

Brackenridge Park Cultural Landscape Report San Antonio, Texas

Prepared for
Brackenridge Park Conservancy
San Antonio Parks & Recreation and
San Antonio River Authority



Reed Hilderbrand, LLC
Doug Reed
John Grove
Christina Sohn

Suzanne Turner Associates
Suzanne Turner
John Welch
Herpreet Singh
Ashley Braquet

January 2020

In Collaboration with

The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
Michelle Bertelsen

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BRACKENRIDGE PARK
CONSERVANCY



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
PARKS & RECREATION



SAN ANTONIO
RIVER AUTHORITY

Brackenridge Park
3700 N. St. Mary's Street
San Antonio, TX 78212
www.brackenridgepark.org

Cover Image: Circa 1970s, children playing in the Tuleta Street Low-Water Crossing, with families picnicking and seated on rockwalls.

Photo Credit: *San Antonio-Express News*

Reed Hilderbrand, LLC
Doug Reed
John Grove
Christina Sohn

Suzanne Turner Associates
Suzanne Turner
John Welch
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FOREWORD

Two nationally acclaimed landscape architecture firms, in collaboration with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center of the University of Texas at Austin, have spent a year and a half preparing this surprising and challenging two-part study of Brackenridge Park, a Cultural Landscape Report and an Environmental Site Assessment, giving us a rare opportunity to see ourselves as others see us.

We San Antonians have been enjoying Brackenridge Park, our city's major municipal park, since it was established in 1899. But we have also tended to take it for granted. Concern over a drift in the park's direction led to formation of the Brackenridge Park Conservancy in 2008 under the auspices of the San Antonio Conservation Society, which has played an active role in the park's preservation since its founding in 1924. There was also important input from San Antonian Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, founder of the Central Park Conservancy in New York.

Happily, the findings of the Cultural Landscape Report and Environmental Site Assessment provide, as we hoped, the underpinning for another major Brackenridge Park Conservancy goal, preparing a nomination for a National Heritage Area. Its fifteen-mile length would include Brackenridge Park and the headwaters of the San Antonio River on the campus of the University of the Incarnate Word. It would extend south through the river corridor and the San Antonio Missions World Heritage Site. Of the National Park Service's fifty-five National Heritage Areas, there are few in the Southwest, and none in Texas.

We owe a debt of gratitude to special friends Ann and Chico Newman, long-time Brackenridge Park advocates, for introducing the Conservancy to Charles Birnbaum, chief executive and founder of The Cultural Landscape Foundation in Washington, DC, and for securing his consultation. While sharing his expertise with the Conservancy and with city leaders, Charles Birnbaum concluded that "Brackenridge Park, as a public municipal park, is unequaled across the United States." It is he who recommended a Cultural Landscape Report as the next step after the city's Brackenridge Park Master Plan, completed in 2017. Without his guidance we may not have embarked on this journey.

City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department Director Xavier Urrutia recognized the value of compiling previously uncollected information into one comprehensive document. We are grateful to him and Assistant Director Homer Garcia and to landscape architect Bill Pennell, who all offered their institutional, on-the-ground knowledge about the park's later development, providing the Parks and Recreation Department partnership so critical to this work's success.

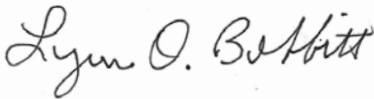
A generous financial investment by the San Antonio River Authority launched the project, and we are most grateful for that partnership as well. I express my sincere gratitude to Suzanne Scott, the River Authority’s general manager, for her commitment to finding solutions to protecting the park and improving its interface with the San Antonio River. River Authority staff members Kirk Moravits, Aarin Teague, Patrice Melancon, and Emilio Molina were invaluable members of the team.

A host of local experts also lent invaluable aid to the Conservancy, as they did to preparers of this study—Reed Hilderbrand Landscape Architects of Cambridge, Massachusetts and Suzanne Turner Associates of Baton Rouge, Louisiana—who list them in their following Acknowledgements. In addition, we appreciate the support of San Antonio Conservation Society President Susan Beavin and of the society’s executive director, Vincent Michael.

We are grateful for the professional work of Reed Hilderbrand staff members Doug Reed, John Grove and Christina Sohn and of Suzanne Turner Associates staff members Susan Turner, John Welch, Herpreet Singh, and Ashley Braquet. Austin’s Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Project Director Michelle Bertelsen and Adam Barbe also made important contributions.

Making sense of 12,000 years of an evolving landscape and providing a useable plan for the future has been no easy job. But the green space of Brackenridge Park and the San Antonio River through the urban center along with the heritage of uses and stories of people through time is irreplaceable, and well worth the effort. The documentation, chronology, mapping, and analysis chronicled in this Cultural Landscape Report and Environmental Site Assessment will be an invaluable guide as we work together to ensure a healthy and sustainable future for Brackenridge Park.

Onward,



Lynn Osborne Bobbitt
Executive Director
Brackenridge Park Conservancy
November 22, 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Brackenridge Park is the kind of landscape with which historians, designers, and scientists are eager to engage. To do so as part of a multidisciplinary team has been this group's privilege. Preserving and planning for cultural landscapes deserves and benefits from the perspective that outsiders offer. But a landscape so abundant with culture, history, and ecology, as Brackenridge Park is, also tends to be a landscape that is not easily or quickly understood.

Our team is grateful to our client and its partners, The Brackenridge Park Conservancy (BPC), led by the astute and dedicated Lynn Osborne Bobbit, the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, headed by Xavier Urrutia when the project began, and managed by the knowledgeable and always willing to assist Bill Pennell, and the San Antonio River Authority, led by the exacting Suzanne Scott. To invest in a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) is to take the long view of public land protection and stewardship. Not all people at the helm of cultural and historic landscapes possess the wisdom, patience, or insight to make this investment at the municipal level. These fine leaders not only grasped the value of a CLR, but they pressed to ensure that it would be tailored to the City of San Antonio and the park itself by the inclusion of an Ecological Site Assessment (ESA). They also trusted our team to comprehend, document, and provide comprehensive and visionary recommendations for Brackenridge Park's future.

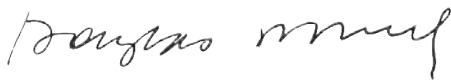
We are equally indebted to the community of passionate local experts who Lynn gathered to support this work. Numerous people graciously lent their time and knowledge to translate to us the complex factors that contribute to the Brackenridge Park landscape. Their expertise enabled us to stitch together our perspectives as landscape architectural historians, landscape architects, and ecologists and environmental designers with the inherent and distinctive truths of the place. They include historian and BPC Advisory Board member Maria Pfeiffer; author and BPC Board member Lewis F. Fisher; Landscape Architect, FASLA/Architect, NCARB Certified and BPC Advisory Board member Everett L. Fly; archaeologist Clinton McKenzie, UTSA Center for Archaeological Research; Kay Hindes, City of San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation; environmental scientist/water analyst, San Antonio Water System and BPC Advisory Board member Gregg Eckhardt; architect and former President of BPC Jay Loudon. San Antonio is lucky to have this wealth of institutional knowledge, and we were lucky to cull their expertise.

Collectively, our team has worked on numerous CLRs over the years, many for the National Park Service, and some for municipalities. Indisputably, Brackenridge Park has been the most exciting and complicated site for which we have had the opportunity to create a CLR. To create this historical document and technical tool, a CLR requires constant collaboration,

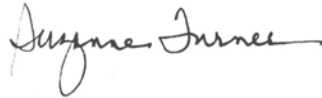
patience, and attention to detail by many individuals. John Grove and Christina Sohn, of Reed Hilderbrand; John Welch, Herpreet Singh, and Ashley Braquet of Suzanne Turner Associates; Michelle Bertelsen and Adam Barbe of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center; and copy editor, Alison Rainey, each played instrumental roles in forming and finalizing the Brackenridge Park CLR and its accompanying ESA.

As with every CLR we have completed, but perhaps with heightened awareness for this one, we are deeply aware that more can be done—more historic details captured, more graphics rendered to illustrate information, more recommendations made. Due to the volume of information and real-world time constraints, in the eighteen months we’ve worked on this CLR, at certain points, we’ve had to observe a simple mantra: pencils down.

Now that pencils are down, our hope is that this CLR is a thorough, inspiring, and useful management tool. We aim for it to serve as the catalyst for putting in place necessary funding and systems-based projects for forward-thinking preservation and future development of Brackenridge Park and the City of San Antonio’s extensive network of cultural, historic, and ecological resources along the San Antonio River.



Doug Reed, FASLA
Principal
Reed Hilderbrand, LLC



Suzanne Turner, FASLA
Principal
Suzanne Turner Associates

PREFACE

Like historic buildings and their interiors, historic landscapes require specialized approaches for their preservation and long-term management. Architecture and interiors have traditions and methodologies for preservation that have been in use for centuries. Restoration architects and material conservators have developed highly refined processes for the documentation and treatment of architectural fabric. Universities offer specialized graduate degrees for architects working in this arena. An entire industry has developed to supply the demand for the architectural products, building materials, paints, mortars, and fixtures necessary to reproduce and repair the fabric of historic buildings. The same is true for historic interiors. This has not been the case with historic landscapes.

Unlike the preservation of historic buildings, which has been occurring on a large scale in the United States since the 1920s, preservation of landscapes as a specialized methodology is a relatively young endeavor in America. Recognizing the need for parallel technologies and processes appropriate for the preservation of cultural and historic landscapes, the field of cultural landscape preservation emerged about forty years ago. In 1981, the National Park Service (NPS) “first recognized cultural landscapes as a specific resource type,” and “more than any other organization or agency...[the NPS] provided the most significant direction to the nascent cultural landscape preservation movement.”¹ In 1984, the NPS published *Cultural Landscapes: Rural Historic Districts in the National Park System*, a document that “spelled out criteria for identifying and defining cultural landscapes.”²

Tremendous strides have been made in the field of landscape preservation since that publication, but the need to raise awareness is all the more urgent with the rise in extreme weather events and the general fragility and ephemeral character of landscapes. Barring natural or accidental disasters, buildings are relatively static structures, but the very nature of any landscape is change. Landscapes are constantly in a state of growth or decline, making them difficult to document, stabilize, or preserve.

THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT AS A MANAGEMENT TOOL

Since laying groundwork in the 1980s, “the NPS has continued to provide both intellectual and practical leadership for the landscape preservationist movement.”³ In 1998, the NPS published *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*. This document continues to prescribe the standard methodology for documenting, treating, and managing cultural landscapes in the United States. The NPS manages 419 properties, and many of them are documented, treated, and managed through the use of a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR).

The NPS defines a CLR in the following way:

The Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) serves two important functions: it is the principle treatment document for cultural landscapes and the primary tool for long-term management of those landscapes.⁴

More recently, in 2000, scholars Arnold Alanen and Robert Melnick described a CLR in greater detail:

Typically interdisciplinary in nature, the CLR includes documentation, analysis, and evaluation of historical, architectural, archaeological, ethnographic, horticultural, landscape architectural, engineering, and ecological data. It analyzes the landscape’s historical development, evolution, modifications, materials, construction techniques, geographical context, and use in all periods, including those deemed not significant. Based on the analysis, it makes recommendations for treatment consistent with the landscape’s significance, condition and planned use.

The scope and level of investigation vary depending on management objectives. It may focus on an entire landscape or on individual features within it.⁵

Ideally, the development of a Master Plan for a cultural landscape will follow a CLR. It is common, however, for a CLR to be created in conjunction with, or even after, the creation of a Master Plan. For this reason, a CLR is intended to work with existing plans.

3 Alanen and Melnick, *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*.

4 Robert Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*. US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Washington, DC, 1998.

5 “Research,” National Park Service, www.nps.gov/subjects/culturallandscapes/research.htm#CLR.

MAKING MEANING VISIBLE: THE BRACKENRIDGE PARK CLR

In 2016, the City of San Antonio commissioned a Master Plan for Brackenridge Park. The Brackenridge Park Master Plan was approved in February 2017. In June 2018, the Brackenridge Park Conservancy, in partnership with the San Antonio River Authority and San Antonio Parks & Recreation Department, commissioned a CLR for Brackenridge Park.

Whereas the Master Plan provides a plan “to shape the future development and rehabilitation”⁶ of the park, the CLR is tailored to provide a holistic understanding of the entire landscape from ecological and cultural perspectives. As a long-term management and treatment document, the CLR

1. provides analysis of broad historical and contemporary contexts relevant to Brackenridge Park’s development and present circumstances;
2. documents Brackenridge Park’s history;
3. evaluates the health of the park’s biotic systems;
4. defines the cultural significance of the landscape;
5. evaluates the physical and visible integrity of the landscape;
6. is the principal treatment document for the preservation of this cultural landscape; and
7. is the primary tool for the site’s long-term management.

Ultimately, the 2017 Brackenridge Park Master Plan recommendations should be measured and fine-tuned against the overarching treatment recommendations this CLR provides.

The consultant team hired to execute the CLR consisted of the landscape architecture firm Reed Hilderbrand (Cambridge, Massachusetts), landscape architectural historians Suzanne Turner Associates (Baton Rouge, Louisiana), and the ecological research consulting arm of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (Austin, Texas). The Brackenridge Park CLR, in conjunction with an Ecological Site Assessment, was completed over a period of seventeen months, beginning in June 2018 and ending in November 2019.

The clients’ decision to involve the Wildflower Center in a preservation process that conventionally focuses on human culture and on the social and design histories connected to landscapes was crucial and brilliant. It demonstrated that park leadership comprehends the primacy of the San Antonio River in the formation of the city, the magnitude of Brackenridge Park’s compromised ecological and cultural health, and the inherent relationship that exists between ecology and culture in this landscape.

The Brackenridge Park CLR is modeled after the NPS process for initiating and guiding cultural landscape preservation, although it is also tailored specifically to the needs of the site and the clients. In the CLR, the site’s history and existing conditions were documented. This information was then used to analyze whether the Brackenridge landscape is culturally and/or historically significant. A Statement of Significance was developed to outline the ways in which the Brackenridge Park landscape is culturally significant at the national, state, and local levels. The landscape’s integrity was then evaluated—that is, the consultant team assessed whether the present conditions of the Brackenridge Park landscape provide

6 “Brackenridge Park Master Plan,” San Antonio, TX, February 21, 2017, p. 1, brackenridgepark.org/files/large/b163e99c63315d1.

users with an intact, visible, and easily understood experience of what makes the landscape culturally or historically significant or, alternatively, whether the present conditions are so compromised that the landscape’s significance is no longer detectable. This assessment was used to generate a formal Determination of Integrity.

The final component of the CLR is a Treatment Plan. This is a set of recommendations that is informed by NPS-defined approaches to protecting landscapes. The level of integrity the cultural landscape possesses “influences treatment decisions regarding what features to preserve [‘as is’], where to accommodate change for contemporary use [and to what degree], and where to reestablish missing features.”⁷ This CLR’s treatment chapter identifies an overarching approach to preserving and treating the site, priorities that support the overarching approach, suggested management investigations and practices, further research and documentation needs, and basic suggestions for exploring financial strategies to sustain the park. CLR recommendations specific to ecological health were developed in collaboration with the Wildflower Center. The treatment aims to make Brackenridge Park a more sustainable landscape that is ecologically, culturally, and financially resilient and relevant well into the twenty-first century and beyond. The chapter also includes recommended next steps, so park leadership can quickly act.

Recommendations related to site interpretation are also integral to treatment of any cultural landscape. Interpretation involves determining what narratives will communicate the multilayered story of the landscape to the visitor. This will be no easy feat for Brackenridge Park, but it is of utmost importance. In this CLR, decisions were made about *which stories* and *whose stories* to tell. The Brackenridge Park CLR Treatment advocates for a multidisciplinary and culturally inclusive interpretation that will be inseparable from the park’s major landscape systems and future projects.

At face value, a CLR is a thorough historic documentation—a technical report—but it also serves an ambitious purpose. It puts a cultural landscape into a larger perspective and utilizes the landscape’s past to set the course for its future. A CLR is an action plan. It declares implementable answers to the following questions: Why does this place still matter today? As we heal and care for this place, how should its meaning be made clear? And, within the web of important histories, which have the greatest potential to communicate to present and future users the meaning of this place and its contemporary relevance?

7 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 101.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY, TIME-LAYERED APPROACH TO PRESERVATION

The Brackenridge Park landscape contains an astonishing twelve thousand years of documented prehistoric and human interaction with the upper course of the San Antonio River. In that span, its 120-year existence as a *municipal park*¹ is relatively short. Brackenridge Park is thus more than a municipal park. It is a rich and complex *cultural landscape* that not only merits pride and deserves protection but also demonstrates that landscapes are inherently dynamic.

At present, Brackenridge Park is in decline. Its historic and public value have become less and less comprehensible. And a piecemeal approach to improving its current conditions will not serve its long-term viability. Yet the ultimate purpose of preserving this cultural landscape cannot be to freeze it in time. We should not toil to create a static and outmoded representation of one single period of its existence. That would be wholly impossible. The very act of landscape preservation at Brackenridge Park necessitates a nuanced understanding of its past to chart a new way forward.

Brackenridge Park holds stories about San Antonio's foundations and origins. Revealing these stories requires interdisciplinary measures on a grand, systemic scale. The most powerful landscape preservation will convey that this place is ecologically, historically, and culturally meaningful and relevant across the arc of time. Landscape preservation at Brackenridge Park must make obvious to the public the many layers that contribute to the site's unique local character and national importance, with paramount focus on the long-term sustainability of the park and the many ways that this landscape defines San Antonio's identity—that of both the place and its people.

This Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) calls for an interdisciplinary systems-based approach to the park's preservation and future growth and sets four intentions: (1) to heal Brackenridge Park's ecology, (2) to protect and celebrate its many layers of historic significance and cultural diversity, (3) to elevate its identity locally and nationally, and (4) to usher it into the twenty-first century.

A distilled explanation of the Treatment, focusing on the overarching approach, is included in the final section of this executive summary. Following the executive summary is a two-part introduction. Part one acquaints CLR users with the park's history and grounds readers in terminology so they will understand, at a technical level, the complicated network of cultural and related landscapes. Beginning with *municipal park*, each term builds on the previous term in order to convey how Brackenridge Park fits into this network and how its CLR historians, designers, and ecologists believe it can categorically distinguish itself

¹ Terms that appear bold and italics are defined in the Glossary at the end of this CLR. After their first appearance in the CLR, they are no longer bolded and italicized."

from other cultural landscapes. Part two focuses on the Brackenridge Park CLR Outcomes, summarizing its Statement of Significance, Determination of Integrity, and Treatment Recommendations, including priority systems and projects.

TREATMENT THAT DEFINES AN INDELIBLE IDENTITY—TOMORROW’S BRACKENRIDGE

A deliberate shift in Brackenridge Park’s identity is justified. It should be elevated in the eyes and minds of the local community and widely known outside of San Antonio. Brackenridge Park should be loved and experienced as an immersive landscape of learning—a cultural park that is equal parts ecological laboratory, outdoor museum, leisure and recreational park, and revered setting.

In the immediate future, updating Brackenridge Park’s National Register Nomination to recognize its cultural resources as significant beyond the local level will begin the technical process of elevating its identity. But physical interventions are also necessary.

Eight natural and constructed landscape systems represent the site’s continuum through time and collectively contribute to Brackenridge Park’s defining spirit—whimsical, romantic, and uniquely San Antonian. Yet these systems are currently either in jeopardy or invisible. The systems include

- buried prehistoric and historic **Archaeology**;
- the no-longer-healthy or accessible upper course of the **San Antonio River and Riparian Corridor**;
- damaged and hidden **River Structures**—acequias, dams, ditches, tunnels, and retaining walls;
- threatened **Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology**, made up of historic tree canopies and dwindling plant communities;
- **Entry and Arrival Areas** that are not entirely evident or inviting;
- **Circulation through the Park** that is confusing and does not adequately provide access to the park’s numerous landscape experiences;
- confusing **Edges between Cultural Institutions**, which mask their historic relationship with the park, including the Japanese Tea Garden, Witte Museum, San Antonio Zoo, Brackenridge Park Golf Course, Davis Park and others; and
- the park’s regionally distinctive and one-of-a-kind **Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art**.

These struggling systems make up the framework for the park. Historically and in the present, they define and imbue this landscape with meaning. For these reasons, this CLR Treatment calls for these systems to be addressed *ahead* of individual projects in Brackenridge Park.

Together, these systems must become healthy, visible, and cared for, and they must be constant signifiers of the landscape's ongoing continuum. When this is achieved, Brackenridge Park will transform into a place for which people feel the pride, responsibility, and shared ownership that is necessary for a thriving urban park.

An **Interpretation** strategy is also critical for the park's viability. Interpretation must be developed in unison with and as an inextricable component of the systems. Brackenridge Park's interpretation should forefront its expansive history and San Antonio's ecological and cultural heritage, with deliberate commitment to diverse and inclusive representation.

Continued dynamism is equally vital to the landscape's longevity. As this systems-based Treatment is implemented, the many current uses and rituals that contribute to the park and San Antonio's rich identity *can and should* remain. But new uses and users will also emerge as population and climate shifts occur and as scientific and technological advances are made. The location, organization, and management of existing and new cultural layers must be considered in tandem with the overall sustainability of the park's systems.

CLR Treatment includes one other recommendation that the city of San Antonio should work toward as a longer-term goal: achieving congressional designation as a **National Heritage Area**. Brackenridge Park is one among many cultural sites in the city that emerged along the San Antonio River and its system of artesian springs, expressing the natural pattern of early human settlement along water. Deliberately designing linkages between these sites through interpreted urban greenways will elevate Brackenridge Park—and each linked site—to a precedent-setting level of landscape excellence that not all cultural landscapes possess.

Tomorrow's Brackenridge Park will be an immersive landscape of learning. Its local, state, and national significance will be evident to users, and its identity as a public land will be indelible.

INTRODUCTION PART 1

THE BRACKENRIDGE PARK LANDSCAPE

A CONDENSED HISTORY

Imagine a clear, cold river originating from a deep, gushing artesian spring, not trickling, but rushing, chasing itself through prairie grassland. It forges a winding path that stretches southeasterly, like a ribbon unraveling for nearly 250 miles. Life blooms and bursts in many forms along this river's upper banks for thousands upon thousands of years, until eventually, a city grows.

The Brackenridge Park landscape was once a stomping ground for mammoths and other prehistoric life. It was part of a ritual migratory route for Indigenous Americans. It is the origin of one of this country's earliest democratized water systems, executed through a Spanish system of acequias and built by Indigenous people to irrigate and provide potable water to the Spanish missions (1719 - 1724), and eventually to provide water to secular settlements for almost one hundred years (1770s-1850s). It is the site of early industrial development in the form of limestone quarries that first built up the city (1850s - 1880). It is the site of a Civil War Confederate tannery and sawmill where enslaved people labored (1863 - 1865) and the site of a cement company, which, by the hands of workers, further contributed to the building up of San Antonio (1880 - 1908).

This landscape then became a grand, shady, scenic driving park and a river swimming hole that attracted locals and tourists from around the country (1899) (**figures 1 and 2**). It became the grounds for a charming display of buildings that melded German architectural styles of “half-timbering or rock-and-mortar methods”¹ with native limestone materials that resulted in distinctly local buildings and structures that still dot the park and the city. Its limestone quarries eventually became exceptional, dramatic backdrops to what is today the historic

1 Hulbert G. H. Wilhelm, “Organized German Settlement and Its Effects on the Frontier of South-Central Texas” (Dissertation 1523, Louisiana State University, 1968), iv, accessed November 4, 2019, digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/1523.



FIGURE –1. View of a historic carriage way in Brackenridge Park, circa 1900s. Source: Witte Museum Collection



FIGURE –2. View of people canoeing and picnicking in Brackenridge Park, circa 1900s. Automobiles are parked along the riverbank, middle right. Source: Witte Museum Collection

San Antonio Zoo (1915), the Japanese Tea Garden (1917), and the Sunken Garden Theater, an outdoor theater (1930). It became a canvas for public art—whimsical *faux bois* bridges, benches, and tables created by Mexican-born Dionicio Rodriguez, as well as works by other notable artists. It is the original and long-time home to The Witte (1926), today a first-class natural history museum. It was a public space where civil rights for African Americans and Mexican Americans were once denied and, eventually, enacted (1950s). In 1997, it became home to the Tunnel Inlet, an engineering feat that protects downtown San Antonio from flood events and, alternatively, maintains the flow of water to the river during drought. This landscape contains many more defining layers as well.

“People have been grilling meat here alongside the river for 12,000 years. They are still sitting here, alongside the river, and grilling meat today.”² Speaking about Brackenridge Park, Ricardo Romo, a San Antonio native, urban historian, photographer, and former University of Texas at San Antonio president, made an on-the-record³ version of this remark in 2012. He has repeated the sentiment many times since, because the tradition persists year after year to the present.

Yet many San Antonians are aware neither of this landscape’s expansive natural and cultural heritage nor of its storied development as public parkland. To paraphrase another local historian, Lewis F. Fisher, many San Antonians think of Brackenridge Park as an “old shoe”⁴ rather than as a prized public landscape. Some locals possess nostalgic memories of the park’s prime periods of development and use, ranging between the 1920s and 1950s. And over the past fifty or more years, a purely San Antonian Easter tradition that local Mexican Americans embraced in the park has also become beloved and deeply rooted. But as a result of limited resources, lack of public awareness, benign neglect, and, in some cases, being “loved to death,” Brackenridge Park today mostly appears run down.

The site’s captivating and complicated ecological and cultural layers are barely evident; Brackenridge Park does not appear to be the landscape that its history merits. Circulation leading from city streets into the park is not well marked. No central welcoming visitor center or wayfinding system orients people to the relationship between the park and the resources and institutions situated in this landscape—it is unclear to users that the Japanese Tea Garden, Witte Museum, San Antonio Zoo, and Brackenridge Park Golf Course are each a component of a single substantial park. One cannot easily decipher how to move through the entire park, which contains a surprising variety of landscape experiences, from wooded trails to riparian banks to an arid desert-plant community and a view overlooking historic quarries. The Joske Pavilion playground, a space that bears its own worthy past, is teeming with vultures attracted to the site because of feeding activity in the zoo. The once airy woodland landscape through which historic carriage and motorways wind (today as pedestrian trails) is dense with invasive plant species is the accidental habitat of a feral cat colony.

Historic buildings and structures as well as live oak canopies need maintenance. Soil is bare, compacted, and eroding, endangering the health of existing trees and undermining

2 Ricardo Romo, CLR Draft Feedback and Treatment Workshop, August 2019.

3 Rivard, Robert. “Brackenridge Park: San Antonio’s Neglected Crown Jewel,” in *Rivard Report* (Institute for Nonprofit News, October 7, 2016), accessed October 1, 2019, therivardreport.com/brackenridge-park-san-antonios-neglected-crown-jewel/.

4 Lewis F. Fisher, CLR Draft Comments, August 2019.



FIGURE –3. View of erosion along the banks of the San Antonio River, February 2019. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

the river’s integrity. There is no young generation of trees to replace the aging canopy in the coming years. Natural bottomland woodland and riverbank plant communities that once protected and enriched the river are either nearing collapse or are gone. As a result, the San Antonio River, frequently described as containing crystal-clear water, appears dark and unhealthy in some areas. It is laden with duck, goose, and heron excrement, contamination from surrounding parking lots and roadways, and the excessive runoff that comes with urban development. Its WPA-era limestone retaining walls are crumbling, and its banks are eroding (**figure 3**).

There is a palpable disconnect between the landscape’s current conditions and its millennia-long thread of natural, cultural, and historic value. Traces of its significance are vaguely and disjointedly visible, but none of this landscape’s significance is truly understood. Visitors do not know that Brackenridge Park is a cultural landscape of major importance in San Antonio and in America—and yet it is exactly this!

Brackenridge Park’s cultural significance, historic character, and ecological health are diminished, and currently the park is not immersing people in its story. These issues deserve to be remedied. Successfully remedying them will require that they be addressed holistically.

SAN ANTONIO'S LARGE MUNICIPAL PARK

Brackenridge Park is San Antonio's first *large municipal park*⁵—so defined, in part, by its vast 343-acre size and its ownership and management by the city of San Antonio. The term *municipal park* and is a general baseline term that falls under the umbrella of the long history of park design in America. Naming and comprehending Brackenridge Park at this level is useful, because it is a starting point for illuminating the ways in which the Brackenridge Park landscape surpasses its basic classification.

America's first large municipal park, Central Park, was designed and began to be implemented in 1857. On the heels of Central Park, large municipal parks emerged around the country throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century. Brackenridge Park, envisioned and established in 1899 with an initial 199-acre donation by philanthropist George Brackenridge, was among this first wave of large American municipal parks.

In addition to being distinguished by size and city ownership and management, large municipal parks are defined by their inclusion of “such diverse amenities as zoos, outdoor theatres, golf courses, and public gardens.”⁶ They are also comprised of sequential spatial experiences “characterized by winding roads and paths, woodlands,...large expanses of lawn, and groves of trees.”⁷ In almost every way, Brackenridge Park fits the standard profile of a large municipal park.

These parks also often include artificial lakes. But flowing through the center of Brackenridge Park is a favorable natural feature, the upper course of the San Antonio River. The river originates from a complex of natural artesian springs located just north of Brackenridge Park. One of the largest of these, the San Antonio Springs, is locally known as the Blue Hole. It is within walking distance from the park on property owned by the Sisters Charity of the Incarnate Word, and it is widely considered the source of the San Antonio River. The banks of the San Antonio River and its immediate watershed were the locus of activity and occupancy in the region from prehistory to Indigenous bands,⁸ to imperialist and religious explorers and missionaries, and to the first settlers of European origin. All these features classify Brackenridge Park as a cultural landscape.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES—TERMS AND TYPOLOGIES

Most San Antonians know that their city is brimming with culture and history. But they may not be aware that *cultural landscape* is a designated term with designated paths to protection. In 1984, the National Park Service (NPS) defined a cultural landscape as

a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.⁹

⁵ Italicized, bold terms in this chapter are defined in the glossary at the end of this CLR.

⁶ Lewis F. Fisher, CLR Draft Comments, August 2019. “Large Municipal Park.” The Cultural Landscape Foundation. tclf.org/category/defined-landscape-types/public-park/large-municipal-park.

⁷ “Large Municipal Park,” The Cultural Landscape Foundation, accessed November 1, 2019, tclf.org/category/defined-landscape-types/public-park/large-municipal-park.

⁸ None of the Coahuiltecan of the area were considered tribes. They were, according to a 2014 article by Bobby L. Lovett and Russell K. Skowronek, smaller family groups described as bands.

⁹ “Understand Cultural Landscapes,” National Park Service, nps.gov/subjects/culturallandscapes/understand-cl.htm.

The UNESCO World Heritage Convention began recognizing cultural landscapes internationally in 1992, defining them as “combined works of nature and man,” and

illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces”¹⁰

The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF), established in 1998, defined cultural landscapes as those

that have been affected, influenced, or shaped by human involvement. A cultural landscape can be associated with a person or event. It can be thousands of acres or a tiny homestead. It can be a grand estate, industrial site, park, garden, cemetery, campus, and more. Collectively, cultural landscapes are works of art, narratives of culture, and expressions of regional identity.¹¹

Perhaps the most compelling definition to date, specifically considering Brackenridge Park, was offered in 2000 by Dolores Hayden, Yale University professor emeritus of Architecture and American Studies. Hayden stated that a cultural landscape is

that combination of natural landforms and buildings that defines a particular place or region. It is the creation of the women, men, and children who lived their lives within that landscape.¹²

Hayden follows her definition with a critical statement:

Preserved and interpreted for the public, the cultural landscape tells us who we are, as Americans, far more effectively than most works of architecture or exhibits in museums ever can. Main streets and mail-order houses, *casitas* and steam baths, small towns and big parks, Pueblo Indian kivas and Midwestern flower gardens—all convey the specific traces of American material life as generations of diverse peoples have lived it.¹³

Brackenridge Park has no preservation plan, and it is not “interpreted for the public.” Yet it is teeming with every feature that is distinct to cultural landscapes, and the park is most certainly an expression of San Antonio’s regional identity. This CLR provides the starting point for an exacting and urgent endeavor. It is park leadership’s first opportunity to adopt and implement a preservation plan and to develop substantive interpretation.

¹⁰ “Cultural Landscapes,” UNESCO World Heritage Center, accessed November 1, 2019, whc.unesco.org/en/culturallandscape/#1.

¹¹ “About Cultural Landscapes,” The Cultural Landscape Foundation, accessed November 1, 2019, tclf.org/places/about-cultural-landscapes.

¹² Dolores Hayden, “In Search of the American Landscape,” in *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*, ed. Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Melnick (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), vii-ix.

¹³ Hayden, “In Search of the American Landscape,” vii-ix.

SITUATING BRACKENRIDGE PARK AS A CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Brackenridge Park, like its most prominent municipal park predecessor, Central Park, embodies the distinction of being both a large municipal park and a cultural landscape. The two parks represent categorically different types of cultural landscapes, however. The NPS differentiates four types of cultural landscapes: *designed landscapes*, *vernacular landscapes*, *historic sites*, and *ethnographic landscapes*. It is typical for a single landscape to contain overlap, and this is the case with Brackenridge Park.

A *designed landscape* is one that was “consciously designed and laid out...by a master gardener, landscape architect, architect, or horticulturalist to a design principle, or by an owner or other amateur according to a recognized style or tradition.”¹⁴

On the other hand, a *vernacular landscape* is one

whose construction, or physical layout reflects endemic traditions, customs, beliefs, or values; in which the expression of cultural values, social behavior, and individual actions over time is manifested in physical features and materials and their interrelationships, including patterns of spatial organization, land use, circulation, structures, and objects; in which the physical, biological, and cultural features reflect the customs and everyday lives of people.¹⁵

Brackenridge Park most visibly possesses the qualities of a vernacular landscape. The differences between the park-making process for Central Park and the park-making process for Brackenridge Park also evidence this fact.

The process by which a designed landscape comes to be created is straightforward and predictable. For Central Park, locations were carefully deliberated, including an unoccupied “150-acre wooded landscape on the Upper East Side”¹⁶ and an area that included “Seneca Village, the largest community of African-American property owners in 19th-century New York”¹⁷ as well as Irish immigrants and German descendants. According to Sain-Baird, “this area was considered stable and prosperous,”¹⁸ compared with other African American areas in the city at the time. Ultimately, a value judgement was made, this was the site chosen, and “the New York State Legislature enacted a law that set aside 776 acres of land...to create the country’s first major landscaped park.”¹⁹ In 1856, this land was cleared “through eminent domain, which allowed the government to take private land for public use, with compensation to the landowner.... There were roughly 1,600 inhabitants displaced throughout the area.”²⁰

With the land designated and cleared, a design competition was held in 1857. The winning plan, by architect Calvert Vaux and by Frederick Law Olmsted, who is credited as being the “father of landscape architecture,” was selected; the process was administered by a board of commissioners; and construction began under the same administration. The chosen

14 “Defining Cultural Landscapes,” National Park Service, nps.gov/subjects/culturallandscapes/understand-cl.htm.

15 Defining Cultural Landscapes,” National Park Service.

16 Marissa Castrigno, “The Competition: 33 Plans for Central Park in 1858,” Central Park Conservancy (blog), April 18, 2019, accessed November 2, 2019, centralparknyc.org/about/blog/competition-33-plans-for-central-park.html.

17 Jessica Sain-Baird, “The Story of Seneca Village,” Central Park Conservancy (blog), January 18, 2018, accessed October 6, 2019, centralparknyc.org/about/blog/story-of-seneca-village.html.

18 Sain-Baird, “Story of Seneca Village.”

19 Sain-Baird, “Story of Seneca Village.”

20 Sain-Baird, “Story of Seneca Village.”



FIGURE –4. An 1871 plan of Central Park by Olmsted and Vaux shows the park integrated with city street grid. The Museum of Natural History, center left, is included in the plan. Source: Charles E. Beveridge and Paul Rocheleau, *Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing the American Landscape*

master plan, called the Greensward plan, guided the development that followed (figure 4). As social and political trends and forces have evolved, changes have been made, but the essential character and features of Central Park remain and have been sustained over time.

The process by which a vernacular landscape is created is different from that of a designed landscape in every instance. When George Brackenridge made his original 1899 bequest to the city of San Antonio, he paved the way for a park that would be influenced by Central Park and park design movements of the time, including the emergence of the national park system. But overwhelmingly, this landscape’s transformation from forested and industrial use to a place of respite and recreation for the population of San Antonio can best be described as organic.

Unlike the making of Central Park, there was neither a deliberate governmental determination regarding park location nor any known formal discussion of a master plan for Brackenridge Park. Instead, with George Brackenridge’s donation, the public value of lands bordering the San Antonio River—the city’s reason for being—was removed from private development and dedicated to public access and use in perpetuity. Whereas Central Park was deliberately placed into a surrounding city grid, the San Antonio River provided Brackenridge Park’s central unifying thread. Hundred-year-old acequias located east and west of the river inadvertently helped shape its overall boundaries and form. In essence, the form of the park followed the form of the site’s major water features (figure 5).

The intention of the park making was unstated in the plan for Brackenridge Park beyond the idea that it would be a driving park, initially for carriages and soon followed by the introduction of the automobile—both transports of the elite. The park’s acreage gradually increased, and a circuit of carriageways was constructed that allowed visitors to directly cross the river in two locations and to experience the beauty of the woodlands that characterized the landscape.

The growth and development of the park came out of a series of ordinary responses to the evolution

of various special-interest groups: cultural and neighborhood groups, political organizations, swimmers, exotic animal lovers, gardeners, golfers, childhood education alliances, polo players, civic boosters, and so on. As each of these “needs” were accommodated within the park acreage, no overarching plan or conceptual goal guided the site selection, and there was no prescribed method for evaluating the appropriateness of new land uses. The process was often what was most expedient, a response to those who lobbied the loudest or to those who had the best connections with decision-makers.

Central Park and Brackenridge Park are both magnificent parks but both also have contested histories. And although they are each in and of themselves nationally important, they exist at two ends of a spectrum. Central Park bears national significance as the country’s first large municipal park and the preeminent design precedent for all others. Brackenridge Park’s regional vernacular design of a municipal park, though distinctive, bears primarily local significance. Its national significance comes instead from the fact that it is a *historic site* and because it contains traces of an *ethnographic landscape*. But its manifestation as each of these two categories of cultural landscape is less apparent to the naked eye than its manifestation as a *vernacular landscape*.

A historic site is defined as one that is significant “for its association with a historic event, activity, or person.”²¹ Perhaps the most well-documented historic association at Brackenridge Park is the one it has with the acequias. Indigenous labor constructed the earliest acequia in the city. The Madre de Valero acequia was first constructed in 1719, beginning in today’s Brackenridge Park near the Witte Museum. Its associated mission was originally “on the west side of the San Antonio River, but it was moved to the east to its permanent location in 1724.”²² Charles Porter Jr. wrote that the “distribution of the water via acequias sowed the first seed of sustainable life for the settlement” and that “San Antonio would



FIGURE –5. A circa 1929 blueprint of Brackenridge Park shows its organic form. The park is shaped by the river course flowing through its center and the 1776 upper labor acequia, located west of the river. Source: San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department

21 Defining Cultural Landscapes,” National Park Service.

22 Charles Porter Jr., *Spanish Water, Anglo Water: Early Development in San Antonio* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 26.

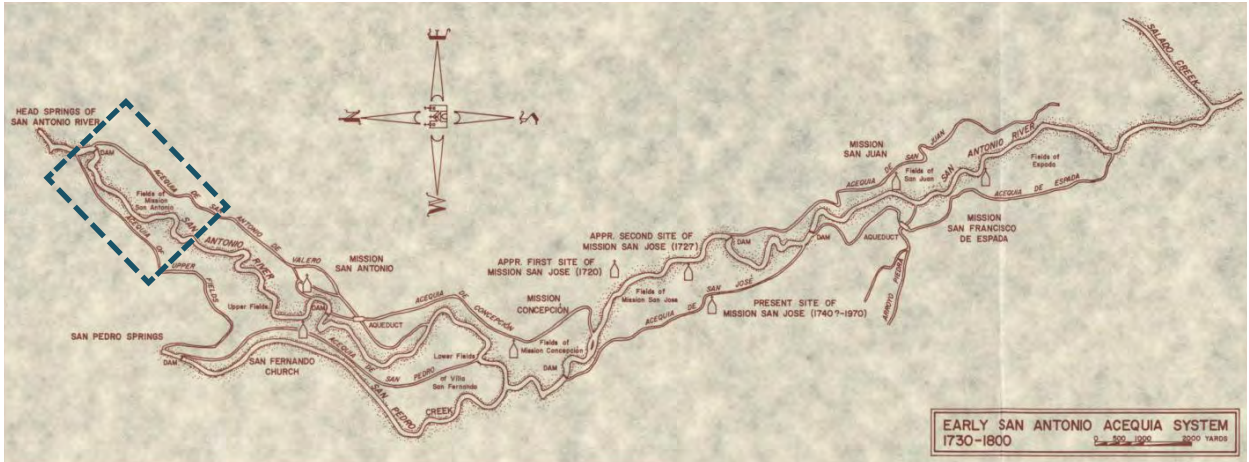


FIGURE –6. A 1730–1800s map of the San Antonio acequia system, created circa 1970s. Brackenridge Park is highlighted below the headwaters of the San Antonio River. Source: *The Portal to Texas History*, University of North Texas Libraries



FIGURE –7. Engraving of Indigenous people building the acequia at Mission San José between 1720–1730. Source: Weckler, 1883, published in Charles R. Porter, Jr., *Spanish Water, Anglo Water*

never have become a major community without its irrigation system to distribute water resources.”²³ Remnants of a later acequia, the Upper Labor, dating to approximately 1776, “branched from the river’s west bank within the park just below Hildebrand Avenue.”²⁴

At its completion, “there were over 50 miles of acequia ditches in San Antonio that served the missions, the secular settlement of Béxar, and the military presidio”²⁵ (figures 6 and 7). The acequias were the predecessor of a system of dams and ditches that would continue to be carved out of the river. In addition to providing irrigation, San Antonio’s acequia system “distributed water for all uses by all the settlers, including personal consumption

23 Porter Jr., *Spanish Water, Anglo Water*, 26, 32.

24 Maria Watson Pfeiffer and Steven A. Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” National Register of Historic Places, Texas Historical Commission, San Antonio, TX, June 15, 2011.

25 “Mission Trails Historic Sites, Acequias,” Sanantonio.gov/sanantonio.gov/Mission-Trails/Mission-Trails-Historic-Sites/Detail-Page/ArtMID/16185/ArticleID/4230/Acequias.



FIGURE –8. The White Shaman Rock Art Panel, a four-thousand-year-old, twenty-six-foot-long cave pictograph. Some interpret it as depicting cosmic beliefs and seasonal migration to the San Antonio River. Source: Rock Art Foundation White Shaman Preserve, Witte Museum Collection

and other household use. It can therefore be said to have been the first municipal water system in the United States,”²⁶ preceding a public water system dating to 1754 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, which is typically cited as the country’s earliest public water system.²⁷ Today, the two acequias on the Brackenridge Park site, are largely intact beneath the ground, but are imperceptible to the human eye.

The NPS defines an ethnographic landscape as one “containing a variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources.”²⁸ Another description states that

unlike vernacular landscapes which generally reflect, often unintentionally, repetitive human activities, such as farming or mining, ethnographic landscapes mirror the systems of meanings, ideologies, beliefs, values, and world-views shared by a group of people....

In a very real way, ethnographic landscapes reflect a distinctive way of transforming nature into culture. The transformation...affects land-use practices, responses to landforms and other features of the natural environment.... Ethnographic landscapes reflect not only quite different histories and cultural traditions but also the continuing process of world-making.²⁹

Without written accounts, early Indigenous populations are labeled prehistoric. But two hundred miles west of San Antonio, a twenty-six-foot-long ancient mural illustrates a developed pictographic language. Some San Antonian descendants of the Yanaguana, who were native to the area, interpret the mural as illustrating cosmic beliefs about an origin story and mapping a seasonal ritual that brought Indigenous Americans to the San Antonio River’s headwaters and the upper course of the river each year to honor that story (figure 8). Given existing archaeological research and the presence of Yanaguana descendants in the city, further research is merited to better understand the Indigenous traces of this landscape.

²⁶ Porter Jr., *Spanish Water, Anglo Water*, 48-49.

²⁷ Porter, Charles, Jr., *Spanish Water, Anglo Water*, .49.

²⁸ Defining Cultural Landscapes,” National Park Service.

²⁹ Donald Hardesty, “Ethnographic Landscapes: Transforming Nature into Culture,” in *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*, ed. Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Melnick (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 169–185.

Past links to native rituals are not the only suggestion that Brackenridge Park is an ethnographic landscape. The creation of ethnographic landscapes is a contemporary and ongoing process.

In America, ethnographic landscapes have been and continue to be created by Native Americans and more recent immigrants.... The mix of American cultures and ethnic groups coming at different times means that the same landscape may be simultaneously significant to people carrying quite different cultural traditions.³⁰

The twentieth-century yearly Easter tradition in which families descend on the park on Easter weekend to camp, grill, hold Easter egg hunts, break cascarones, and burst piñatas is a demonstration of San Antonio's Mexican American community "transforming nature into culture." The tradition emerged as early as the 1930s, however, from news clippings it is not clear whether it was initially a primarily Mexican American event, or whether it evolved to become a cultural event. No intentional physical reshaping of the landscape results from the tradition, but "components of ethnographic landscapes may be either material or nonmaterial."³¹ Put another way, just as "rock art panels...may carry significant meaning, [the] same significance may be attached to visible landforms or other landscape features with no evidence of human modification"³² (**figures 9 and 10**).

Brackenridge Park has been the subject of extensive archaeological research, as have many of the city's green spaces and other areas along the banks of the San Antonio River. This research has uncovered traces of the site's prehistoric and Indigenous history, which must be researched more deeply along with events over the past fifty years. But the existing information, limited as it may be, suggests that Brackenridge Park is an *ethnographic landscape*.

30 Hardesty, Donald L. "Ethnographic Landscapes: Transforming Nature into Culture." 171.

31 Hardesty, Donald L. "Ethnographic Landscapes: Transforming Nature into Culture." 174.

32 Hardesty, Donald L. "Ethnographic Landscapes: Transforming Nature into Culture." 174-75.



FIGURE –9. Photo of a piñata is seen hanging from a tree in Brackenridge Park during the Easter celebration, 2019. Source: Edward A. Ornelas, *San Antonio Express-News*



FIGURE –10. Photo of a man barbecuing ribs during the Easter celebration in Brackenridge park, 2019. Source: Edward A. Ornelas, *San Antonio Express-News*

URBAN CULTURAL PARK SYSTEMS AND NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS

A cultural landscape is a *single* landscape classification that may embody several landscape typologies. There are also cultural landscape *systems*. In 1981, at the same time as the early NPS work defining cultural landscapes, the New York State legislature sought to establish an ***urban cultural park system*** that would create a partnership between the state government, local governments, and private communities.

The partnership parks were to fulfill four goals.... Preservation of historic settings, natural features, and unique character; Education of residents and visitors about the locale’s history, contribution to New York State’s cultural and the relationship to current life; Recreational use for active and passive enjoyment; and Economic Development through private investment in adaptive reuse, interpretive attractions and other special activities.³³

An ***urban cultural park system*** is defined as a “designated historical area in a community which has been revitalized to interpret the community’s role in the cultural development of the region and state.”³⁴

Brackenridge Park is not designated as part of a larger system or network of cultural landscapes, and it has not yet undergone this type of revitalization. But through preservation projects that will be implemented, including interpretation of the site, it contains the possibility to become part of a premier *urban cultural park system*.

The landscape that comprises Brackenridge Park is distinctive in the state of Texas, the nation, and even the world because of the relationship between its natural ecology and cultural history.

To reiterate, the landscape contains numerous stories, including the following:

- Prehistoric and historic life, recorded in and near the park through the investigation of sixteen prehistoric and historic archaeological sites,³⁵ including rare but real evidence of human and mammoth interaction documented along the San Antonio River (circa 9200 BCE – 1500 CE)³⁶
- Indigenous occupancy and rituals with the river and sacred springs (circa 1000 CE – 1530s)
- Mexican heritage from early human occupancy and development that continues to imprint the site today (circa 1000 CE – present)
- Spanish exploration and religious conversions in the Americas, notably defined by the five San Antonio missions, today comprising a UNESCO World Heritage Site (1535 – 1718)
- Spanish colonization of the northernmost lands of Mexico, before Texas achieved independence as a country (1718)

33 Jeanne S. Fagan, “New York State Urban Cultural Park System” (master’s thesis, Rochester Institute of Technology, 1992), accessed October 7, 2019, scholarworks.rit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=5977&context=theses.

34 Fagan, “New York State Urban Cultural Park System.”

35 Clinton M. M. McKenzie with C. Stephen Smith, *Archaeological Investigations of the Alamo Dam and Upper Labor Dam, Brackenridge Park, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas*, archaeological report, no. 444 (San Antonio: Center for Archaeological Research, University of Texas at San Antonio, 2017).

36 Stephen M. Carpenter et al., “The San Antonio River Mammoth Site: Archaeological Testing Investigations for the Interstate 37 Bridge at the San Antonio River Improvement Project, Bexar County, Texas. Texas Antiquities Permit 4531” (Austin, TX: SWCA Environmental Consultants, 2013), 111.

- Early agricultural practices in the Americas and how humans have engineered land and water from the very beginning, defined by the city’s systems of Spanish acequias that originated in the park and of which remnants remain (1724)
- Industrial development in San Antonio after Texas entered statehood, including the presence of a Civil War tannery and sawmill where enslaved people labored (1863) and, later, a quarry and cement factory by which workers built up the city with their hands (1850s – 1880)
- European immigration into the United States, with the arrival of Germans to San Antonio (1847–1861)
- Brackenridge Park as a park, which is written on the landscape (1899 – present)

Hidden in plain sight and buried beneath the ground, this entire developmental evolution is etched in the Brackenridge Park landscape.

In 1984, four years after the state of New York envisioned its urban cultural park system, Congress signed into law, with leadership from the NPS, its first designation of a National Heritage Area, which has a strikingly similar description to an urban cultural park system. National Heritage Areas (NHAs) are

places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form cohesive, nationally important landscapes. Through their resources, NHAs tell nationally important stories that celebrate our nation’s diverse heritage. NHAs are lived-in landscapes. Consequently, NHA entities collaborate with communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.

NHAs are a grassroots, community-driven approach to heritage conservation and economic development. Through public-private partnerships, NHA entities support historic preservation, natural resource conservation, recreation, heritage tourism, and educational projects.³⁷

So long as the landscape is “lived-in,” the congressional designation of an NHA may occur in urban, rural, or wilderness areas. San Antonio would be an urban expression of an NHA, were it to receive the designation. Brackenridge Park, with other parks and historic sites in the city, contains the vast potential to become part of a premier urban cultural park system and to become an NHA. Intentional linkages between parks and historic sites that occur along the water—connecting Olmos Basin, Brackenridge Park, the San Antonio River Walk, the Alamo, San Pedro Springs Park, Confluence Park, the San Antonio Mission Park, and other sites—would illuminate the relationship between the city’s natural hydrology and its cultural development. These sites all boast versions of the same history: twelve thousand years of documented occupancy that emerged along San Antonio’s network of rivers, creeks, and springs; it is a *shared history*, although locals and visitors do not yet experience it as such.

³⁷ “What is a National Heritage Area?,” National Park Service, accessed June 2, 2019, [nps.gov/articles/what-is-a-national-heritage-area.htm](https://www.nps.gov/articles/what-is-a-national-heritage-area.htm).



FIGURE –11. An 1894 plan of Boston’s Emerald Necklace by Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot. Boston Commons is highlighted at lower right. Source: Charles E. Beveridge and Paul Rocheleau, *Frederic Law Olmsted: Designing the American Landscape*

There are currently fifty-five NHAs in the country, and some are in urban settings. For instance, the Baltimore NHA includes neighborhoods, waterfront, and portions of the city’s park system that can be experienced as part of a 3.2-mile-loop Heritage Walk. Its website states that “the city’s oldest urban trail leads visitors through three distinct areas of Baltimore: the Inner Harbor, Little Italy, and historic Jonestown,”³⁸ and it lists several cultural institutions and landmarks that the route passes by. But none of the urban NHAs represent or are distinctly tied to a cohesive, deliberately linked urban cultural park system.

A landscape-driven, congressionally designated heritage area in an urban context that visibly demonstrates, through a connected network of interpreted park spaces, the basic fact of early human settlement patterns along water, would be precedent-setting.

A LINKED PARK SYSTEM PRECEDENT FOR BRACKENRIDGE PARK

Though it is not a congressionally designated NHA, Boston’s Emerald Necklace is the most important urban cultural park system precedent for the city of San Antonio. Like Central Park, the Emerald Necklace is also an Olmsted design, but because it is an entire system, it is more expansive. Devised later in Olmsted’s career, between 1878 and 1895, the Emerald Necklace is a 1,100-acre chain of parks that traverses Boston and Brookline and

consists of five parks: the Back Bay Fens, the Muddy River Improvement (later named Olmsted Park and the Riverway), Jamaica Pond, the Arnold Arboretum and West Roxbury Park (later named Franklin Park). The parks were linked by a network of parkways resulting in a comprehensive system of water, meadows and woodland measuring five miles in length. The Necklace was one of the largest projects ever undertaken by the City of Boston or the Town of Brookline.³⁹

³⁸ “Tours and Trails Heritage Walk,” Baltimore National Heritage Area, explorebaltimore.org/tours/heritage-walk.

³⁹ “Emerald Necklace,” The Cultural Landscape Foundation, tclf.org/landscapes/emerald-necklace.

Boston's Emerald Necklace was a designed response to drainage and health issues related to the presence of water. The chain of parks began in an area of mud flats, salt marshes, and streams, and it connected to the Charles River as well. Also worth noting is that when Olmsted began designing parkways to link the parks, he began with a connection to America's first public park, Boston Common⁴⁰ (**figure 11**).

SAN ANTONIO'S URBAN CULTURAL PARK SYSTEM

In San Antonio, an *urban cultural park system* has developed organically, not as a response to drainage and health issues—although they certainly arose as the city developed—but as an expression of the natural pattern of early settlement along water. The city's oldest public parks, green spaces, and historic sites emerged along the city's network of springs, creeks, and the San Antonio River corridor.

A complex of natural artesian springs and seeps in San Antonio originate from the Edwards Aquifer, "one of the most prolific artesian aquifers in the world,"⁴¹ spanning eight thousand square miles and including "all or part of 13 counties in south-central Texas."⁴² This aquifer feeds "two parallel-running water courses, San Pedro Creek and the San Antonio River"⁴³ in San Antonio. San Pedro Spring is the origin of San Pedro Creek, and these springs are located in San Pedro Park. San Antonio Spring—or the Blue Hole, mentioned early in this introduction—is located above Brackenridge Park.

Within San Antonio, Brackenridge Park is preceded only by the forty-six-acre San Pedro Springs Park, which was declared public land in 1729 and is the oldest park in Texas and second-oldest park in the nation, after Boston Common.⁴⁴ Just as Boston Common is the beginning of the Emerald Necklace, San Pedro Springs Park, a smaller and primarily recreational park, is an important predecessor and partner to Brackenridge Park.

Above each of these major spring sources is the Olmos Basin, from which Olmos Creek flows. Olmos Creek is also fed by springs from the aquifer, and Olmos Creek and San Pedro Creek both feed into the San Antonio River. The city's system of missions, historic acequias, and dams; the River Walk; and public green spaces are all part of the intricate network of water. Today, viewed as a whole, the city possesses the physical framework of a vernacular urban cultural park system.

40 "San Pedro Springs Park," City of San Antonio, accessed September 30, 2019, sanantonio.gov/ParksAndRec/Parks-Facilities/All-Parks-Facilities/Parks-Facilities-Details/ArtMID/14820/ArticleID/2504/San-Pedro-Springs-Park/Park/216.

41 Gregg Eckhardt, "Hydrology of the Edwards Aquifer," Edwards Aquifer, accessed June 03, 2019, edwardsaquifer.net/geology.html.

42 SAWS, "About the Edwards Aquifer," San Antonio Water System, accessed June 3, 2019, saws.org/your-water/new-water-sources/current-water-supply-projects/edwards-aquifer/about-the-edwards-aquifer/.

43 Porter Jr., Spanish Water, Anglo Water, 10.

44 "San Pedro Springs Park," City of San Antonio, accessed September 30, 2019, sanantonio.gov/ParksAndRec/Parks-Facilities/All-Parks-Facilities/Parks-Facilities-Details/ArtMID/14820/ArticleID/2504/San-Pedro-Springs-Park/Park/216.

ENVISIONING BRACKENRIDGE PARK AS PART OF A NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

Brackenridge Park, with other parks and historic sites in San Antonio, contains the vast potential to become part of a National Heritage Area that is a premier *urban cultural park system*. Intentional linkages between parks and historic sites that occur along the water—connecting Olmos Basin, Brackenridge Park, the San Antonio River Walk, the Alamo, San Pedro Springs Park, Confluence Park, the San Antonio Mission Park, and other sites—would illuminate the relationship between the city’s natural hydrology and its cultural development (**figure 12**). These sites can be linked in such a way that the city’s hydrologic connections are made evident. These sites all boast versions of the same history: 12,000 years of documented occupancy that emerged along San Antonio’s network of rivers, creeks, and springs; it is a *shared history*, though locals and visitors do not yet experience it as such.

NHA designation of this kind is an avenue toward financial sustainability for San Antonio’s public land resources and cultural institutions. It would stitch together and make visible San Antonio’s larger significance as an American city. A landscape-driven Congressionally designated heritage area in an urban context that visibly demonstrates, through a designed connected network of interpreted park spaces, that demonstrates the basic fact of early human settlement patterns along water would be precedent-setting.

In March 2017, Charles Birnbaum, a national expert on cultural and historic landscapes and founder and CEO of TCLF, stated, “I don’t think there is another municipal park in America that can boast 11,000 years of history in one place.”⁴⁵ At this writing, that estimate is twelve thousand years of history, based on more recent archaeological discoveries. Birnbaum also asserted what many San Antonians intuitively sense—that “the story of San Antonio is the story of water. The Missions and Brackenridge Park are places connected by water.”⁴⁶ Finally, he articulated a broad vision for Brackenridge Park: to “become part of a National Heritage Area, encompassing the San Antonio River to the missions.”⁴⁷

Birnbaum is not the first landscape expert of national acclaim to recognize San Antonio’s cultural heritage and the remarkable importance of the San Antonio River and its headwaters. Frederick Law Olmsted visited San Antonio in 1853. In 1857, the same year he designed Central Park with Vaux, Olmsted’s remarks about his experiences in San Antonio were published in *A Journey Through Texas*. Of the San Antonio River’s headwaters north of Brackenridge Park, he wrote,

The San Antonio Spring may be classed as the first water among the gems of the natural world. The whole river gushes up in one sparkling burst from the earth. It has all the beautiful accompaniments of a smaller spring, moss, pebbles, seclusion, sparkling sunbeams, and dense overhanging luxuriant foliage. The effect is overpowering. It is beyond your possible conceptions of a spring.⁴⁸

45 Nancy Cook-Monroe, “Could Brackenridge Park Become a National Heritage Area?,” in *Rivard Report* (Institute for Nonprofit News, March 6, 2017), accessed June 3, 2019. therivardreport.com/could-brackenridge-park-become-a-national-heritage-area/.

46 Cook-Monroe, “Could Brackenridge Park Become a National Heritage Area?”

47 Cook-Monroe, “Could Brackenridge Park Become a National Heritage Area?”

48 Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey Through Texas* (New York: Dix Edwards, 1857), 156-57.

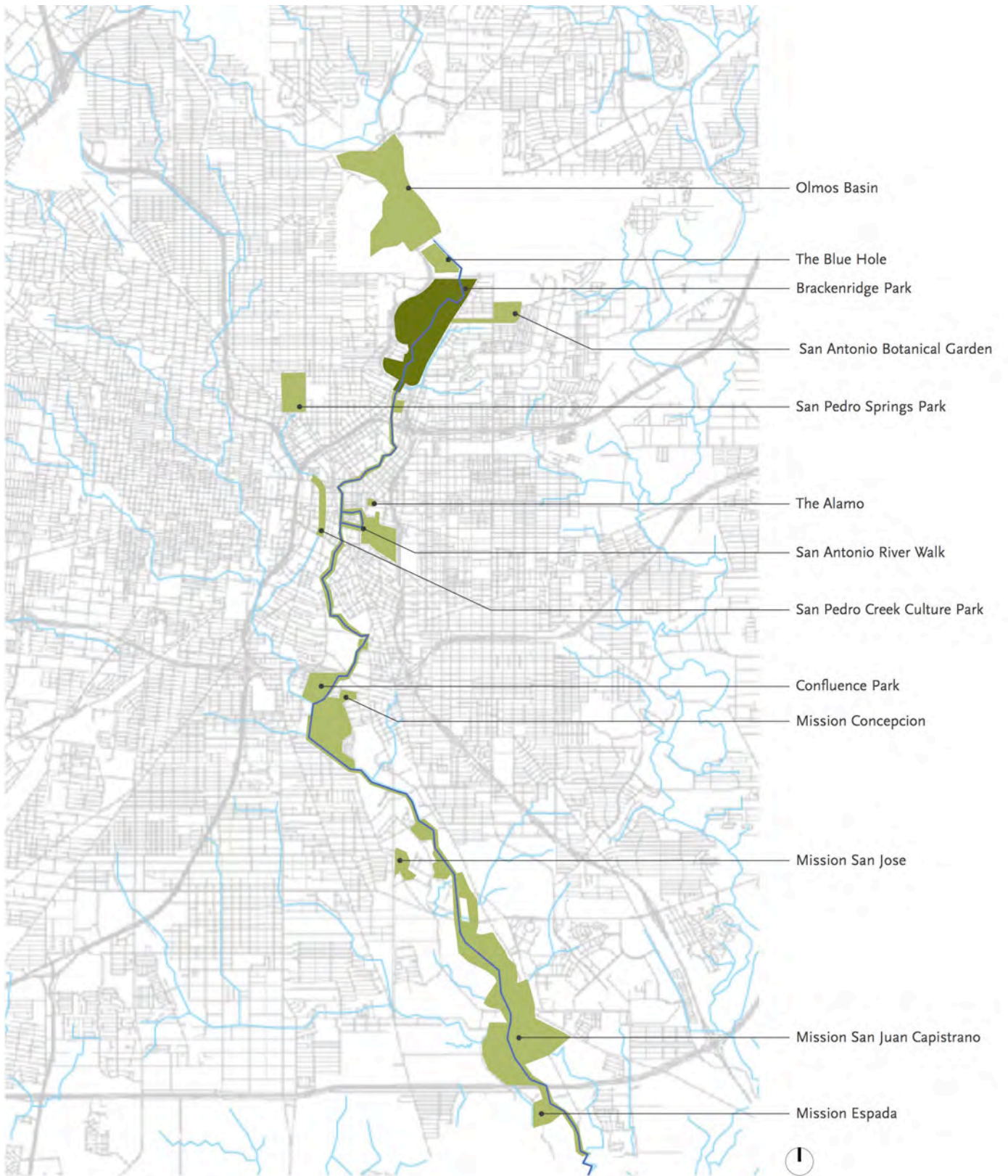


FIGURE –12. A map shows the potential National Heritage Area along the San Antonio River and associated spring and stream system. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

CULTURAL PARK SYSTEM

Of the historic acequias that have origins on the site of Brackenridge Park, Olmsted wrote,

The system of aqueducts, for artificial irrigation, extends for many miles around San Antonio, and affords some justification for the Mexican tradition, that the town, not long ago, contained a very much larger population. Most of these lived by agriculture.... These water-courses still retain their old Spanish name, 'acequias.' A large part of them are abandoned, but in the immediate neighborhood of the city they are still in use, so that every garden-patch may be flowed at will.⁴⁹

More than 160 years separate Birnbaum's recognition of the San Antonio River as, in effect, the birthplace of San Antonio from Olmsted's marvel over the San Antonio Springs and the city's acequia system. But they affirm Brackenridge Park's significance on a national and international scale.

Brackenridge Park is homegrown, with unique features that were creatively conceived and added both opportunistically and in response to the site's ecology, resulting in excellent places and spaces of vernacular design quality. This organic "quilt" of uses and structures has resulted in a physical manifestation of the history of San Antonio and its relationship to the river, from the landscape's initial beginnings to today. With its exceptional regional vernacular response to a complex ecology, it *should be* nothing short of a premier, sought-out cultural landscape. But there is work to be done.

⁴⁹ Olmsted, *Journey Through Texas*, 150-51.

INTRODUCTION PART 2

BRACKENRIDGE PARK CLR OVERVIEW AND OUTCOMES

OVERVIEW

CURRENT MANAGEMENT

Brackenridge Park is owned by the city of San Antonio, and three entities contribute to its oversight, management, and stewardship: the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, the San Antonio River Authority (SARA), and the Brackenridge Park Conservancy (BPC). The San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, previously under the direction of Xavier Urrutia (from January 2009 – July 2018), and currently headed by Homer Garcia on an interim basis, is responsible for maintaining the park, along with approximately 240 other parks that it maintains throughout the city.¹ SARA, created in 1937 and currently under the management of Suzanne Scott and governed by an elected board of directors, is responsible for “developing and conserving” the San Antonio River.² SARA, therefore, is instrumental in protecting the park’s ecological resources and improving the water quality of the San Antonio River, which runs through the park. The BPC, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization directed by Lynn Osborne Bobbitt and governed by a volunteer board of directors, acts as the park’s primary preservation steward and advocate. The BPC was formed in September 2008, and its founding board was elected in February 2009.³

Prior to the BPC’s formation, the San Antonio Conservation Society “played an active role in the park’s preservation,” serving as its steward since its founding in 1924. In the early 2000s, the conservation society formed a Brackenridge Park committee and engaged Elizabeth Barlow Rogers to prepare a white paper “about the creation of an organization

1 “About Our Parks,” San Antonio Parks and Recreation, City of San Antonio, accessed June 6, 2019, sanantonio.gov/ParksAndRec/About-Mission/About-Us.

2 “About San Antonio River Authority,” San Antonio River Authority, accessed June 6, 2019, sara-tx.org/about.

3 “Brackenridge Park Mission and History,” Brackenridge Park Conservancy, brackenridgepark.org/about/mission-history.

dedicated solely to the protection of Brackenridge Park.”⁴ Rogers, a San Antonio native, was instrumental in founding the Central Park Conservancy in the 1980s, and she served as the first Central Park administrator. The BPC originated following Rogers’s commissioned white paper.

Working closely with the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, the BPC “raises funds for projects that benefit the park, implements park-based programs and projects, advises City staff and City Council, supports the evolution and implementation of plans for the park, and acts as a forum for users to address common issues and build consensus.”⁵

The BPC is the primary client for this CLR. SARA is the primary client for the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center’s Ecological Site Assessment that informs components of this CLR and addresses the site’s ecology in greater depth. Both entities are working in close partnership, along with the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, to ensure the outcomes of the CLR process.

PROJECT/GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT AND SITE BOUNDARIES

San Antonio’s Brackenridge Park is in the geographic region referred to as South Texas. “The region is bordered by the Edwards Plateau to the north...the Gulf of Mexico coastline” to the southeast, “and the Lower Pecos region to the west.”⁶ The major metropolitan Houston area is east of Bexar County and San Antonio. San Antonio is at the base of the Balcones Escarpment” fault line “of the Edwards Plateau.”⁷ The plateau is the southernmost unit of the Great Plains. The site is a transitional zone. The convergence of these geographic regions results in a dividing line between the “humid subtropical East and Gulf Coast Texas and semiarid Central and West Texas.”⁸ This dividing line does not mean that San Antonio has a balanced, temperate climate. Rather, “In one year, San Antonio may experience desert-like conditions and in the next year receive a deluge of precipitation”⁹ (**figure 13**).

Major drainages associated with Brackenridge Park are the Olmos Creek Basin located north of the park, the headwaters of the San Antonio River, south of Olmos Creek Basin and north of the park on property owned by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, the San Antonio River, and several small springs in proximity to the river.¹⁰ The park is situated north of downtown San Antonio, and it is the starting point for a series of cultural and historic sites that dot the San Antonio River and associated spring systems (**figure-14**).

In its entirety, Brackenridge Park occupies 343 acres. This acreage includes the Witte Museum, San Antonio Zoo, Brackenridge Park Golf Course, and the area occupied by

4 “Brackenridge Park Mission and History,” Brackenridge Park Conservancy.

5 “Brackenridge Park Mission and History,” Brackenridge Park Conservancy.

6 Kristi M. Ulrich. “Archaeological Services Associated with Improvements to Miraflores at Brackenridge Park, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.” Archaeological Report, No. 387. Texas Antiquities Permit No. 4653. San Antonio, TX: Center for Archeological Research. The University of Texas at San Antonio. 2008. From Norwine 1995 138.

7 Ulrich, Kristi M. “Archaeological Services Associated with Improvements to Miraflores at Brackenridge Park, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.” 2008. 1.

8 Porter, Charles R. Jr. *Spanish Water, Anglo Water: Early Development in San Antonio*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2009. 3.

9 Porter, Charles R. Jr. *Spanish Water, Anglo Water: Early Development in San Antonio*. Quoting Miller 21.

10 Ulrich, Kristi M. “Archaeological Services Associated with Improvements to Miraflores at Brackenridge Park, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.” 2008. 1.



FIGURE –13. A map shows the geographic context of Brackenridge Park within South Texas. A portion of the Houston metropolitan area can be seen in the upper right. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

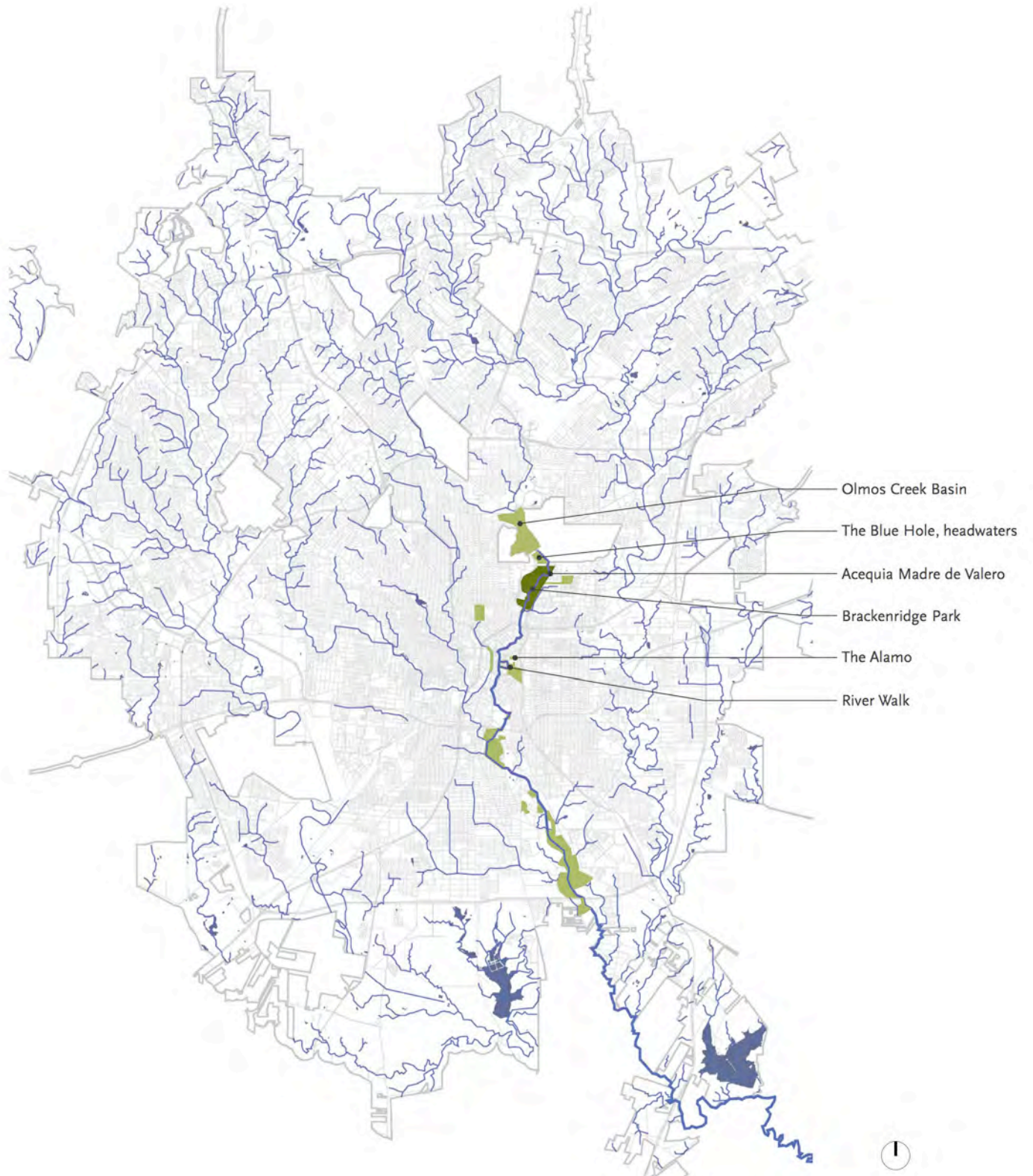


FIGURE -14. Major drainages associated with Brackenridge Park. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

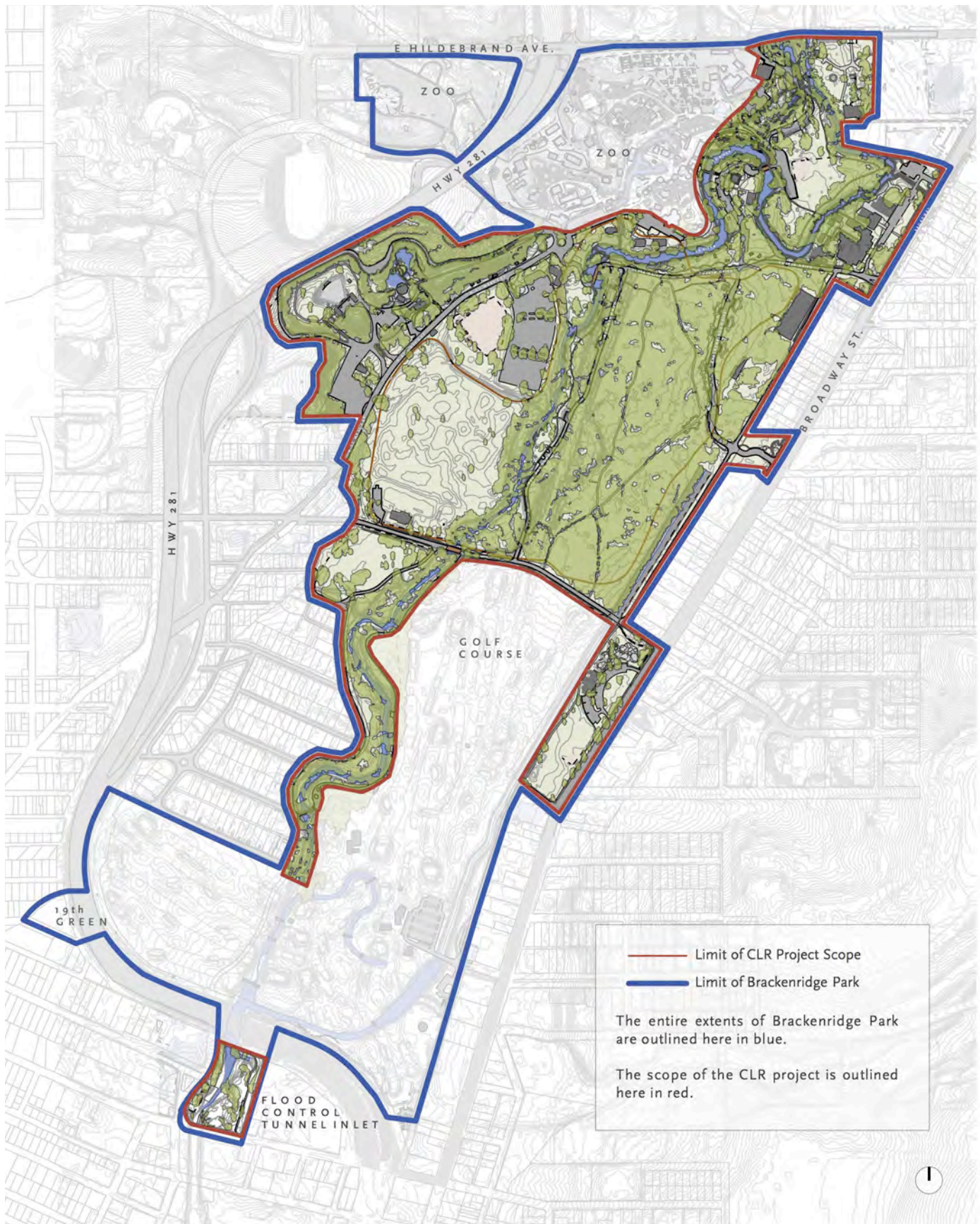


FIGURE –15. A Brackenridge Park Project Boundary map shows limits of the CLR study and the overall park, which differ. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

the Driving Range and the First Tee charitable organization, which was one of George Brackenridge's last land donations to the city (1917).

The zoo and golf course are not within the project bounds of this CLR. The Brackenridge Park CLR focuses primarily on the expansive open space through which the San Antonio River flows—in a sense, it is a study of the connective thread between the Witte Museum, the golf course, and the zoo. Therefore, although the latter two are not addressed at length, these cultural institutions are included in the timeline and mentioned in the site history and are represented in various diagrams and maps throughout this report. In **figure 15**, the bounds of this project are outlined in red, with the bounds of the entire park outlined in blue. In developing the Treatment Plan, the park's preservation and future development is considered as a whole, as it is impossible to physically, factually, and culturally extract these historic institutions from the park's history.

METHODOLOGY

The process used by the landscape architectural historians, landscape architects, and ecologists working on this CLR is based on methods prescribed by the Historic Landscape Initiative of the National Park Service (NPS). It was adapted to include a greater focus on the site ecology.

The level of investigation in this CLR responded to a combination of opportunities, limitations, and a series of deliberate decisions. The amount of material and local knowledge available to the researchers presented an opportunity. But although there was a bounty of information, time was a major limitation. It is not unusual for a CLR to be completed over the span of two to four years—this project spanned eighteenth months. Another limitation existed in the amount of available research related to the park during the Civil War and, in particular, of information about the enslaved who labored on the site.

With a site that has such a long and complex history, narrating and illustrating its stories becomes a series of choices. Tracing cultural influences and sifting through research to understand geophysical forces such as the Balcones Escarpment; the megafauna that once inhabited the area; the site's relationship to the regional Edwards Aquifer; a complex system of historic acequias and dams; and more recent engineering interventions, such as the Tunnel Inlet, one of the world's largest drainage diversion tunnels at the southern end of the site, can seem like a daunting task for cultural landscape historians. Determining what is relevant and important, what connections should be made for the reader, what depth of information should be provided, and what to leave out as well as finding a way to provide an objective outsider's view into the site in balance with local experts—these are always the challenges and opportunities.

The CLR process included seven steps. These steps are listed below and then discussed in greater detail:

1. Project Kickoff and Initial Site Reconnaissance
2. Wildflower Center Ecological Site Assessment
3. Historical Research and Ongoing Site Reconnaissance
4. Documentation of Existing Conditions
5. Site Context and History
6. Analysis and Evaluation
7. Development of a Treatment Plan

1. PROJECT KICKOFF AND INITIAL SITE RECONNAISSANCE

A project kickoff meeting was held on June 19, 2018. During this meeting, the CLR consultants, including John Grove and Christina Sohn of Reed Hilderbrand, John Welch and Herpreet Singh of Suzanne Turner Associates (STA), and Matt O’Toole and Adam Barbe of the Wildflower Center, presented an overview of the process for conducting a CLR and an Ecological Site Assessment (ESA). The team met the clients, including representatives from the BPC, SARA, and San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department. The consultant team also met stakeholders who represented various institutions, organizations, and academic and professional disciplines, including BPC board members, local historians, archaeologists, hydrology experts, landscape architects, architects, engineers, and others. During an extensive tour of Brackenridge Park, the consultant team photographed the park and listened to stakeholders. Thus the team was introduced to the complexity of the site, challenges of the physical landscape, conditions of the historic fabric, previous and existing plans related to the site, and current projects planned or underway.

Site reconnaissance also included an evaluation of several key documents related to the site, including the Brackenridge Park National Register Nomination Form (2011) and the Brackenridge Park Master Plan (2017). The goals of the adopted Master Plan follow:

1. Improving water quality/restoring natural features
2. Restoring and preserving cultural and historical features
3. Studying circulation as a cultural resource

These goals were carefully considered throughout the development of the CLR.

2. WILDFLOWER CENTER ECOLOGICAL SITE ASSESSMENT

Michelle Bertelsen and Adam Barbe of the Wildflower Center conducted an ESA of Brackenridge Park from July 30 to July 31, 2018. Bertelsen assessed the findings and authored the ESA, which provides an overview of existing plant communities, soil surface condition, analysis of site drainage, and the relationship of the site to the surrounding area. It examines current conditions and identifies opportunities to improve the overall ecological health of the site and to improve the resilience of natural plant communities and hydrologic function. The final ESA brings together multiple aspects of ecology (soils, vegetation, and hydrology) with consideration of human use of the landscape, cultural resources, and maintenance parameters.

3. HISTORICAL RESEARCH AND ONGOING SITE RECONNAISSANCE

Historical research and ongoing site reconnaissance included an additional site visit and the collection of electronic resources. From November 12 to 16, STA visited the park to meet and speak with Marise McDermott, president and CEO of the Witte Museum; and with representatives from the San Antonio Zoo, including Chris Vanskike, vice president of operations, and Ben Barton, director of maintenance and construction for the San Antonio Zoo. STA also toured these institutions. Later, STA toured and photographed areas of Brackenridge Park and its surroundings for a second time, including visits to Flood Control Inlet Park, Miraflores Gardens, exposed portions of the Acequia Madre de Valero (on Witte Museum property), exposed portions of the Upper Labor acequia (located in the zoo), and the San Antonio Spring, or Blue Hole” just north of the park. During this visit, STA interviewed or met with historians Maria Pfeiffer and Lewis Fisher, archaeologist Clinton McKenzie, engineer and former general manager of SARA Fred Pfeiffer, and landscape architect Everett Fly.

The researchers also met with Bill Pennell, assistant manager of the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, to cull through its extensive archives of park plans and with librarian Beth Standiford of the San Antonio Conservation Society. STA reviewed Ms. Pfeiffer’s collection of research and news clippings related to Brackenridge Park, preliminarily reviewed the Witte Museum’s archival collection with chief curator Amy Fulkerson, and met with Pamela Ball, executive director of the University of Incarnate Word, to investigate the location of George Brackenridge’s library collection.

Working remotely, STA consulted with environmental scientist Gregg Eckhardt. STA also obtained an extensive collection of books, articles, and historic news clippings relevant to the occupation, evolution, and development of the Brackenridge Park landscape. Historic photographs were collected with the help of Ms. Pfeiffer, Ms. Fulkerson, and Mr. Fisher, as well as through online repositories. Aerial photographs were also obtained from USGS repositories and USDA National Archives.

4. DOCUMENTATION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The documentation of Brackenridge Park’s existing conditions is based on a combination of site visits, field notes, and photographs; the conditions are presented through ecological and cultural lenses, and they are addressed at varying scales.

From July 30 to 31, 2018, the Wildflower Center visited the park to conduct the ESA, which included “an overview of existing plant communities, soil surface condition, analysis of site drainage and relationship of the site to the surrounding area”¹¹ with a focus on understanding the site’s current ecological conditions. STA used the National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form as a guide for determining which cultural features should be assessed as part of the existing conditions.

Between February 25 and 26, Reed Hilderbrand visited the site to assess existing conditions. They focused on collecting photographs and assessing larger site systems of circulation, vegetation, character, and use as well as the relationships between these larger components.

¹¹ Michelle Bertelsen. “Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment.” (San Antonio, TX: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas at Austin, 2019), 5.

Reed Hilderbrand met with Ms. Pfeiffer to review historic images and plans and with Mr. Pfeiffer to discuss the Flood Control Tunnel Inlet. Mr. Pennell, of the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, shared current practices for site care, maintenance, and use. Reed Hilderbrand walked the site with Eckhardt to understand the hydrology system on site: its artesian wells, acequias, tunnels, and pumps.

Site Mapping

Site mapping of existing conditions was created using a combination of sources; site contours, aerial images, and a detailed survey of a northern section of the park were provided by the San Antonio River Authority. The remaining site linework was created using a CAD file provided by Jay Loudon, principal at Workshop, who shared information compiled during the 2017 master planning process.

5. SITE CONTEXT AND HISTORY

STA began compiling a comprehensive timeline for Brackenridge Park following the project kickoff. This timeline was essentially completed over the course of six months, between June and December 2018. It continued to evolve throughout the process, however, as new information was discovered or as analysis revealed that certain contexts or events were relevant that may not have been thought relevant during earlier phases of the CLR work.

Using the initial timeline as a measure, STA determined the most critical narratives related to the site:

- Stories of humans and hydrology, including the park’s ecological transformation over time and interpretation of future projects that aim to restore riparian health
- Prehistoric and historic life, including hidden and difficult cultural histories, such as those of Indigenous people, the enslaved, and early Mexican occupants
- Regional vernacular character, including the river as the park’s form-defining element, early vehicular circulation in the park, cultural access to the river, and regional art and craftsmanship
- Cultural layering that has contributed to the park’s physical and ritual development, with intentional focus on historic ties to San Antonio’s Indigenous people, the enslaved and their descendants, and the Mexican American community

These narratives became the framework for determining which broad contexts should be elaborated on in the CLR in order to help readers understand Brackenridge Park’s development over time in relationship to national and local events and movements.

The timeline also helped the consultants understand the major periods of occupation and development of the site and determine which of these should be considered periods of significance. With these periods defined, STA began to draft the site history—a chronological narrative detailing the site’s most transformative and meaningful changes.

The timeline, in conjunction with historical aerial photographs and plans, informed Reed Hilderbrand's work developing period plans. These plans—created by comparing historical maps dated 1908, 1921, and 1929—clearly and concisely illustrate the evolution of the park, enabling users to make important comparisons and draw relationships between the park and its key narratives.

6. ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

Evaluating the timeline, contexts, site history, and period plans alongside the existing conditions and the Wildflower Center's ESA, the team analyzed the overall cultural significance of the landscape. A Statement of Significance was formulated and is included in this introduction and in the analysis chapter. With an understanding of how the site is culturally and historically significant, the team formulated a Determination of Integrity—an assessment of the site's physical fabric and whether the landscape and its components maintain historical integrity that makes visible its cultural and historical significance. The Determination of Integrity is also included in this introduction and in the analysis chapter.

7. DEVELOPMENT OF A TREATMENT PLAN

On August 13, 2019, the consultant team met with the clients at the BPC. During a one-day Treatment charette, fourteen stakeholders articulated goals and dreams for Brackenridge Park. The consultant team asked the stakeholders to share what they consider to be sacred at Brackenridge Park and what they consider to be character-defining in the park. The following day, the team met and began to develop a framework for Treatment.

CLR OUTCOMES

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Brackenridge Park landscape is highly significant due to multiple periods of its development, at the national, state, and local levels. At the national level, it is significant on five fronts. First, the site's complicated evolution of water diversion for the provision of public water, agriculture, and flood control represents one of the first municipal water systems in the country and a broad pattern of the country's history of managing water as a resource. The initial system of acequias, built by Indigenous laborers, successfully provided public access to water beginning in 1719, and a more recent tunnel inlet system located at the base of the park continues to manage river flow and flood control today. (NPS Criterion A)

A second aspect of national significance is that Brackenridge Park is likely to yield archaeological information from prehistory, protohistory, and history—this single landscape possesses the ability to tell a contiguous story of occupancy and development from the prehistoric to historic periods. Although much of the park has not yet been examined, archaeological surveys have been conducted at Brackenridge Park. Each survey has yielded artifacts and information related to multiple periods of occupation and development. It is extremely likely that future research will yield additional prehistoric, protohistoric, and historic information, including evidence of Indigenous people, the enslaved, and the early Mexican population. Properties both north and south of Brackenridge along the San Antonio River have yielded paleontological artifacts; it is highly probable that site exploration at Brackenridge would yield similar artifacts. (NPS Criterion D)

A third aspect of national significance, as well as state and local significance, is the park's regional vernacular development and character as an early urban municipal park. This character is exemplified by an extensive collection of vernacular regional features, including a historic system of roads in the park that dates to the early 1900s, a network of pedestrian bridges, rock house architecture, rock house retaining walls, and other vernacular objects, structures, buildings, and built landscape works, such as low-water crossings that enabled carriages and vehicles to directly cross the San Antonio River in an immersive manner. As a regional vernacular park that emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth century and on the heels of the highly designed Central Park, Brackenridge Park represents the other end of the municipal park spectrum. (NPS Criterion C)

The landscape is also nationally significant as a result of numerous sculptures located in the park. These were designed by Mexican-born artist Dionicio Rodriguez and by Italian-born artist Pompeo Coppini. (NPS Criterion C)

Finally, the twentieth-century Easter tradition that is known to have emerged after World War II, and possibly as early as the 1930s, had evolved to an annual picnic and tent tradition and was widely associated with San Antonio's Mexican American community by the 1950s.¹² The tradition has spread to parks throughout the city as it has taken root. This recurring ethnographic event is significant at the national, state, and local levels because it conveys a broad pattern of ethnic migration and settlement. It is a newer cultural tradition and ritual that has symbolically imbued Brackenridge Park. (NPS Criterion A)

Brackenridge Park is significant at the state and local levels for its association with George W. Brackenridge, who was a cotton broker and banker before he traveled the state of Texas to conduct business and philanthropic work. He made major contributions in Austin, through his work as a University of Texas board member, and in Seguin, Texas, where he helped establish Guadalupe College for African Americans. Brackenridge was especially active in San Antonio, where, to give two examples, he donated the initial 199 acres for Brackenridge Park and established the San Antonio Water Works Company. His vision for Brackenridge Park was its first vernacular imprint. (NPS Criterion B)

Considered holistically for its archaeological, hydrologic, regional vernacular, artistic, and ethnographic evolution and development, the Brackenridge Park landscape possesses national, state, and local significance—and likely even international significance.

DETERMINATION OF INTEGRITY

A significant span of Brackenridge Park's history precedes its development as a park. Its archaeological heritage contains clear evidence of the prehistoric and historic continuum of the site. Although the archaeological resources are not visible throughout, they are largely undisturbed, and the entire park can be considered an archaeological site. Disturbance has been associated with construction of the Confederate tannery and, later, the Alamo Portland Cement site, the development of the San Antonio Zoo and the Brackenridge Park Golf Course, and foundations for buildings throughout the site. Disturbance has primarily not been at depths that would destroy the prehistoric archaeological fabric and record, however.

¹² "Park and Zoo Draw Huge Crowd." *San Antonio Express*, B-1. April 10, 1950, Newspaperarchives.com.

Because the archaeological resources are largely intact but not visible or easily understood, the archaeological integrity ranges from high to medium.

Brackenridge Park was first designated as a municipal park after George Brackenridge's original 1899 donation of 199 acres, and additional bequests and purchases over the next two decades completed the 343-acre park that now exists. The various regional vernacular components that were constructed during the park's first five decades (1899–1949) are clearly visible and remain largely intact, however, they are not completely understood as significant.

The only major change in park boundaries occurred between the late 1960s and late 1970s, when federal dollars were widely distributed throughout the country to improve and expand infrastructure investments that involved the automobile and trucking industries. One of these investments was the expansion of the interstate highway system. The expansion of the McAllister Freeway, which opened in 1978, carved off a slice of the park on the north side adjacent to the Sunken Garden Theater and the Japanese Tea Garden.

Taken as a whole, the significant components of the Brackenridge Park cultural landscape retain a high level of integrity in terms of physical intactness but a medium-to-low level of integrity in terms of the way their significance is visible and understood by the public.

TREATMENT APPROACHES

The NPS uses the term *Treatment* to describe the management plan that results from CLR analysis of a landscape's historical context, site history, existing conditions, significance, and integrity. Treatment is the work carried out to achieve a cultural landscape's long-term preservation goals—in effect, it is an *action plan*.

The NPS prescribes four treatment approaches:

Preservation requires “retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric, including historic form, features, and details as they have evolved over time.”

Rehabilitation “acknowledges the need to alter or add to a cultural landscape to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the landscape's historic character.”

Restoration allows for “the depiction of a landscape at a particular time in its history by preserving materials from the period of significance and removing materials from other periods.”

Reconstruction establishes a framework for “recreating a vanished or non-surviving landscape with new materials, primarily for interpretive purposes.¹³

¹³ *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, DC, 1993.

Alongside recommendations that correspond to the Secretary of the Interior’s approaches for treating cultural landscapes, the Brackenridge Park Treatment Plan includes recommendations developed in collaboration with the Wildflower Center for protecting and celebrating the site’s ecology through **Ecological Restoration** (*Eco-Restoration*).

Eco-Restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed.¹⁴ Eco-Restoration is typically focused on the goal of repairing the function, or health, of damaged ecosystems, but not necessarily recreating a historic ecological community. Often, Eco-Restoration is achieved through Low Impact Development (LID).

Although there is no one-to-one correlation between Eco-Restoration and the four NPS-prescribed cultural landscape treatment approaches, Eco-Restoration most closely matches the approaches of Reconstruction and Rehabilitation.

The level of integrity a cultural landscape possesses—“the ability of a property to convey its significance”—is “a primary consideration in determining treatment...of the landscape.... The level of integrity influences treatment decisions regarding what features to preserve, where to accommodate change for contemporary use, and where to reestablish missing features.”¹⁵

The NPS notes that “because of the complexity of many cultural landscapes, a primary treatment often serves as a general treatment for the entire landscape. The primary treatment is defined by the overall level of intervention and change proposed for the landscape.”¹⁶ In addition to the primary treatment, other treatment approaches or elements of other approaches may also be employed to varying degrees.

RECOMMENDED TREATMENT APPROACHES FOR BRACKENRIDGE PARK

Given Brackenridge Park’s broad-ranging significance, multiple levels of integrity, ecological importance, and current and future uses, the treatment recommendations will primarily employ a balanced mix of **Rehabilitation** and **Eco-Restoration**. Secondary treatments of **Preservation** and **Reconstruction** are recommended in certain areas of the park.

Because Brackenridge Park lacks one single period of significance—one particular time or style that should be celebrated, revealed, or preserved for the public to experience—we must look to the essential character or feeling that has resulted from its many periods of significance and attempt to celebrate and preserve that character. One can describe Brackenridge Park’s essential character as charming, quirky, surprising, patinated, layered, and containing a feeling of being handcrafted. These qualities, which have arisen from its long history, are the qualities to retain and maintain. In addition, the site contains some difficult histories as part of its layering. The very layering that contributes to the park’s unique character also presents a challenge. Brackenridge Park’s character today is disjointed, but this was not

¹⁴ “What Is Ecological Restoration?,” Society for Ecological Restoration, accessed. SER. Accessed November 22, 2019, ser-rrc.org/what-is-ecological-restoration/.

¹⁵ Robert Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports* (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Washington, DC, 1998), 101.

¹⁶ Page, Gilbert, and Dolan. *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 86.

always the case. This means that the Treatment must return a sense of cohesion to the park while thoughtfully acknowledging the multiple periods of significance and difficult histories and retaining elements of surprise and charm.

SUMMARY OF TREATMENT PRIORITIES

A NEW FRAMEWORK

Every park contains a foundational framework of systems that define and impact the landscape in a holistic manner. Some systems are constructed, and some are natural. Brackenridge Park's eight defining systems are the Archaeology (hidden bones), San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor (heart), River Structures, Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology, Entry and Arrival Areas (face), Circulation through the Park (connective tissue), Edges between Cultural Institutions, and Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art. These landscape systems form the park's foundational framework. Because the existing framework is currently suffering, the culture and ecology of the park are endangered.

This CLR's findings conclude that Brackenridge Park's leadership must create a new framework by which each system is addressed comprehensively. Interpretation is a strategy that is critical to the health and longevity of any cultural park, and it is integral to the success of a new framework. Development of a new interpreted framework will holistically examine and design solutions for the park's systems. The framework will respect preservation treatment guidelines outlined in this CLR and the planning goals defined in the Master Plan.

A SYSTEMS APPROACH: SUMMARY OF TREATMENT PRIORITIES

Brackenridge Park's leadership must invest first and foremost in a new framework, focusing initially on five of its eight systems—its river and riparian corridor, its entry and arrival areas, its circulation, its archaeology, and its interpretation, which can be thought of as the park's soul. A new framework would set a future vision for the whole park while guiding key projects and growth over time and seeing site-wide goals realized.

This systems-based approach is not only vital but also possible. Designs and plans to restore the health of each system should be approached with the mind-set that implementation will occur in phases. Likewise, a piecemeal approach to funding and isolated development within Brackenridge Park must be rejected. The needs of site systems cannot be addressed one corner or parcel at a time. That approach has only added to the site's fragmentation over time; larger site needs and more complicated fixes have been passed over as this beloved park struggles to keep up with the needs of its diverse community. This piecemeal approach has served neither the park's cultural and historic significance nor its level of integrity thus far.

The following section summarizes Treatment Plan recommendation projects that rise to the highest level of action. These projects can be embarked on with the goal of healing the five priority systems. It is essential that these projects must be thought of as part of larger systems-related design efforts. The projects concern restoring a greater level of health to the park's ecology, preserving and maintaining its distinctive "homegrown" regional vernacular character, making ecological systems and prehistory and history—the difficult *and* the endearing histories—more evident and understandable, and creating a unified and

exceptional municipal park and cultural landscape—an *immersive landscape of learning* that lives up to Brackenridge Park’s astonishing heritage.

PRIORITY SYSTEM: THE RIVER AND RIPARIAN CORRIDOR (THE HEART)

The San Antonio River, with its associated riparian corridor, has functioned as the heart of the Brackenridge landscape for millennia. But it is no longer healthy or safely accessible. Improving the river’s health is imperative. Related projects align with the key recommendations found in the Ecological Site Assessment for Brackenridge Park.

1. **Riparian Buffer Design:** Establish a riparian buffer¹⁷ along the San Antonio River to reduce and eliminate erosion and to address compaction issues resulting from stormwater runoff. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, this design should:
 - a. Set minimum and preferred buffer widths along the entire river
 - b. Integrate viewing and access points to the river
 - c. Set goals for and achieve measurable ecological improvements
 - d. Interpret buffer for the public to promote riparian education and stewardship

2. **Park-Wide Ecological Restoration:** Design a phased park-wide system of ecological management areas and Low Impact Development (LID) features.¹⁸ Fundraising for this effort can also occur in phases. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, this design should:
 - a. Establish a park-wide goal for average annual runoff capture
 - b. Be tightly integrated with the circulation system
 - c. Include strategies to manage runoff from existing and new impervious cover and set an upper limit on impervious cover within the park
 - d. Establish soil protection zones to reduce extent and severity of compaction
 - e. Utilize plantings and mowing strategies to direct traffic away from critical root zones
 - f. Include an invasive plant species management plan

This project should be phased with an initial fundraising component that includes an Ecological Transect Design.

- a. Design a transect through the park that demonstrates the full range of possibilities for stormwater management and riparian improvement.
- b. Model the impacts through an initial computer-generated model created by ecologists with an interpretive specialist.
- c. The demonstration transect can show that the health of vegetation, soils, and hydrology across the site are interdependent.
- d. Interpret the transect to the public on-site and through an education program that traces the gradual ecological impacts on the site.

¹⁷ Bertelsen, “Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment,” 25.

¹⁸ Bertelsen, “Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment,” 25.

PRIORITY SYSTEM: ENTRY AND ARRIVAL AREAS (THE PUBLIC FACE)

The park currently has no public face or physically defined presence in the community. The need exists to define the park's edge in connection with the community that surrounds it and to establish a hierarchy of park entrances. Newly defined park entry points and community-facing edges should appear to be related and should honor the park's regional vernacular character.

3. **Park Entrances Plan and Design:** Entry points should be assessed around the entire site. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, develop a design that identifies optimal entry points.
 - a. A “front door,” “side doors,” and “back door” should be located, and poorly situated entries should be decommissioned and eliminated.
 - b. Entries should be designed and improved to relate to each other, to be visible to the public, and to honor the park's regional vernacular character. Materials and aesthetics should be guided by historic and regional vernacular precedents.
 - c. The main entry to the park should respond to that area's historical significance and integrity.
 - d. External or public edges between the entries should be designed to clearly define the park's entire boundaries. The design should imply and function as a connection—drawing one's eye to the park and inviting people in—rather than as a border.

4. **The Front Door Project, Phase A:** Convert Lions Field into Brackenridge Park's “front door” and main entry, capitalizing on its highly visible location on Broadway, high historic significance, and relatively low historic integrity, which justifies a major investment. Lions Field falls between Hildebrand Avenue and Inlet Tunnel Park and is the geographic center point of the entire park. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, the design for this area contains many possibilities.
 - a. Design a first-rate visitors center that conveys the entire history of the site, orienting people to its core narratives.
 - b. Park leadership should work with the existing tenants of this space toward an acceptable relocation plan.
 - c. Interpretation within the visitors center might include interactive computer displays, a graphic timeline, and a display of archaeological discoveries. An interactive map might orient users to the park's history, trail systems, and cultural institutions, including the zoo and the Witte Museum.
 - d. The visitors center should house the Brackenridge Park Conservancy (BPC), which is currently housed in a former park storage room and functioning restroom facility.
 - e. The site design may call for a sustainable and interpreted meadow or pastureland, drawing on early park history as pasture for animals (the pasture did not get developed until 1923).
 - f. Lions Field was originally a property of George Brackenridge's San Antonio Water Works Company, so the story of San Antonio's public water system may be interpreted in this area.
 - g. Phases A and Phase B must be strategically conceived of together before determining which to phase in first.

5. **The Front Door Project, Phase B:** Expand the Lions Field front door across East Mulberry Avenue to create a magnificent central “double door” entry experience for the public. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, park leadership should
- a. Work with existing business owners on a relocation and/or land integration strategy.
 - b. Acquire land between Broadway and Avenue B and adjacent to Lions Field.
 - c. Design Catalpa-Pershing as a phase of this comprehensive Front Door Project. Design considerations for Catalpa-Pershing include the following:
 - i. Building on the park’s original vocabulary of bridges
 - ii. Leaving portions of the concrete ditch revealed to interpret a more recent component of the park’s lengthy history with water management and flood control
 - iii. Naturalizing portions of the ditch, interpreting this site as part of the physical evolution of water management on the site and in connection to Eco-restoration.

Phases A and B must be strategically conceived of together before determining which to phase in first.

PRIORITY SYSTEM: CIRCULATION THROUGH THE PARK (CONNECTIVE TISSUE)

Circulation is a critical landscape system, and the park’s ability to be experienced and conceived of as a cohesive park is heavily dependent on a comprehensive circulation plan. Today, circulation in Brackenridge Park is disjointed. It does not adequately provide for multiple modes of transportation. Historically, the park developed as a driving park, enabling people to use what was then the newest form of transportation in order to have multiple landscape experiences. This history is not understood on the site today.

6. **Comprehensive Circulation Plan and Design:** With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, design a comprehensive pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation plan to move people through the interior of the park.
- a. The plan should draw on the park’s history as a driving park and on its historical circuits.
 - b. It should also be integrated with care for the park’s natural plant communities and with the repair of damaged hydrology, including subtractive measures, such as eliminating invasive plant species.
 - c. Circulation should ensure that visitors can be immersed in a variety of landscape experiences as they move through the park.
 - d. Incorporate wayfinding and interpretation that is minimally intrusive, respectful of the regional vernacular, and effective in guiding people through the park, regardless of which landscape experiences they would like to encounter (arid desert vegetation, riparian landscape, woodlands, etc.) and regardless of the stories they seek to experience (eco-restoration, archaeological layers, cultural identity in the park, etc.).

PRIORITY SYSTEM: ARCHAEOLOGY (HIDDEN BONES)

Prehistoric and historic archaeological remnants exist throughout Brackenridge Park. The extent of potentially sensitive ground is therefore pervasive. It is increasingly common for cultural landscapes to take the approach of uncovering archaeological resources, preserving them in place, and interpreting them to the public. Advocating for a more public approach to archaeological resources, Dr. Matthew Reeves, the director of Archaeology and Landscape Restoration at James Madison's Montpelier, states that "one of the best ways to have a community feel protective of sites is to know about them and become knowledgeable regarding their significance. And the best protection for sites against looting/disturbance is a local community's eyes!"¹⁹

1. **Acequia Investigation:** Due to the high significance of the Acequia Madre de Valero and the Upper Labor Acequia, it is recommended that archaeological work be conducted to locate as much of the original two acequias as possible. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners:
 - a. Remaining intact portions should be preserved and protected in place, under the guiding philosophy "first, do no harm."
 - b. Areas that have collapsed should be examined by archeologists and preservation technologists who understand local stone and mortar materials and ways to preserve and possibly rehabilitate these resources.
 - c. The exposed and protected areas should be interpreted for the public to convey the story of water management and a public water system.
 - d. If there are areas that contain various layers, including precolonial, colonial, and Civil War, these remnants should be interpreted to convey the changes over time.

¹⁹ Matthew Reeves, director of Archaeology and Landscape Restoration, James Madison's Montpelier, email correspondence, October 1, 2019.

INTERPRETATION STRATEGY (THE SOUL)

The four critical narratives noted throughout this CLR must be integrated into the pilot projects and any future projects. This requires specialized research. These narratives should be fully developed into interpretive plans that permeate the park. The narratives are

1. Stories of humans and hydrology, including the park's ecological transformation over time and interpretation of future projects that aim to restore the river's health
2. Prehistoric and historic life, including hidden and difficult cultural histories
3. Regional vernacular character, including the river as the park's form-defining element, early vehicular circulation in the park, cultural access to the river, and regional art and craftsmanship
4. Cultural layering that has contributed to the park's physical and ritual development, with intentional focus on historic ties to San Antonio's Indigenous people, the enslaved and their descendants, and the Mexican American community

Interpretation can and should be interdisciplinary and should span time. It should reveal the site's history and ecology, but the public must also understand how the past is relevant in the present and how it impacts the future. To this end, interpretation will need to convey the role that Brackenridge Park is actively playing in improving the present conditions and experience, whether the interpretation is related to Eco-restoration, circulation, or archaeological discovery.

Whether park leadership moves forward with a project related to one priority system or combines more than one system into a single project, interdisciplinary interpretation must drive the design approaches. Interpretation cannot be an afterthought. It will need to go beyond wayfinding and visitor center exhibits. By design, it must incorporate ways for park users to be immersed in the stories of the landscape's past and future; it should permeate the site.

NEXT STEPS

The CLR is a technical document that contains a vast amount of information. It will be used by park leadership as the primary management tool for Brackenridge Park. Therefore, the document must be read and digested by leadership from the BPC, San Antonio Parks and Recreation, and the San Antonio River Authority. Next steps toward implementation of the CLR Treatment follow.

1. Representation from these leadership groups must develop a shared understanding of the document and how to best use it to evaluate proposed projects and to guide new projects in Brackenridge Park.
2. When park leadership has developed a shared understanding of the CLR, fund-raising will be crucial to management and adoption of a systems approach. For more sustainable management practices, park leadership should look to other large municipal park conservancy models for guidance, which should facilitate conversation about funding models and about greater interface between Brackenridge Park and its cultural institutions.
3. Updates to the National Register Nomination can be made based on the content included in the analysis chapter of this CLR. This will begin the process of formally elevating Brackenridge Park to the national level of significance. It will also begin the process of laying further groundwork for a National Heritage Area designation.
4. One or more of the five priority systems should also be identified as a starting point for investment. Funds will be necessary to hire interdisciplinary teams to design for each system. It is critical that projects, such as those suggested in the Treatment Summary, be conceived of as part of a holistic strategic design; Boston's Emerald Necklace, discussed in the CLR introduction, is an example of systems-based planning and design at a larger scale. Once a system (or systems) has been planned and/or designed, implementation can and should occur in phases.
5. Using the systems framework as a guide, all existing and future large projects, smaller projects, and isolated efforts should be evaluated against the Treatment Plan guiding principles, Treatment Outcomes, Treatment Recommendations, and especially the prioritized systems. Such projects should be implemented only if they act as phases or segments of an established large-vision strategy. Again, to the degree possible, the three leadership entities should evaluate these projects together in order to assess them with a shared understanding of the CLR and its Treatment Plan.

If implemented successfully, this action plan will create cohesion for the park, providing clear direction to visitors and a consistency against which the layered, handcrafted elements of the site can be viewed and registered; it would remedy the currently deteriorating river banks and shade canopy, ensuring that these significant spatial experiences are protected for future visitors; and it would develop a strategy for telling the site's stories, ensuring that awareness of the site's history is integrated seamlessly.

MANAGEMENT MODELS

The emergence of formal stewardship of municipal parks arose concurrent with academic scholarship and the development of formal federal standards for documenting and preserving cultural landscapes. Central Park led the charge in 1985. This work provides a useful example for Brackenridge Park.

A benchmark for how the treatment of historic parks has changed over the century and a half since Olmsted and Vaux transformed the landscape of New York City is the preservation work, noted early in this chapter, led by Elizabeth Barlow Rogers. The 1985 report “Rebuilding Central Park: A Management and Restoration Plan” resulted from Rogers’s leadership and was the outcome of a three-year planning study by a large team of landscape architects, consultants, and planners who integrated the findings of ten individual planning studies. In many ways, this work—a phased, multidisciplinary, multiyear process with a critical interpretation and public information component—set the bar for much of the preservation work that would follow in American parks over the next few decades. For Central Park itself, the document became the road map and rationale for an ambitious fund-raising campaign. The Central Park Conservancy’s first capital campaign raised \$50 million over a five-year period and has been used to fund major restoration projects and annual maintenance.

The Central Park process not only emphasized the need for the preservation of the landscape’s significant features but also ensured that the municipal park would be understood in the public eye and experience as a cohesive setting that includes and visibly “shakes hands” with cultural institutions, including the Central Park Zoo, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Central Park, and the American Museum of Natural History. Likewise, the process placed management and ecological restoration front and center in the approach to healing the decades of neglect and overuse from which Central Park had suffered. Thirty-five years later, entire professional subdisciplines have grown up in order to provide expertise in the unique circumstances of landscape deterioration: vegetation loss, soil depletion, depletion of wildlife diversity, decay of historic landscape structures, the pollution of hydrologic systems, groundwater management, high crime statistics and perception of danger, outdated circulation systems, and loss of visitor services. Perhaps most important was the recognition that without well-researched and coordinated management of such a complex resource, decline was inevitable.

In 2013 the Central Park Conservancy Institute for Urban Parks was established as an educational arm of the Central Park Conservancy with the dual intent to teach park users and managers to care for urban parks everywhere and to share their experience in planning and management with other urban parks. Thus all urban parks can realize their potential to assume the role of “cultural and environmental treasures that have extraordinary capacity to educate, enrich, and inspire.”²⁰

Each cultural landscape is different and requires an approach that responds to the special qualities and situations of the particular landscape. Brackenridge Park is no exception, but the Central Park Conservancy provides one model for financial sustainability, viable management practices, and long-term stewardship.

²⁰ “Central Park: A Research Guide PDF,” 4, (New York, NY, 2016), centralparknyc.org/assets/pdfs/institute/Central-Park-Conservancy-Research-Guide.pdf.

PART ONE: CONTEXTS

Introduction to Contexts

Chapter 1: River Cities

Chapter 2: New Directions in Preservation

Chapter 3: Park Development and Design in The United States

Chapter 4: American Tourism and Automobiles in Parks

Chapter 5: Ethnographic Imprints on the Landscape

Chapter 6: The Ecology of Brackenridge Park

Chapter 7: George Brackenridge, a Portrait

Much of what landscape architects do is help people to see something different in the world around them, often in places that they assume they already know.

—David Malda,
“Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River”

Populations move. Plants disperse genes by way of seeds and pollen; wetlands accrete and erode; animals forage, mate, roam. Humans leave their—homes in search of work, land, education, safety, and opportunity. Migration is a process by which organisms track resources, discover, and escape. The patterns of migration reflect spatial and temporal changes in the landscape. Migration is a cipher and a signifier—it helps us unravel the invisible threads that hold together an ecosystem.

Stephanie Carlisle and Nicholas Pevzner,
Scenario Journal 6: Migration, 2019

INTRODUCTION TO CONTEXTS

There are many ways to contextualize any landscape. Determining which to focus on is an exciting challenge that landscape architectural historians face when developing a cultural landscape report (CLR). Early in this process, the clients asked the consultant team for help understanding where Brackenridge Park fits into the national landscape. This question helped guide the team's decisions about which contexts to focus on. It also became clear that it would not be enough to provide only historical contexts, because contemporary contexts related to preservation and ecology also help situate the park. Several of the context chapters look backward as well as forward, establishing where cultural movements, events, and trends have been globally, nationally, or locally, where they are heading, where Brackenridge Park fits in, and where it can go.

Chapter 1 provides a global and national perspective of river cities, situates San Antonio as a river city, and situates Brackenridge Park as a foundational point on the San Antonio River's riparian corridor. The chapter touches on river cities as historic loci of human settlement, but it spends more time on a discussion of the long history of management of and interventions on rivers to ensure human survival in drought and flooding conditions. Specifically, the historic management of the Mississippi River is discussed. Looking ahead, South Korea's Cheonggyecheon River is discussed as a precedent that illustrates the current trajectory for healing riparian corridors. Initially, this landscape seems far removed from San Antonio, but the river's scale and size are similar to the upper course of the San Antonio River that flows through Brackenridge Park; also comparable are the urban issues surrounding these two ecological restoration projects. This chapter suggests that Brackenridge Park contains the promise for ecological healing in the face of climate and population changes that are already occurring in San Antonio, as in the world.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the evolution of preservation in America, highlighting its beginnings and gradual transition from focusing on landmarks and buildings to expansive and complex landscapes. The chapter situates San Antonio within the American tradition of historic preservation, calling attention to how San Antonio's preservation movement has reflected national trends and how it has been ahead of its time.

Finally, this chapter presents a way forward for preservation in San Antonio. An extensive discussion of National Heritage Areas is included to suggest preservation and treatment of Brackenridge Park that will establish it as part of the larger urban and cultural fabric of San Antonio. Considering the overview of how preservation in America and San Antonio have evolved over time, always on the “right side of history,” the context includes a call to seize an opportunity—that is, to recenter research and interpretation of the park on Indigenous, African American, and Mexican American contributions, perspectives, and histories, in greater balance with the park’s well-documented colonial history.

Chapter 3 focuses on park development and design in America, providing a way for park leadership to better understand the ways that Brackenridge Park, when it became a park in 1899, followed national trends and the ways that it maintained a regional identity. A brief inclusion of international movements and trends that informed park making in America is included before a longer discussion of American municipal park design. In addition, discussion about the formation of the first national parks is included. Brackenridge Park arose at a critical time, when municipal and national parks were emerging.

Building on the overview of park development in the United States, chapter 4 drills down into two related topics: American tourism in parks and the use of automobiles in parks. This chapter serves to illustrate the national trends that were occurring and how Brackenridge Park reflected the national trends as well as set itself apart.

Chapter 5, “Ethnographic Imprints on the Landscape,” is an attempt to define San Antonio’s predominant ethnographic cultures, how they have evolved over time, and how they have made lasting marks on the city and the park. A brief discussion of migration as part of a global cycle is included. The discussion then zooms in to look at America’s transforming population and how San Antonio’s population trends compare. The purpose of this context is to emphasize the rich opportunity that exists to recenter preservation research and interpretation and to enable park leadership to consider how a recentering will ensure future stewardship, given future population trends.

Chapter 6, “The Ecology of Brackenridge Park,” builds on the broad context provided in chapter 1, “River Cities.” This later chapter drills down to a finer level of detail, focusing purely on Brackenridge Park and the status of its ecological health. The chapter illustrates the critical need for ecological intervention at Brackenridge Park. Readers should recall the Cheonggyecheon River precedent described in chapter 1 as they consider the ecological needs and opportunities in Brackenridge Park.

Chapter 7, “George Brackenridge: A Portrait,” is another chapter that bids CLR users to look backward in order to look forward. It provides human context for the birth of San Antonio’s regional vernacular park, focusing on the fascinating individual who donated the original 199 acres to the city of San Antonio. It aims to illustrate that Brackenridge shaped the park’s distinctive and lasting character not as a designer but simply as a visionary and compassionate citizen. It is a well-deserved feel-good story of one person’s life and legacy.

Yet this historic portrait is also a beginning—it suggests a pathway that might eventually feature other individuals who have contributed to the park’s character. Many of these individuals are called out in part three of this CLR, in chapter 14, “Analysis and Evaluation.” Since one intention in these context chapters is to begin recentering research, responding to San Antonio’s historic and future diversity, chapter 7 provides reasons to dig deeper into the histories of people who are not yet as well documented as Brackenridge. George Brackenridge’s history, wholly instrumental to Brackenridge Park as a park, should eventually be showcased alongside other park contributors and alongside the histories of individuals and/or groups who were instrumental to this cultural landscape before it became the municipal park it is today. Some of these histories will be hard to document, and some may not be celebratory, but they are no less valuable in helping to tell a whole truth.



CHAPTER 1. RIVER CITIES

The visionaries who formed Brackenridge Park, seeming to recognize the San Antonio River’s major significance and value, paid simple homage to the river: they sited the park in alignment with its sinuous course, even as the city surrounding the park was adapting to an urban grid. A more expected approach would have been to fit the park into the developing grid. That form follows water—the formation of the city of San Antonio and the formation of its municipal park—is evident in Brackenridge Park.

San Antonio is a city whose entire existence is due to the presence of the San Antonio River. This fact is foundational to Brackenridge Park as a cultural landscape. To gain greater understanding of this claim, it is helpful to pull back and consider river cities as a global phenomenon that spans time, geographies, and scales.

Around the world, rivers and other bodies of water have been the spine on which settlements develop.¹ Historically, rivers “have been harnessed in city making for industrial and commercial production, for water supply and waste removal, and for energy production. They offer an essential means of transportation and communication, irrigation for food production, and opportunities for defense.”² The presence of water allows for the existence of civilizations. Yet each river city engages in its own complex network of geographical, social, cultural, infrastructural, ecological, and environmental relationships,³ and what results is a drastically different settlement pattern based entirely on the character of the river.⁴

1 Thaïsa Way, *River Cities, City Rivers* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, 2018), 4.

2 Way, *River Cities, City Rivers*, 2.

3 Way, *River Cities, City Rivers*, 3.

4 Way, *River Cities, City Rivers*, 2.

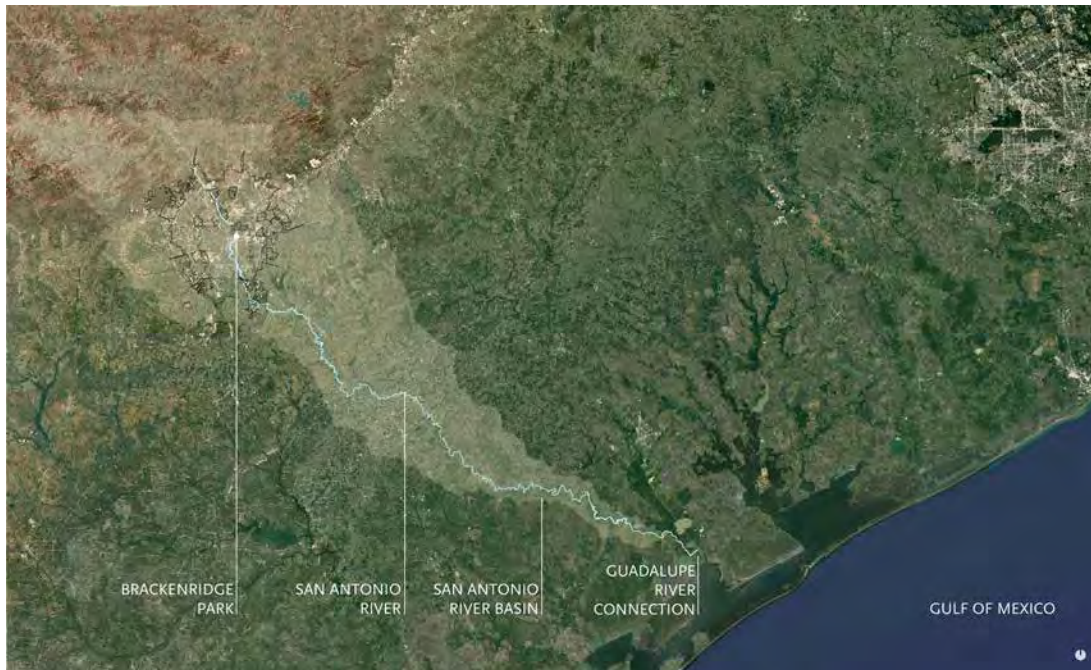


FIGURE 1–1. The 240-mile-long San Antonio River begins north of Brackenridge Park and flows through Bexar County and four other counties. The Balcones Escarpment fault line is visible above San Antonio. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

HUMAN ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL WATER

Whether they are globally significant watercourses or local meandering streams, rivers are life-giving, but they also bear destruction.⁵ People have thus attempted to control them for millennia. The 240-mile-long San Antonio River begins just north of Brackenridge Park and flows southeasterly through Bexar County and four other counties until it reaches the Gulf of Mexico. (figure 1-1). Within the city of San Antonio, irrigation was the first documented use of the river; it also became a recreational asset due to its low volume and slow movement.⁶ The San Antonio River has also been a constant source of flooding and drought, with interventions to manage these issues occurring even in the present.

What follows is a comparison of human efforts to control rivers of vastly different scales and geographies. In size, the San Antonio River falls between the Mississippi River and South Korea’s Cheonggyecheon River. These distinctly different rivers both offer relevant examples of the positive and negative effects of human intervention.

In the case of the Mississippi River, which is approximately 2,300 miles long,⁷ writer John McPhee, in his widely referenced 1987 *New Yorker* essay “Atchafalaya,” said that the “army replaced nature.”⁸ In an attempt at comprehensive flood control in south Louisiana, Congress charged the US Army Corps of Engineers with maintaining the current course of the river through the use of river control structures (figure 1-2). Historically, the river has

5 Way, *River Cities, City Rivers*, 7.

6 David Malda, “Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River,” in *River Cities: City Rivers*, ed. by Thaisa Way (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, 2018), 252.

7 “Mississippi River Facts,” National Park Service, Department of the Interior, November 24, 2018, accessed June 14, 2019, nps.gov/miss/riverfacts.htm.

8 John McPhee, “Atchafalaya,” *New Yorker*, December 22, 2017, accessed June 13, 2019, [newyorker.com/magazine/1987/02/23/atchafalaya](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1987/02/23/atchafalaya).

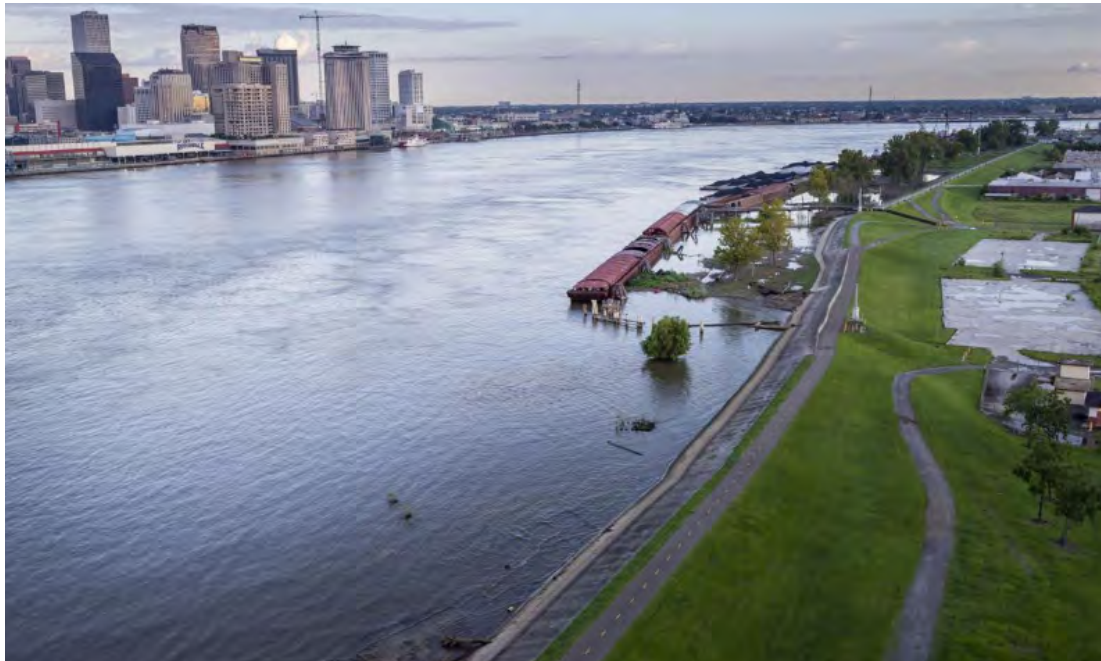


FIGURE 1–2. View of the Mississippi River and concrete levee walls in Algiers, Louisiana. During periods of high water or flooding, the river is sometimes at grade with the top of the levee. Source: Bill Feig, *The Advocate*

shifted course across the deltaic plain roughly every seven hundred to eight hundred years,⁹ unevenly depositing sediment that builds fertile land in some places and allows subsidence in others. Before 1900, Louisiana experienced a net gain in land, but channelizing the river caused coastal Louisiana communities to sink at an alarming rate as regenerative river sediment was propelled off the continental shelf.¹⁰

In recent decades, cities have been realizing the extent of the issues created through attempts at river control and taking steps to remedy the effects.¹¹ In Seoul, South Korea, the less-than-seven-mile long Cheonggyecheon River was part of a recent and significant urban renewal project. In the early 1900s, the river was channelized for sanitation reasons, and an elevated highway was eventually built above it.¹² As a result of these actions, the riparian corridor experienced decreased biodiversity, illegal dumping, major flooding, and higher temperatures due to heat island effect.¹³ In the early 2000s, a campaign was launched to promote removal of the elevated freeway and restoration of the stream through the creation of an ecological and recreational park¹⁴ (**figure 1-3**). This ecological restoration project has resulted in benefits including flood protection from a two-hundred-year flood event, increased biodiversity, reduced heat island effect, reductions in air pollution and rates of respiratory disease, and increased ridership of public transportation. There have been

9 Milton B. Newton, *Atlas of Louisiana; a Guide for Students* (Baton Rouge, LA: School of Geoscience, Louisiana State University, 1972), 24.

10 McPhee, "Atchafalaya."

11 Way, *River Cities, City Rivers*, 2.

12 "Visit Seoul—Cheonggyecheon," Home: Visit Seoul—The Official Travel Guide to Seoul, I Seoul U, February 13, 2019, accessed June 14, 2019, english.visitseoul.net/attractions/Cheonggyecheon-Stream_/35.

13 Lucy Wang, "How the Cheonggyecheon River Urban Design Restored the Green Heart of Seoul," Inhabitat Green Design Innovation Architecture Green Building, MH Sub I, LLC, November 18, 2014, accessed June 13, 2019, inhabitat.com/how-the-cheonggyecheon-river-urban-design-restored-the-green-heart-of-seoul/.

14 Wang, Lucy. "How the Cheonggyecheon River Urban Design Restored the Green Heart of Seoul."



FIGURE 1–3. View of the Cheonggyecheon Stream after removal of the elevated highway. Areas were built into the stream to slow water and support bird and aquatic biodiversity. Source: Alexander Robinson, published in “Cheonggyecheon Stream Restoration Project”

economic benefits as well, including increased spending from foreign tourists and increased property values.¹⁵

When river cities become stewards of their water resources—enacting sustainable practices along watercourses and “thinking of the city as a landscape”¹⁶—they reap tangible cultural and ecological benefits. Over 75 percent of the world’s population is projected to live in cities by 2035. Many challenges, such as energy and food supply shortages, water security issues, climate changes, poor air quality, and increased poverty and social equity issues, will be realized; these challenges are “embedded in urban systems and landscapes.”¹⁷

In San Antonio, these realities have been present for much of the city’s history, given that it was the largest city in Texas by 1920 and one of its oldest and most diverse municipalities. But the impacts are accelerating. San Antonio is the nation’s twenty-fourth-largest Standard Metropolitan Area. It is also currently the seventh most populous city in the country,¹⁸ and it continues to grow; social and environmental extremities are likely to continue impacting the city and its river.

15 “Cheonggyecheon Stream Restoration Project,” Landscape Performance Series, Landscape Architecture Foundation, July 16, 2018, accessed June 13, 2019, landscapeperformance.org/case-study-briefs/cheonggyecheon-stream-restoration.

16 Way, *River Cities, City Rivers*, 2.

17 Way, *River Cities, City Rivers*, 3.

18 Malda, “Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River,” 243.

SAN ANTONIO AS A RIVER CITY

THE RIVER'S FORMATION

“San Antonio is a confluence of geologies, climates, and cultures”¹⁹ created by seismic activity that occurred in the area north of the city. The uplift of the limestone foundation created the rugged terrain known as the Balcones Escarpment. This is the fault line that delimits the boundary between the sub arid conditions of the Great Plains to the west and the subtropical conditions of the Coastal Plains in the east (**figure 1-1**). This same line separates the rugged Texas Hill Country from the flat and fertile Blackland Prairie. A micro example of these two different but abutting conditions can be experienced in Brackenridge Park. Although the escarpment is a geological feature, it is essential to San Antonio’s experience of water. Fissures along the escarpment allow water to trickle down to the Edwards Aquifer below, creating the rechargeable source of water from which numerous springs, and the San Antonio River, flow.²⁰

EARLY RIVER INTERVENTIONS: SHAPING A CITY

San Antonio is the definition of a river city. The city has a three-hundred-year “heritage of simultaneously constructing the city and the river.”²¹ This has allowed for the development of management strategies that address both drought and deluge.

When Spanish settlers arrived in the region beginning around 1535, they found a climate not unlike that in some parts of Spain. Knowledgeable in the art of using scarce water resources for irrigation, they sought water before settling and then created a system of acequias.²² Construction of the acequias began in 1719 and represented the first interventions on the San Antonio River. The acequias drew water from the San Antonio River to missions as a source of irrigation and drinking water. When they were in use, growth of the city was based on access to the river.

As the city grew, bouts of cholera occurred in 1846, 1849, and 1866. The increased population meant increased water contamination and health risks, and this became the impetus for an important change. The city awarded a contract to the San Antonio Water Works Company in 1877, initiating the commercialization of the municipal water system. The Water Works Company, of which George Brackenridge was an original shareholder,²³ drilled deep artesian wells into the aquifer and installed the infrastructure that allowed water to be delivered through pipes to paying customers. The wells were so successful that they prompted other San Antonians, and many outside of Bexar County, to drill artesian wells that depleted the aquifer over the next thirty years. This remains a problem today, and as a result of over pumping and extended droughts, the springs are sometimes dry for years at a time.²⁴

Between 1890 and 1899, the shape of the city transformed from the use of long narrow plots to orthogonal street grids as the reliance on artesian wells became commonplace (**figure**

19 Malda, “Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River,” 246.

20 Malda, “Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River,” 249.

21 Malda, “Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River,” 241.

22 Charles Porter Jr., *Spanish Water, Anglo Water: Early Development in San Antonio* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 6-7.

23 Porter, *Spanish Water, Anglo Water*, 101.

24 Porter, *Spanish Water, Anglo Water*, 123.

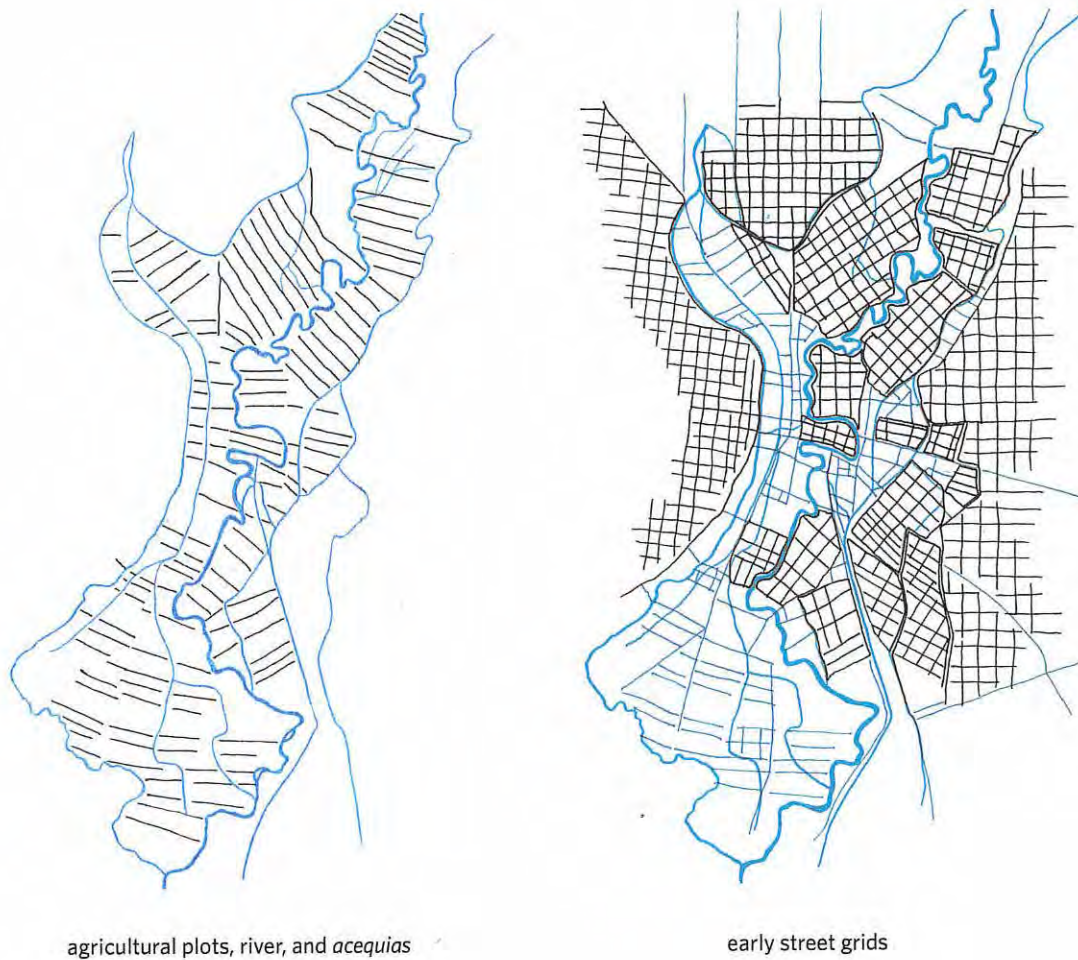


FIGURE 1-4. Two diagrams illustrate the 1890s transformation from long, narrow agricultural plots to an orthogonal grid system in San Antonio. In the diagram on the left, blue lines originating from the San Antonio River illustrate the location of acequias and dams that provided agricultural irrigation. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

1-4). Use of the acequias was discontinued beginning in 1899,²⁵ and the last acequia, the San Pedro, finally closed in September 1912.

TWENTIETH-CENTURY RIVER INTERVENTIONS: FLOODING, DROUGHT, AND TOURISM

Flooding due to heavy rain in 1913 and a catastrophic flood in 1921 had an entirely different impact on the city (**figure 1-5**). In the early 1900s, the slow-moving river became something that needed to be contained and controlled in an attempt to avoid future flooding.²⁶ The city commissioned an engineering study, and the initial intervention in 1924 was a retention dam on the Olmos Creek Basin. Afterward, the San Pedro and Alazán Creeks were cleared, straightened, and widened at the points where they met the San Antonio River south of the city. Bends in the San Antonio River at either end of the city were removed,²⁷ and in the “Great Bend” of the river, two 650-foot-long box culverts designed to catch flood overflow were installed.²⁸

25 Porter, *Spanish Water, Anglo Water*, 120.

26 Fisher, Lewis F. *Crown Jewel of Texas: the Story of San Antonio's River*. San Antonio, TX: Maverick Pub Co, 1997. 31-32.

27 Fisher, *Crown Jewel of Texas*, 1997. 42.

28 Fisher, *Crown Jewel of Texas*, 1997. 45.



FIGURE 1-5. Photo of downtown San Antonio after the flood of September 1921. Source: San Antonio River Authority, published in Lewis F. Fisher, *River Walk*



FIGURE 1-6. A dotted line shows the location of the cutoff channel that would be constructed along the San Antonio River to protect the Great Bend. This introduced a loop that would become the framework for the San Antonio River Walk. Source: Lewis F. Fisher, *River Walk*

A cutoff channel was constructed, which served to preserve the character of the Great Bend,²⁹ and also allowed for the diversion of floodwaters during extreme rain events and the potential flooding that would have resulted without the cutoff channel. The Great Bend and cutoff became a circular route, and this eventually became the framework around which the San Antonio River Walk formed (**figure 1-6**). The cutoff enabled businesses to be on the river without fear of flooding.³⁰ Beautification and the creation of an identity for San Antonio were factored in after these major flood-reduction infrastructures were completed.³¹

Between periods of flooding, water shortages remained an issue. As a result of both drought and artesian wells pulling water from the Edwards Aquifer, the river and springs stopped flowing. The city intervened around 1928 by installing pumps on abandoned wells, extracting water, and redirecting it for use within the city.³² The River Walk, first proposed in 1929 by architect Robert Hugman and conceived of as a tourist attraction, was constructed beginning in 1939 as a Works Progress Administration project³³ (**figure 1-7**).

This is the city experience that most visitors to San Antonio still encounter. Tourists see a consistently flowing river along the River Walk, but San Antonians experience daily reports of declining aquifer levels.³⁴ The lively shops, restaurants, and activities along the five-mile stretch belie the reality of drought concerns and the legacy of water conservation efforts within the city. In 1997, the San Antonio River Tunnel became operational, and it prevented what would probably have been major flooding throughout downtown and surrounding areas in October of the next year³⁵ (**figure 1-8**).

As scientific research progresses, more is learned about the outcomes of heavily engineering water bodies, and this is transforming the types of river interventions completed today and planned for the future. Despite human efforts toward control and conservation of the San Antonio River, larger ecological forces as well as human intervention have had a great impact on the river and its primary source, the Edwards Aquifer.

29 Malda, "Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River," 253.

30 Malda, "Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River," 253.

31 Malda, "Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River," 253.

32 Malda, "Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River," 250-52.

33 Malda, "Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River," 253.

34 Malda, "Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River," 241.

35 "The People's Waterway," San Antonio River Improvements Project, San Antonio River Authority, accessed June 8, 2019, sanantoniorever.org/riverhistory/history.php.



FIGURE 1-7. A promotional plan of the San Antonio River Walk, proposed in 1929 by architect Robert Hugman. It was first conceived of as a tourist attraction called Shops of Aragon. It was constructed beginning in 1939 as a WPA project. Source: San Antonio Conservation Society, published in Lewis F. Fisher, *River Walk*



FIGURE 1–8. Photo of Inlet Tunnel flood control structure at Josephine Street. The structure became operational in 1997 and prevented a major flood the following year. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

Looking Ahead

From small missionary outpost to large urban city, San Antonio’s identity and function have shifted drastically, as have those of its river.³⁶ Yet the San Antonio River continues to be a “central element in local identity and survival.”³⁷ Cultural preservation and ecological conservation and development of the Brackenridge Park landscape must remain in tune with the river. Forward-thinking ecological restoration measures grounded in the site’s unique regional character present an opportunity to heal the landscape’s riparian corridor and to interpret stories related to the city’s origins that are not yet apparent to visitors or locals. This is essential in formulating the next phase of San Antonio’s identity as an increasingly diverse and progressive urban River City.

36 Malda, “Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River,” 243.

37 Malda, “Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River,” 241.

CHAPTER 2. NEW DIRECTIONS IN PRESERVATION

San Antonio's preservation and conservation efforts have a long history. These efforts have always succeeded in being ahead of their time, in that the city recognized the need early in the twentieth century to both preserve its cultural heritage and to prioritize environmental stewardship of the San Antonio River. The San Antonio Conservation Society, founded in 1924, was one of the first preservation groups in the United States that organized with the intent of preserving not just a landmark but also the historic landscape surrounding it as well as the region's historic natural environment.¹ This was a radical and progressive departure from other early preservation groups. Likewise, the San Antonio River Authority (SARA), founded in 1937 to oversee and protect the San Antonio River, is an early example of legislated protection for a natural asset; SARA arose out of 1917 state legislation geared toward the protection of Texas's water resources after severe flooding in 1913 and 1914. To understand San Antonio's unique situation as a city steeped in forward-thinking preservation approaches, it is useful to understand the evolution of preservation at the national level.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AS AN AMERICAN ACTIVITY

As early as the mid-1800s and as America continued to mature as a nation, citizens developed a concern for maintaining a sense of cultural connection. Out of this arose the historic preservation movement. Its history can be viewed in chronological stages according to what kind of resource was being protected:

- a. Individual buildings associated with historic persons and events intended to inspire patriotism (purchase of Mount Vernon by private women's group in 1856)
- b. Places of high aesthetic value (formation of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities [SPNEA] in 1910)

¹ Lewis F. Fisher, *Saving San Antonio: The Preservation of a Heritage*, 2nd ed. (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2016), 95.

- c. Historic environments in their entirety as the setting for historic sites and buildings as well as a means of preserving a way of life (Rockefeller begins development of Colonial Williamsburg in 1927)
- d. Historic neighborhoods in order to maintain integrity of urban areas, using municipal historic district designation (in Charleston in 1931, in Vieux Carré New Orleans in 1937)
- e. Urban districts, Main Streets, entire historic cities and towns, adaptive reuse, and economic benefits of preservation (federal urban renewal in the 1950s and 1960s catalyzed efforts such as NTHP Main Street Center in 1977, NPS standards for treatment of historic properties in 1995)

Each of these transitions in the evolution of American preservation has come with a broadening of the subjects to be protected. In 1990, James Marston Fitch recognized this broadening in his book *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World*, writing,

From an emphasis on buildings, they [preservationists] have come to understand the equal importance of the gardens, open spaces, and streets around them—that is, of the connective tissue that binds the built world into an organic, life-sustaining whole.

In addition, the following excerpts on preservation demonstrate the expansion from preservation of the past to the present. In 1965, Charles B. Hosmer Jr. wrote in *Presence of the Past* that

even in the early period before the Civil War there is abundant evidence of an emergent national consciousness that caused some individuals to look upon the preservation of historic sites as a sign of cultural maturity.

In Hosmer’s two volumes documenting the history of the preservation movement in America through the 1960s, neither San Antonio nor any properties there are listed in the index, suggesting that what was happening in San Antonio was little known to the national preservation community. Instead, the book primarily focuses on work being done on the eastern seaboard and its colonial period, the rural plantations of the Deep South, and the California missions.

Forty-four years later, architectural historian John Stubbs wrote in his book *Time Honored* that

the sense of one’s physical position and place in time is in large part based on historic places, whether they are individual buildings, or entire cities, or the countries in which they are situated.

Moreover, in the same book Stubbs referred to the San Antonio River Walk as “one of the first American projects of this type,” demonstrating smart-growth planning and how “the vision of one architect backed by a whole community” was realized. He praised the project, stating, “over thirty years later, it is more successful than ever”² (**figure 2-1**).

² John H. Stubbs, *Time Honored: a Global View of Architectural Conservation*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2009.



FIGURE 2-1. Pictured is the San Antonio River Walk in the first decade of the 2000s. John Stubbs wrote that the WPA-era project demonstrated “the vision of one architect backed by a whole community,” and noted that it has remained successful. Source: John Stubbs, *Time Honored*

Of great importance to this CLR, the maturation of preservation has been marked by the “entry of professionals (architects, landscape architects, art historians, archaeologists) into the field which hitherto had been filled almost exclusively by antiquarians: that is, by laymen who, whatever their training or erudition in other fields, were usually amateurs” in the area of buildings and landscapes, and almost all were volunteers.³ Today, each of these disciplines offers academic concentrations in preservation, and several universities and research institutions have developed preservation degree options or certification programs. Because of these advances, it is a fortunate time to tackle the complexity of a resource such as Brackenridge Park.

SAN ANTONIO’S EARLY COLONIAL HISTORY AND PRESERVATION

Preservation in San Antonio, as in America, continues to evolve and mature. The early formation of governmental and nonprofit preservation entities in the city to serve as stewards for natural and cultural resources continues to impact the city today. Lewis Fisher’s 2016 *Saving San Antonio* chronicles the events and persons who introduced the concept of preservation to San Antonio. The city’s story offers several unique aspects in its approach that are only now being embraced in the larger national arena.

San Antonio is known for its history and architecture and the tourism that these generate. The Spanish roots of the city are self-evident in its name. Other aspects of its history and culture are less well-known. Over time, many of its historic and cultural resources have been threatened, and some have been lost. When one considers the several high-growth periods in the city’s history, it is surprising that so much of the community’s historic fabric survives.

³ James Marston Fitch, *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1990), ix.



FIGURE 2-2. Photo of the Alamo, circa 1900s, the first public landmark preserved west of the Mississippi River. In *Saving San Antonio*, Lewis Fisher wrote, “Preservation of no landmark in America can equal that of the Alamo in depth of symbolism, breadth of players and sheer drama.” Source: Collection of Wallace L. McKeehan, Sons of DeWitt Colony Texas

Each city tackles the need and impulse to preserve differently, and how a city chooses to do so reveals a great deal about its character and values. The following section surveys the growth of the preservation movement in San Antonio. This overview suggests why the concern for the current condition and future of Brackenridge has finally emerged as a subject that matters greatly to the San Antonio community.

Gandhi said that “the greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” One could easily substitute “community” for “nation” and “culture” for “animals,” and the sentiment would still stand. San Antonio’s approach to the preservation of its culture is indicative of how values have shifted and how the practice of preservation has evolved along with the city.

If we survey how preservation has shaped the San Antonio landscape of today and how San Antonio has developed its own particular approach to the topic, we can see that in general, the milestones in local activity have reflected most of the national trends. Certainly, the initial outcry to save the Alamo is reflective of the urge to save places important to the founding fathers and patriots, and nowhere was this urge for independence better represented than at the Alamo (**figure 2-2**). The shrine’s interface with downtown San Antonio has been through many iterations and continues to be a lightning rod for debate. But the basic compunction to save the building and its surroundings was an early cause for citizen involvement and, like the drive to save Mount Vernon, was accomplished primarily by local women.

The 1877 arrival of the railroad in San Antonio connected the place and its people to the rest of the nation. San Antonians began to travel farther and see the efforts that were beginning to cement the identities of their counterpart historic American cities. They also traveled to Europe, where they witnessed the use of dedicated historic districts to save centuries of culture and facilitate sensitive layering of various periods of architecture. San Antonians began to take note of the value of their home city. With progress came business, construction, and competition for strategic locations, many of which were occupied by early buildings from the earliest settlements and urbanization. As Fisher so aptly puts it,

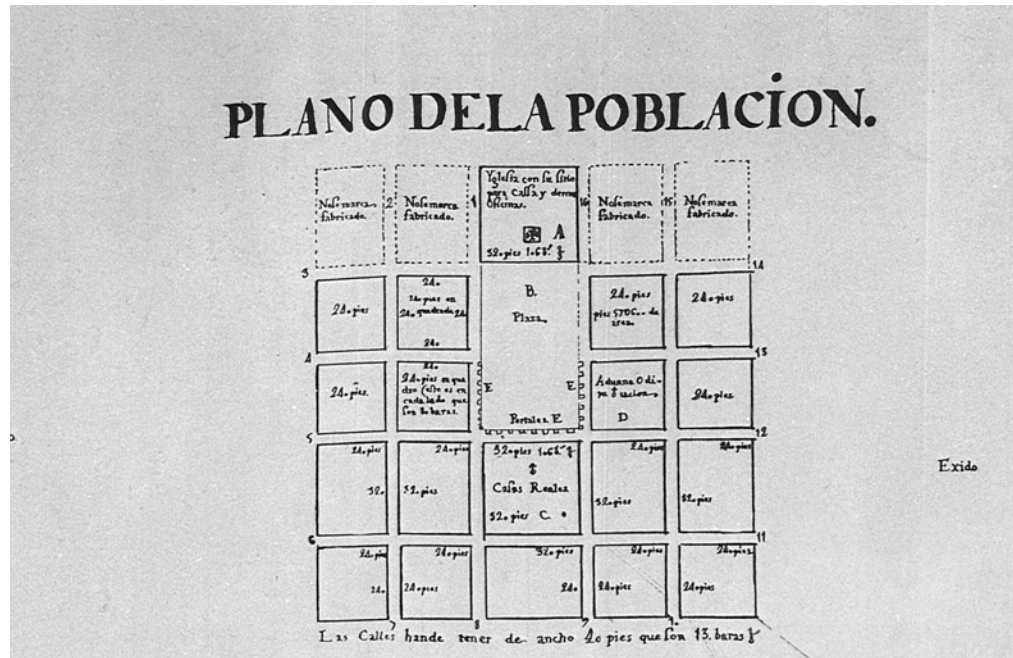


FIGURE 2-3. An original plan of the pueblo of San Fernando, in Spain, demonstrates an example of a Laws of the Indies town. Rectangular blocks are arranged around the plaza, the church, and royal house fronting the plaza. Note the narrow streets in response to the hot climate. Source: John Reps, *The Making of Urban America*, Figure 17

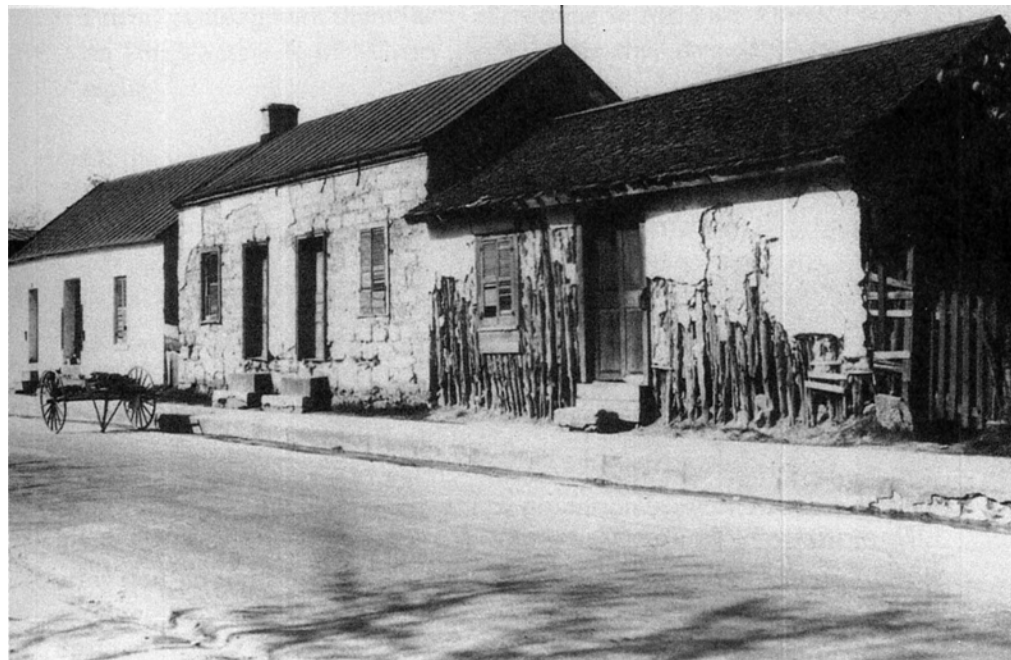


FIGURE 2-4. A photo of houses that once stood on Laredo Street illustrates San Antonio's early architecture. Plastered adobe is seen at the left; flaking plaster revealing caliche blocks underneath is seen in center; and on the right, mud and plaster are seen falling away from indigenous palisade, or vertical log construction. Source: Witte Museum Collection, published in Lewis F. Fisher, *American Venice*

Travelers, who once claimed to think they were in Italy rather than in Texas and who marveled over the mix of cultures and “confusion of unknown tongues,” now began to warn local residents about the value of what San Antonio had to lose by becoming a modern city.⁴

The urban plan of the city embedded its European roots and also impacted its later preservation. The first settlers laid out San Antonio according to the Law of the Indies developed by Spanish monarch Philip II in 1573 (figure 2-3). Plazas organized the plan and provided space for military festivals. Because of the hot climate, the streets were to be narrow in order to minimize exposure to direct sun.⁵ (This provision would create a dilemma several centuries later for those trying to save the earliest structures.) The first structures were primarily flat-roofed and constructed of cedar logs covered with adobe or lime plaster.⁶ These early adobes, built right up to the sidewalk or street edge, became the first preservation battles (figure 2-4).

The Spanish presence in the area is attributable to the San Antonio River, which served as a spine along which colonial settlers could establish agriculture and grazing. Many locals and tourists alike do not realize that the water and land rights distribution system had been brought to Spain by the Moors, who in turn, beginning around 1719, translated the idea to this area of New Spain by building a system of “eight engineered acequias [and] hand dug ditches which diverted water from the river for nearly two hundred years.”⁷

Lacking settlers for the new area, the Spanish established a system of missions along the river in order to convert the Indigenous Americans. San Antonio has the nation’s largest grouping of Spanish missions, with four along the river south of town, and the church of the fifth, now the Alamo, in the heart of the city⁸ (figure 2-5). Although San Antonio was initially the most important settlement in Texas, later it struggled because of its isolated location, making



FIGURE 2-5. Contemporary map of the system of Spanish missions developed along the San Antonio River, built with the intent of converting Indigenous people to Catholicism. Source: Texas Beyond History, Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory, University of Texas at Austin

4 Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 13.

5 Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 18.

6 Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 19.

7 Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 17.

8 Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 14.



FIGURE 2-6. 1857 painting entitled “Crockett Street Looking West,” by German-born painter Karl Friedrich Hermann Lungkwitz. San Antonio’s early urban character is conveyed through unpaved roads, varied fence types, and the allotment of open yards behind houses providing space for kitchen gardens, cows, and other domestic animals. Source: Witte Museum Collection

market access difficult. The missions, initially successful, began to fail after several decades, because the Indigenous population was decimated by disease epidemics to which they had no immunity and because the Catholic faith was so alien to their animistic belief system. Moreover, it was natural that the Indigenous population resisted colonial occupation and settlement. As Fisher writes, “Between 1793 and 1824...all missions were gradually closed and their lands secularized.”⁹ This left the future of some of the nation’s most significant and historic architectural and landscape complexes in jeopardy.

New American colonists were led to San Antonio at the end of 1820 as a buffer to the Indigenous resistance and territorial expansion by Comanche people. By 1835, the residents of San Antonio felt that the Mexican government, led by Santa Anna, was grabbing more power and compromising their freedoms, and the battle of the Alamo ensued in 1836. Despite having established the Republic of Texas, the community continued to be pummeled both by Comanche and Mexican forces. By the time the United States had finalized annexation of Texas, the colonially descended population had been cut in half, and “future president Rutherford B. Hayes...described San Antonio simply as an ‘old, ruined Spanish town.’”¹⁰

The following decade redefined the city, with “immigrants pouring in, forming their own communities in the shadow of the surviving Spanish culture.... Unrest in Germany in particular drew disenchanted intellectuals accustomed to an urban environment, and German superseded Spanish as San Antonio’s dominant language.” By the time of the Civil War the German population had grown to eight thousand¹¹ (**figure 2-6**).

9 Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 21.

10 Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 25.

11 Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 25.



FIGURE 2-7. Headquarters of the San Antonio Conservation Society are located in the Anton Wulff House in the King William District. The home was built between 1869 to 1870 by German immigrant Anton Wulff, who became the city's first park commissioner. The organization saved the house from demolition and restored it in 1974. Source: San Antonio Conservation Society

This capsule of San Antonio, from its early settlement to the end of the 1800s, illustrates the complexity of its evolution into an American place as well as the layering of cultures that assimilated to form the distinctive character that has come to define it.

San Antonio's participation in what we call preservation today had from the outset a marriage of the built and the natural environment, as specified in the mission of the San Antonio Conservation Society from its founding in 1924 (**figure 2-7**). Whereas several of the earlier concerns were for threatened historic structures, the disastrous flood of 1921 seemed to impress upon leaders and citizens alike that the fate of this place that the Spanish colonized because of its water resources would need to always consider the symbiotic relationship between the waters of the San Antonio River and the civilization that it had spawned (**figure 2-8**).

The other distinctive quality of the preservation movement in San Antonio is that from its beginnings, those who did the hard work, formerly and fondly referred to as “little old ladies in tennis shoes,” not only recognized the inherent value of the cultural layering that created the city but also were determined to keep the physical evidences of these various cultures and, more importantly, the intangible exuberance of the resultant diverse population. Fisher describes the first generation of women who led the movement: well educated, well traveled, and ready to participate as equal citizens as voters, as teachers, as artists, and as social workers.

Vigorous and imaginative, these women and their future compatriots did not need more admonitions on the uniqueness of their city from cosmopolitan travelers, warnings which in the previous century fell on deaf ears locally anyway. They felt its charm instinctively. The entire mix of their cultures was their birthright, the soul of their home city, and



FIGURE 2-8. Navarro Street after 1921 flood, the worst flood on record in San Antonio in terms of loss of life and property. Note the mesquite block paving floating. Source: *San Antonio Express-News* Archives.

it was not to be taken away. Their goal became the saving not only of landmarks but of traditions and ambience and natural features as well, the preservation of no less than San Antonio's entire historic cultural and natural environment.¹²

In 1964 the city of San Antonio reached a critical point in its progression to a mature American city at which preservation and conservation had seats at the table. They applied to the National Trust for Historic Preservation to host their annual meeting, and it was held to great success. From that point on, the community of preservationists in America gained an immense respect for the accomplishments of the leadership of San Antonio in both the public and private sectors. There, the union of nature and culture was at the heart of decision-making. Although national events, such as urban renewal and the interstate highway system, have challenged the determination of preservationists, the net result has been a community that is singular because of its deep cultural roots and the respect it has for those roots.

It is equally important, however, to point to the typically European and colonial focus of preserved histories. This CLR attempts to move the needle. It formalizes an acknowledgment that Brackenridge Park contains an untapped opportunity to recenter local research and interpretation of Indigenous and Mexican origins and perspectives as well as African American perspectives and to recenter local research and interpretation of the historic and lasting impacts this cultural diversity has had on the landscape.

¹² Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 92.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN PRESERVATION IN SAN ANTONIO

With an established legacy of preservation, where can San Antonio's preservation community go next? Committing resources to historic diversity and to inclusive interpretation is one new direction. There are also many different ways to designate and protect cultural, historic, and natural assets, ranging from international to local programs. One recent and significant outcome of San Antonio's preservation movement is that in 2015, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) bestowed the honor of a World Heritage Site designation on the San Antonio Missions, elevating the city's significance to the international level. Brackenridge Park has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 2011, distinguishing this landscape as significant at the local and state levels.

Often, cultural assets overlap in terms of historical and/or environmental relationships. With vision and leadership in place, municipalities and local stewards can leverage these relationships toward longer-term preservation and environmental health efforts and to meet economic goals for their cities. To begin discussion regarding this opportunity in San Antonio, it is helpful to understand the designations that currently exist in the city, to consider their potential relationships, and to consider designations that do not currently exist in the city.

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

UNESCO is an intergovernmental organization established after World War II to "promote peace and change the minds of men,"¹³ and it is often perceived as the "cultural arm" of the United Nations.¹⁴ The UNESCO designation is the global standard for recognizing sites that contain a unique archaeological heritage, and it is thought to be a universal tool for preservation and cultural memory and a driver for development, peace, and intercultural dialogue.¹⁵ Sites are "selected on the basis of six cultural and four natural criteria,"¹⁶ which are not limited to archaeological significance but cover a wide range. To be included on the list, "sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one" of the ten selection criteria.¹⁷ The San Antonio Missions were successfully nominated because they met three of the ten criteria:

Criterion (ii): exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design

Criterion (iii): bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared

13 Lynn Meskell, "UNESCO's World Heritage Convention at 40: Challenging the Economic and Political Order of International Heritage Conservation," *Current Anthropology* 54, no. 4 (2013): 483-94, jstor.org/stable/10.1086/671136. 484.

14 Meskell, "UNESCO's World Heritage Convention at 40," 485.

15 Meskell, "UNESCO's World Heritage Convention at 40," 492.

16 "World Heritage List Nominations," UNESCO World Heritage Centre, accessed June 12, 2019, whc.unesco.org/en/nominations/.

17 "World Heritage List Nominations," UNESCO World Heritage Centre, accessed June 12, 2019, whc.unesco.org/en/nominations/.

Criterion (iv): be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history¹⁸

The Nomination for Inscription summarized the justification for including the San Antonio Missions on this prestigious list as follows:

Closely located along a 12.4-kilometer (7.7-mile) stretch of the San Antonio River basin in southern Texas are five Spanish colonial mission complexes built in the early eighteenth century. According to the Laws of the Indies, missions were required to be at least one day's ride apart, but for various reasons the Franciscan missionaries established the San Antonio Missions closer together than is found anywhere else in the Spanish colonial empire. In spite of their proximity to each other, each mission was planned to be able to succeed on its own and to prepare for eventual secularization....

The resulting ensemble is the most complete and intact example of the Spanish Crown's efforts to colonize, evangelize, and defend the northern frontier of New Spain during the period when Spain controlled the largest empire in the world....

At the heart of the missions are the substantial remains of extensive water distribution systems whose acequias carry the San Antonio River's waters to irrigate nearby labores. These irrigation systems supported a secure source of food for the inhabitants and provided agricultural surpluses that were sold or traded for other goods, giving the missions agricultural and financial independence.... These water distribution systems eminently illustrate an exceptionally important interchange between indigenous peoples, missionaries, and colonizers that contributed to a fundamental and permanent change in the cultures and values of all involved.¹⁹

¹⁸ "San Antonio Missions: Nomination for Inscription on the World Heritage List PDF," 159-61, San Antonio, TX, January 2014, whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/1466.pdf.

¹⁹ "San Antonio Missions: Nomination for Inscription on the World Heritage List PDF," 158, San Antonio, TX, January 2014, whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/1466.pdf."

San Antonio's Acequias 1778



FIGURE 2-9. Illustration of San Antonio's acequia and mission system by 1778, when acequias were used for secular development. Brackenridge Park is labeled at the northern portion of the map. Source: Frank Himes, published in Frank W. Jennings, *San Antonio: the Story of an Enchanted City*

In July 2015, when the United Nations voted to make the San Antonio Missions a World Heritage Site, it became the first in Texas.²⁰ The eighteenth-century sites were built by Franciscan missionaries and demonstrate both the Spanish Crown's colonization, evangelization, and defense efforts and the interweaving of Spanish and Indigenous cultures within the San Antonio River basin. The five missions were founded independently, but together they illustrate a common approach to water distribution, defense, food production, and other activities necessary for colonization, evangelization, and secularization²¹ (**figures 2-9 and 2-10**).

As of this writing, there are twenty-three World Heritage Sites in the United States. The website WorldAtlas say that "of these, ten are cultural, one is mixed, and twelve are natural sites, with most of them being national parks."²² Neither Brackenridge Park nor the approximately twenty-mile length of the San Antonio River from its headwaters to the San Antonio Mission Park are in the UNESCO designation. In other words, a formal recognition of the relationship between the park site and the missions has not been made—this presents

20 Press Release. "United Nations Declares San Antonio's Spanish Missions a World Heritage Site." National Parks Conservation Association, July 6, 2015, accessed June 02, 2019, [nps.gov/articles/538-united-nations-declares-san-antonio-s-spanish-missions-a-world-heritage](https://www.nps.gov/articles/538-united-nations-declares-san-antonio-s-spanish-missions-a-world-heritage)

21 "San Antonio Missions," UNESCO World Heritage List, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, accessed June 2, 2019, whc.unesco.org/en/list/1466.

22 "UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the USA," WorldAtlas.com, March 5, 2019, accessed June 12, 2019, [worldatlas.com/articles/unesco-world-heritage-sites-in-the-united-states-of-america.html](https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/unesco-world-heritage-sites-in-the-united-states-of-america.html).

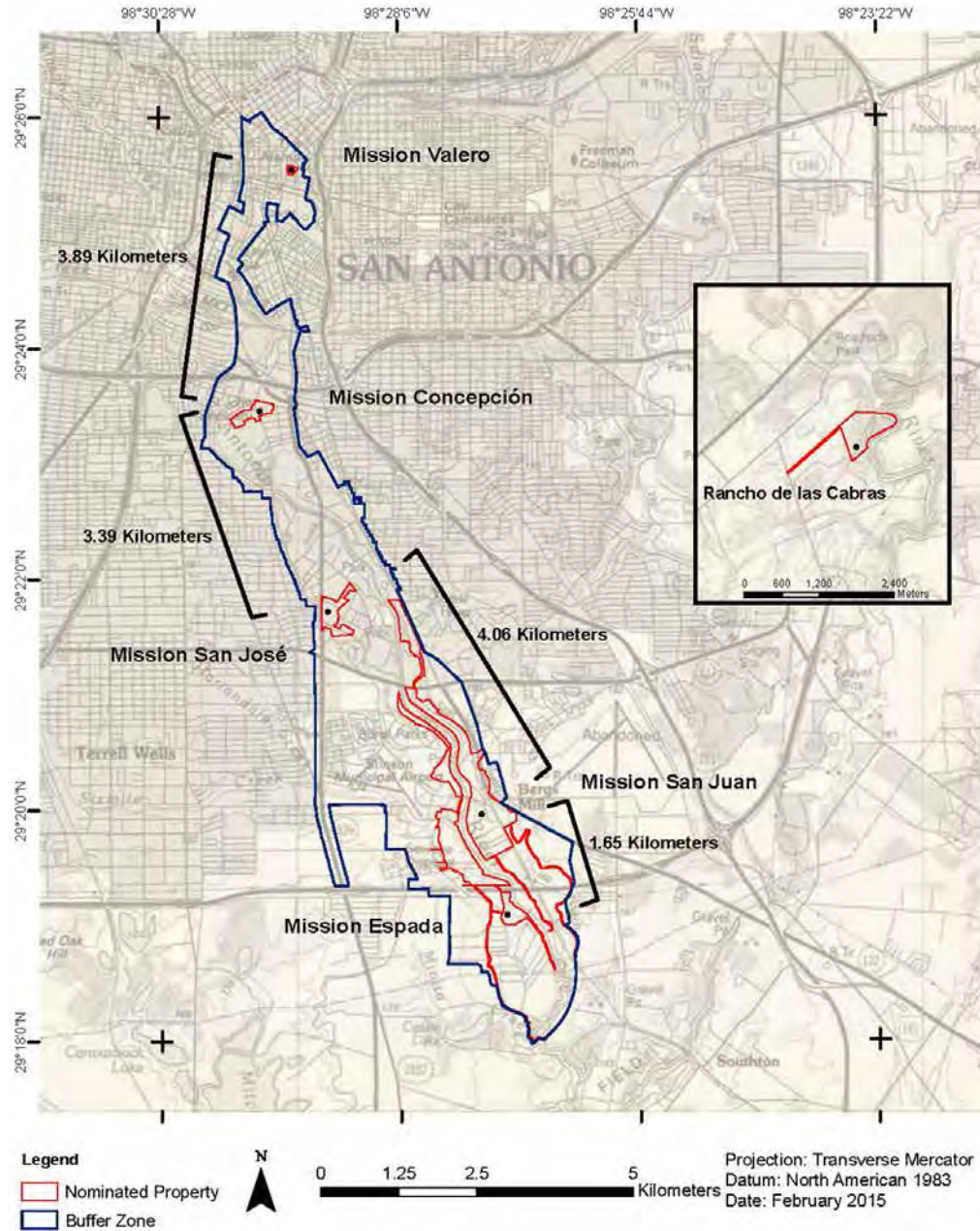


FIGURE 2-10. A map shows the San Antonio missions property included in the UNESCO World Heritage Site Nomination. The nomination began at Mission Valero (later the Alamo), but did not extend north to Brackenridge Park, where the acequia that served the Mission Valero began. Source: "San Antonio Missions: Nomination for Inscription on the World Heritage List"

both a gap and a path forward for San Antonio’s preservation record. That path may not lie within the criteria of the World Heritage Sites, but the UNESCO designation provides an important building block.



FIGURE 2–11. A 2013 excavation of the original Alamo dam that diverted water from the San Antonio River to the Acequia Madre de Valero to deliver water to the mission-turned-fort (Alamo). Source: Darren Abate, *San Antonio Express-News*.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Another building block is the presence of sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In the state of Texas, there are over 3,300 sites listed at the time of this writing, and within San Antonio, there are 138 individual listings.²³ The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) was created by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. This database records and recognizes places “worthy of preservation,”²⁴ and it is maintained by the National Park Service. This program was designed to protect the nation’s historic and archaeological resources²⁵ by encouraging preservation and reuse of historic properties. It was initiated during the 1960s, when urban renewal federal funding prioritized both new highways and suburbs and the demolition of older buildings and neighborhoods.²⁶

The 2011 National Register Nomination for Brackenridge Park states that the park meets three of the four criteria—among these is Criterion D: “Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important to prehistory or history.”²⁷ The National Register Nomination elaborates on this criterion, noting that it is significant for the collection of Prehistoric-Aboriginal archaeology that encompasses Paleoindian (12,500-8,800 BCE), Early to Late Archaic (8,800-1,200 BCE), and Late Prehistoric (1,200-350 BCE) periods as well as archaeological deposits from the Spanish colonial period through the twentieth century.²⁸

23 “National Register of Historic Places Listings in Bexar County, Texas,” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, September 16, 2019, Accessed November 2, 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Register_of_Historic_Places_listings_in_Bexar_County,_Texas.

24 “National Register of Historic Places: FAQs,” National Parks Service, US Department of the Interior, accessed June 10, 2019, nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/faqs.htm.

25 “National Register of Historic Places: FAQs,” National Parks Service, US Department of the Interior, accessed June 10, 2019, nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/faqs.htm.

26 Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 7.

27 Maria Watson Pfeiffer and Steven A. Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” National Register of Historic Places, Texas Historical Commission, San Antonio, TX, June 15, 2011, 3.

28 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 8.

In layman’s terms, the archaeological investigations at Brackenridge Park “have produced evidence of human visitation and occupation extending back 11,000 years,” with prehistoric sites having been “identified north of the park in Olmos Basin, at the headwaters of the San Antonio River, in the park itself, and south of the park.”²⁹

One example of this archaeological heritage was discovered in 2013 on the grounds of the Witte Museum in Brackenridge Park. There, a team of University of Texas at San Antonio archaeologists unearthed remnants of the Acequia Madre de Valero, originally constructed between 1718–1719 to divert water from the San Antonio River to the Mission San Antonio de Valero—the first of San Antonio’s missions to be established. A *San Antonio Express* article published on May 2, 2013, noted that “the dam is the oldest unearthed in San Antonio,”³⁰ and this remains true today (**figure 2-11**).

Many other sites on the National Register are located in the vicinity of Brackenridge Park and the San Antonio Missions, including the Alamo and the Alamo Plaza Historic District, the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, the San Antonio Downtown River Walk Historic District, the Espada Aqueduct, Miraflores Park, and San Pedro Springs Park.³¹ When the astounding archaeological heritage of Brackenridge Park, including the fact that the upper course of the San Antonio River occurs in the park and is the location at which the first missionary acequia was built, is considered collectively with its neighboring National Register sites and with the UNESCO World Heritage Site (which also enjoys a National Register listing), the city’s larger preservation story, including its gaps, begins to unfold.

NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS

National Heritage Areas (NHAs) are yet another designation for cultural assets within a city, and they may hold the key to unlocking the city’s next entrance into preservation and the protection of ecological resources. The National Park Service defines an NHA as

a place designated by Congress where natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These patterns make National Heritage Areas representative of the national experience through the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved in them. Continued use of National Heritage Areas by people whose traditions helped to shape the landscapes enhances their Significance.³²

Although San Antonio has one UNESCO World Heritage Site and numerous National Register sites, there are no National Heritage Areas in the entire state of Texas.

29 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 29.

30 Scott Huddleston, “Long-Buried Parts of Acequia Unearthed,” *San Antonio Express*, May 2, 2013, accessed June 13, 2019, [sfchronicle.com/news/local/article/Long-buried-parts-of-acequia-unearthed-4484433.php](https://www.sfchronicle.com/news/local/article/Long-buried-parts-of-acequia-unearthed-4484433.php).

31 “National Register of Historic Places Listings in Bexar County, Texas,” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, October 23, 2019, accessed November 1, 2019, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Register_of_Historic_Places_listings_in_Bexar_County,_Texas.

32 “National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines,” 2, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, August 2003, accessed June 06, 2019, [nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/feasibility-studies.htm](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/feasibility-studies.htm).

As of March 15, 2019, Congress has designated fifty-five NHAs throughout the country, including within Texas’s bordering states of Louisiana, Arkansas, and New Mexico. NHAs provide long-term benefits such as sustainable economic development, healthier environments and people, improved quality of life, increased community engagement, and the opportunity for education and stewardship.³³

The first NHA was realized under the Reagan administration in 1984. The general attitude under this administration, which came to leadership in 1980, was that governmental regulation was an impediment rather than a benefit, with Reagan declaring, “government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem.”³⁴ In the arenas of preservation and conservation, this outlook propelled the creation of a type of park that prioritized partnerships and management by multiple owners at both state and local levels, as opposed to the traditional National Park Service (NPS) model that is owned and operated by the federal government.³⁵ The outcome was legislation creating the Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor that paved the way for future NHAs. The overall site today spans an eight-hundred and sixty-two mile region, from Chicago to the Illinois River, and includes areas that are rural, urban, industrial, and governmental. The scale of this project and the ability to create multijurisdictional collaboration became emblematic of future NHAs.

The NPS—formally established in 1916, with Yosemite recognized as a national park in 1890, prior to the formation of the NPS—emerged from an era when people viewed governmental regulation more favorably than it would come to be viewed during the Reagan era. Therefore, the major administrative difference between national parks and NHAs is that whereas the NPS is responsible for taking care of the resources that Congress has declared to be important to the nation’s heritage, the people who live in the region are responsible for protecting an NHA, with some assistance from NPS.³⁶

NHAs are also different from other landscape conservation efforts because they are specifically designed to benefit local communities. This can take the shape of economic development or conservation of locally/culturally valued resources.³⁷ Traditional NHAs include watersheds, regional landscapes tied to a distinctive culture, political subdivisions, as well as working landscapes and “worked-out” landscapes (such as an abandoned mine).³⁸ These are “lived-in landscapes,”³⁹ whether they have been “worked” or “lived in” previously or whether they are still integral to daily human commerce, recreation, and social and political systems. This is another way that national parks and NHAs differ. The main component of an NHA is the people who helped define its culture and those who are bearers of the region’s history and its future.⁴⁰ This is key, because NHAs are often realized due to the efforts of local residents,⁴¹ and they are not controlled by NPS in the traditional top-

33 “What Is a National Heritage Area?,” National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, May 29, 2018, accessed June 02, 2019, nps.gov/articles/what-is-a-national-heritage-area.htm.

34 Brenda Barrett and Eleanor Mahoney, “National Heritage Areas: Learning from 30 Years of Working to Scale,” *The George Wright Forum* 33, no. 2 (2016): 164, [jstor.org/stable/44131249](https://www.jstor.org/stable/44131249).

35 Barrett and Mahoney, “30 Years of Working to Scale,” 164.

36 “National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines,” 3, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, August 2003, accessed June 06, 2019, nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/feasibility-studies.htm.

37 Barrett and Mahoney, “30 Years of Working to Scale,” 170.

38 Brenda Barrett, “National Heritage Areas: Places in the Land, Places in the Mind,” *The George Wright Forum* 22, no. 1 (2005): 10-11, [georgewright.org/221barrett.pdf](https://www.georgewright.org/221barrett.pdf).

39 “What Is a National Heritage Area?,” National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, May 29, 2018, accessed June 2, 2019, nps.gov/articles/what-is-a-national-heritage-area.htm.

40 Barrett, “Places in the Land,” 12.

41 Barrett, “Places in the Land,” 12.

down manner; rather they are designated areas that receive federal support and recognition without the regulatory authority.⁴²

The major benefit to local and state groups of an NHA designation is that they are partnering with NPS and are not turning over full responsibility of the resource. In these situations, the role of NPS is to assist in management planning, interpretation, and resource preservation and to provide funding.⁴³ Therefore, NHAs facilitate working partnerships between federal, state, and local groups to preserve in a cost-effective way the nationally important resources that NPS has not been able to address.⁴⁴

The partnerships that make up NHAs allow for the sharing of resources and responsibility, and they also build relationships and trust between a diverse group of stakeholders⁴⁵ who share a regional identity and a common narrative.⁴⁶ NHAs are seen as “venues for partnership” that allow for more resiliency. In 2008, congressionally mandated studies of twelve NHAs and their usage of federal funding showed that “the highest-priority work for all 12 of the NHAs was cultural and natural resource conservation,” with about one-third of the investments having gone toward watershed and river corridor restoration, documentation of cultural practices and folk traditions, and landmark preservation.⁴⁷

DESIGNATING AN NHA

There is currently no law or statute that governs the establishment of an NHA. But in August 2003, the NPS did complete a draft document called the National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines that provides a methodology for obtaining an NHA designation. The first step involves a feasibility study completed by NPS as an order or directive from Congress. Alternatively, local groups can commission an independent study if they want to obtain the NHA designation from Congress.⁴⁸ This study should engage the public, and there must be widespread support from the residents who live in the proposed area. Finally, the submitted proposal must have support from stakeholders, which may include local citizens, nonprofits, private businesses, and local governing bodies.⁴⁹

If undertaken without congressional authorization or NPS oversight, the feasibility study must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which requires an Environmental Assessment (EA), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. If quantifiable negative or positive impacts are identified, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) may also be required. Finally, consultation with State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs), the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and American Indian tribes and tribal organizations is required. These steps are necessary before the Department of the Interior can make a recommendation to Congress to designate an area as an NHA.⁵⁰

42 Barrett and Mahoney, “30 Years of Working to Scale,” 166.

43 Barrett, “Places on the Land,” 14-15.

44 Barrett, “Places in the Land,” 14-15.

45 Barrett and Mahoney, “30 Years of Working to Scale,” 163.

46 Barrett and Mahoney, “30 Years of Working to Scale,” 169.

47 Barrett and Mahoney, “30 Years of Working to Scale,” 167.

48 “Heritage Areas: Background, Proposals, and Current Issues,” EveryCRSReport.com, Congressional Research Service, July 22, 2019, accessed June 06, 2019, [everycrsreport.com/reports/RL33462.html](https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL33462.html).

49 “National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines,” 4, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, August 2003, accessed June 06, 2019, [nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/feasibility-studies.htm](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/feasibility-studies.htm).

50 “National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines,” 5-6.

Although it did not become law, in 1999 the NPS presented to the House of Representatives a set of interim criteria for proposing legislation to designate an NHA. These criteria are as follows:

1. An area has an assemblage of natural, historic, or cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use, and are best managed as such an assemblage through partnerships among public and private entities, and by combining diverse and sometimes noncontiguous resources and active communities;
2. Reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folklife that are a valuable part of the national story;
3. Provides outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, cultural, historic, and/or scenic features;
4. Provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities;
5. The resources important to the identified theme or themes of the area retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation;
6. Residents, business interests, non-profit organizations, and governments within the proposed area are involved in the planning, have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants including the federal government, and have demonstrated support for designation of the area;
7. The proposed management entity and units of government supporting the designation are willing to commit to working in partnership to develop the heritage area;
8. The proposal is consistent with continued economic activity in the area;
9. A conceptual boundary map is supported by the public; and
10. The management entity proposed to plan and implement the project is described.⁵¹

There are eight steps to consider when undertaking an NHA feasibility study to ensure that a comprehensive study is completed. First, if a study area is not defined, then the study team must create a process for determining the appropriate study boundaries. Second, a public involvement strategy that ensures public understanding of the study, maximizes contribution and participation by participants within the study boundary, and proposes tactics to access public support is also needed. A third component is determining how the place is “representative of the national experience,” pulling key themes forward that help tell the story of the region and how it contributes to the “national story.”⁵² The fourth step is completing a Cultural Resource Inventory to determine whether the area is a “nationally distinctive landscape” and which resources support the themes previously outlined.⁵³ Note that “an exhaustive resource inventory may not be necessary,” and instead, “the study team [will need to] focus on identifying a strategic assemblage of natural and cultural resources that relate to the identified themes.”⁵⁴ The fifth step involves evaluating management alternatives to NHA designation for the area, ranging from considering the pros and cons of

51 “National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines,” 4-5.

52 “National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines,” 6-7.

53 “National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines,” 9.

54 “National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines,” 9.

taking “no action” to evaluating the merit in creating an NHA. Intermediate management interventions must also be considered, such as “other types of heritage partnerships, trails, or other NPS assisted or unassisted endeavors.”⁵⁵ The sixth step is determining what the actual heritage area boundaries would be (which may differ from the study area boundaries identified in step one). The seventh step is describing the entity that will manage the NHA and creating a conceptual financial plan.⁵⁶ The final step is evaluating public support as well as the commitment by local partners to the designation of the NHA.⁵⁷

The path to an NHA designation is long and involved, but a real opportunity exists in San Antonio to create a world-class destination for cohesively teaching about our shared heritage from a cultural and ecological perspective. Brackenridge Park and its twelve thousand years of documented history, with the upper course of the San Antonio river flowing through it, collectively present the possibility to fill in existing preservation gaps in the city. An NHA designation would be the impetus for additional resources that would enable the city’s leadership to elevate regional preservation efforts in tandem with progressive conservation efforts for the San Antonio River.

MILESTONES IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRESERVATION

1894	National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty (Great Britain) formed.
1916	National Park Service formed providing philosophical foundation for uniting preservation and conservation movements by targeting the preservation of nonrenewable resources.
1933	The Historic American Building Survey (HABS), a WPA program, records nation’s culture as joint venture of NPS, the Library of Congress, and the American Institute of Architects.
1945	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) chartered.
1949	National Trust for Historic Preservation (United States) chartered to address “preservation of sites, buildings, and objects of national significance or interest.”
1965	International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) established.
1966	Passage of National Historic Preservation Act, including National Register of Historic Places.
1969	Passage of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), requiring Section 106 review for projects using federal funds, thereby conflating the concern for natural and cultural resources into a single program.

55 “National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines,” 9.

56 “National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines,” 11.

57 “National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines,” 12.

SELECTED MILESTONES IN PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION IN SAN ANTONIO⁵⁸

- 1921 Devastating flood occurs.

 Daughters of Republic of TX Alamo Chapter formed by Adina De Zavala.
- 1924 San Antonio Conservation Society, one of the first community preservation groups in United States, founded by thirteen women to save 1859 Market House (razed for street widening a year later) and city’s cultural heritage. Sought to preserve historic built and natural environment “to keep the history of Texas legible and intact to educate the public.”
- 1936 San Antonio Conservation Society purchases Espada Mission acequia aqueduct, the only Spanish structure of its type still in use in the United States.

 Restored San Jose Mission compound dedicated.
- 1937 San Antonio River Authority founded to oversee and protect the San Antonio River.
- 1941 San Jose Mission compound except church ceded to Texas as state park; designated as National Historic Site.
- 1953-1957 Proposed city plans for underground garages beneath Travis Park, Main Plaza, Alamo Plaza, and part of La Villita are finally killed when Texas Supreme Court rules it illegal, ending threat of garages beneath city parks.
- 1957 San Antonio Conservation Society purchases twenty-five acres near Espada dam for Acequia Park.
- 1960 City highway bond issue including North Expressway through Olmos Basin floodplain is defeated; passes the next year. Lawsuit filed by San Antonio Conservation Society and Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.
- 1967 City of San Antonio adopts first historic zoning ordinance and creates a preservation commission. The following year, King William, the first local historic district, was established and members of the Historic and Design Review Commission were appointed.

 San Antonio Missions National Historical Park legislation introduced in Congress.
- 1971 Conservation Society holds first preservation seminar.
- 1974 City hires first Historic Preservation Officer, revises historic districts and landmarks ordinances.

⁵⁸ Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*.

- 1977 National Trust for Historic Preservation presents Crowninshield Award to San Antonio Conservation Society for national impact on historic preservation activities.
- North Expressway project opens as McAllister Freeway; litigation dropped in 1970.
- 1978 San Antonio Missions National Historical Park passed by Congress; opens in 1983.
- 1979 First draft of Brackenridge Park Master Plan presented to community.
- 1993 City master plan includes historic preservation requirements.
- 1998 Brackenridge Park Master Plan is updated.
- 1999 Restoration of San Juan Acequia to maintain rights to the water that historically irrigated Mission San Juan Capistrano and adjacent farmlands.
- 2005 City makes successful legal claim to Miraflores Gardens with help from land survey paid for by San Antonio Conservation Society.
- 2006 Initiation of World Heritage nomination process for the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.
- 2010 San Antonio Conservation Society, San Antonio Zoo, San Antonio Parks Foundation, Brackenridge Park Conservancy, and Friends of Parks halt proposed lease of land at northern edge of park. It would not have been in compliance with adopted 1979 Brackenridge Master Plan.
- 2014 San Antonio's five Spanish Colonial Missions nomination for World Heritage Site submitted to UNESCO. Culmination of eight years of work by NPS, San Antonio Conservation Society, Los Compadres, Archdiocese, and others.
- 2015 ICOMOS endorses the missions' World Heritage nomination and the World Heritage Committee awards World Heritage Status after nine years of work.
- 2016 Preservation advocates block the University of the Incarnate Word's attempt to lease land to build a dormitory/parking garage near Alamo Stadium in Brackenridge Park.
- San Antonio landscape architect and 2014 National Humanities Medal recipient Everett Fly commissioned to produce National Register nomination for historic African American communities in Bexar County.
- 2017 A new Brackenridge Master Plan is adopted.

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CHAPTER 3. PARK DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN IN THE UNITED STATES

Most American municipal parks from the second half of the nineteenth century owe some debt to Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux's Central Park. Ethan Carr notes that "following the declaration of New York City's Central Park as a 'public place' for 'public use' in 1853, hundreds of municipalities developed peripheral tracts of land into pastoral scenery and picturesque woodlands."¹ In 1865, Vaux described Central Park as "the big artwork of the Republic"² (**figures 3-1 and 3-2**). San Antonio is one of the municipalities that followed suit, with Brackenridge Park among those parks that were likely influenced by Central Park. Brackenridge Park's founding fathers also likely drew inspiration from the emergence, beginning in the 1860s, of national parks.

Central Park and the earliest national parks trace their origins to the American picturesque movement (with its beginnings in the English picturesque movement). American municipal parks were also informed by Birkenhead Park (an English predecessor), 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, also known as the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, and the City Beautiful movement that emerged from that fair, and programs such as the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression.

The evolution of parks can also be traced according to their primary uses. Municipal parks in the United States have evolved over the years. Their uses have changed, typically as a result of increasing population densities, the recreational tastes of Americans, and evolving approaches to park conception and design. In the early 1980s, sociologist Galen Cranz categorized the different eras of park design according to changes in four broad uses. In 2004, she updated these categories to include a fifth period of distinct usage.³ She wrote that "these categories summarize the role of city parks within the American social structure

1 Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 18.

2 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 18.

3 Galen Cranz and Michael Boland, "Defining the Sustainable Park: A Fifth Model for Urban Parks," *Landscape Journal* 23, no. 2 (2004): 102–20, doi.org/10.3368/lj.23.2.102.



FIGURE 3–1. View of the mall in Central Park, circa 1902. Recognizing a need for a grand space where citizens could promenade and socialize, this elm-lined formal area became the central spine of the park plan. Source: centralparknyc.com

and the intellectual and moral life of the culture.”⁴ Although overlap exists between the categories, both in terms of time and activity, Cranz’s five broad uses, listed in the following table, roughly correspond to the major movements this chapter elaborates on.

<u>USAGE/CATEGORY</u>	<u>MOVEMENT</u>	<u>TIME PERIOD</u>
The Pleasure Ground	Picturesque	1850–1900
The Reform Park	City Beautiful	1900–1930
The Recreation Facility	Works Progress Administration	1930–1965
The Open-Space System	Historic Preservation	1965–1995
The Sustainable Park	Ecological Conservation	1995–Present

EMERGENCE OF THE AMERICAN PICTURESQUE

Before Central Park, the American sensibility for landscape had been largely shaped by the European tradition of seeing “places as pictures and seeing land as landscape.”⁵ According to historian of the picturesque Christopher Hussey, between 1730 and 1830 in Great Britain, “the relation of all the arts to one another through the pictorial appreciation of nature was so close that poetry, painting, gardening, architecture, and the art of travel may be said to have been fused into the single ‘art of landscape.’”⁶ Through the work of British park “improvers” such as Lancelot “Capability” Brown (1716-1783),

the technology and aesthetics of the modern landscape park emerged in the English countryside...by regrading topography into rolling meadows, by impounding streams and ponds into large lakes, and by planting thousands of trees in scattered groves that framed and directed views.... Such scenes followed visual rules of composition derived (at least indirectly) from landscape painting, descriptive poetry, and of course the existing visual character of British pastureland and woodlots.⁷ (figure 3-3)

4 Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), x.

5 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 11.

6 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 12.

7 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 14-15.

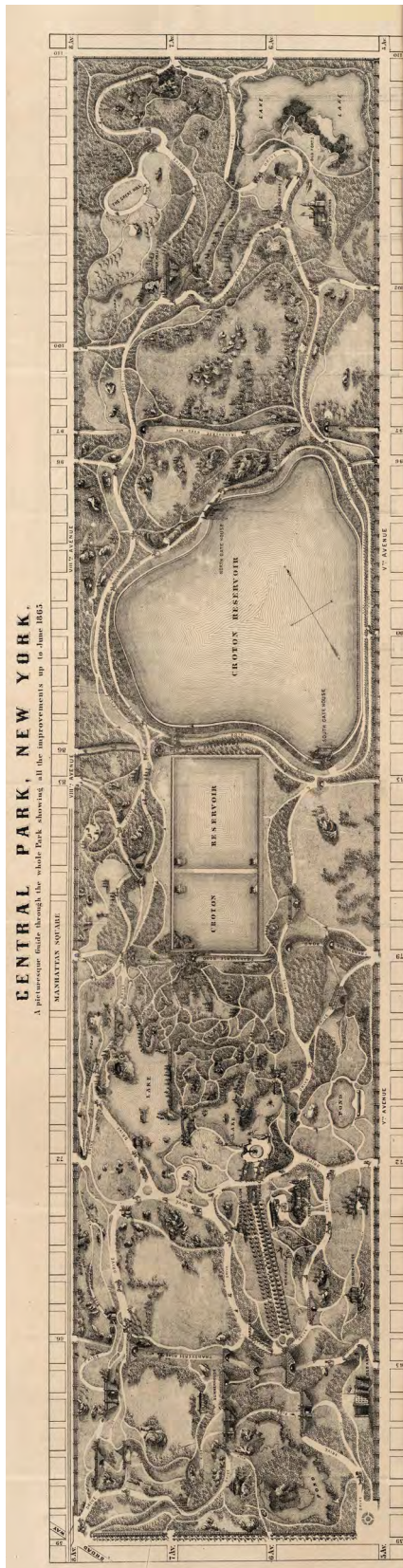


FIGURE 3-2. An early plan of Central Park. The title reads, "A picturesque guide through the whole Park showing all the improvements up to June 1865." Source: David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, davidrumsey.com.

The art historian Nicolas Pevsner defines the English picturesque as

asymmetrical, informal, varied and made of such parts as the serpentine lake, the winding drive and winding path, the trees grouped in clumps and smooth lawn (mown or cropped by sheep) reaching right up to the French windows of the house.⁸ (figure 3-4)

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING (1815–1852)

The language of the picturesque that would distinguish the design of Central Park traces its American origins to the work of Andrew Jackson Downing. Downing was "the first American writer on landscape architectural topics."⁹ With his 1841 book *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America*, Downing became the most popular horticultural authority of his time.¹⁰ The book "was so widely read and had such far-reaching effects at a time when the arts of America were groping forward eagerly for expression and guidance" that it made Downing famous.¹¹ Through his periodical *The Horticulturist* (1849-1852) and through his books, Downing sought to instruct the gentry on the proper ways to develop the home grounds of a suburban estate and, by translation, the larger context of parks (figures 3-5). Downing's ideas drew heavily on the work of the proponents of the romantic landscape movement in eighteenth-century England. He felt, however, that the practice of landscape gardening in the new nation had to reflect America's republican values of "moderation, simplicity, and civic responsibility."¹²

Downing's formula for landscape design included a broad front lawn, plantations of trees, "ponds and lakes in the irregular manner," winding walks and drives, flower gardens, pavilions, bridges, rustic seats, kitchen gardens, and orchards.¹³ What mattered in the picturesque was not so much the selection of plant materials, the architectural style, or the geometry of the landscape plan but the overall general effect.

8 Nikolaus Pevsner. *The Englishness of English Art* (London: Penguin, 1964).

9 Norman T. Newton, *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1978), 260.

10 Newton, *Design on the Land*, 260.

11 Newton, *Design on the Land*, 261.

12 Judith K. Major, *To Live in the New World: A. J. Downing and American Landscape Gardening* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997).

13 Andrew Jackson Downing, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America* (New York: Wiley, 1841), xiv.



FIGURE 3–3. A view of the Blenheim Palace landscape in the English countryside. In 1763, the landscape was transformed and “modernized” when Capability Brown “erased” the formal gardens surrounding the castle, built two dams to create a new 40-acre lake, and designed new serpentine drives and a new entrance. Source: John Thorn, “Try a Little Wilderness: Andrew Jackson Downing”



FIGURE 3–4. Two photos of the Red Book for Vinters, Kent, 1797. Sir Humphrey Repton succeeded Capability Brown as landscape designer for the British aristocracy of the late-18th century, using his unique “Red Books” to illustrate his clients’ existing landscapes adjacent to his improved designs. Source: Yale Center for British Art.



FIGURE 3-5. Two photos of Downing's 1841 *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*. The document introduced the language of the picturesque to Americans. On left, the cover is shown. On right, the inside cover image depicts the grounds of a Dutchess County, NY residence. The hallmarks of Downing's design directives are visible— asymmetry, exotic tree types, curving walks, and seats for relaxation. Source: John Thorn, "Try a Little Wilderness: Andrew Jackson Downing"

The picturesque landscape designer knew that although engineering and horticulture might be science, they were to be deployed for emotional effect; he sought to engineer the emotions through the deployment of plants, of paints, and of buildings.¹⁴

The formula for the picturesque landscape went through many permutations. It traveled from the English countryside and the work of Capability Brown, Humphrey Repton, and John Claudius Loudon to the French suburbs, where it was reincarnated as the *jardin anglaise*. It traveled to the American frontier in the plantation settings of Mount Vernon and Monticello, to estates along the Hudson River Valley in upstate New York, and, finally, to suburban landscapes of the Deep South.

In addition to widely introducing the ideas of the English picturesque to American gardeners, designers, and broad groups of citizens, "Downing's place in the history of landscape architecture rests also upon two other significant acts of service." First, in 1850 he brought the young English architect Calvert Vaux to America. Second, Downing, along with the Romantic poet William Cullen Bryant initiated a journalistic campaign for a public park in New York.¹⁵ These two acts would have lasting impacts.

Seven years after Vaux began practicing in America, he asked Frederick Law Olmsted to join him in the competition for a plan for Central Park.¹⁶ Their design won, and it would catapult Olmsted's career and reputation in America. Olmsted would eventually come to be known as the father of landscape architecture—a field that at the time had yet to be defined in the American economy or psyche.

14 Roger G. Kennedy, *Architecture, Men, Women, and Money in America 1600-1860* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1989), 453.

15 Newton, *Design on the Land*, 266.

16 Newton, *Design on the Land*, 266.

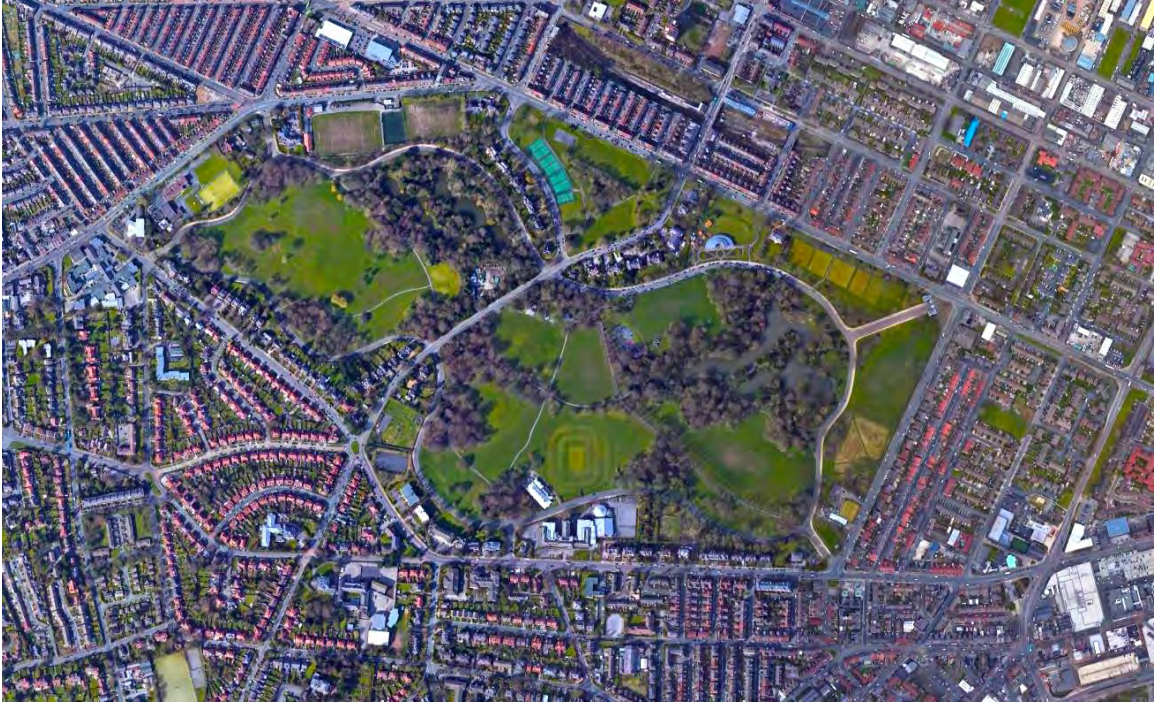


FIGURE 3-6. A contemporary aerial view of the 1847 Birkenhead Park. The park made a lasting impression on Frederick Law Olmsted. Source: googleearth.com



FIGURE 3-7. View of Birkenhead Park with boathouse in center background. Source: parksandgardens.org

BIRKENHEAD PARK (1847) AND FREDERICK LAW OLNSTED (1822–1903)

The translation of the English picturesque to the American picturesque served as the underpinning for Olmsted and Vaux’s design for Central Park, but a park predecessor also informed their design. In 1850, the same year Downing brought Vaux to America, Olmsted visited Birkenhead Park in the city of Liverpool, located in Merseyside, England. Birkenhead Park would serve as a forerunner to the municipal park movement in America, starting with Central Park (**figures 3-6 and 3-7**).

The European revolutions of 1848 were a major impetus in the transition from English park enclaves designed for wealthy private patrons to parks conceived and designed for the urban working class. With the rise of the industrial manufacturing sector, workers migrated to cities to live closer to their places of work. Texas was not isolated from this global trend. Between 1847 and 1861, German immigrants migrated in large numbers to San Antonio as well as to the entire Texas Hill Country.

In England, Birkenhead Park demonstrated the combination of the two trends that were driving the world at that time, the technical and the social. Planned as part of a new industrial community on the Wirral Peninsula across from Liverpool, Birkenhead Park was a response to the rising merchant class’s desire to provide a “Gentlemen’s Park” for the growing cargo port and manufacturing population of Birkenhead. The investors supporting the park were encouraged by the passage of the Third Improvement Act in 1843, which provided public funds for the purchase and construction of public open spaces for the working class.¹⁷

Birkenhead’s civic leaders were also interested in the development of a park site with available land surrounding it that could be developed as homesites facing the open areas of the park. What would later be described as the “proximate principle” was an impetus for park development, with the surrounding landowners anticipating financial gains from the sale of lots adjoining the park property.¹⁸ City commissioners hired Joseph Paxton to design the landscape garden and to incorporate the financing principle in the construction of Birkenhead Park, which was the world’s first municipal park to be funded with local taxpayers’ resources.¹⁹

Olmsted spent several days in Liverpool visiting Birkenhead Park at various times of the day, walking its paths, and observing the activity that occurred within the park boundaries. He recorded his observations in his book *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England*.

Walking a short distance up an avenue, we passed through another light iron gate into a thick, luxuriant, and diversified garden. Five minutes of admiration, and a few more spent studying the manner in which art had been employed to obtain from nature so much beauty, and I was ready to admit that in democratic America there was nothing to be thought of as comparable with this People’s Garden. Indeed, gardening had here reached a perfection that I had never before dreamed of. I cannot undertake to describe the effect of so much taste and skill as had evidently

¹⁷ Newton, *Design on the Land*, 227.

¹⁸ John L. Crompton, “The Genesis of the Proximate Principle in the Development of Urban Parks in England,” *Annals of Leisure Research* 9, nos. 3-4 (2006): 214, doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2006.10816432.

¹⁹ Crompton, “Genesis of the Proximate Principle,” 214-15. “In the contemporary era, the proximate principle is perhaps most obviously manifested in the private sector context of golf courses which are often incorporated as central features of real estate developments.”

been employed; I will only tell you, that we passed by winding paths, over acres and acres, with a constant varying surface, where on all sides were growing every variety of shrubs and flowers, with more than natural grace, all set in borders of greenest, closest turf, and all kept with consummate neatness.²⁰

Many of the ideas displayed at Birkenhead, translated from the great English estate garden tradition and its foundations in the picturesque, were further translated and amplified at Central Park.

THE BEGINNING OF AMERICA’S PUBLIC PARKS (1850–1899)

CENTRAL PARK AND THE AMERICAN PLEASURE GROUND

During the colonial and most of the antebellum period, parks were similar in size and scale to parks in European cities and urban centers. They related to densely populated areas and were a brief respite from the urban experience. Jackson Square in New Orleans is an example of such an urban park, often the size of a city block and originally laid out as a military parade and training ground that followed the European model for a park located as a focus within a district, neighborhood, or city.

Cemeteries, which emerged in the US in the 1830s, preceded the concept of large parks for the public; cemeteries were used not only for burial, but also for strolling and picnicking. The development of large parks, designed to mimic the healthful qualities and psychological benefits of country living, became the goal of US city planners and designers during the 1840s, as urban centers became more congested from growth and immigration. Those who could afford to looked for places to live that provided convenient access to the commerce and society of the city but also offered the spaciousness and quiet of rural living. This was particularly true of cities on the eastern seaboard, where early industrialization produced overcrowding and unhealthy living conditions. This trend toward larger parks was first realized in its most complete manifestation in America at Central Park in New York City, which “was the first public park developed in the context of what became the urban park movement.”²¹

Consisting of multiple recreational opportunities, large passive areas, and water bodies—both recreational and institutional (the city reservoir)—and providing for passive activities such as strolling, taking carriage rides, picnicking, listening to music, and boating, Central Park quickly came to represent the ideal urban park. It also represented what Cranz referred to as the Pleasure Ground park (**figures 3-8 and 3-9**).

In Europe, the “pleasure gardens of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been designed according to three rules prescribing the relationship between nature and art: (1) the garden should orient itself to the image of nature; (2) in mirroring nature, it should be differentiated from the surrounding landscape and recognizable as something different; and (3) this difference should not be an unnatural contrast but rather a heightening of nature in the image of nature and reason.”²²

20 Frederick Law Olmsted. *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England* (New York: Putnam, 1852), 62.

21 Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, xi.

22 Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, 24.



FIGURE 3–8. A contemporary aerial view of Central Park. The photo demonstrates the variety of spatial shapes and scales, providing a range in the experience for park users. Source: smithsonianmag.com



FIGURE 3–9. The circuit of roadways in Olmsted and Vaux’s plan for Central Park were important places to see and to be seen. “While intended for the enjoyment of all, Central Park was the perfect setting for the wealthy to display the splendor of their carriages and attire.” Source: Bernd H. Dams and Andrew Zega, *Central Park, NYC: An Architectural View*

Olmsted and Vaux borrowed from the ideals of their British counterparts to develop a park that provided an experience of pastoral meadows and picturesque woodlands and that would “preserve, reveal, and often enhance the existing scenic characteristics of a place by regrading, planting, and otherwise ‘improving’ as necessary to create calculated visual compositions.”²³ Both men understood the complementary yet conflicting purposes of public parks—to promote the individual and personal appreciation of natural beauty while also providing spaces to accommodate a larger, more diverse population so that they may experience that beauty. Olmsted and Vaux also knew that achieving these goals would require the “‘assemblage of movement of great crowds,’ as long as ‘the driving room, riding room, walking room, skating, sailing and playing room’ were ‘not only liberally designed,’ but ‘studied and adapted to the natural circumstances of the site with the greatest care.’”²⁴

From aesthetic and design perspectives, all of the municipal Pleasure Ground parks that emerged between 1850 and 1899 were primarily designed using picturesque principles—utilizing the democratic informality of winding roads and walks and “an overall composition of smoothness, harmony, serenity, and order, with an occasional reminder of the awesome grandeur of a mountain, a deep crevasse, long waterfall, or steep crag.”²⁵

But the pastoral surroundings could be compromised by the density and popularity of the suburbs. As a response to the dual ideal of the park surrounded by suburbs, Olmsted envisioned parks and parkways as the thread that would stitch together residential developments, thereby inserting landscape ribbons and nodes to buffer housing density. Much of the Central Park budget was reserved for the circulation strategy of separating vehicular routes with pedestrian and equestrian paths. Bridges, tunnels, and underpasses eliminated crossings so traffic could flow unimpeded. The result was a “refined system of roads and paths, as well as places to congregate and promenade, all were combined in a single work of landscape art: the public park.”²⁶ By making movement through the park as effortless and carefree as possible, “the designers allowed for thousands of individual visitors to appreciate landscape scenery personally.”²⁷

Central Park became the gold standard for park development in America and represented a successful diagram for cities and their aspirations for making municipal parks. By the 1890s, hundreds of American cities had developed parks.²⁸ Because of the effect that parks had on adjacent lands, they became a component of city planning. Some forty years after the implementation of Central Park, considerations and decisions related to New York’s suburban development and the connectivity design moves at Central Park would have provided strong points of reference when Brackenridge Park was envisioned.

23 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 18.

24 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 21-22, quoting Olmsted and Vaux’s “Preliminary Report for Laying Out a Park in Brooklyn, New York.”

25 Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, 24.

26 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 18.

27 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 22.

28 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 24.

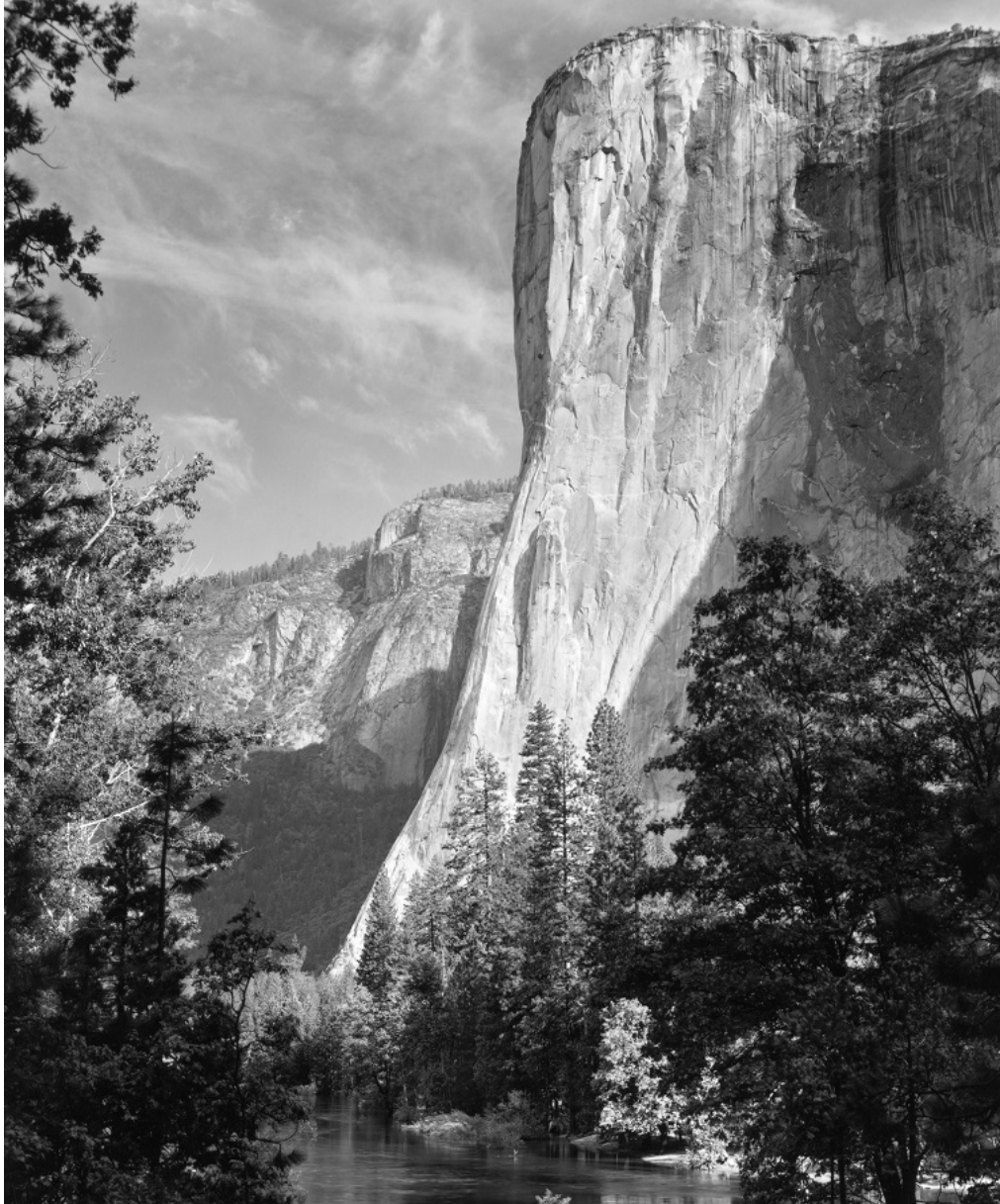


FIGURE 3-10. Ansel Adams' "El Capitan," Yosemite. Adams' photographs of Yosemite, beginning in 1950, widely exposed the grandeur of the natural wonder to the American public. Source: anseladams.com

THE FIRST NATIONAL PARK (1872)

During the same fifty-year period that America's municipal parks were being created, the federal government was acquiring and developing parks on a larger scale. As environmentalists joined real estate developers to plan city growth, public and private interests prodded state and federal agencies to secure and preserve remote scenic areas. In 1864, Congress granted Yosemite Valley to the state of California, effectively making it a state park rather than a national park. In return the state would "manage the scenic wonder for public use, resort, and recreation...inalienable for all time."²⁹ Although different in character, both Central Park and Yosemite Valley "expressed the cultural value placed on landscape beauty"³⁰ (figure 3-10).

²⁹ Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 11.

³⁰ Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 11.

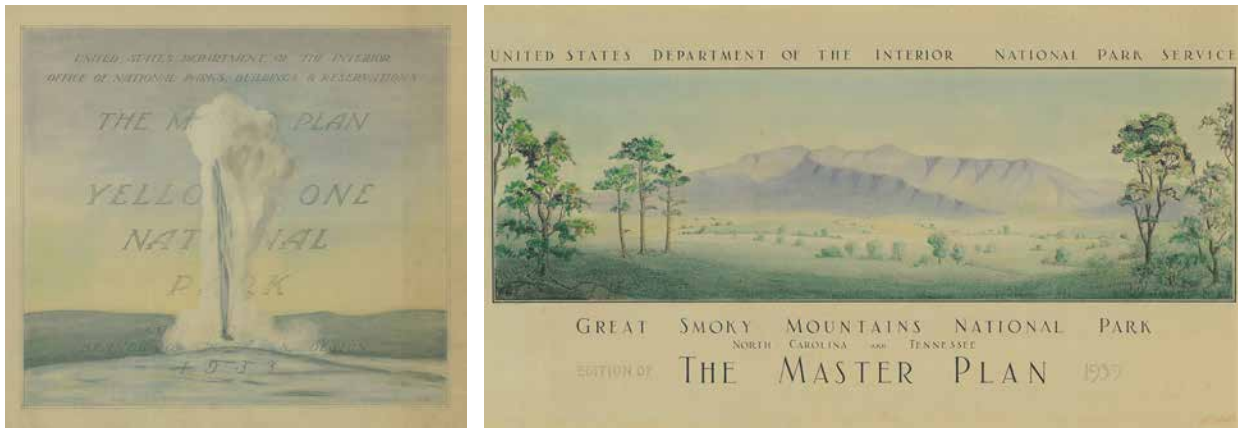


FIGURE 3–11. 1933 Master Plan for Yellowstone National Park and 1939 Master Plan for Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Early master plans for the National Parks, which preceded Cultural Landscape Reports, were essential to managing these sites. Source: National Archives, Record of the National Park Service.

National parks emerged from a fascination with the sublime. Carr notes that “Sublime (or awesome) scenery, epitomized by Niagara Falls, held a particularly powerful hold on the American imagination.”³¹ Along with picturesque principles influencing municipal parks, this principle also would be translated to America’s sublime wilderness landscapes. “From the pastoral scenes of the Connecticut River Valley to the sublime spectacle of Niagara, British picturesque aesthetics underlay the American tourist’s awakening for landscape beauty.”³² In the national parks, picturesque principles would be applied in the form of providing visitors with framed views.

The governor of California, Frederick F. Low, named Olmsted as the chairman of the commission overseeing proposals for Yosemite’s development. Olmsted proposed what he called “the noblest park or pleasure ground in the world.”³³ He suggested the construction of a one-way carriage loop (up one side of the valley and down the other) “which shall enable visitors to make a complete circuit...reach all the finer points of view.” This was a classic park carriage drive, in other words, “with suitable resting spots and turnouts...at frequent intervals.” The circuit drive “would be complemented by a system of pedestrian paths leading to points of view accessible only by foot.”³⁴ Olmsted took measures to prevent “injury to the scenery” and to “minimize the impact of visitors by concentrating their activities through a thoughtful development of the valley.”³⁵ “The formula for the careful, minimal development of Yosemite Valley was based on the formal and theoretical precedents of the landscape park, a genre Olmsted had already exploited with great success to accommodate large numbers of tourists seeking picturesque scenery in a public setting.”³⁶ Soon after he returned to New York in 1865, however, Olmsted’s plan for Yosemite would be tabled by the park commission.³⁷

31 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 12.

32 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 12.

33 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 28.

34 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 29.

35 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 28-29.

36 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 29.

37 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 30.

In 1872, Congress approved an act to create Yellowstone National Park. The park, which occupied lands in not one but two states, Wyoming and Montana, became the first national park by default, because “the new park remained under the jurisdiction of the secretary of the interior...since there was no state government to receive a land grant.”³⁸ But with no precedent for federal management of a park, it would take many years and development pressure from the completion of a nearby railroad line before the government implemented a process for more comprehensive design and management of Yellowstone. In 1891, Hiram M. Chittenden, “completed and improved most of the park’s road system: a ‘general circuit or belt line connecting all the important centers of interest...’ The Grand Loop formed the basis of the 150-mile figure-eight loop drive still in use today”³⁹ (**figures 3-11**).

Chittenden knew and respected Olmsted’s work, and in his approach to Yellowstone, he “embraced municipal park engineering and design theory.”⁴⁰ According to landscape historian Ethan Carr, Yellowstone’s development “comprised an analogy with municipal landscape design,” and especially with Central Park.⁴¹

By 1911, there were “twelve existing national parks,”⁴² but they received modest federal appropriations due to limited visitorship:

The lack of interest on the part of Congress, it was felt, could be directly attributed to the apparent indifference of the traveling public. Increased appropriations would come only with increased use of the parks, and increased appropriations were needed, ironically, because poorly planned visitor accommodations were already degrading scenery and polluting natural systems in several parks.⁴³

At the inception of municipal and national parks, the design intent overwhelmingly “embodied the higher hopes of modern progress. From Manhattan Island to Yosemite Valley, the idea and the formal design components of the landscape park proved adaptable to the needs of cities and the nation to demonstrate the vitality” of America.⁴⁴ Brackenridge Park’s visionaries could not have avoided these national hopes and their role in park making. The landscape of Brackenridge Park provided them with the opportunity to apply picturesque principles in a blended manner—applying them toward a Pleasure Ground municipal park but on a site that contained the kinds of wilderness qualities that national parks were beginning to preserve. As businessmen, they must have been especially attuned to carving out a place of significance for San Antonio in the larger national fabric.

38 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 31.

39 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 32.

40 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 32.

41 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 33.

42 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 2.

43 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 3.

44 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 34.



FIGURE 3–12. Aerial perspective of the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago World's Fair, 1893. Source: posterazzi.com

CITY BEAUTIFUL MOVEMENT AND THE REFORM PARK (1900–1930)

Around the turn of the century, a new movement emerged. The City Beautiful movement grew out of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago⁴⁵ (figure 3-12). The exposition was intended to introduce America to “the products of men’s handiwork and mechanical skill”⁴⁶ from around the world. Through its collection of exhibits at a grand scale—including art galleries, electrical light displays, agricultural and transportation advancements, horticultural displays, and replicas of statuary, all set within stark white classical buildings and against a park-like backdrop—Americans were introduced to a version of the world.

The fair “was the unprecedented awakening of public interest in civic design.... The country had never seen anything like it before, and to most visitors the fair was like a dream of unimaginable opulence. A vibrant new interest was aroused far and wide in what design could do for America’s towns and cities.”⁴⁷ The City Beautiful movement that it prompted shifted the role of the city as a symbol of economic development and industrialization to one of beauty and aesthetics. The Columbian Exposition was the first demonstration in America that cities could be designed.⁴⁸ As a result, city centers that featured plazas surrounded by museums, courthouses, offices, and other public buildings were often planned as the heart of City Beautiful schemes.

Programming for early municipal parks had primarily focused on passive uses, but it became increasingly important to policy makers to provide more cultural activities within park grounds. During the City Beautiful movement, there was a shift in park aesthetics, as civic additions such as museums, conservatories, architectural memorials, and zoos were included within large municipal parks. Park settings were made for grand buildings

45 “The City Beautiful Movement,” New York Preservation Archive Project, accessed June 3, 2019, nypap.org/preservation-history/city-beautiful-movement/.

46 Newton, *Design on the Land*, 365.

47 Newton, *Design on the Land*, 367.

48 “The City Beautiful Movement,” New York Preservation Archive Project.

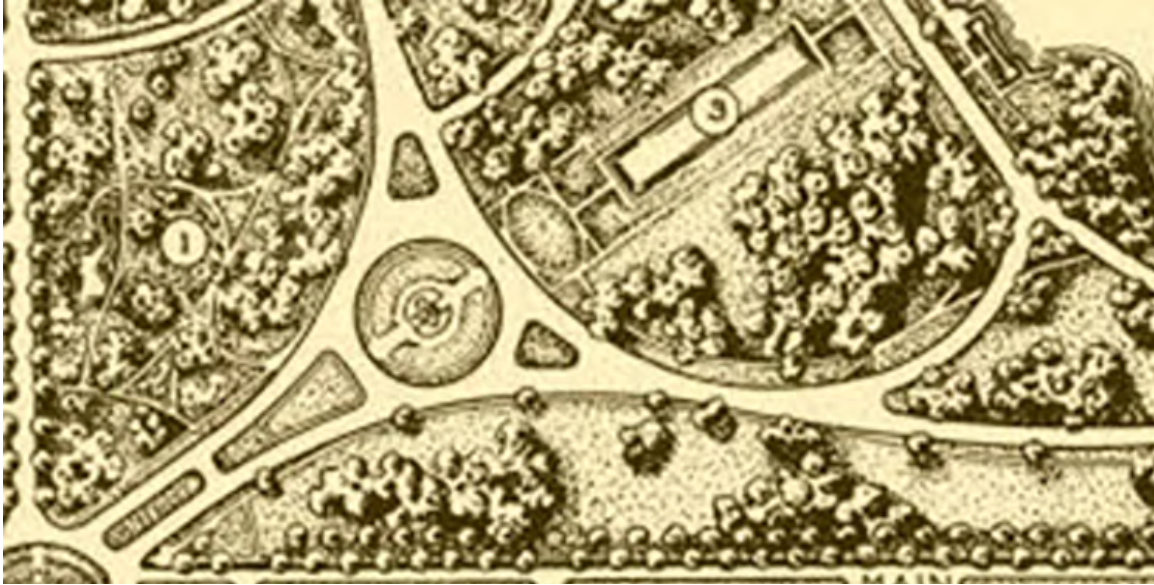


FIGURE 3–13. In 1914, Houston industrialist George Hermann deeded Houston 285 acres for the creation of a municipal park across from Rice Institute. Landscape architect and planner George Kessler designed the formal aspects of the park’s entry and water features, including the “grand basin,” and an elliptical island with a Sunken Garden. Source: hermannpark.org.



FIGURE 3–14. A 1932 photo of the main entrance to Houston’s Hermann Park shows the manifestation of Kessler’s plan. Source: *Houston Chronicle*

and monuments rather than scenes of landscape beauty⁴⁹ (figures 3-13 and 3-14). The Columbian Exposition “justified the museums, botanical gardens, zoological gardens, aquariums, arboretums, meteorology observatories, and music halls we see in parks today.”⁵⁰ Like many design trends, it took several years for City Beautiful to reach San Antonio, which experienced the movement’s influence beginning around 1915.

Cranz refers to the evolution of municipal parks during the period from 1900 to 1930 as the era of the “Reform Park,” noting that it grew out of trends that developed in the late nineteenth century that were rooted in social ideas about the health of the average citizen. There was a general social attitude that citizens had the right to participate in activities that both revived the soul through communing with nature (an opportunity the Pleasure Ground park had provided) and stimulated the physical body through active outdoor recreation. Whereas early park programming involved passive and unstructured activities, the dawn of a new century brought new ideas about how parks should be used and organized. Central to this change in perspective was the idea that organized activities planned by a recreational specialist were the most effective means to bring exercise and fresh air to the masses. In 1906, the Playground Association of America formed and became the leading force in programming theory for urban parks.⁵¹

Baseball, football, art classes, gardening, and nighttime activities became the norm for urban parks focused on recreation and leisure. During the 1920s, “golf for everybody” became the goal of recreation departments, and parks with enough open space installed courses throughout the country.

The design of the Reform Park fell increasingly to park employees and thus reflected the current ideas of planned recreation, with less emphasis on the healing power of picturesque aesthetics and more emphasis on the active uses planned for the park.

The rationale of reform park design was as highly evolved and consistent as that of pleasure ground design, but virtually antithetical to it; it represented much more than an erosion of the older ideal. Thus water was not used for psychic effects but for practical ones.⁵²

Architecturally, the theories of the kinds of buildings that could be included in a park were carried over to the reform movement from the picturesque. “Permanent buildings were excluded if their purpose was not considered compatible with that of a playground or small park. Accordingly, museums were permissible, but courthouses and schools were not.”⁵³

49 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 36.

50 Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, 14.

51 Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, 66.

52 Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, 88.

53 Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, 96.



FIGURE 3–15. A photo of the Vulcan colossal sculpture in Vulcan Park, facing the downtown Birmingham skyline. Source: [jstor.org/stable/40947144](https://www.jstor.org/stable/40947144)



FIGURE 3–16. The Dreyfous Bridge is an art deco bridge in New Orleans City Park designed and implemented as a WPA project. Source: Works Progress Administration

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION AND THE RECREATION FACILITY (1930 –1965)

Brought on by far-reaching changes in workplace rules and growing leisure time in the middle class, the park of the recreation era sought not only to provide places of recreation—both passive and active—but also to respond to public demand for newer opportunities for physical exercise as well as staged entertainment events. This additional emphasis added a new layer of commercialization onto the previous layers of aesthetic stimulation and organized recreation.

During the Great Depression, parks nationwide provided huge opportunities for employment of hundreds of workers doing basic tasks with rudimentary tools under several New Deal programs (**figures 3-15 and 3-16**). Headed first by the Reconstruction Finance Administration and by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), Depression-era projects updated the infrastructure, installed new recreational areas and buildings, and virtually remade the landscape of some parks. These kinds of changes are especially prominent in Brackenridge Park, where an extensive list of items was accomplished with the aid of WPA funds and workers. During this period, approximately \$90,000 was earmarked for projects to improve the infrastructure of Brackenridge Park and its zoo as well as of Koehler Park. Investments included the construction of rock retaining walls along the San Antonio River to control erosion. The city forester, Stewart King, who became a noted landscape architect, supervised a project to build a drive—Tuleta Drive—from Broadway to the recreation area at Brackenridge.⁵⁴

Later in this period, other changes occurred in urban parks. World War II reduced park budgets, and they improved little following the war. Due to the continuing shortage of funding, staff was reduced, and plantings were simplified. “Economy...led to the removal of previous planting, especially shrubbery, though here decisions to strip parks rather than fund the supervision and maintenance of planted areas could be justified as proceeding from concern for safety and ease of surveillance.”⁵⁵

With the end of World War II and the return of war veterans, a veritable boom in population occurred, characterized by large numbers of middle-class families with young children. It was during this time that the “small children’s amusement park[s], sometimes called Kiddieland, Storyland, or Fairyland,” were constructed across the country.⁵⁶

Another New Deal program, the National Youth Administration, was also responsible for development in the park, including the second low-water crossing and part of the Sunken Garden Theater.

⁵⁴ Maria Watson Pfeiffer and Steven A. Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” National Register of Historic Places, Texas Historical Commission, San Antonio, TX, June 15, 2011, 65.

⁵⁵ Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, 123.

⁵⁶ Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, 126.

PARK PRESERVATION AND THE OPEN-SPACE SYSTEM (1965–MID-1990S)

Increasingly, parks began to be viewed as more than just recreational opportunities and entertainment venues. The importance of open space with no programming or prescribed uses gained wider acceptance within urban park planning, and such plans were increasingly implemented due to further budgetary constraints brought on in part by “wholesale middle-class flight from the inner city” and the resulting loss in tax revenue for the maintenance of urban infrastructure and employment.⁵⁷

“Anything goes” became the mantra of park planners and theoreticians who increasingly saw their influence diminishing and their user base disappearing. Although this attitude pervaded the era culturally and physically, city boosters continued their attempts to stimulate park attendance and user satisfaction. As such, parks updated their programming to include trampoline, motocross, and other new and more urban activities.

An important milestone was reached during this era when, in 1963, the “National Park Service declared Central Park and Prospect Park as National Historic Landmarks, making their preservation, as opposed to remodeling, important and possible.”⁵⁸ This decision ushered in an era of park preservation that coincided with the expansion of interstate highways. Included in the concept of preservation was to “preserve the historic legacy of the parks, not just responding to present demands for their services”⁵⁹ (figures 3-17 and 3-18).

57 Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, 137.

58 Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, 135.

59 Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, 141.



FIGURE 3–17. Pictured is the 1985 draft plan for rescuing New York’s Central Park from decades of neglect. The plan was a touchstone for future park preservation planning in the US. It emphasized the critical role that consistent management of both natural and built components of the park played in long-term preservation. Source: Elizabeth R. Barlow, *Rebuilding Central Park*

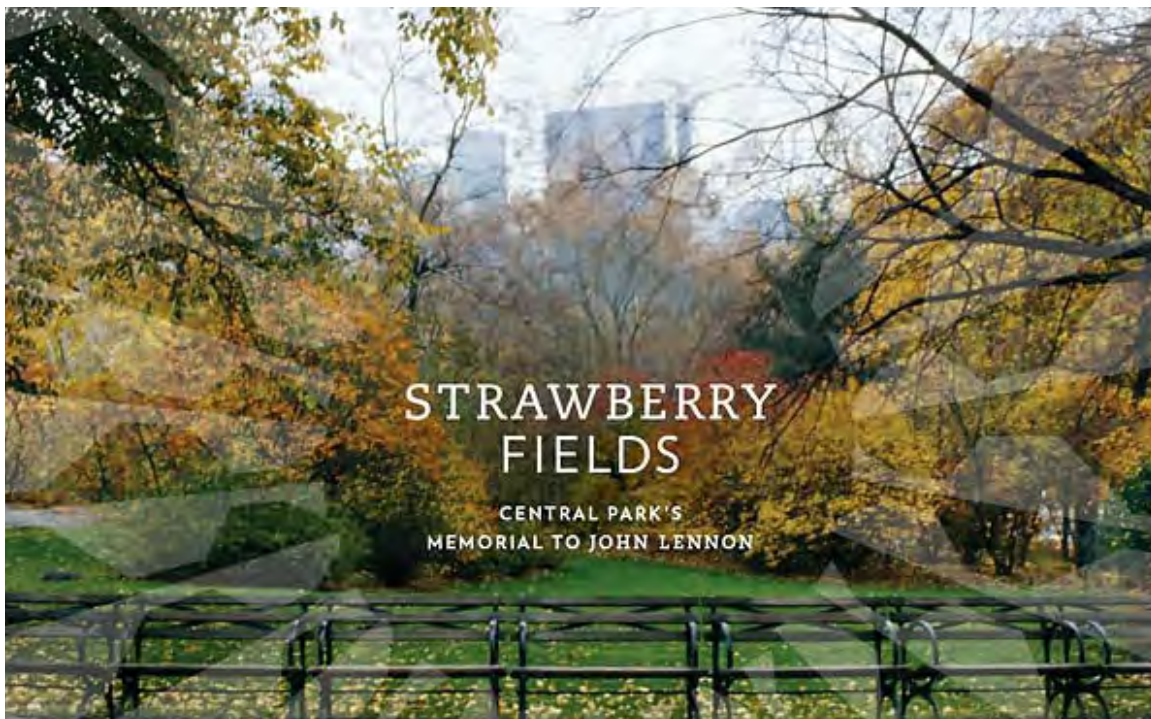


FIGURE 3–18. The ability of park planners to respond organically to changes over time has been key to Central Park’s support by the city and community. Strawberry Fields, shown here, was designed to be carefully inserted without interrupting the overall character of the park. It was designed after public outcry and Yoko Ono’s gift to memorialize John Lennon in the park that he loved gained traction. When jogging became popular, auto roadways were closed to cars during morning and evening running hours. Source: Sara Cedar Miller, *Strawberry Fields: Central Park’s Memorial to John Lennon*

THE SUSTAINABLE PARK (1995–PRESENT)

Today, according to Cranz, “ecological problems may be counted among our most pressing social problems,”⁶⁰ and as cities grapple to become more sustainable, parks have begun to contribute to their ecological restoration. According to Cranz, the model for sustainable park development includes three general attributes: “(1) self-sufficiency in regard to material resources and maintenance, (2) solving larger urban problems outside of park boundaries, and (3) creating new standards for aesthetics and landscape management in parks and other urban landscapes.”⁶¹ In this fifth era of park design, citizen participation, ecological education, and policy implications fall under the aegis of park administration.

While attempting to minimize harmful impacts to natural resources and the climate, the sustainable development movement attempts to “balance ecosystem/environment protection, economic development, and quality of life.”⁶² The park is now viewed as a tool for creating sustainable cities, with a sustainable city being defined as a place in which ecological and environmental systems are protected, and decent employment, housing, commerce, and lifestyle opportunities are attainable.⁶³ There is now a pressure on parks to be spaces that mitigate urban heat islands, improve water quality, manage stormwater, mitigate habitat loss, and facilitate the adaptation of our cities to climate change. This era of park design is an attempt to reincorporate nature into cities. There are relatively simple on-site sustainable solutions such as redesigning our streetscapes to include trees and vegetation, permeable paving, and stormwater storage capacity, while others are more complex and involve rethinking infrastructure and transportation systems.⁶⁴

This park movement looks at systems holistically—for example, an urban park might contribute to microclimate cooling, economic stimulation, and the mental health of park visitors. Dorothy C. Ibes interprets this in a piece called “Sustainable Urban Park Systems,” in which she explains that sustainability is the “balance and maintenance of social, financial, and natural capital.”⁶⁵

60 Cranz and M. Boland, “Defining the Sustainable Park.”

61 Cranz and M. Boland, “Defining the Sustainable Park.”

62 Cranz and M. Boland, “Defining the Sustainable Park.”

63 Efraim Ben-Zadok, review of *The Sustainable City*, by Steven Cohen, *Journal of Urban Affairs* 41, no. 3 (2019), 419–21, doi.org/10.1080/07352166.2018.1507209.

64 Daniel C. Esty, *A Better Planet: Forty Big Ideas for a Sustainable Future* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 342.

65 Dorothy C. Ibes, “Sustainable Urban Park Systems,” *Cities and the Environment (CATE)* 7, no. 2, art. 8 (2014): 1, digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cate/vol7/iss2/8.

Brackenridge Park's developmental evolution reflects the trend in sustainable parks in several ways. First, there is the rich history of water rights and access to the San Antonio River and the acequias; the case can be made that Brackenridge has always played a role in creating "self-sufficiency in regard to material resources" and "solving larger urban problems." The trend continued with the implementation of the San Antonio River Tunnel, at the southern end of the park, which protects downtown San Antonio and the River Walk from flooding and droughts. Today, a greater importance is being placed on improving the ecology of the park in a way that enables humans to be immersed in the landscape. This Brackenridge Park is evidence that the park staff is making strides toward creating a sustainable park, and central to this report is the eco-restoration of the San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor and the vegetation/soils/hydrology systems.

A broad understanding of the development and evolution of America's municipal parks and a peripheral view into the origins of the first national parks provide understanding of Brackenridge on a continuum of US park history. The Site History section of the CLR, which provides a chronological history of Brackenridge Park, further and more specifically reinforces the fact that Brackenridge exists on this continuum.

CHAPTER 4. AMERICAN TOURISM AND AUTOMOBILES IN PARKS

Social, technological, and economic changes unfolded against the backdrop of the development of America’s municipal and national parks. The rise of tourism in America and the rise of the automobile are two examples of such changes. A cursory look at the early inclusion and usage of roads in parks enlivens the understanding of Brackenridge Park beyond its place on the continuum of park history. This context provides a basis for more clearly understanding the San Antonio park in the language of its regional vernacular.

THE RISE OF AMERICAN TOURISM

Few people traveled for pleasure in America until the early 1790s, but an increasing interest in American landscapes around that time prompted a rising number of Americans to tour the country. Tourists were in pursuit of picturesque travel. “The object of picturesque travel,” according to art scholar Bruce Robertson, “was the discovery of the particular beauty in ‘the scenery of nature.’”¹ Tourists sought out “the ingredients of landscape—trees—rocks—broken-grounds—woods—rivers—lakes—plains—vallis [sic]—mountains.”² Moreover, they desired that these scenic elements be designed or composed so they could be viewed as if in a “natural” frame in which “distances should be contrasted: light and dark, high and low, rocky and wooded, cultivated and wild”³ (figure 4-1).

By the 1820s, Americans were fully enamored with picturesque scenery. Those who could afford to became sightseers, drawn to places of sublime natural beauty such as Niagara Falls and the Hudson River Valley and to the more pastoral scenes of America’s broad cultivated river valleys, such as that of the Connecticut River.⁴ The American tourism industry was well established by the 1830s, with popular hotels and spas, scenic attractions, and passable roads and routes.⁵

1 Bruce Robertson, “The Picturesque Traveler in America,” *Views and Visions* (Washington, DC: The Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1986), 189.

2 Robertson, “Picturesque Traveler in America,” 189.

3 Robertson, “Picturesque Traveler in America,” 189.

4 Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 12.

5 Robertson, “Picturesque Traveler in America,” 189.



FIGURE 4-1. A painting by William Guy Wall entitled “Cauterskill Falls on the Catskill Mountains, 1826-1827,” depicts the kind of picturesque landscapes travelers sought out. Source: Ellwood C. Parry, III, *Views and Visions*.

Travel became so popular that in the early nineteenth century “the United States was being traversed by tourists both foreign and American.”⁶ Prior to the Civil War (1861–1865), travel for pleasure was an activity undertaken mostly by the elite. Some traveled to spas or mineral springs to “cure an ailment or to maintain health.”⁷ Some traveled to purely scenic destinations. After the Civil War, the development of the railroad network expanded travel possibilities.⁸ People vacationed at the Jersey Shore and Florida coast, in major cities, and at mountain campsites. Since transportation was slow, vacations required much planning and were therefore extended in duration.⁹

Early tourism was not limited to the East Coast and the Florida coast. San Antonio promoted itself as a winter destination to affluent residents of the Northeast and the midwestern hub of Chicago (**figure 4-2**). Long before the WPA-era development of San Antonio’s River Walk, the missions, golfing amenities, and Brackenridge Park were all promoted as major attractions for East Coast tourists. In its first permutation as a pleasure ground park, Brackenridge Park was promoted as a “natural” park. As a 1908 *San Antonio Express* article stated, “If one is fortunate to possess a carriage or motor car, a journey may be taken to the more secluded recesses of Brackenridge Park, where the scenery is still unspoiled by the mechanical touch of the landscape gardener.”¹⁰ In 1916, with the opening of the golf course, which was one of the first in the South, the city promoted major tournaments and advertised the course through national travel magazines and newspaper articles.

6 Robertson, “Picturesque Traveler in America,” 189.

7 Livia Gershon, “How American Tourism Began,” *JSTOR Daily: Education & Society*, JSTOR, June 13, 2016, accessed May 29, 2019, [daily.jstor.org/how-tourism-began/](https://www.jstor.org/stable/4471111).

8 Gershon, “How American Tourism Began.”

9 Gershon, “How American Tourism Began.”

10 “Opportunities to Move Around on the Day of Rest,” *San Antonio Express*, August 2, 1908, accessed November 6, 2019, [newspapers.com/image/30933621/](https://www.newspapers.com/image/30933621/).



FIGURE 4-2. A January 1917 article discusses San Antonio's ability to compete with California and Florida for northern tourists. The Brackenridge Park golf course, "old quarry," and zoological collection in a "wonderful natural setting" are noted as tourist draws. Source: *San Antonio Express-News*, published in *The Portal to Texas History*, University of North Texas Libraries

In the 1920s, San Antonio caught the attention of Henry Ford, who promoted automobile ownership by sending photographers and filmmakers throughout the United States to document sites where auto travel and tourism could thrive. Brackenridge Park was one of those sites.

PARKWAYS AND PARK BOULEVARDS IN MUNICIPAL PARKS

The fifteenth-century Italian Renaissance architect Leon Alberti wrote in his 1485 architectural treatise, *De re aedificatoria*, that a road should be made "rich with pleasant scenery."¹¹ The American version of this aesthetic road was called a *parkway*—a term that "originated in Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1699 and was initially applied to roads with wide, grassy central medians."¹² But in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, roads and modes of transportation were not refined. The primary transportation options were either train or horse and carriage. "Carriages were often open to the weather and without padding or suspension.... The discomfort of carriages, which in fact were not much worse than most European ones, was nothing compared to the roads, which were rutted in dry weather and swampy in wet."¹³

11 M. G. Lay, *The Ways of the World: A History of the World's Roads and of the Vehicles That Used Them* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 314.

12 Lay, *Ways of the World*, 314.

13 Robertson, "Picturesque Traveler in America," 190.

The concept of American parkways was popularized in the late 1850s with the development of Central Park. “Olmsted’s design sank the four main transverse traffic roads below ground level and used bridges to carry local surface traffic over these arteries. These surface roads then crossed over the path network on a separate set of bridges.”¹⁴ Initially, these roads would have served carriages. After the construction of Central Park, Olmsted and Vaux continued to employ parkways as a component of park development with the construction of Ocean and Eastern Parkways in Brooklyn’s Prospect Park.¹⁵ Olmsted’s solutions that separated through traffic from park traffic prompted designers and engineers to begin considering scenery when designing roads.

As tourism increased in America, municipalities and city parks evolved from purely picturesque expressions into places heavily influenced by the City Beautiful movement. Automobiles, which emerged near the turn of the twentieth century, remained a presence and became more integrated into park planning during this period. Additional parkways were built in New York and Washington in the period between world wars.¹⁶

THE ADVENT OF AUTOMOBILES AND ENTRY INTO NATIONAL PARKS

“On January 29, 1886, Karl Benz was granted the German patent...for a three-wheeled vehicle powered by a four-stroke, single-cylinder gasoline engine”—this event is widely considered the birth of the automobile.¹⁷ Ten years later, and four years before the opening of Brackenridge Park, in 1896, Henry Ford introduced the first motorized vehicle in America—a four-horsepower Quadricycle.¹⁸ When George Brackenridge donated 199 acres of riverfront property to the city of San Antonio in 1899 to be used as a municipal park, forty years had passed since Central Park’s opening. Germans had developed a reputation for their automobile advances, and Henry Ford had founded the Detroit Automobile Company. Ford then founded the Ford Motor Company in 1903 and introduced the Model-T in 1908.

George Brackenridge and other city boosters, many of whom had German origins and must have felt a proud connection to German advances in automobile technology—including hotelier Ludwig Mahncke, had a visionary ambition at the outset: a grand park and boulevard system. The motorized vehicle would be at the forefront of that vision. A June 30, 1905, *San Antonio Express* article reported that the system would “contain 800 acres and provide fifty miles of drives” as well as contain a new park¹⁹ (**figure 4-3**). The article further stated,

If the plans of George W. Brackenridge and some of his associates succeed, San Antonio before many months will have one of the finest park and boulevard systems in the United States barring no city large or small. These plans are nothing less than to give this city a continuous system of parks and drives which will encircle the north, northeast and northwest sides of the city.²⁰

14 Lay, *Ways of the World*, 314.

15 Lay, *Ways of the World*, 314.

16 Lay, *Ways of the World*, 314.

17 Vaclav Smil, *Creating the Twentieth Century: Technical Innovations of 1867-1914 and Their Lasting Impact* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), 112.

18 “Henry Ford Test-Drives his ‘Quadricycle,’” History.com, A&E Television Networks, LLC, June 28, 2019, accessed June 18, 2019, [history.com/this-day-in-history/henry-ford-test-drives-his-quadricycle](https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/henry-ford-test-drives-his-quadricycle).

19 “...and Boulevard...may be given San Antonio,” *San Antonio Express*, June 30, 1905, PDF documentation of news article from Maria Pfeiffer.

20 “...and Boulevard...may be given San Antonio,” *San Antonio Express*.



FIGURE 4-3. A map sketch shows the park and boulevard system George Brackenridge envisioned. It was published with a June 1905 *San Antonio Express-News* article, entitled "Park and Boulevard System May Be Given San Antonio." The title is cut off due to a tear. Source: Maria Pfeiffer Collection

Brackenridge's vision for a park and boulevard system that included Brackenridge Park as part of the northwest side of the loop never materialized, although the role of roads and automobiles was certainly privileged during Brackenridge Park's development.

Whereas municipal parks were quick to invite the increasingly popular automobile in through the design and implementation of parkways and boulevards, national parks were slower to accept this mode of transportation. For the most part, cars were banned in federal parks for the first decade of the twentieth century.

During the development of Yosemite in the early 1860s, before the advent of automobiles, circulation within national parks was largely accomplished by horse and carriage. As motorized vehicles became more readily available and affordable, people began to arrive at their favorite destinations by car in increased numbers. Finally, "at the dawn of the 20th century... the lure of taking them [horseless carriages] out to view the scenic wonders of America's national parks was irresistible."²¹

The middle class achieved a newfound freedom of mobility. Families no longer had to live in urban centers or near transportation hubs. The first motorists visited Yosemite National Park in 1900 and Yellowstone two years later. Unprepared, park officials forbid them from entering parks. For nearly a decade, vehicles were prohibited in national parks.²² The reasons for the ban included concerns that they "endangered park visitors, spooked the horses who

21 Donna R. Braden, "Automobiles Enter the National Parks," Past Forward: Activating the Henry Ford Archive of Innovation, The Henry Ford Center, Dearborn, MI, August 12, 2016, accessed May 22, 2019, [thehenryford.org/explore/blog/automobiles-enter-the-national-parks](https://www.thehenryford.org/explore/blog/automobiles-enter-the-national-parks).

22 Braden, "Automobiles Enter the National Parks."



FIGURE 4-4. Postcard of the Wawona Big Tree tunnel in Yosemite, circa 1917-1920. Source: The Henry Ford Museum, Gift of Jim Johnson, 2016.57.2.

regularly pulled tourist carriages and wagons, and seemed out of keeping with the quiet solitude of the parks.”²³

Finally, in 1907, a year before Ford introduced the Model-T to the country, Mount Rainier National Park was the first to officially allow automobiles. Glacier allowed automobiles in 1912, followed by Yosemite and Sequoia in 1913 (**figure 4-4**). Motorists still faced long lists of requirements and regulations, including “written authorization to enter, time restrictions on the use of their vehicles, strict attention to speed limits, and rules about pulling over for oncoming horses and honking at sharp turns.”²⁴

The turning point for vehicles in national parks occurred when the National Park Service was created on August 25, 1916. The 1916 act of Congress that established the National Park Service within the Department of the Interior is known for its dual mandate. The act states that the purpose of national parks is “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for future generations.”²⁵

Stephen Mather, the first National Park Service director, wanted all Americans to experience the kind of healing power that he had found in the national parks. He realized that the automobile was transforming people’s lives and that it would be the impetus for people to explore the parks independently.²⁶

In the early twentieth century, as automobile clubs became popular, they increased pressure on state and local governments to improve park roads. As a result, Congress slowly acted to make park roads safer for motorists. By 1917, as America entered World War I and travel

23 Braden, “Automobiles Enter the National Parks.”

24 Braden, “Automobiles Enter the National Parks.”

25 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 5.

26 Braden, “Automobiles Enter the National Parks.”

to Europe dwindled, railroad companies and highway associations launched an aggressive campaign called “See America First.”²⁷ The same year, all restrictions on vehicles were abandoned, and motor fees became a considerable source of revenue for national parks. A typical visitor “drove to the park, camped out, and controlled his or her own itinerary for seeing the sights.”²⁸

In 1920, for the first time, the number of visitors to national parks reached one million during a single year. Mather concluded that people had turned to parks for “health, happiness and a saner view of life” and that the automobile “has been the open sesame.”²⁹ As the parks received more visitation, Congress was more willing to financially support them.

In 1925, yearly visitation to the parks exceeded two million and in 1928, three million. Annual appropriations went toward improvements geared to motorists, including campgrounds, picnic areas, parking lots, supply stations, and restrooms. Newly paved roads were designed to harmonize with the landscape and offered plenty of scenic turnouts and vistas.³⁰

Between the end of World War I in 1918 and American entry into World War II in 1941, the National Park Service modernized and developed the park system extensively. Engineers and landscape architects designed scenic roads, campgrounds, administration areas, and other interventions (**figure 4-5**). These years proved to be the most intensive period of development in the park system’s history. During this era, parks obtained a consistent visual character and were upgraded to a level of comfort and convenience that visitors have come to associate with their experience of scenery, wildlife, and wilderness.³¹

AUTOMOBILES IN SAN ANTONIO AND BRACKENRIDGE PARK

Although national parks eventually accepted the inevitability of automobile tourism and designed accordingly, municipal parks were ahead of the curve. In particular, Brackenridge Park came into being at a pivotal time for the automobile, which made an entry into San Antonio the same year that Mahncke laid out the initial park features.

The first recorded horseless carriage in San Antonio was an electric vehicle used by the Staacke Brothers Livery Service in 1899. The first gasoline vehicle arrived in 1901. “Because automobiles were so expensive at this time, often costing more than most houses, the earliest examples in any given city was usually acquired by a doctor, who could justify the cost as he could now make double the number of house calls than with horses...”³²

In the summer of 1902, bicycle shop owners Lewis Birdsong and Frank Crowthers acquired one of the first mass produced vehicles in the world, the single cylinder Curved Dash Oldsmobile. They established the city’s first automobile agency and sold Oldsmobiles to several customers including Fred Cook, the president of San Antonio’s first automobile

27 Braden, “Automobiles Enter the National Parks.”

28 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 7.

29 Braden, “Automobiles Enter the National Parks.”

30 Braden, “Automobiles Enter the National Parks.”

31 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 1.

32 Hugh Hemphill, “Automobiles in San Antonio, 1899-1916,” Texas Transportation Museum, accessed May 22, 2019, txtransportationmuseum.org/history-car.php.



FIGURE 4–5. Postcard of “A Yellowstone Public Automobile Camp,” circa 1920. Source: The Henry Ford Museum, 90.238.6.

club, which was established in the fall of 1903. Cook led members on regular outings to destinations including to the Medina River and New Braunfels, Texas.³³

At that time, common rules were not yet established for automobile travel. In March 1910, the San Antonio City Council introduced the first set of road rules, “at more or less the same time the police department acquired its first automobiles and motorbikes.” The posted speed limit within the business district was 10 miles per hour, and outside of this zone the speed limit ranged from 18 to 25 miles per hour.³⁴

BRACKENRIDGE: THE DRIVING PARK

George Brackenridge had an extensive library and travelled widely. As a banker, he would have had knowledge of developments occurring nationally. Mahncke, as a hotelier, would also have had knowledge of national trends in tourism. Thus, it is highly probable that the vision for a large central park in San Antonio was influenced by trends for both national and municipal parks. The introduction of roads for carriage and automobile tourism was conceived from the start. It was decided that the park ‘should be a driving park more than a picnic place.’ To this end, Mahncke designed and opened several miles of driveways that all converged on the river at the north end of the park.”³⁵

Most notably, the design and decisions regarding placement of Brackenridge Park’s roads did not reflect the formality of Central Park’s roads. Instead, the directive that the design would be grounded in the “the existing visual character” of the indigenous landscape became an important principle as Brackenridge was developed (**figure 4-6**). A *San Antonio Express* newspaper article noted, “These roads have been opened through the dense forest

³³ Hemphill, “Automobiles in San Antonio.”

³⁴ Hemphill, “Automobiles in San Antonio.”

³⁵ Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 48.

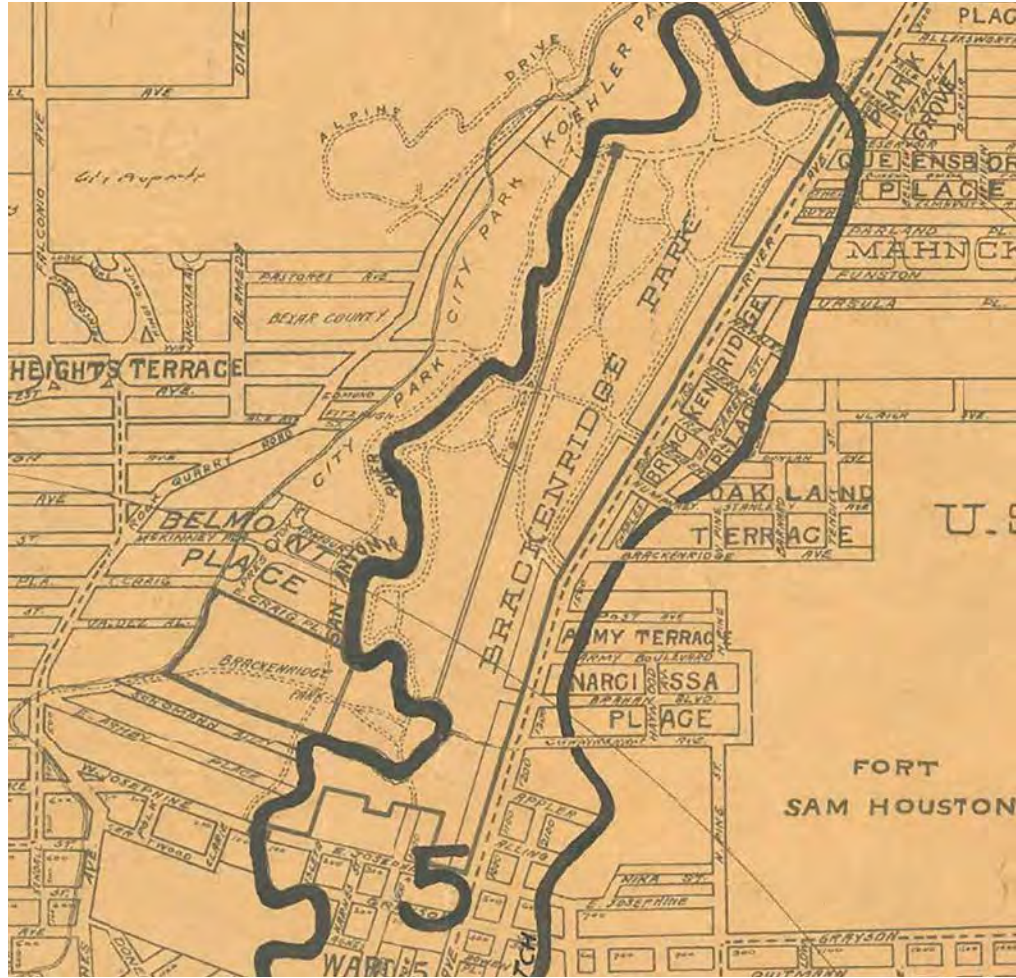


FIGURE 4-6. Detail of the 1921 “Ward Map of the City of San Antonio” shows the extensive system of roads in Brackenridge Park. The roads are represented with dotted lines. The San Antonio River is represented with a thick black line, and the Acequia Madre de Valero “ditch” is shown with a black line east of the river. Source: City of San Antonio Archives.



FIGURE 4-7. Circa 1917 photo shows a horse-drawn carriage and an automobile at the Tuleta Street low-water crossing. Source: Jay Loudon, WorkShop.

upon a plan to give the most pleasure and variety of scenery,” with road construction careful “not to disturb the throne of a single monarch of the forest.”³⁶ Relaying its general character as a woodland, driving park, the 1905 article stated that “The course is already well wooded with live oak and elm trees.”³⁷ The newspaper also printed a sketch that shows the unusual shape the park would take on, following the siting and shape of the San Antonio River and its surrounding acequias (**figure 4-3**).

Like the municipal parks’ contemporary, the national parks, Brackenridge Park connected tourists to vast and scenic woodland areas and to the San Antonio River, through the usage of automobiles. But to further emphasize the point, in its execution, Brackenridge Park’s vernacular design is distinct from its predecessor, Central Park, in expressing a regional character. Brackenridge, Mahncke, and their colleagues took their most important cues, not from Central Park, but from the San Antonio site’s indigenous hydrologic and vegetative patterns, as well as its exposed limestone geology. They determined the placement of roads in response to the existing woodlands and in response to the San Antonio River. For example, two “low-water crossings,” one built in 1917 at Tuleta Street, and the other built in 1939 at Avenue A, physically connected automobiles with the river, and they created a park that is inextricably linked to the automobile—a natural feature to be experienced upon spinning tires and through open windows, with the only-in-Brackenridge opportunity for one to run their fingers through the cool spring water as their vehicle rolled through the river. Brackenridge Park, from the outset, was a masterpiece or regional vernacular design not yet seen in other early municipal parks (**figure 4-7**).

36 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 48.

37 “...and Boulevard...may be given San Antonio,” *San Antonio Express*.

CHAPTER 5. ETHNOGRAPHIC IMPRINTS ON THE LANDSCAPE

One goal of a CLR is for landscape historians to enable communities to see their cultural landscapes from different and perhaps surprising perspectives—to expand the view. When Olmsted visited San Antonio in 1857 and remarked on the city’s “odd and antiquated foreignness” and “jumble of races, costumes, languages and buildings,”¹ he could not have predicted that it would maintain an enigmatic cultural identity for well over a century.

This chapter attempts to define San Antonio’s predominant historic ethnographies. A brief discussion of migration as part of a global cycle is also included. Then, in order to make the connection between San Antonio’s ethnographically layered cultures and the global perspective, the discussion zooms in to look at America’s transforming population and how San Antonio’s population trends compare. Finally, this section considers the preservation of these layers and discusses their cultural and ethnographic imprints on Brackenridge Park.

Early in its history, San Antonio recognized its unique relationship with drought and flood conditions and the precious resource of water. Treating water as an equitable resource, one so precious that its conservation was also accounted for at the outset of settlement, shaped San Antonio and informed future conservation measures. The city’s cultural identity is a resource as well, and San Antonio is in a unique position to set the pace for the rest of the country, not merely in capitalizing on its cultural identity or freezing it in time—which would be impossible—but instead in interpreting it meaningfully to create a legacy of continued stewardship of public space resources (**figure 5-1**).

1 Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey through Texas* (New York: Dix Edwards, 1857), 150-51.



FIGURE 5–1. “Eye of God” painting on the ceiling of the Mission Concepcion library room. The San Antonio Missions complex is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in part, because details such as this, inspired by nature and pervasive in the architectural details of these complexes, demonstrate the weaving of Spanish and Coahuiltecan cultures. Source: “San Antonio Missions: Nomination for Inscription on the World Heritage List”

SAN ANTONIO’S EARLIEST BLENDED CULTURES

San Antonio’s history of ethnic layering resulted in an amalgamated culture that is original and unique to the city, but what should that culture be termed? The US Office of Management and Budget defines the terms *Hispanic* and *Latino* both as “a person of Cuban, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.”² According to a 2013 Pew Research Center study, although most Americans are ambivalent about the federal terminology, Texans are an exception: 46% of “Hispanic Texans prefer Hispanic, while just 8% prefer the term ‘Latino’—roughly a 6-to-1 ratio.”³

Among the “jumble of races” that Olmsted observed, the two most predominant would have been what this CLR will call San Antonio Tejanos and Hill Country Germans. Distilling the historic cultures of San Antonio into two dominant ones in no way discounts the ethnically and racially diverse landscape that existed in San Antonio from earliest exploration, beginning in the mid-1500s. But these two cultures, complex in and of themselves, seem to have established a lasting foothold that is present to this day.

SAN ANTONIO TEJANOS

Unlike *Hispanic* and *Latino*, the term *Tejano* is not a federal designation. It is a cultural term defined in *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* as someone who is “a Texan of Hispanic descent.” The Texas State Historical Association defines *Tejano* as “a Texan of Mexican descent, thus a Mexican Texan or a Texas Mexican.”⁴ To add San Antonio as a qualifier to

2 US Census Bureau, “Hispanic Origin,” United States Census Bureau, US Department of Commerce, March 7, 2018, [census.gov/topics/population/hispanic-origin/about.html](https://www.census.gov/topics/population/hispanic-origin/about.html).

3 Mark Hugo Lopez, “Hispanic or Latino? Many Don’t Care Except in Texas,” Pew Research Center, October 28, 2013, accessed November 22, 2019, [pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/10/28/in-texas-its-hispanic-por-favor/](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/10/28/in-texas-its-hispanic-por-favor/).

4 Adán Benavides, “Tejano,” *Handbook of Texas*, Texas State Historical Association, June 15, 2010, accessed November 22, 2019, [tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/pft07](https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/pft07).



FIGURE 5-2. Circa 1870–1880 quilt made by Antonia Ruiz Herrera, daughter of two prominent Tejano families in San Antonio. The quilt incorporates symbols of Mexican Texas. Source: Witte Museum Collection

Tejano, using the latter definition, provides yet more regional and cultural specificity—*San Antonio Tejano*.

San Antonio’s Tejano culture is an amalgamation. Various Indigenous Coahuiltecan groups—the original inhabitants of the area—began mixing with Spanish missionary settlers who arrived in 1718 and with Canary Islanders (known as the *Isleños*) who were sent by an order of the Spanish crown in 1731 to settle the area. The blending of these groups formed the Mexican American culture that is distinct to the area and different from the Mexican American cultures along the Texas border or in other cities in the United States (figures 5-2 and 5-3).



FIGURE 5–3. Photo of two tortilleras making tortillas in San Antonio in 1944. The image demonstrates a lasting Mexican food culture in the city. The culture was prevalent in San Antonio early, as evidenced by the presence of the Mexican Village in Brackenridge Park in the 1920s, where vendors sold crafts and food. Source: Library of Congress, USF 33-012057

EARLY AFRICAN AND CANARY ISLANDER IMPRINTS

With the first Spanish explorers came the first Africans.⁵ As early as 1527, accounts of the expedition that sought to conquer the New World, led by Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, mention a Moroccan by the various names of Mostafa al-Azemmouri, Estabanico de Dorantes, Esteban the Moor, and, occasionally, “the first black man” in the New World. The Reverend Father Frier Marco De Niza’s descriptions detail how al-Azemmouri was routinely sent out into Indigenous lands to discover new territories for the Spanish Crown.⁶ In 1689, African soldiers accompanied the Spaniard Alonso de Leon’s expedition when they established a military garrison, or presidio, at the site of a Papaya Indian village, Yanaguana (present-day San Antonio).⁷

Villa San Fernando de Béjar (present-day San Antonio), or Villa de Béjar, was the settlement that evolved outside of the presidio, and it “acquired the reputation of a racially-mixed post as the small garrison of soldiers intermarried with the local Indians.”⁸ In 1718, Martin De Alarcon was appointed the new governor of the region, and his expedition brought “the first families,” which comprised Spanish soldiers and their families; Christianized Tlascalcan natives from central Mexico; enslaved Africans—Muslim captives from West Africa who may have been freed or resold to the Spanish; Christianized Moors; and “a group of racially mixed scouts or probable slaves” who were from Spanish provinces of the West African Coast. There were many interracial marriages within Villa de Béjar, and the mixed populace called themselves Tejanos, since they were the first residents of the Tέjas Spanish colony.⁹

5 Bruce A. Glasrud, ed. *African Americans in South Texas History* (College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 2011), 3.

6 Lhoussein Simour, *Recollecting History beyond Borders: Captives, Acrobats, Dancers and the Moroccan-American Narrative of Encounters* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 45-62.

7 Glasrud, *African Americans in South Texas History*, 3; and “Spanish Exploration and the Colonial Era (1689-1820),” Mission Trails, The City of San Antonio—Official City Website, accessed October 23, 2019, www.sanantonio.gov/Mission-Trails/Prehistory-History/History-of-San-Antonio/Spanish-Exploration-Colonial-Era/Spanish-Exploration-Colonial-Era-Narrative.

8 Kenneth Mason, *African-Americans and Race Relations in San Antonio, Texas, 1867-1937* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 4.

9 Mason, *African-Americans and Race Relations*, 4-5.



FIGURE 5-4. Map illustrating the route of original Canary Islanders to San Antonio via Vera Cruz, Mexico. These families were believed to have been a mix of Canary Island, Spanish, African, Genoese Italian, and Portuguese people. Source: Gerry Rickhoff and Bexar County Clerk's Office, published in *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association

Around 1730, fifteen families from the Spanish Canary Islands were recruited to come to the colony in New Spain and settle within Villa de Béjar. The Spanish crown recruited enlistees to go to the colony by offering “land grants, irrigation rights, horses, titles of minor nobility to heads of families..., subsistence allowances throughout the journey by sea and overland, tools for farming and construction of homesteads, and the opportunity to serve in the government (*ayuntamiento*) they were to initiate”¹⁰ (figure 5-4). As the Canary Islands actively participated in the Atlantic slave trade, many of the Islanders, being a mixture of Spanish, African, Genoese Italian, and Portuguese people, shared similar traits with people already in Villa de Béjar.

In the Canary Islands, it was said that the racial mixing created a “new” people who replaced Indigenous Canary Islanders.¹¹ It was these dark-skinned people who were sought by Spanish authorities to go to the New World, because the authorities believed the “new” Canary Islanders, with their “racially-mixed heritage would...blend easily into foreign overseas populations.”¹²

Although they were also of racially mixed heritage, the Islanders had connections to the crown and were “true European Spaniards”; believing in the caste system (*las castas*), they thought of themselves as a “white ‘elite’ group,” which set them apart from the Tejanos. Some of the terms used to describe the Tejanos included *mulatto*, *mestizo*, *Afro-mestizo*, *Eurafrian*, *Eurindian*, and *Espanol*.¹³

Under the Spanish and Mexican governments, there was movement between the classes and races of people within the colony, and there are some records of people of African descent receiving land grants and marrying into upper-class Spanish families.¹⁴ There was often a desire among the Canary Islanders to increase economic status, which frequently led to interracial marriages with people of African descent, and this was not regarded as taboo.¹⁵

THE ENSLAVED

In 1776, despite racial mixing, Africans were still a recognizable presence in San Antonio, with 150 of the 2,060 inhabitants listed as a “mixture of whites and blacks.” By 1790, records show that 862 people were listed either as mulatto or simply as black. Likely due to an increase in enslaved runaways, the percentage of the population with African heritage had increased by 1800. Afro-mestizos and mulattos were identifiable groups until about 1824, when “racist notions about blacks” became more common, and more people began claiming Mexican or Spanish descent than they did their African ancestry.¹⁶

San Antonio embraced the institution of slavery, as did most other Southern cities. Although slavery did not contribute greatly to San Antonio’s economy in comparison to other cities, San Antonio’s slaveholders were wealthy and powerful people who proffered the institution.

10 Armando Curbelo Fuentes, *The Canary Islanders in Texas: The Story of the Founding of San Antonio* (San Antonio, TX: Maverick Books/Trinity University Press, 2018), xvi.

11 Mason, *African-Americans and Race Relations*, 5.

12 Mason, *African-Americans and Race Relations*, 5.

13 Mason, *African-Americans and Race Relations*, 6-7.

14 Glasrud, *African Americans in South Texas History*, 3-4.

15 Mason, *African-Americans and Race Relations*, 7.

16 Mason, *African-Americans and Race Relations*, 7.

There were few slaveholders and enslaved people, however. Census records from the 1850s to 1860s show an overall decrease in the percentage of the enslaved population and of slaveholders.¹⁷ In 1860, there were approximately 500 enslaved people in a city of nearly 8,000 free people, compared with 220 enslaved people and a free population of 3,168 ten years earlier in 1850.¹⁸

	Total free population	Total enslaved population
1850	3,168	220
1860	7,683	514

Census Records for San Antonio¹⁹

But newspaper coverage of the “Texas Troubles,” a series of well poisonings and fires that occurred throughout Texas in the 1860s, spread fear of enslaved people. In response, the council of San Antonio enforced strict ordinances that restricted the behavior of the enslaved population.²⁰

Between 1850 and 1860, there were also nearly four hundred free blacks in the state of Texas, according to the US Census. The counts were incomplete, though, because many free blacks with Spanish surnames were not counted. Some estimate that the numbers would have been twice the census counts, but most of the new blacks arriving were enslaved.²¹ Notably, within San Antonio, only 19.3 percent of the enslaved were adult males, which means that most enslaved humans were laboring as house servants rather than laboring to produce economic gains.²² An important exception is the enslaved people who labored in the tannery and saw mill that were operable in what is now Brackenridge Park.

After the Civil War ended in 1865, many formerly enslaved people migrated to Texas, as it was thought that they would have a better life than they would have in the Deep South²³ (**figure 5-5**).

CANARY ISLANDERS

The Canary Islanders were the first *civilians* in the colony. They arrived in the presidio after the soldiers and friars, and they established the colony’s first governing cabildo, with its building located between the San Antonio presidio and Mission San Antonio de Valero, in 1731 in the name of King Philip V of Spain. The first mayor and head of the cabildo of San Antonio was an Islander by the name of Juan Leal Goraz. Incidentally, the Isleños had chosen him to lead the expedition from the Canary Islands to the New World, and they naturally thought of him as a leader within the colony. The population of the settlement totaled about three hundred people and included the soldiers and their families, the friars, the natives, and the Islanders. Although the Islanders were the newest settlers in the colony, the first

17 Glasrud, *African Americans in South Texas History*, 37.

18 Glasrud, *African Americans in South Texas History*, 33-34.

19 Glasrud, *African Americans in South Texas History*, 37.

20 Glasrud, *African Americans in South Texas History*, 33-34.

21 Glasrud, *African Americans in South Texas History*, 4.

22 Glasrud, *African Americans in South Texas History*, 37.

23 Glasrud, *African Americans in South Texas History*, 1.

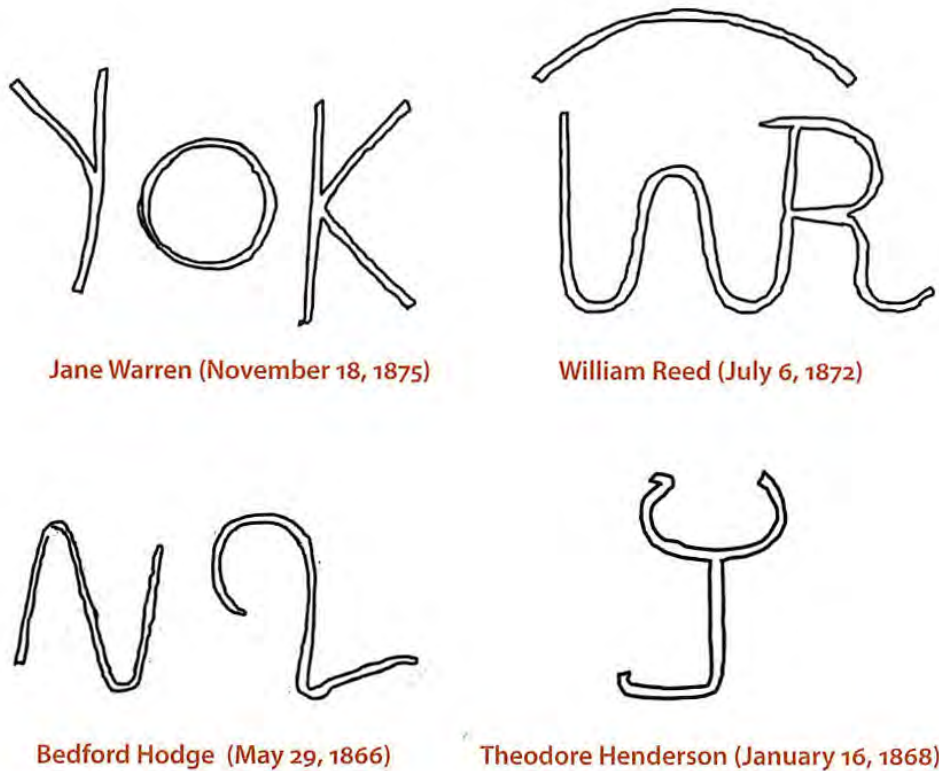


FIGURE 5–5. Some African Americans worked in the cattle industry. African American cattle brand registrations appeared in San Antonio as early as 1852, though the majority were registered after Emancipation in 1866. Brands were typically made from letter characters in the applicant’s name. Source: *300 Years of San Antonio and Bexar County*

cabildo comprised entirely Canary Islanders, and it was the job of this new government to create houses, streets, a plaza, and a new church as well as to get water to these new settlers²⁴ (figure 5-6).

The Isleños came to the New World with royal decrees that offered “free use of the water for irrigation purposes if the supply to the missions was not cut off.” Disputes over water rights in the colony are covered in volumes of court records.²⁵ Before the cabildo was elected, the captain of the presidio, Juan Antonio Perez de Almazan, was the supreme authority over all inhabitants, and naturally, there was friction caused by the election of a civilian government. Almazan refused to return horses to the Islanders for use in farming and would not grant them titles to the land granted by the Spanish Crown.²⁶ Friar Miguel of the Franciscan ministry was also against them; he did not want the Islanders to use water from the river, as it was to be used only for the missions. What both the missionaries and the military hoped was that the Canary Islanders would divide up and live within the five missions. But the settlers decided to take up residence around the cabildo and function as a separate, self-governing town. So naturally, Captain Almazan and Friar Miguel devised a plan to have Antonio Rodriguez Mederos, cabildo councilor and the canal builder in the settlement, supervise the building of a canal to irrigate the Mission Concepcion estate, which would delay the building of the

24 Fuentes, *Canary Islanders in Texas*, 5-8.

25 “Acequias,” Mission Trails, The City of San Antonio—Official City Website, October 17, 2016, accessed October 28, 2019, www.sanantonio.gov/Mission-Trails/Mission-Trails-Historic-Sites/Detail-Page/ArtMID/16185/ArticleID/4230/Acequias?ID=53.

26 Fuentes, *Canary Islanders in Texas*, 8, 13.



FIGURE 5-6. Circa 1850 Map of Plaza de las Islas, laid out in the 1700s by Canary Island settlers. The plaza is today the main plaza in downtown San Antonio. Source: City of San Antonio, "Spanish Exploration and the Colonial Era"

canal that the Islanders desperately needed. Accepting this position meant Mederos could not work on the irrigation projects for the cabildo and its occupants. This action on the part of the military and missionaries separated the cabildo and the missions permanently and garnered much scorn for Mederos. He would later work on a canal project for the cabildo, however, and he would supply water to both their fields and the town.²⁷

When the Concepcion Canal was completed in 1738, the Isleños petitioned the new captain, Jose de Urrutia, who immediately approved the construction of the San Pedro Canal, as he saw the need for irrigation within the town. Mederos was unanimously elected to direct the project, and after three years of intense work, the canal was completed. It supplied water to all houses, the fort, and adjoining farmlands to cover an area of over four hundred acres on either side of the canal. In 1741, Mederos was elected president of the cabildo because of his contributions to the community.²⁸

The San Pedro Canal continues to supply water to surrounding croplands today and is referred to as the Mother Canal. The cabildo that they established is the foundation for the way the city is governed today. The impact of these settlers cannot be underestimated, as traces of this strong and outspoken community still remain today.

²⁷ Fuentes, *Canary Islanders in Texas*, 42.

²⁸ Fuentes, *Canary Islanders in Texas*, 54-57.

HILL COUNTRY GERMANS

Another predominant European culture entered San Antonio over a hundred years after its original colonial settlement. Beginning in the 1840s, German immigrants settled the Texas Hill Country between Austin and San Antonio and developed a distinctive regional culture.

During the nineteenth century, German immigrants were the largest ethnic group from Europe residing in Texas, constituting over 5 percent of the total population in 1850. There were so many settlers that the region in the south central part of the state stretching from Galveston to Houston, west to the towns of Hondo and Mason, and just past San Antonio became known as the German Belt.²⁹

In the early 1800s, the state of Texas offered land contracts to begin colonies by settling specific groups of immigrants in vacant lands—contracts included stipulations that the immigrants be “professants of the Catholic religion [and] be of good moral habits” and often detailed where the immigrants were to be from.³⁰ Initially, there were several plans in place to attract German immigrants, but the most successful method of attracting these settlers was chain migration, or using a dominant personality to write letters to their homeland describing emigration to the New World as a “solution to economic, social, political or religious problems” of the homeland. Johan Friedrich Ernst was the first of these dominant personalities, and because generous land grants were available to Europeans within Stephen F. Austin’s Texas colony, he was able to obtain a land grant of over four thousand acres, thus forming the central core of the German Belt.³¹

In 1830, Austin was the arbiter of a project, located in present-day Austin County, that invited Swiss and German immigrants to come to settle Texas. The Swiss and Germans were thought to be industrious and of good character, and Austin described how “above all, they will oppose slavery,” as he favored the exclusion of slavery from the state.³² Although he did not enforce this within the colony, his abolitionist position on slavery did discourage large planters from coming to Texas.³³ Austin thought that if he introduced a few “respectable families” that were “pleased with the country,” he would have no issue in persuading other families to follow them.³⁴ This wasn’t difficult to do, as Ernst wrote many “America letters” to Germany describing the positive aspects of the new land that were heavily publicized in the newspapers, and in this way he encouraged “a steady stream of migrants” from northwestern Germany to come to Texas.³⁵

Another factor that increased German immigration to Texas was a society of wealthy and titled Germans, called the Verein. Members of this society were interested in overseas colonization and took advantage of what was called the “Verein grant” (also referred to as the Adelsverein, the Verein zum Schutze Deutscher Einwanderer in Texas, or the German Emigration Company). This grant cost \$120 for a single man and \$240 for a household and

29 Terry G. Jordan, “Germans,” *Handbook of Texas*, Texas State Historical Association, June 15, 2010, accessed November 1, 2019, tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/png02.

30 Rudolph Leopold Bieseke, *The History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* (Austin, TX: Press of Von Boeckmann-Jones, 2008), 21-25.

31 Jordan, “Germans.”

32 Bieseke, *History of the German Settlements*, 26.

33 Terry G. Jordan-Bychkov, *German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 24.

34 Bieseke, *History of the German Settlements*, 26.

35 Jordan, “Germans.”

included the following benefits:

Each agreed to cultivate at least fifteen acres for three years and to occupy his house for the same period. In return of this, the Verin promised (1) free transportation to the colony, (2) free land in the colony (160 acres for a single man and 320 acres for a family), (3) a free log house, (4) provisions and all goods necessary to begin farming, supplied on credit until the second successive crop had been harvested, and (5) numerous public improvements, such as the construction of roads, mills, cotton gins, hospitals, schools, churches, orphan asylums, and even the canalization of rivers.³⁶

Although the Verin was a disaster financially, it was the main impetus for bringing thousands of Germans to Texas. Many of these immigrants died in epidemics, and many others never made it to the settlement but made their homes in cities such as San Antonio, Galveston, and Houston because of better economic opportunities. The settlers were mainly farmers, but there were also some landowners, artisans, and “university-educated professionals and intellectuals.”³⁷

The German migration continued through the 1850s, after the organized immigration projects ended, and more migrants came to settle in the German Belt through the 1890s (**figure 5-7**). In 1880, the population of San Antonio was about a third German. By the turn of the twentieth century, German immigration was focused on the cities rather than on the rural settlements, and of the city dwellers, the third and fourth generations were very prosperous and moved to the suburbs. This signaled the decline of affluent German neighborhoods, German schools, and the German press in San Antonio.³⁸

In a sense, San Antonio’s blended identity is a predecessor to new patterns of immigration transforming the city’s cultural landscape today, and it is representative of larger migration patterns globally.

³⁶ Jordan-Bychkov, *German Seed in Texas Soil*, 42-43.

³⁷ Jordan, “Germans.”

³⁸ Jordan, “Germans.”

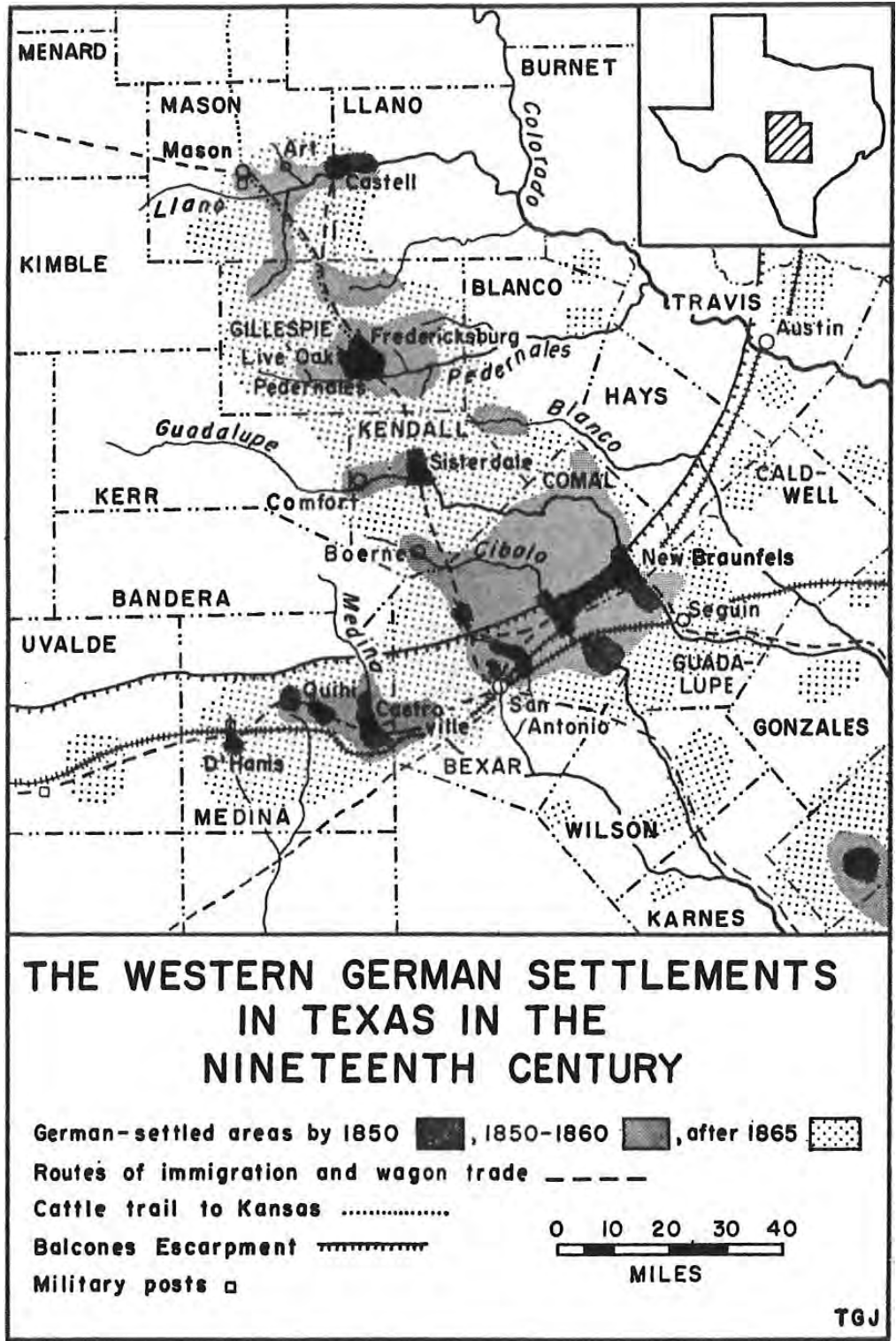


FIGURE 5-7. Map illustrating German settlement in the Texas Hill Country between 1850-1865 and after. Northern San Antonio appears to have attracted the most German settlers. Source: Jordan-Bychkov, *German Seed in Texas Soil*, Figure 17.

GLOBAL, NATIONAL, AND LOCAL PATTERNS OF MIGRATION

Just as humans have settled rivers for millennia, migration has occurred throughout human history.

The large-scale movement of people goes back more than a hundred thousand years when early homo sapiens began migrating out from the African continent. Just as other species migrate in reaction to resource availability, habitat quality, and stress or disturbance—human populations move (voluntarily or involuntarily) for a wide range of motivations.”³⁹

Migration...can describe flows of populations as diverse as the seasonal patterns of migrant laborers and nomadic herders, the relocation of populations in response to earthquakes or civil wars, the zealous journeys of missionaries or explorers, the voluntary seasonal travel of retirees, or the involuntary removal of populations ensnared by mass incarceration.

It can also describe “complex and traumatic histories such as the forced migration resultant of ethnic cleansing or the transatlantic slave trade.”⁴⁰

The seasonal migration pattern of Indigenous Coahuiltecan groups (also known as the Payaya), the missionary settlement of Spaniards, the colonial settlement of Spain’s Canary Islanders, the chain migration that brought German immigrants to San Antonio, and the presence of an enslaved population in San Antonio are all examples of the global pattern of migration. “These large-scale movements of individuals and communities from one location to another, or one way of life to another, [are] now recognized as having far-reaching effects on culture, language, genetics, law, economics and the environment.”⁴¹ Examples include the first Spanish colonists (Canary Islanders) laying out plazas and providing space for military festivals in accordance with the Law of the Indies⁴² as well as the system of water and land rights that was brought first to Spain by the Moors and then from Spain to San Antonio.⁴³

Brackenridge Park contains its own example of the effects of hybridized cultures on the structure of laws and imprints on the landscape. It displays turn-of-the-century buildings that melded the German architectural styles of “half-timbering or rock-and-mortar”⁴⁴ with native limestone materials (**figure 5-8**). This resulted in regional vernacular buildings and structures that dot the park and the city (**figure 5-9**).

39 Stephanie Carlisle and Nicholas Pevzner, “Introduction: Migration,” *Scenario Journal*, PennDesign, July 2, 2017, accessed November 22, 2019, scenariojournal.com/article/introduction-migration/.

40 Carlisle and Pevzner, “Introduction: Migration.”

41 Carlisle and Pevzner, “Introduction: Migration.”

42 Lewis F. Fisher, *Saving San Antonio: The Preservation of a Heritage*, 2nd ed (San Antonio, TX: Maverick, 2016), 18.

43 Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 17.

44 Hubert G. H. Wilhelm, “Organized German Settlement and Its Effects on the Frontier of South-Central Texas” (Dissertation 1523, Louisiana State University, 1968), iv, accessed November 4, 2019, digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/1523.

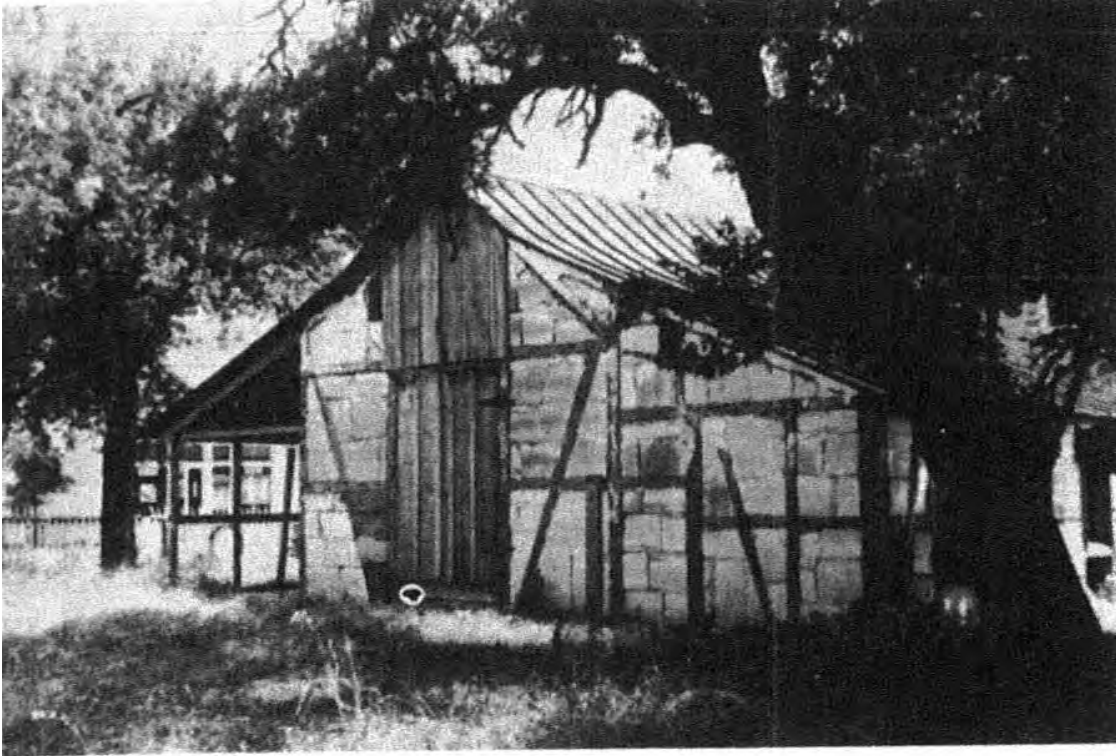


FIGURE 5–8. Two circa 1857 half-timbered houses in Kendall County, located northwest of Bexar County. The traditional German building method in which squared-off jointed timbers are secured with wooden pegs, and sometimes left exposed on the exterior of the building. These homes illustrate the method in combination with native Texas limestone. Source: Jordan-Bychkov, *German Seed in Texas Soil*, Figure 5.



FIGURE 5–9. The lower pump house in Brackenridge Park, constructed in 1885. German half-timbering construction melded with native limestone material can be observed in other places in the park, including the Japanese Tea Garden, where Mexican building methods are also seen, and the amalgamation of cultures is more pronounced. Source: Brackenridge Park Conservancy

AMERICA'S TRANSFORMING POPULATION—LOOKING AHEAD Twenty-Five YEARS

Although various forms of human migration are nothing new, the United States is presently in the midst of a major cultural transformation. Migration has been widely covered in mainstream media over the past year, and it is being addressed by world leaders. “[B]oth *Science* and *Nature* ran special issues on Human Migration. *The Economist* included a special report on the topic.... Last year, the United Nations General Assembly hosted its first high-level summit to discuss large movements of refugees and migrants and plan a coordinated global response.”⁴⁵

The United States has begun transitioning to a society that is more urban and in which people possess increased ethnic and racial plurality (beyond Western European heritage). Widespread projections, including a 2018 study by the Brookings Institute, show that by 2045—just twenty-five years—the nation will become a “minority white” population. The study states that the projections “confirm the importance of racial minorities as the primary demographic engine of the nation’s future growth, countering an aging, slow-growing and soon to be declining white population.”⁴⁶ With this transition, the population has also heightened its attunement to cultural factors.

⁴⁵ Carlisle and Pevzner, “Introduction: Migration.”

⁴⁶ William H. Frey, “The US Will Become ‘Minority White’ in 2045, Census Projects,” Brookings, March 14, 2018, accessed November 22, 2019, [brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/03/14/the-us-will-become-minority-white-in-2045-census-projects/](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/03/14/the-us-will-become-minority-white-in-2045-census-projects/).

Texas as a whole has also become more diverse, with Houston ranked as the most diverse city in the nation. Dallas is ranked fifth, Arlington ninth, Fort Worth twenty-fifth, and Austin forty-seventh.⁴⁷ San Antonio is, today, ranked sixty-second out of the five hundred most diverse cities in the country on a combination of socioeconomics, cultural diversity, religious diversity, and economic diversity.⁴⁸ When isolating only southern cities, San Antonio rises as the fifteenth most diverse city in the South. So it is inevitable that the stewards of the nation’s cultural landscapes will look different in the very near future than they look today.

SAN ANTONIO’S POPULATION—PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

San Antonio’s population already provides, and has throughout most of its history, a snapshot of what other American cities of the future will look like in twenty-five years—places led by people who possess distinctive ethnic identities and/or an amalgamation of their respective ethnic cultures. The Demographics Research Group of the University of Virginia analyzes census and demographic data, and in 2013, the group created the Racial Dot Map, which captures one dot per person in the entire United States (308 million dots). The results illustrate that San Antonio’s population is overwhelmingly Hispanic, at 63 percent, while the remainder of the population is made up of “pockets of white, black, and Asian communities”⁴⁹ (figures 5-10 and 5-11).

In San Antonio, Tejanos already play numerous leadership roles in the city. Although Mexican immigration to the city has declined overall in recent years, those who are still migrating—largely from Monterrey, Mexico—have financial means and are entering the business sector. A 2013 study by the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce found that “Mexican Nationals, both domestic and foreign, generated \$2.7 billion on spending in 2012, across a 20-county area of south and central Texas.”⁵⁰ Indeed, San Antonio’s landscape stewards will be representative of these demographics, if they are not already.

ETHNOGRAPHIC LANDSCAPES AND PRESERVATION

“As...development patterns push up against long-established migration patterns, some of which are coming into focus for the first time, how can cities...be designed to be more mindful of these flows? ...[W]hat kinds of assistance can designers, planners, land managers, and restoration ecologists offer?”⁵¹ Communities are faced with the opportunity to determine at a civic level which aspects of their ethnic identities and culture to preserve for future generations.

Do I fit in this landscape—is there a place for me here? Can I find myself in this landscape’s story; is it relatable to me? These central questions can inform an approach to preservation and interpretation that is both rooted in history and forward-looking, toward the goal of

47 Adam McCann, “Most Diverse Cities in the U.S.,” *WalletHub*, Evolution Finance, April 10, 2019, accessed June 16, 2019, wallethub.com/edu/most-diverse-cities/12690/.

48 McCann, “Most Diverse Cities in the U.S.”

49 Kolten Parker, “Stunning Diversity Map Shows San Antonio’s Racial Divide,” *San Antonio Express-News*, September 15, 2014, accessed November 22, 2019, expressnews.com/news/local/article/Stunning-diversity-map-shows-San-Antonio-s-racial-5757061.php.

50 Scott Beyer, “‘Mexican Nationals’ Are Transforming San Antonio,” *Forbes*, June 17, 2016, accessed November 22, 2019, forbes.com/sites/scottbeyer/2016/06/17/mexican-nationals-are-transforming-san-antonio/#3a8b8ff0dab6.

51 Carlisle and Pevzner, “Introduction: Migration.”

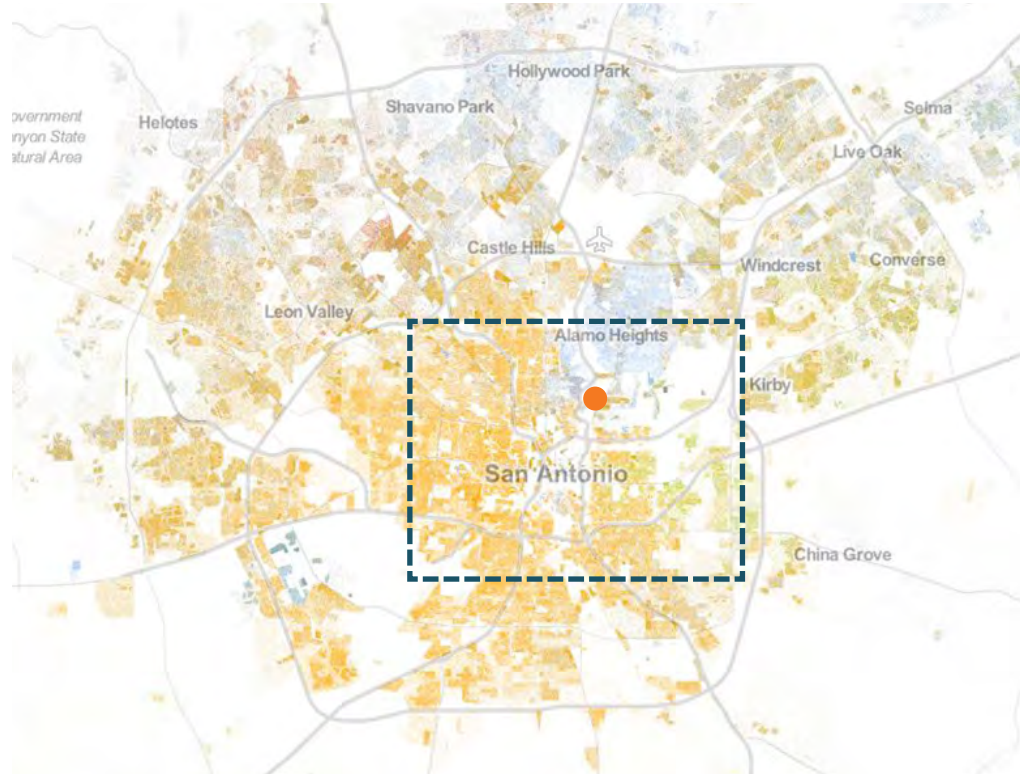


FIGURE 5–10. A map illustrating San Antonio’s racial composition. Brackenridge Park is shown with a red dot; the area bounded in blue is shown below. Hispanic: yellow, White: blue, African American: green, Asian: red. The 2013 map was generated with 2010 census data. Source: Weldon Center of University of Virginia

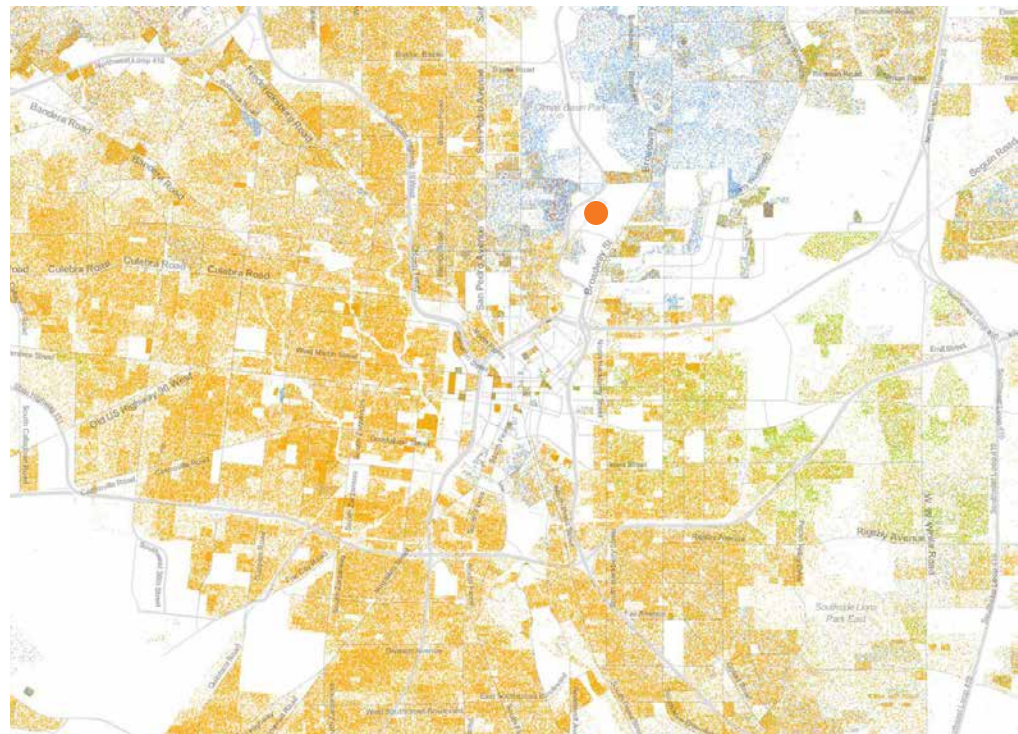


FIGURE 5–11. An enlargement of the 2013 “Racial Dot Map” shows the areas immediately surrounding Brackenridge Park. Except for areas directly north and northeast of the park, the majority of the population surrounding the park is Hispanic, with a mixed Hispanic and African American population located southeast of the park. Source: Weldon Center of University of Virginia

making places that are not merely places hyper programmed to attract users but places imbued with meaning with which future generations will strongly connect—.

The National Park Service defines a cultural landscape as “a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values” and further notes that there are four types of cultural landscapes, which may overlap: “historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes.”⁵² These four types of cultural landscapes have been defined in the introduction to this CLR, and they are included in the glossary located near the end. It is helpful, however, to repeat the definition for an ethnographic landscape here. An ethnographic landscape is defined as one that contains

a variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources. Examples are contemporary settlements, religious sacred sites and massive geological structures. Small plant communities, animals, subsistence and ceremonial grounds are often components.⁵³

Ethnographic landscapes offer a more recent way of reading landscapes, and they can be more difficult to recognize. In municipal parks, especially—which history typically traces to European traditions—identifying ethnographic components is challenging. Brackenridge may be an exception.

Just as San Antonio has continually advanced water conservation efforts according to scientific developments, the city must acknowledge and respond to changing national, statewide, and local demographics as it invests in preservation of the Brackenridge Park landscape. Thus city officials can determine what stories should rise to the surface of preservation planning and interpretation.

BRACKENRIDGE PARK’S CULTURAL AND ETHNOGRAPHIC IMPRINTS

The process of cultural evolution is as constant as the process of ecological evolution. As people migrate and cultures change, the impact of those cultures becomes embedded in the landscape, emerging as new forms of architecture, engineering, agricultural practices, and even cultural traditions that are transformed into meaningful traditions.

Traces of the San Antonio Tejano culture have been present in Brackenridge Park throughout its history, although the physical evidence of this culture prior to the park’s use as a park is more challenging to identify and must be researched further. The Mexican Village of 1920 is one example. Ray Lambert used existing structures to create what he named the Mexican Village in approximately 1920. The Mexican Village became a tourist attraction made up of “four small stone structures that were constructed to house food and craft concessions to serve visitors to the [Japanese Tea] garden and adjoining park.”⁵⁴ The stone structures were originally homes associated first with the quarries and later with the Alamo Portland

⁵² Charles Birnbaum, “Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes,” Technical Preservation Services, National Park Service, accessed November 2, 2019, nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/36-cultural-landscapes.htm.

⁵³ Birnbaum, “Protecting Cultural Landscapes.”

⁵⁴ Maria Watson Pfeiffer and Steven A. Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” National Register of Historic Places, Texas Historical Commission, San Antonio, TX, June 15, 2011, 201. 7.

Cement Company. It is important to note that this was a commercial enterprise, and it is one that potentially exoticized Tejanos, although this is only a possibility. It is mentioned in order to draw attention to the need to reveal histories sometimes, not for the purpose of celebration but for the purpose of truth telling and representation.

In contrast to the Tejano imprints, there are also imprints of Mexican heritage on the Brackenridge Park landscape. Miraflores Gardens, largely in ruins, contained an extensive private art collection. The area was Urrutia's effort to pay homage to his native Xochimilco, Mexico, and to provide patronage to numerous Mexican artists and artisans.⁵⁵ Dionicio Rodriguez's faux bois is another mark of the legacy of Mexicans in San Antonio.

As early as the 1930s, according to local historian Maria Pfeiffer, another form of San Antonio Tejano culture emerged in the park—a tradition that persists today. From news clippings, it is not clear whether the tradition began with Mexican American families, or whether they embraced the tradition and it evolved to be associated with this group. However, by the 1950s, Mexican American families began camping along the banks of the San Antonio River in Brackenridge Park over Easter weekend. Families cook out, set up a variety of games, such as piñata competitions, sack races, egg hunts, and breaking open cascarones, which are dyed and hollowed out eggshells that have been dried and stuffed with confetti to later be smashed open over a recipient's head. For many, the weekend concludes with a community prayer.⁵⁶ The event has become so steeped in the park's history that many families return over generations to the very same spot to camp each year. This tradition informs the park's identity from an outside perspective, while it is also a reflection of San Antonio's larger identity. Similar traditions exist throughout South Texas, but there are no known similar traditions in other cities that contain significant Mexican American populations, making it a distinctly San Antonio Tejano tradition (**figure 5-12**).

“This annual spring outing is reminiscent of the Romerías, the spring outings in Spain where the townspeople hike to a spot in the countryside to honor a saint or visit a hermitage with prayer and food.” Hand in hand with this tradition is the prevalence of the cascarones, which are found in other Mexican American communities as well as throughout Mexico. Both the hike to the countryside around Easter that has taken root in south Texas and the cascarones likely came about during Spanish missionary and colonial settlement of the area. Although the tradition has outgrown Brackenridge and expanded into other parks, it seems to have first taken hold at Brackenridge.

There may also be Native American traditions inextricably linked to the Brackenridge landscape. Some research shows that the Indigenous Native American population was drastically reduced or assimilated into Tejano culture. There are Native Americans today in San Antonio, however, who trace their lineage to this area and to the Coahuiltecan groups (**figure 5-13**).

55 Nancy A. Aguirre and Elisa Urrutia, “A Place in Exile: People Fleeing the Mexican Revolution Enriched San Antonio Life,” in *300 Years of San Antonio and Bexar County* (San Antonio, TX: Maverick Books/Trinity University Press, 2019), 55.

56 Emilie Eaton, “San Antonio Family Has Celebrated Easter at Brackenridge for 66 Years,” *San Antonio Express-News*, April 21, 2019, accessed November 22, 2019, [expressnews.com/news/local/article/San-Antonio-family-has-celebrated-Easter-at-13784182.php](https://www.expressnews.com/news/local/article/San-Antonio-family-has-celebrated-Easter-at-13784182.php).



FIGURE 5–12. Photo of a family celebrating Easter in Brackenridge Park. Source: Ricardo Romo and Harriet Romo 2012 Exhibition, University of Texas at San Antonio



FIGURE 5–13. Pictured is a traditional Coahuiltecan dance being performed at a San Antonio mission. Descendants of San Antonio's Indigenous bands and tribes still exist. American Indians in Texas is an organization that works to preserve cultures and traditions of the Coahuiltecan and other Indigenous people in Texas. Source: *300 Years of San Antonio and Bexar County*.

It is the meaning imbued in the Easter tradition that suggests to the CLR researchers that it is an ethnographic landscape. Ultimately, however, “the only way to identify ethnographic landscapes is through the knowledge of the people who give them meaning in the first place.”⁵⁷ Therefore, San Antonio’s Mexican American community must determine whether the tradition truly holds cultural meaning and value, and if the tradition is truly inextricable from Brackenridge Park and the community’s culture, steps toward preservation can be taken. Through this process, “many parks have been able to gain a great deal of understanding about the associations between the lands and resources under their stewardship and the traditionally-associated people for whom the resources hold deep cultural significance.”⁵⁸

For an American city that was born of Mexican origin (by way of Indigenous American and Spanish roots), that has maintained a strong Mexican heritage—even as colonialism entered its territory and later as it transitioned to statehood—and is 63 percent Mexican today, ethnographic layers matter. In a nation whose demographics are drastically and rapidly shifting and that is in the midst of a charged political climate in relationship to the cycle of migration, this layer of the landscape’s history presents an opportunity. That opportunity is to create a model for the preservation, interpretation, and celebration of ethnographic landscapes impressed on public municipal spaces. Delivering powerful messages about belonging and about the physical legacies of America’s immigrant populations, which continue to evolve over time, is another pathway to ensuring stewardship and preservation.

57 Michael J. Evans, Alexa Roberts, and Peggy Nelson, “Ethnographic Landscapes,” *CRM* 24, no. 5 (2001): 55, webpages.uidaho.edu/css501/images/Readings/ethnographic%20landscapes.pdf.

58 Evans, Roberts, and Nelson, “Ethnographic Landscapes,” 55.

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CHAPTER 6. THE ECOLOGY OF BRACKENRIDGE PARK

It is impossible to extract ecological realities from cultural imprints at Brackenridge Park. One can hike up Alpine Drive and encounter the surprising arid desert landscape that overlooks the Sunken Garden Theater and Japanese Tea Garden. One can be immersed in the Japanese Tea Garden or wandering at the San Antonio Zoo and experience the sublime magnitude of the historic quarry walls, glimpsing some of the site’s geology. One can jog along the historic motorways that crisscross through the more humid and densely wooded wilderness area. And one can stand and take in the Riparian Corridor itself, which in some areas feels sunny, open, and sweeping and in other areas feels secluded, shady, and quiet. Varied natural environments are a pronounced part of the human experience of the Brackenridge Park (**figure 6-1**). The unifying thread for the entire park is the San Antonio River.

The National Park Service (NPS) specifies that a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) “guides management and treatment decisions about a landscape’s physical attributes, biotic systems, and use when that use contributes to historical significance.”¹ As part of those decisions, “a CLR must establish preservation goals for a cultural landscape.”² Therefore, a fundamental challenge underlies the protection of Brackenridge Park—to deliver treatment and management practices that balance the allowance for inevitable and contemporary human uses with the provision for the cultural preservation and improved ecological health of Brackenridge Park. In other words, preservation and future development must respond to both the human and ecological sides of the cultural landscape. This is strikingly true for Brackenridge Park.

The ecological research consulting arm of the Lady Bird Wildflower Center documented and assessed Brackenridge Park’s overall ecological health on July 30 and July 31, 2018. The findings were summarized in an Ecological Site Assessment (ESA), completed in November 2019. The findings present an alarming picture. Along with diminished integrity of cultural

¹ Robert Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports* (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Washington, DC, 1998), 3.

² Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 3.



FIGURE 6-1. Four images illustrate varied landscape experiences one encounters in Brackenridge Park, June 2018. Top left, a view from Alpine Drive looking south to downtown San Antonio. Arid desert vegetation can be seen in the foreground. Top right, a view of the Wilderness Area and a historic roadway. Bottom left, San Antonio River landscape in Brackenridge Park near the Witte Museum in the northern portion of the park. Cypress trees dot the river bank, and the river is generally open and sunny. Bottom right, San Antonio River landscape near Avenue A/Woodlawn Avenue low-water crossing in the southern portion of the park. This section of the river is densely shaded. Source: Suzanne Turner Associates

resources, which is detailed in chapters 13 and 14 of this CLR, Brackenridge Park's ecological health is diminished, and the two are thoroughly intertwined.

Live oak canopies need maintenance. Soil is bare, compacted, and eroding, endangering the health of existing trees and undermining the river's integrity. There is no young generation of trees to replace the aging canopy in the coming years. Natural bottomland woodland and riverbank plant communities that once protected and enriched the river are either nearing collapse or are gone. As a result, the San Antonio River, frequently described as containing crystal-clear water, appears dark and unhealthy in areas. It is laden with duck, goose, and heron excrement, contamination from surrounding parking lots and roadways, and the excessive runoff that comes with urban development. Its WPA-era limestone retaining walls are crumbling; its banks are eroding.

The consultant team, comprised of landscape architectural historians, designers, and ecology experts, worked together throughout the development of the CLR. The Treatment strategy found in chapter 15 was developed in close collaboration with the Wildflower Center, and it reflects the ESA's major recommendations. These recommendations confront Brackenridge Park's compromised ecological and cultural health. The final ESA, which is included at the end of this CLR, also contains detailed recommendations specific to the site's ecology.

The CLR and ESA are companion pieces. Because the ESA is scientific in nature, this chapter summarizes some information contained in the ESA in layperson's terms. The ESA is also referenced throughout the CLR.

SUMMARY OF ECOLOGICAL SITE ASSESSMENT

The ESA provides critical information about Brackenridge Park's soil, hydrologic, and vegetative health. Three main points must be understood:

1. Brackenridge Park is in poor ecological health—its vegetative diversity is in trouble, and its overall function, which impacts the health of the soil, tree canopy, plant communities, and wildlife, is suffering.
2. Healing Brackenridge Park's ecology will rely on ecological restoration (eco-restoration) measures (defined in the next section) that aim to return a level of functionality to its ecological systems.
3. The ecological health and the cultural health of Brackenridge Park as well as contemporary human use are all interdependent. This means future development and design will need to work together and include ecological expertise.

Several key findings in the Wildflower Center's report, particularly those that intersect with cultural considerations for the park, are summarized in the following paragraphs.

ECOLOGICAL COMPOSITION AND HEALTH OF BRACKENRIDGE PARK

Much of Brackenridge Park was once a tallgrass savannah community, comprised mainly of tall grasslands with “up to 20 percent tree and shrub canopy,”³ though areas near the river may have contained a higher tree and shrub canopy. In the first half of the nineteenth century (1800 – 1850), preceding its development as a park, “row crop agriculture led to over 80% of the original vegetation” of tallgrass savannah communities throughout Texas “to be lost.”⁴ Compounded by urban development over time, “Today, less than one percent of the original tallgrass prairie remains”⁵ on ecological sites such as those found within Brackenridge Park.

Brackenridge Park is ecologically diverse. Three primary types of ecological sites exist in the park today, along with several minor ecological sites. Each ecological site is defined by its own distinctive soil type, hydrology, plant communities, and community dynamics, and typically, these ecological sites are named according to findings on the area’s county soil survey (**figure 6-2**). Examples of the some of the different types of ecological sites can be found in the Wilderness area (Southern Clay Loam), along Alpine Drive and the quarry area (Low Stoney Hill), along the San Antonio River (Clayey Bottomland), and in the open space, or park-like, areas (more Southern Clay Loam).

Each ecological site, regardless of its location, has varying human uses and varying degrees of health, ranging from low to high. In Brackenridge Park, only one area in the entire park was found to be in moderate/high ecological health (**figure 6-3**). This is a very small portion in the northeast section of the Woodland/Wilderness area, which is dominated by dense woods containing live oaks and cedar elms. But for the most part, this area is in moderate health, although it also contains areas in low/moderate and low health. Most of the riparian corridor along the San Antonio River is in low health.

3 Michelle Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment*, (San Antonio: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas at Austin, 2019), 15.

4 Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment*, 15.

5 Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment*, 15.

ECO-RESTORATION INTERVENTIONS

Poor ecological health is not unusual in urban park settings, but development and design interventions can improve it while making these settings even more engaging places for people to be. The Wildflower Center ESA and the CLR Treatment advocate for eco-restoration. Eco-restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed.⁶ Eco-restoration typically focuses on the goal of repairing the function, or health, of damaged ecosystems but not necessarily on re-creating a historic ecological community. This is because the mix of human uses and environmental or climatic changes today would not support a purely historic expression of the ecology—in this case, a tallgrass savannah community.

Ecological function repair, then, focuses on restoring a site's ability to capture energy and cycle nutrients and on allowing the living part of the system to exert control over resource flows (or to maximize hydrologic processes). For example, during a moderate rain event, a healthy forest will experience very little runoff and a higher level of water infiltration. But if the forest has experienced a loss of plant cover and contains compacted soil, the amount of runoff will increase.

To achieve this kind of ecological function repair, the WFC recommends a combination of two eco-restoration techniques. First, Low Impact Development (LID) interventions are recommended. LIDs “reduce runoff and improve water quality by capturing and treating it in a series of dispersed, but interconnected, systems such as rain gardens, bioswales, and filter strips.”⁷ These interventions will improve the health of Brackenridge Park while creating engaging outdoor spaces. Second, land management practices that increase the overall health of natural areas by improving water infiltration, cleansing, and self-repair capacity are recommended.

⁶ “What Is Ecological Restoration?,” Society for Ecological Restoration, accessed November 22, 2019, ser-rrc.org/what-is-ecological-restoration/.

⁷ Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment*, 8.

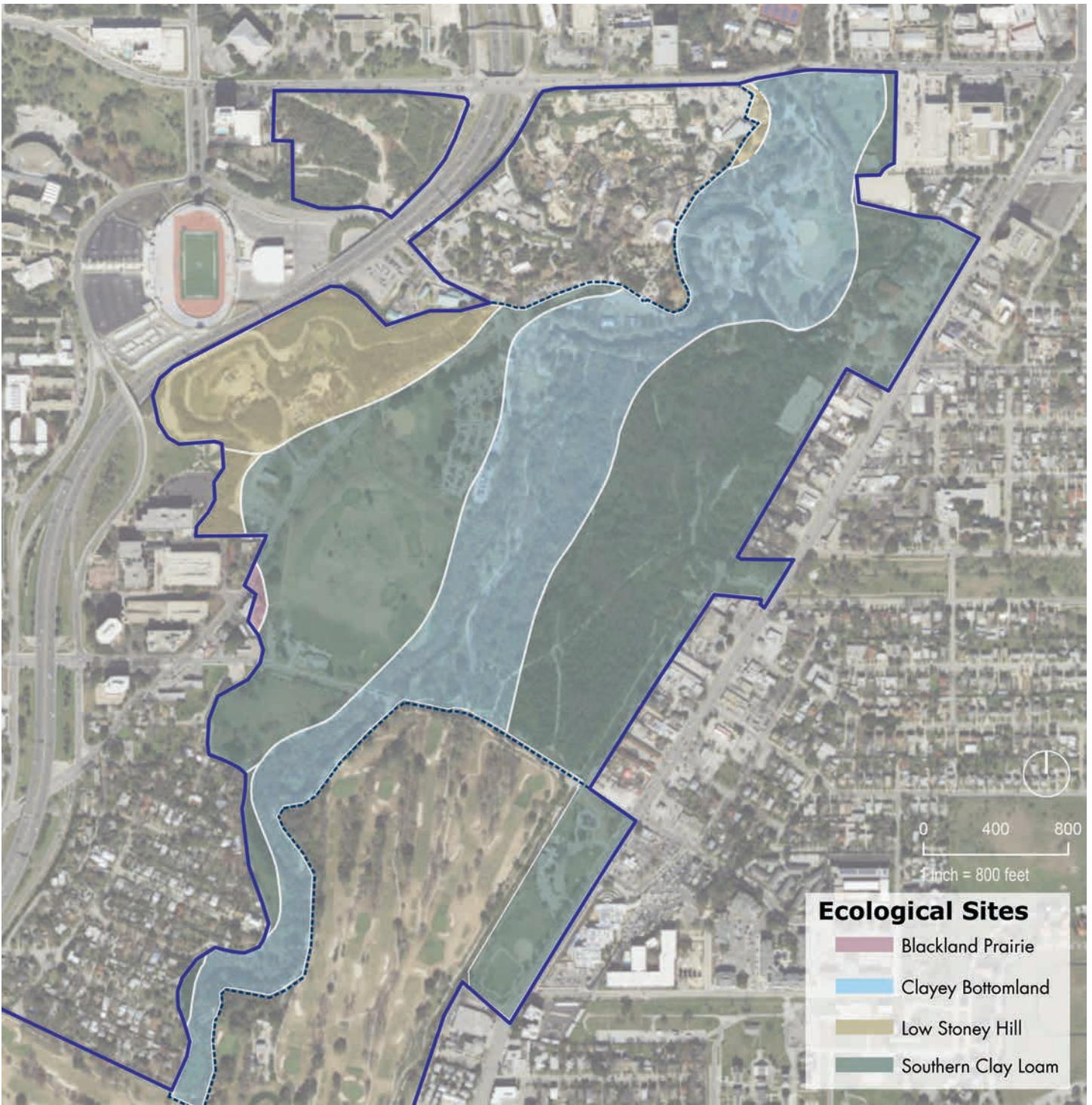


FIGURE 6-2. A diagram shows Brackenridge Park’s three primary soil types and one minor area of Blackland Prairie. Source: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, “Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment”

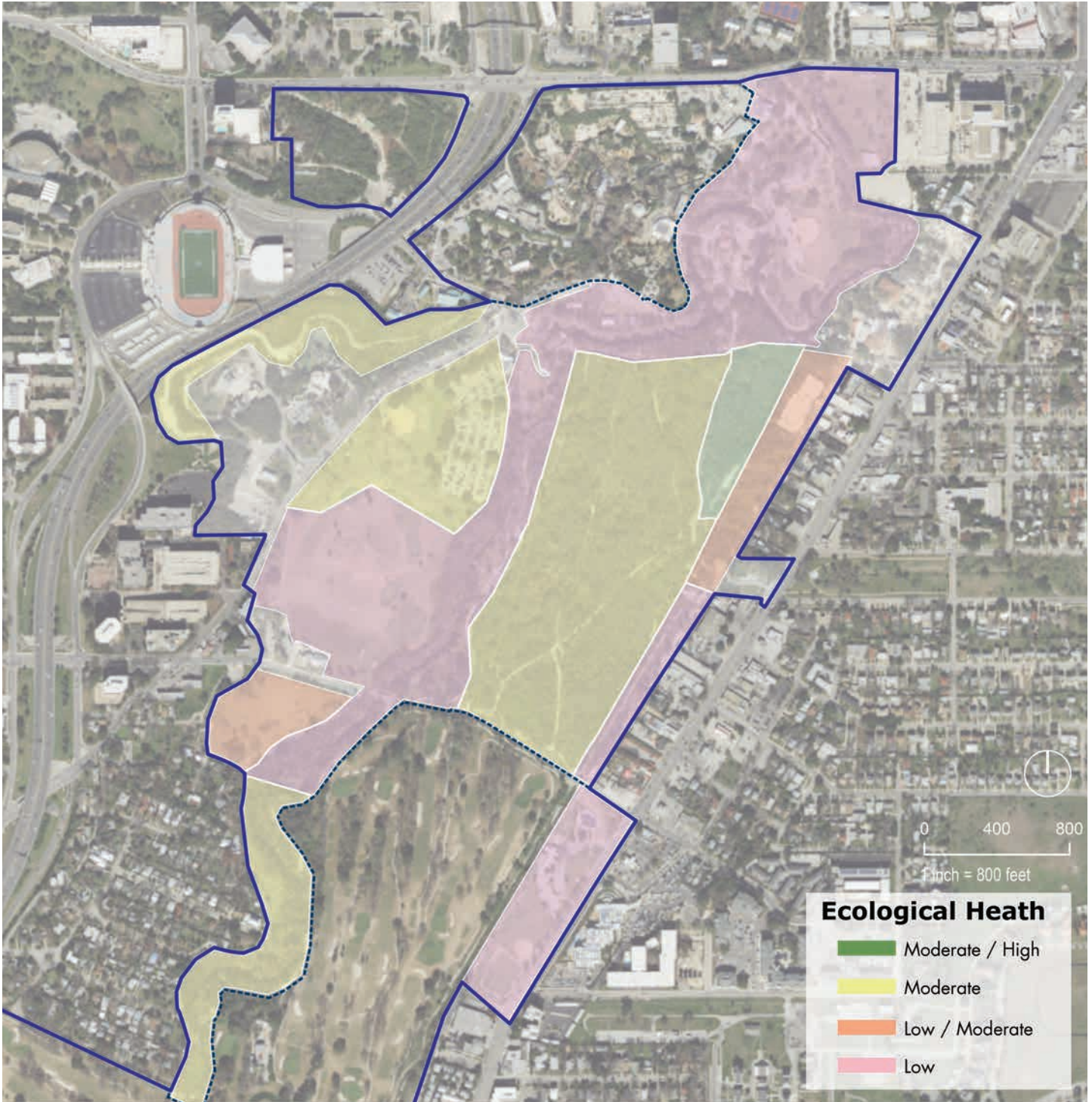


FIGURE 6-3. A diagram shows Brackenridge Park's ecological health, from "Moderate/High" to "Low." Source: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, "Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment"

HUMAN USES AND ECOLOGICAL FUNCTION

If we are to truly understand ecology as a larger context that shapes Brackenridge Park, it is crucial to understand the interdependence between human uses and ecological function (**figure 6-4**). Consider the situation of one parking lot in which numerous cars park or of one driving range heavily managed with toxic fertilizers and herbicides. These features contaminate stormwater. If soil surrounding these features and close to the river is compacted and exposed, it cannot absorb, hold, or filter water. Roots become stressed and stormwater carrying soil and contaminants flows uninterrupted to the river's edge. Thus, the river is impacted, along with historic live oaks and newly planted trees that do not have the ecological quality needed to grow and thrive.⁸

People have been drawn to Brackenridge Park landscape for its natural attributes and its river and shaded bottomland for thousands of years. And its soil, plant communities, and hydrology are doing important work. At the most basic level, they provide a respite from the heat and noise of the city. When natural communities are healthy, they do more—they clean water, protect the river, and provide rare wildlife habitat in the city. When natural communities are unhealthy, they lose the ability to provide those services and become vulnerable to collapse. For humans to continue enjoying the beauty and benefits of Brackenridge Park—and they should—the park's natural components, structures, and cultural experiences need to be cared for.

⁸ Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment*, 40.

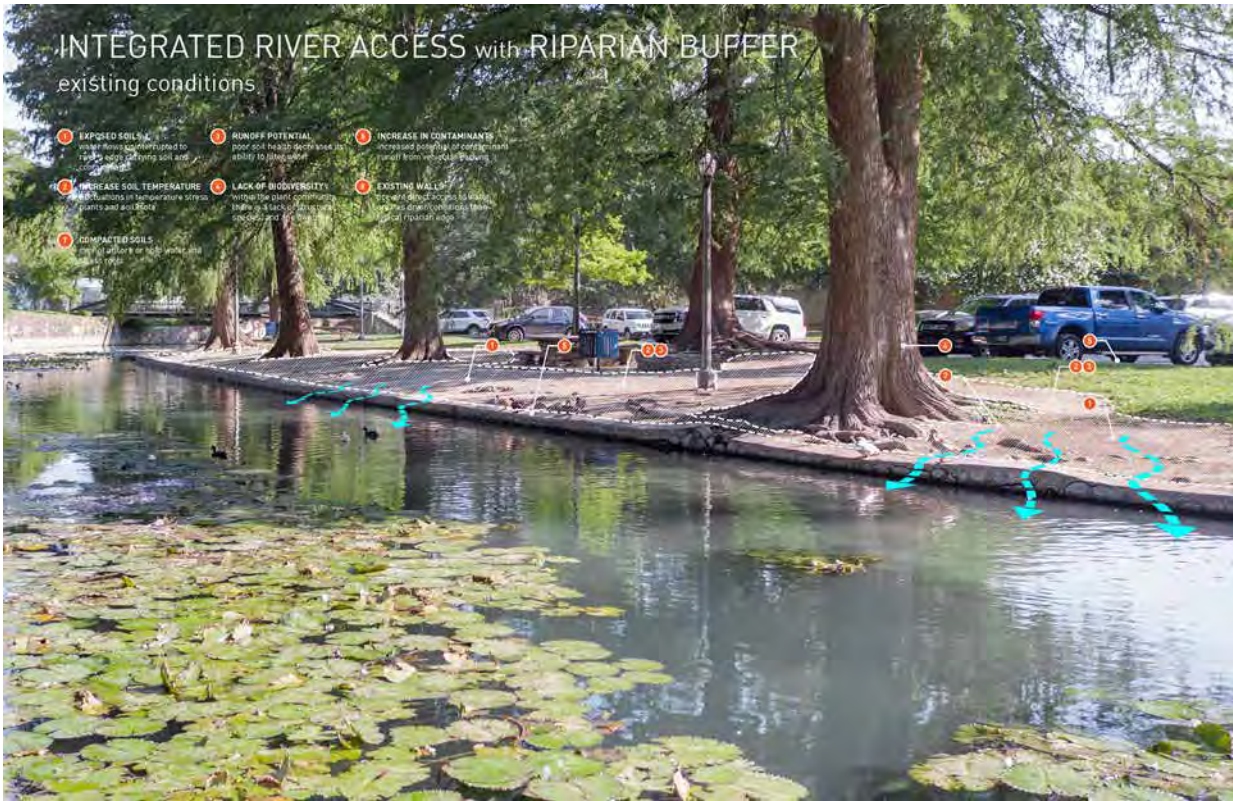


FIGURE 6-4. Top: diagram shows existing conditions of stormwater runoff and other contaminants into the San Antonio River. Bottom: a rendering of eco-restoration that heals the ecology while maintaining human access to the river and improving the overall experience. Source: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, “Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment”

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CHAPTER 7. GEORGE BRACKENRIDGE, A PORTRAIT

The land that became Brackenridge Park was shaped to a large extent by the vision of its donor, George Washington Brackenridge (**Figure 7-1**). For that reason, an exploration of his life and legacy infuses significance into the chronicle of the park’s development at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Brackenridge spent most of his life in Texas, but he was never able to reconcile the region’s active participation in slavery during the antebellum period and the culture of racial discrimination that continued after the Civil War. Although he was a sharp and sometimes ruthless businessman, he worked during his mature years to better the community of San Antonio and the plight of its underserved citizens, particularly through his support of public education. Brackenridge Park is another part of his public legacy.

Born on January 14, 1832, in Warrick County, Indiana, George Washington Brackenridge was the second child, and second son, of John Adams and Isabella Helena McCullough Brackenridge. John Adams Brackenridge (1800-1862) had deep northern roots. His Scottish forebears had first settled in Pennsylvania. He studied law at Princeton, where he not only reaped the benefits of an Ivy League education but also made friends and connections that would prove invaluable throughout his life. As a young college graduate, he moved to Indiana, joining “the movement westward that characterized his time.”¹ The fact that he became a staunch Unionist is not surprising given his Pennsylvania roots and those of his father.

George’s grandfather, a Presbyterian minister, was sent in 1795 to Washington, DC, which was just then developing its urban bones. It was there that, “with a fine sense of nationalism and nonpartisanship, he named his sons for three presidents who had worshiped in his congregation: John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison.”² The mere gravity of these names and those given to the next generation of Brackenridge men cannot be

1 Marilyn MacAdams Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973), 19.

2 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 18.

underestimated in terms of the psychological baggage and inspiration they carried. Certainly, the notion of patriotism was at the core of this family.

It was probably not lost on George that his namesake and America's first president was also a surveyor for Culpeper County, Virginia, in 1749.³ As a young man, George Brackenridge attended Hanover College and Indiana University and studied surveying and engineering. But by 1850, his father's health was precarious, and John Adams Brackenridge became dissatisfied with his economic prospects in Indiana.⁴ He worried that his business was not producing the wealth needed to provide for the future of his large family of eight children, should his health not improve.⁵ To test the waters in a warmer climate filled with apparent opportunities, he encouraged George to "take on the responsibilities of manhood."⁶ After a year of studies at Hanover, George began to explore Texas for its business prospects.⁷

BUSINESS PROSPECTS IN SOUTH TEXAS

The younger Brackenridge spent time between 1850 and 1851 trading merchandise along the Lavaca Bay in Texas, and he returned home having profited and displaying "the remarkable ability to look into the future.... Texas, he predicted, was on the verge of a boom."⁸ He convinced his father to make a move. At the time, Texas was luring immigrant groups from abroad. For Americans, Texas represented the next frontier where land was plentiful and cheap and where the burgeoning immigrant population needed goods and services. When George Brackenridge moved with his family from Indiana to Texas in late 1851, he was nineteen years old. With profits earned in Indiana from peddling the family's dry goods, the family purchased a large tract of land between the Navidad and Lavaca Rivers in Texana, Texas,⁹ approximately halfway between San Antonio and Houston and near the Gulf Coast. It was probably clear to the elder Brackenridge that to live prosperously in Texas, the presence of water was key. The location between two rivers proved a good selection.



FIGURE 7-1. Portrait of George Brackenridge at age 79, 1911. Source: *San Antonio Light* Photograph Collection, MS 359: L-333-F

3 "Surveying," George Washington's Mount Vernon, Mount Vernon Ladies Association, accessed November 4, 2019, mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/surveying/.

4 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 21.

5 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 21.

6 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 22.

7 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 21-23.

8 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 22.

9 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 17, 23. Texana is approximately 130 miles southeast of San Antonio.



FIGURE 7-2. Portrait of the Brackenridge family, circa late 1880s, prior to the 1886 death of George's mother Isabella and the 1905 and 1906 deaths of his brothers James and Tom, respectively. George is seated at center, and Eleanor is at far left. Source: Austin-Travis County Collection, Austin Public Library

The mercantile family (**figure 7-2**) initially operated a dry goods and local bank in the area. As the Civil War brewed, George “left to other men the debates about disunion and slavery in the 1850s. He listened to the arguments. But it was the vast stretches of thinly populated land rather than politics that fired his enthusiasm.”¹⁰ Following his father’s example and using his education as surveyor and engineer, as well as money borrowed from his father, in 1854 George started buying land on his own in Bexar and Guadalupe Counties.¹¹

George Brackenridge would not make his move to San Antonio until 1866, but he would travel there frequently, “trading in merchandise and occasionally taking up a mortgage on the land... [S]ometimes his duties took him to taverns and boarding houses...”¹² and he became familiar with the city. The human landscape he entered there displayed a powerful blend of Tejano, Mestizo, German, and Spanish influences that could be felt in the city’s architecture, artistic heritage, culinary heritage, and traditions.¹³ Central Park was underway in the northeast, and the Civil War was looming before the nation. This event and its outfall became the national backdrop that influenced Brackenridge’s actions as a philanthropist, banker, and developer in San Antonio and elsewhere in Texas.

The year 1857 brought an extended drought, and most farmers’ crops failed that year. Brackenridge liquidated his landholdings, paid off his debts, and ended up essentially broke at the end of 1857.¹⁴ “The experience gave him an abiding distrust of land speculations, without curing him of speculating.”¹⁵

10 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 29.

11 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 29.

12 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 28.

13 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 28.

14 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 29.

15 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 30.

From about 1857 to 1860 George worked as surveyor of Jackson County,¹⁶ where he was “able to do the things he enjoyed most—fish, hunt, camp out, tramp through the woods, observe nature, meditate, and read.”¹⁷ He also learned the locations of the most valuable land in the county based on soils, topography, and access to water. As always, the banks of the rivers were premium tracts, not only for the water resource but also for the land on the banks, which would be richly fertile from flooding and deposition. These experiences would serve him well as he continued to invest in real estate. But after three years of surveying, he became discouraged by his earnings, thinking that it had been a mistake to cut his education short to make the move to Texas. In October of 1860, he enrolled as a student at Harvard University and intended to study law. “Education, he believed, was the key to improvement of both the individual and the human race.”¹⁸ But again, his university career was cut short, this time by the outbreak of the Civil War.

THE CIVIL WAR AND NEW VENTURES

When the Civil War erupted, the elder Brackenridge and his son George chose the side of the anti-secessionists, while George’s three brothers enlisted in the Confederate Army. This put George in the position of outsider not only within his family of siblings but also in his adopted state and community. This would shape his position in the business community and in society for the rest of his life. But George was not just a loyal Unionist; he was an opportunist and an innate capitalist, and at the age of twenty-nine, taking risks came naturally. Because of the cotton blockade, Brackenridge “became a war profiteer in the Matamoros cotton trade and with his family and a friend, he formed the cotton firm of Brackenridge, Bates, and Company.”¹⁹ They bought cotton contracts from local farmers and refused to accept Confederate specie, the Confederate currency of the time. It was during this period that Brackenridge met Charles Stillman, a financier who virtually controlled shipping traffic on the Rio Grande and who would prove to be one of the more prominent investors throughout Brackenridge’s career. By the war’s end, “Stillman was one of the richest men in America.”²⁰

By July of 1863, Brackenridge was forced to leave Texas under duress. His public support for the Union and refusal to accept Confederate money during business transactions turned local residents against him. During his father’s Indiana law career, John Adams had argued a case that was attended by a young attorney in training. That young attorney, Abraham Lincoln, became president of the United States in 1860. Brackenridge biographer Sibley includes an account that says that while the two lived in neighboring counties in Indiana, Brackenridge actually invited Lincoln to work briefly in his office and to use his extensive law library.²¹ This political connection in Washington, DC, helped George Brackenridge land a job at the US Department of the Treasury, a defining opportunity that proved beneficial in his next career as a banker.²²

16 “Brackenridge, George Washington,” *Handbook of Texas*, Texas State Historical Association, August 19, 2016, tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fbr02.

17 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 30.

18 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 31.

19 “Brackenridge, George Washington.” *Handbook of Texas*.

20 “Brackenridge, George Washington.” *Handbook of Texas*.

21 For a discussion of the various versions of this event and their reliability, see Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 19-20, footnote 5.

22 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 77.



FIGURE 7-3. San Antonio's First National Bank Building at corner (213 E. Commerce Street), 1886. Brackenridge maintained a garden on the roof, where he entertained and housed a cow for fresh milk. He and his sister Eleanor kept a downtown residence on the upper three levels of the adjacent Loan and Trust building. Source: University of Texas at San Antonio, General Photograph Collection, 069-8410

When the Civil War ended in 1865, Brackenridge returned to Texas and San Antonio. The family business still held substantial quantities of cotton, and they were well positioned to supply the surging demand from within their own storehouses. In 1866, Brackenridge founded a bank with the extensive profits from his cotton business along with resources supplied by his friend and business associate Stillman (**Figure 7-3**). The early years of the bank were successful. Brackenridge supplied funds to the cattle industry when it was at its peak following the war and before the advent of homesteaders and barbed wire in the mid-1880s. A blizzard in January 1887 effectively ended the cattle business as it had existed before that time. In previous years, cattle on open lands were able to move south in advance of severe weather, but the newly installed fences prevented them from turning south, and millions of cattle froze to death on the prairies and pastures of the Midwest and Southwest.²³

By the time the cattle business fell into decline, Brackenridge had already made his fortune. He then set about sharing his wealth with institutions throughout Texas, with most of his largest donations made to advance educational causes.²⁴ He maintained his close friendship with the Stillman family. The Stillmans continued the economic and social prominence they had created through two strategic marriages, when James Stillman's daughters both married Rockefellers.²⁵

23 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 111.

24 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 202.

25 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 208.

In addition to Brackenridge's work in banking and in the cattle industry, his financial backing and leadership of the San Antonio Water Works, the city's first municipal water system, was one of the best-known of his investments, although it did little to build his fortune. "The system of pumps, pipes, raceway, and reservoir fascinated him and brought out a latent talent for civil engineering."²⁶ But expanding the network of pipes, meters, and other infrastructure as the city rapidly grew in population and area required Brackenridge to reinvest almost every penny of profit the Water Works produced. He repeatedly proclaimed that the investors had seen almost no dividends through the years. Banking problems during the second decade of the twentieth century further reduced Brackenridge's fortunes. Reversals in the cattle business in 1917 consumed his time and energy. By the time of his death, he was still a wealthy man, but his fortune had been diminished through serious reverses at the bank and the distribution of his assets in advance of his death. His final will created a series of trusts for relatives and friends valued at approximately \$1.5 million.

In the years between 1851, when he first arrived in Texas, and 1865, when he returned to Texas from Washington, DC, George Brackenridge explored many avenues—land surveying, land investment, legal studies, and banking. His is one American story. His family's prosperity and connections no doubt contributed to his ability to explore broadly in his business ventures. Brackenridge also witnessed many changes and advances in his lifetime. In 1866, the population of San Antonio was 10,000. By 1920, the year of his death, the city's population was 160,000, and San Antonio was the largest city in the state of Texas.²⁷ In 1866, the primary modes of transportation in San Antonio were ox carts, mule wagons, and horses. By 1920, modes of transportation had shifted. Railroads, streetcars, and automobiles were widely accessible.

From the beginning, San Antonio was a multicultural city with a population of Europeans, Americans, Mexicans, Africans, and many mixes—Tejanos, Texans descended from Mexicans, and Mestizos, who descended from Indigenous people and Spanish colonists. Traffic signs were printed in three languages; English, German, and Spanish. Brackenridge's family advantages surely enabled his early explorations, but his economic success and exposure to the diversity of Texana and San Antonio were likely as influential on his Union politics and his philanthropy.

PHILANTHROPIC INFLUENCES AND LEGACY

So who really was George Washington Brackenridge, and what were the defining influences that positioned him for a long and full life of entrepreneurial investments, land speculation, urban innovation, educational reform, and park making? The Sibley biography is a good beginning for collecting and connecting the facts of his life. But there are many missing links in terms of his day-to-day experiences, and the reader struggles to understand how such a maverick genius came to be. Correspondence and personal records that he destroyed before his death perhaps held the key to some of these questions. The known facts of his life contribute to composing a picture of a bright, independent, thoughtful young man who essentially followed a different drummer.

²⁶ Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 131.

²⁷ Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 145.



FIGURE 7-4. Portrait of George and Eleanor Brackenridge taken in 1920, the year of his death. The original photo includes the note, “Taken by Georgie, 1920.” Source: Claire B. Cramer, published in Marilyn MacAdams Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge*

We can only speculate about most of these questions. George was highly intellectual and thought deeply, with a philosophical bent, about most things in life. Surely, the influences of his family of origin were intense and lasting. His antislavery and pro-Union views could easily have been instilled early in life by the example of his Presbyterian minister grandfather. Although George rejected all organized religion and struggled perennially with the existence of an afterlife, he certainly had a strong and unflinching moral character.

The excellent education that George’s father received stood in high contrast to George’s own two attempts to complete his education. Perhaps from watching and being taught by his father, he came to value that to which he aspired but never completed—a college education. Clearly, he wanted to help young people who might not have access to a college education, along with those who were often shut out of higher education because they lacked the financial resources. This passion led him to his unprecedented efforts to provide educational opportunities especially for African Americans and to women.

In 1866 Brackenridge brought his mother and his sister Eleanor to make their home with him, “an arrangement that proved agreeable for all three of them”²⁸ (figure 7-4). His mother, Isabella, and sister Eleanor were forces in and of themselves. “Both were women of intelligence and purpose, and they promptly found useful places in San Antonio. Mrs. Brackenridge devoted herself to the care of the city’s orphans, while Eleanor pioneered in the women’s club movement, eventually becoming one of the most prominent women in the state.”²⁹ In addition, she was an organizer of San Antonio’s Equal Franchise Society, which advocated for women’s right to vote.

The source of George’s fondness for the natural landscape is unclear, but one might assume that it had roots in his early childhood experiences in Indiana, still very much a wild frontier at the time. The move to a starkly different landscape in Texas would have impressed him with a different kind of natural wildness. Sibley states that George and his mother were “both nature lovers,” and that when he purchased the property at the head of the San Antonio River (1869), which for the next twenty-eight years would be his home, he and his mother “delighted in the natural beauty of the setting and devoted themselves to preserving it” (figure 7-5)³⁰. And George was impressed with “the transitory nature of man’s sojourn on earth. By the early twentieth century, the village of Texana his family had known in the

28 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 126.

29 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 126.

30 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 128.

1850s had vanished because of the coming of the railroad in 1886.³¹ From this personal experience of loss through neglect and attrition, the notion of preserving place became important to his outlook and worldview.

George's affinity for land, its political and natural boundaries, its shape, and its character were demonstrated through his education as an engineer and surveyor. The experience of working as a county surveyor would have put him in touch with the Texas landscape in a visceral and immediate way. At the time, this Jackson County landscape would have been one of great variety in landform, vegetation, and wildlife. One of Brackenridge's recreational favorites was sailing a houseboat called the *Navidad*, which he owned with his brothers James and Tom (**figure 7-6**). George's purchase of not only the headwaters but additional acreage along the San Antonio River in 1876 signaled his keen awareness of the value of water in Texas as well as his own desire to experience it as a pivotal part of his life. Eventually, his conviction that this most precious of natural resources in the city belonged to all led to his gift of the land and its transformation into a park, ensuring this wish in perpetuity.

Travel certainly was a significant force and inspiration in Brackenridge's life. His early life was filled with regional travel, and his later business endeavors would have required that he visit the great banking capitals of New York and perhaps London, although documentation does not survive for most of his travel. Surely he had seen the great parks of Olmsted and Vaux in Manhattan.

In 1905, Brackenridge was ready to depart on an extensive around-the-world trip by land and sea, including Hawaii, Australia and New Zealand, Ceylon, India, Egypt, and, finally, the capitals of Europe.³² The journey was chronicled and published by his niece Isabella Mathews, entitled *Spring Days in Two Hemispheres*, in 1908. Along with his niece, he had included as guests his sister Eleanor; "Colonel Almon Libbey Varney, a retired army man whose company he enjoyed; Mrs. Varney; and Miss Marin Fenwick, a San Antonio journalist."³³ But as the departure date approached, his brother James's health took a turn for the worse, and George sent Eleanor ahead with the group while he remained home. James died in August 1905. George settled the estate and then left with Isabella and the Varneys to join Eleanor's party in the Orient. But before the globe had been circled, brother Tom died

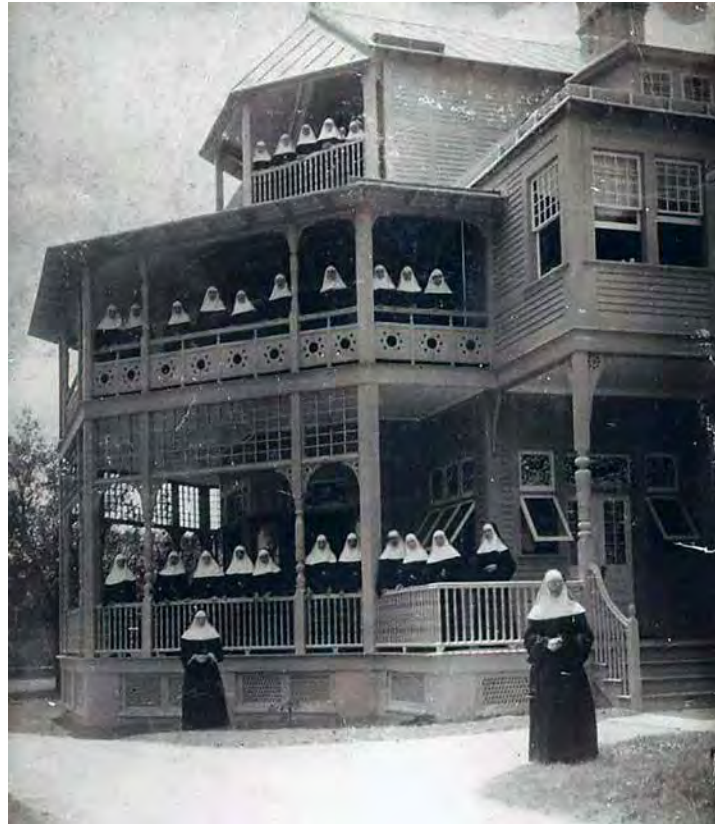


FIGURE 7-5. Brackenridge's Victorian mansion in San Antonio, in which George lived with his mother and sister, until 1897, when he sold 40 acres, including the home, to the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, seen in this image. Source: Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, published in *San Antonio Express-News*

31 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 14.

32 Isabella H. Mathews, *Spring Days in Two Hemispheres* (New York: Peyton Steger; Leopold Classic Library, 1908), passim.

33 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 207.



FIGURE 7-6. A photo of George Brackenridge aboard his and his brothers' houseboat, the *Navidad*, possibly named for the *Navidad* River that ran along land his family purchased and lived on when they first moved to Texas. Source: Claire B. Cramer, published in Marilyn MacAdams Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge*

in March 1906, while the group was preparing to leave Egypt for Europe.³⁴ Not surprisingly, much of the trip was spent crossing water and studying the ancient cultures that had grown up on the banks of the world's great rivers. The discussion in Mathew's diary of sites visited always included visits to places of landscape interest. In former British colonies such as New Zealand and India, there were impressive public parks and botanical gardens. In cultures in which nature was worshiped, as in the Orient, the care and protection of great forests was noteworthy.

Notably, when George was called home for his brother Tom's untimely death, he had just finished touring and learning about the many wonders and challenges of the Aswan Dam on the Nile, which was in the process of being raised higher.³⁵ The power of water and its manipulation by ancient and modern cultures almost seemed to be a subtext of the tour's itinerary.

Despite the amazing tour, the passing of both his brothers within several months of each other must have brought George's own mortality home. He determined to retire "and to enjoy family and friends and travels while there was yet the opportunity."³⁶ He was thoughtful about the legacy that he would leave in Texas. He pondered the nature and effects of philanthropy and was never secure in the impact of his largesse given to the people of the state, and particularly to the citizens of San Antonio. "He subscribed actively to the utilitarian theory that the test of merit was whether the greatest good was accomplished for the greatest number."³⁷ Certainly, Brackenridge's vision of the significance and the potential

34 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 207-8.

35 New World Encyclopedia, s.v. "Aswan Dam," MediaWiki, accessed November 7, 2019, newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Aswan_Dam.

36 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 208.

37 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 8.

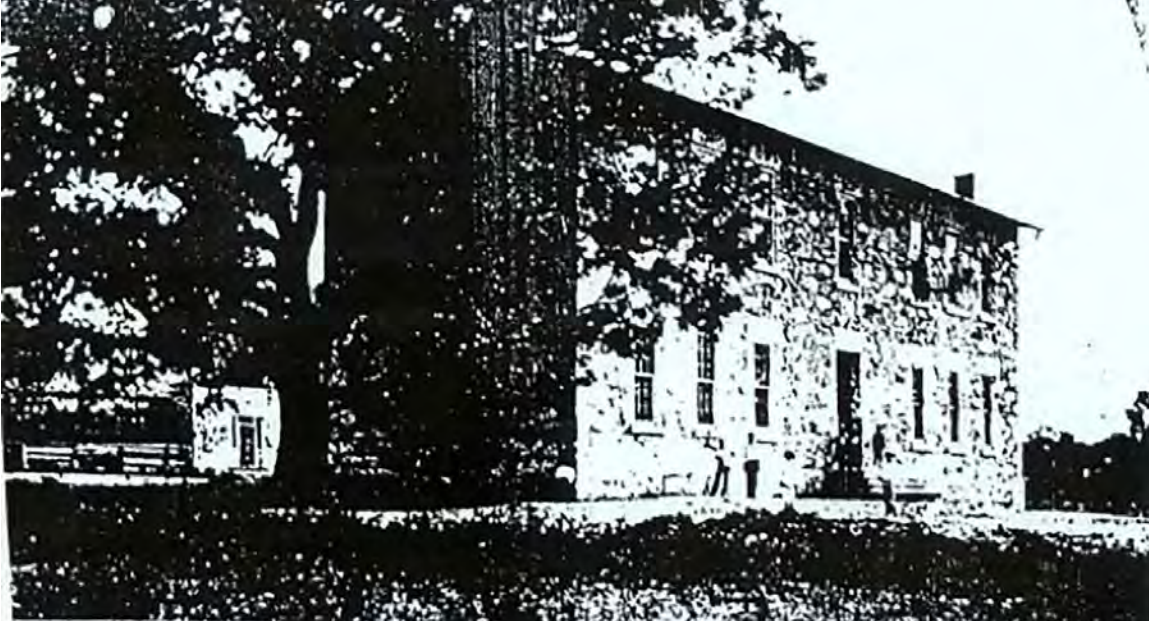


FIGURE 7-7. Rincon/Riverside/Frederick Douglass School at 701 North St. Mary's Street in San Antonio. George Brackenridge supervised the demolition of the Confederate Tannery in Brackenridge Park, and the stones were used to build the school. Source: "A History of Douglass Academy."

for the San Antonio River to become the focal point of San Antonio's premier park saved a landscape of immeasurable importance for future residents and visitors of San Antonio.

Yet he questioned his decision to dispense his fortune for public causes, "suffering pangs of conscience that instead of helping he was injuring society." He wrote to an associate in 1894, saying, "By far the most difficult task undertaken by humanity is that of the proper distribution of charity. The pleasure of giving is usually marred by the fear of...probable injury to the subjects relieved, by destroying their individuality and making them less self-sufficient, to say little of the injury done the community by converting good citizens into mendicants."³⁸

Between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the century, Brackenridge dedicated himself, along with his banking pursuits, largely to education. After the Civil War, according to his friend Alexander W. Terrell, Brackenridge "turned his attention first to black education, because...he wanted to make retribution for his family's ownership of slaves in the prewar years."³⁹ He was appointed a member of the Freedmen's Bureau, and in that role, he "supervised the demolition of a Confederate armory and the building of a Negro school from the stones"⁴⁰ (figure 7-7). By 1909, the school became part of the public school system, and in 1914, when the district wanted to sell the property, Brackenridge, who was the property's sole surviving trustee, allowed the sale "on the condition that the proceeds... be put into another Negro school."⁴¹ Between 1901 and 1905, he contributed large sums of money to the creation of two other San Antonio schools for African Americans. Even earlier, he had become a major financial supporter of Guadalupe Colored College at Seguin, a higher education institution that had been founded in 1884 by a black Baptist organization.⁴²

38 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 10.

39 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 166.

40 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 166.

41 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 166.

42 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 167.



FIGURE 7–8. Bronze sculpture of George Brackenridge designed by Italian-born sculptor Pompeo Coppini in the 1930s, cast in 1970, and installed two years later at the Broadway and Funston Place entrance to Brackenridge Park. A companion piece of a teacher and children was designed but never completed. Source: *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association

“Brackenridge’s most substantial contributions to education and other causes for blacks came in an era when nationwide there was little interest” in the advancement of African Americans.⁴³

In the final judgment, Brackenridge’s gifts to education—both in his insistence on academic freedom in the face of political influence at the University of Texas and his commitment to equal access for all, regardless of race, gender, and financial assets—will have had the most lasting mark on the state. Brackenridge conceived of a foundation—the George W. Brackenridge Foundation—and laid its groundwork in 1913 before his death. It was the first of its kind in the state and one of the few in the nation at the time it was planned, only eight years after Andrew Carnegie had set the pattern.⁴⁴

In 1963, the Brackenridge Scholarship Program shifted the focus of the program from student loans to the provision of an annual four-year scholarship awarded to one or more graduates of each public high school in Bexar County for their college of choice. Today, the foundation funds “the untried, the new, and the more imaginative opportunities in education.”⁴⁵ This inclination to change individual lives one by one and to push the boundaries of current thinking about how to educate the youth of tomorrow is as broad reaching and creative as the man who had the vision to establish the foundation.

43 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 168.

44 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 16.

45 Mary L. Kelley, *The Foundations of Texan Philanthropy* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 21.

In *The Foundations of Texas Philanthropy*, historian Mary L. Kelley writes that “in the three decades following the creation of the George W. Brackenridge Foundation...donors established approximately 180 private philanthropic institutions. The vast majority were ‘family affairs,’ funded from business profits and post-Spindletop oil revenues.”⁴⁶ Philanthropists in Dallas, Houston, and throughout the state followed Brackenridge’s lead and established permanent trusts that became famous first in Texas but now hold their own on a national and international stage. Brackenridge’s legacies in San Antonio have been chronicled and celebrated. His establishment of a philanthropic “trope” in Texas might be his most enduring legacy.

During the mid-1950s, sculptor Pompeo Coppini created a plaster sculpture of George Brackenridge with an eventual plan to recast the sculpture into a bronze figure for permanent display at Brackenridge Park (**figure 7-8**). Coppini’s death in 1957 put the project on hold for a dozen years. In 1969, Coppini’s longtime colleague, Waldine Tauch, completed the project, and the following year it was permanently located at the entrance to Brackenridge Park on the north side of Brackenridge Drive where it intersects with Broadway and becomes Funston Street on the east side of Broadway. But in fact, Tauch did not succeed in completing the entire project. Coppini’s original work was intended to convey Brackenridge’s larger legacy. He had also been creating a separate sculpture portraying a teacher and children. This was to be mounted on a vertical monument in the park, near the Brackenridge sculpture.⁴⁷

George Washington Brackenridge’s love of land, water, and the natural and cultural universe; his compassion for people from all backgrounds and walks of life; his understanding that education is critical to changing the course of lives; and his ability to visualize a future that gave all the opportunity to connect with a place where they felt at home lives for all time in the park that bears his name.

⁴⁶ Kelley, *The Foundations of Texan Philanthropy*, 21.

⁴⁷ Pompeo Coppini, *From Dawn to Sunset* (San Antonio: Naylor, 1949), 396.

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PART TWO: PAST

Introduction to Site History

Chapter 8: Living with Water, Prehistory–1690

Chapter 9: Managing the Water, 1691–1844

Chapter 10: Urban and Industrial Evolution, 1845–1898

Chapter 11: San Antonio's Municipal Park, 1899–1949

Chapter 12: Brackenridge Park Enters the Modern Era, 1950–Present

Period Plans

Period Comparison Diagrams

History is a messy enterprise. It's not simply an account of events in the past but rather one of change over time. History provides context and informs the future.

Claudia R. Guerra,
"300 Years of San Antonio and Bexar County"

We have no city, except, perhaps New Orleans, that can vie, in point of the picturesque interest that attaches to odd and antiquated foreignness, with San Antonio. Its jumble of races, costumes, languages and buildings; its religious ruins, holding to antiquity, ...its remote, isolated, outposted situation, and the vague conviction that it is the first of a new class of conquered cities into whose decaying streets our rattling life is to be infused, combined with the heroic touches in its history...

Frederick Law Olmsted,
A Journey Through Texas, 1857

INTRODUCTION TO SITE HISTORY

Parks hold histories—natural and cultural—in and on their grounds. Stewards of the nation’s parks bear the challenge and responsibility of determining how to preserve these stories—how to lift the hidden ones from unseen places and how to translate the more complex ones into relatable retellings and physical spaces—in order to invite people in to a more dynamic understanding and experience. To preserve a park’s histories is to protect and interpret its grounds for future generations and the stories they will impart.

Nine distinct periods of occupation and development mark the Brackenridge Park landscape.

12,000 BCE – 1690 CE	Prehistoric Human Occupation and Early Exploration
1691 – 1775	Missionary Development and Acequia Construction
1776 – 1844	Secular Development
1845 – 1898	Texas Statehood, German Immigration, Civil War, and City Development
1899 – 1914	The Brackenridge Vision: A Driving Woodland Park
1915 – 1929	The Lambert Period: Cultural and Recreational Development
1930 – 1949	The WPA Era and a New Direction in Flood Management
1950 – 1967	Early Preservation Efforts and the Civil Rights Era
1968 – Present	Archaeological Investigations and the Next Generation of Flood Management

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

In the site history, the nine periods of occupation and development are discussed across five chapters.

No written documentation exists for the prehistoric periods. Chapter 8 draws instead from reports of material archaeological evidence and interpretation of pictographic documentation to provide insight into the Indigenous people of the area. Three prehistoric periods are discussed together—Paleoindian, Archaic, and Late Prehistoric. Collectively, the prehistoric periods demonstrate a long continuum of egalitarian Indigenous American bands who inhabited the landscape seasonally. These bands spoke multiple languages, but they shared a commonality—their cultures formed in direct response to nature and its fluctuations and rhythms. The transitional period, technically referred to as the Protohistoric period and discussed in Chapter 8, is marked by the arrival of Spanish explorers to what was the northernmost territory of Mexico.

Chapter 9 opens with the christening of San Antonio and its river. It discusses construction of the missions and their extensive acequia system, beginning between 1719 and 1724. The first acequia would leave a lasting mark on the Brackenridge Park site. The chapter narrates the use of the missions to secure territory and resources for the Spanish Crown through the act of converting Indigenous people to Christianity, and it touches on the use of Indigenous labor for the construction of acequias. The major shift from humans adapting their lives to the water to humans managing water to adapt to their needs is highlighted.

With the early establishment of infrastructure via acequias, the suburban development of San Antonio began around 1776. But the spread of waterborne illness would severely impact the human population, even as Spanish regulatory structures related to water and land resources began to shape the landscape that would become San Antonio as people experience it today.

Chapter 10 covers only fifty-three years, but it is a period that encompasses numerous social and political changes. Texas incorporated into the Union. The Mexican-American War broke out and established a new Mexico-US border defined by the Rio Grande River (although the Tejano culture would persist on both sides). The new American city, along with the entire Texas Hill Country, attracted pioneer German immigrants and entrepreneurially minded Americans. They arrived not with the desire to expand territory or resources for an imperial European power but with the aim of individual attainment. Among these settlers was a Midwesterner of Scottish origins named George Brackenridge. A few years after his arrival, the Civil War broke out.

These events ushered in an era of rapid urban development—including the transition from the ancient acequia system to a well system; the development of major infrastructure, including water services, gas lighting, and streetcars; and an increase in commercial activities. All of these laid the groundwork for the city's first major municipal park.

Chapter 11 details the making of Brackenridge Park over roughly fifty years, from the turn of the century to 1950. The chapter highlights the amalgamation of influences that formed the park's regional vernacular character. It highlights the impact that cycles of drought and

flooding had on the park's development. Finally, it discusses the park's development as it reflected national trends. This span of time is marked by a new vision of how San Antonians would live with water and forge the city's place in the American tourism economy.

Chapter 12 discusses the park's entry into the modern era, when preservation arose out of policies related to urban development. These policies, such as those relating to the expansion of the transportation system, were also developing at the national level. The period is also marked by changes to integration policies at parks throughout San Antonio.

The most recent developments in Brackenridge Park are also discussed. The present is marked by major population shifts and, globally, more frequent and severe climactic events of the type San Antonio has long endured. These shifts are leading to new approaches and directions in the preservation of public spaces while also ushering in new approaches to water conservation and flood prevention.

At the end of the Site History, a series of period plans and diagrams are included to illustrate the most significant changes in this landscape over time.

NARRATIVE FRAMEWORKS

Defining the periods of occupation and development helps convey the site history chronologically, but there are always degrees of overlap. Time is not static, and the same is true for nature and human beings. Likewise, many social, political, and economic forces inform events, policies, and trends and how those spread, translate, and take hold across geographies.

The site history chapters are narrated according to the lenses that set the Brackenridge Park landscape apart from other municipal park landscapes. Each chapter is intended to convey a larger story that may be related to one or all of the following:

- The evolution of how humans have lived with, adapted to, or tried to adapt water for survival
- The evolution of municipal park development and design in the United States
- The amalgamation of cultural imprints that have defined Brackenridge Park's character

Belying each of these lenses is the critical awareness of new directions in cultural landscape preservation and ecological conservation and—most importantly—the inherent connection between the two.



CHAPTER 8. LIVING WITH WATER, PREHISTORY–1690

Inscribed on a west-facing wall of a cliff in the Lower Pecos Canyonlands of southwest Texas approximately two hundred miles west of San Antonio, an elaborate ancient mural, twenty-six feet long and thirteen feet tall, illustrates a developed pictographic language and set of Indigenous traditions that is at least two thousand years old (**figure 8-1**). Evidence of human habitation in this region stretches ten thousand years beyond the mural's estimated date.¹ The White Shaman Rock mural's imagery suggests that Indigenous populations journeyed seasonally using waterways as a guide, and their destinations included the area that is today San Antonio and, particularly, the San Antonio River headwaters and the landscape of Brackenridge Park.

Early Indigenous populations are labeled prehistoric because they lack a “contemporaneous written account”² of their cultures, but the label is misleading. The layperson often imagines Indigenous people in terms of fictional depictions associated with old Western films and television shows or through clinical textbook terminology. But the White Shaman Rock mural paints a revelatory and humanizing story of the earliest inhabitants of the Lower Pecos Canyonlands. Central to this story is the water.

“Stories about the origins of springs often involve Indian tales of discovery. Occasionally, they reflect the romantic notion of the noble savage who through a primitive unity with the forces of nature discovered the waters’ powers.”³ Indeed, the mural illustrates that Indigenous Americans understood that water was the source of life, but it also demonstrates a complex civilization.

In her 2008 archaeological summary of early occupation in the San Antonio River valley, Kristi Miller Ulrich turned to the work of M. B. Collins and E. R. Prewitt. Both researchers developed chronologies that now serve as the basis for early timelines related to Texas

1 Brad Tyer, “If These Walls Could Talk,” *Texas Observer*, December 2016, accessed November 16, 2019, texasobserver.org/if-these-walls-could-talk/.

2 Tyer, “If These Walls Could Talk.”

3 Janet Mace Valenza, *Taking the Waters in Texas: Springs, Spas, and Fountains of Youth* (Austin: University of Austin Press, 2000), 47.



FIGURE 8-1. The White Shaman Rock Art Panel in the Lower Pecos Canyonlands west of San Antonio. Some interpret the four-thousand-year-old, twenty-six-foot-long pictograph as depicting cosmic beliefs and seasonal migration to the San Antonio River. Source: Rock Art Foundation White Shaman Preserve, Witte Museum Collection

prehistory. There are three discernible periods of prehistoric human occupation in the region—Paleoindian, Archaic, and Late Prehistoric. The Protohistoric period is considered a transitional period between the three prehistoric periods and the historic period—so called because it signifies the beginning of written accounts.

What is known about the prehistoric periods suggests a continuum of nomadic hunting and gathering practices in the region. The White Shaman Rock mural, considered “one of the most significant archaeological sites in North America,”⁴ is dated to the second of the three periods—the Archaic period. It documents hunter-gatherer seasonal patterns, traditions, and belief systems in greater depth.

This chapter provides a distilled account of the prehistory of the larger region, with consideration for how the earliest human occupation of Bexar County, the city of San Antonio, and Brackenridge Park fit into this geographical context. It briefly narrates the regional landscapes of southwest Texas that Indigenous people would have inhabited. It distinguishes the three prehistoric periods and the Protohistoric period of human occupation and shows that each would have impacted Brackenridge Park and its wider surroundings. Thus it illustrates the continuum and then the disruption of the hunter-gatherer lifestyle. The chapter also summarizes the prehistoric culture that would have existed in the area. To make the discussion of culture more vivid, the chapter draws from archaeological interpretation of the White Shaman Rock, which came under the ownership and protection of the Witte Museum in January 2017.

⁴ “Rock Art Foundation White Shaman Preserve of the Witte Museum.” The Witte Museum, accessed November 20, 2019, wittemuseum.org/rock-art/wittemuseum.org/rock-art/.

THE PREHISTORIC LANDSCAPE

The emergence of culture—the way people live on the land and with the water and in the process develop belief systems and conventions related to food, dwellings, and even pleasure—is inextricable from the larger landscape. Therefore, it is helpful to have an image of the environment that the first humans of South Texas encountered.

Twelve thousand years ago... south Texas enjoyed a cooler and wetter climate. The result was a mixed environment of grassland and forest features. This relatively lush environment was home to grass-eating mammoths and tree-browsing mastodons.... Smaller game animals such as deer and camelids, and fish, as well as a wide range of localized plants, many of which were edible, were found in the area....

The environment changed ten thousand years ago with global climate change. In south Texas, the Holocene environment was marked by warmer temperatures and reduced rainfall.... With the change in climate and the rise in sea level, the rivers slowed down and allowed for the creation of oxbow lakes. In the interior, waterholes formed.... The dry and arid landscape we know today was fully developed by 300 B.C.⁵

It is the latter environment, the Holocene, that coincides with knowledge of the earliest inhabitants of southwest Texas.

The Lower Pecos Canyonlands and Bexar County are joined by the Edwards Plateau ecoregion. The Pecos River flows southeasterly, eventually running into the Rio Grande River, and it “marks a transitional zone to the Edwards Plateau, which defines Texas Hill Country.”⁶ The canyonlands are situated at the eastern edge of the Edwards Plateau, and Bexar County is situated at the southwestern edge of the Edwards Plateau. Geographically and symbolically, the Edwards Plateau bridges the Lower Pecos Canyonlands and Bexar County (**figure 8-2**). Some desert conditions of the Lower Pecos Canyonlands can also be found in San Antonio, but the city’s geography is more closely related to the Hill Country’s geography and is also impacted by its neighboring coastal environment.

In simple terms, multiple geographies converge in San Antonio. A micro-occurrence of this convergence remains present and visible in Brackenridge Park, where the Balcones Escarpment, which bounds the Edwards Plateau, cuts directly through the northwest portion of the park. In this area of the park, a striking and discernable semiarid desertlike condition abuts a more humid subtropical climate and ecological conditions (**figure 8-3**).

5 Bobbie L. Lovett and Russell K. Skowronek, “Coahuiltecans of the Rio Grande Region,” in *Native American Peoples of South Texas*, ed. Bobbie L. Lovett et al. (Edinburg, TX: CHAPS at the University of Texas—Pan American, 2014), 22, utrgv.edu/chaps/_files/documents/native-american-peoples-of-south-texas-pdf.pdf.

6 Tyer, “If These Walls Could Talk.”

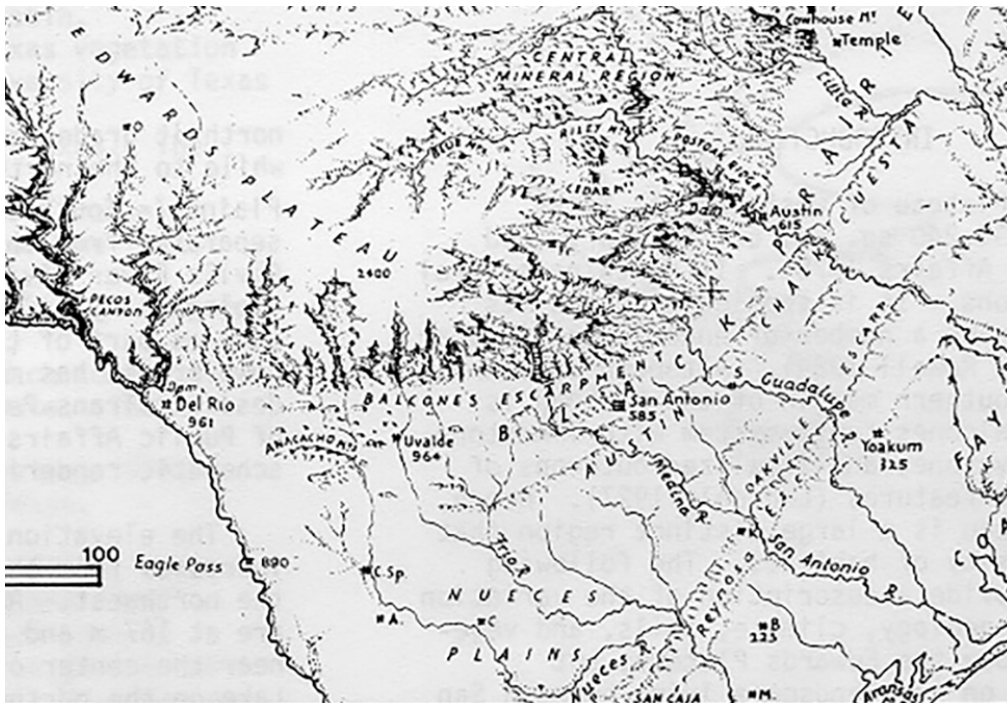


FIGURE 8–2. Detail of a geologic landform map of southwest Texas shows the relationships between the Pecos Canyonlands, Balcones Escarpment, San Antonio, and the San Antonio River. The map, by cartographer Erwin Raisz, was first published in *Landforms of the United States*. Source: The Walter Geology Library, University of Texas at Austin

The Lower Pecos Canyonlands landscape, then and now, includes “plateaus...sparsely vegetated with cactus, mesquite, lechuguilla [an agave species] and ocotillo [a desert shrub].”⁷ Prior to the 1800s, the area would also have contained native grasses, which declined here and in the San Antonio area due to ranching.

Three rivers water the region...the Rio Grande, the Pecos, and the Devils, the latter two largely contained by limestone canyons pocked with ledges and shallow caves. Springs percolate through the porous limestone, feeding the rivers during drought. Then, as now, flash floods scour the channels with unpredictable regularity.⁸

Just as the canyonlands contain springs that percolate through limestone, springs in north and northwestern San Antonio percolate through the limestone that forms the Edwards Plateau.⁹ Major drainages associated with Brackenridge Park are the Olmos Creek Basin north of the park; the San Antonio River, with its headwaters located north of the park and south of the Olmos Creek Basin; and several smaller springs within the park, usually in proximity to the river.¹⁰ These drainages are all born of the Edwards Aquifer, which lies beneath the Edwards Plateau. The San Antonio River eventually flows into the Guadalupe River just before the latter empties into San Antonio Bay, which then opens into the Gulf of Mexico. “In one year, San Antonio may experience desert-like conditions and in the next

7 Tyer, “If These Walls Could Talk.”

8 Tyer, “If These Walls Could Talk.”

9 Kristi Miller Ulrich, *Archaeological Services Associated with Improvements to Miraflores at Brackenridge Park, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas* (San Antonio: Center for Archeological Research, University of Texas at San Antonio, 2008), 1.

10 Ulrich, “Archaeological Services,” 1.



FIGURE 8–3. Alpine Drive pedestrian trail in the northwest portion of Brackenridge Park, with century plants and other desert plants shown at right and desert shrubs left and in horizon, June 2018. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

year receive a deluge of precipitation.”¹¹ Drought punctuated by flood events is also persistent in the Lower Pecos Canyonlands.

During the prehistoric periods in San Antonio, “bear, cougar, and wolf would be usual and common residents. Buffalo or bison would be regular visitors to the area,” and “alligator, large snapping turtles and gar as well as abundant fish of many species” would have lived in the streams.¹² The same animals would have been present in the Lower Pecos Canyonlands.

Descriptions of the Lower Pecos Canyonlands and the Bexar County landscapes convey an inhospitable environment. Yet Indigenous people repeated seasonal journeys through these landscapes, always guided by the water.

PREHISTORIC HUMAN OCCUPATION, 12,000 BCE – 1690 CE

PALEOINDIAN PERIOD, 12,000 BCE – 8800 BCE

The earliest period of human occupation in Texas was that of the Paleoindian. It was during this period—at the end of the last ice age—that “humans first appeared in archaeological record in North America.”¹³ Early on, these migratory populations were hunter-gatherers who subsisted on megafauna,

large prehistoric animals of the early American continents. In Thomas Hester’s 1975 report “Archaeological and Historical Resources in the San Antonio Guadalupe River Basins,” he wrote that the Paleoindian period “was a time in which there was at least some degree of dependence on large game animals, including mammoth and a now extinct species of bison.”¹⁴

In 2013, as part of a study titled “The San Antonio River Mammoth Site,” archaeologists reported on findings that “interpreted the site as yielding evidence of human-mammoth interaction, a rare occurrence in the Americas.”¹⁵ The discovery occurred along a stretch of the San Antonio River south of the park and downtown San Antonio but within city limits. Currently, there is no evidence within the park of human interaction with megafauna such

11 Char Miller, *On the Border: an Environmental History of San Antonio* (San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, 2005), 21.

12 Mickey Killian, “History of the Native People,” Texas Mission Indians, accessed November 20, 2019, texasmissionindians.org/.

13 “Paleoindian Period: 12,000-10,000 BC,” National Parks Service, April 10, 2015, accessed November 20, 2019, nps.gov/fosm/learn/historyculture/paleoindian.htm.

14 Thomas R. Hester, *Archaeological and Historical Resources in the San Antonio Guadalupe River Basins: A Preliminary Statement. Regional Studies No. 1* (San Antonio: Center for Archaeological Research/University of Texas at San Antonio, 1975), 2.

15 Stephen M. Carpenter et al., “The San Antonio River Mammoth Site: Archaeological Testing Investigations for the Interstate 37 Bridge at the San Antonio River Improvement Project, Bexar County, Texas. Texas Antiquities Permit 4531” (Austin, TX: SWCA Environmental Consultants, 2013), 111.

as mammoths. There is evidence in the park, however, of manmade tools dating to the same period, suggesting that the possibility exists and may eventually be discovered.¹⁶

During the late Paleoindian period, the extinction of megafauna occurred and signaled a shift in the Paleoindian diet. The population remained hunter-gatherers, but they introduced small game and plants to their diets. This diet would be the predecessor to the diet of Archaic hunter-gatherers.

ARCHAIC PERIOD, 8000 BCE – 1200 BCE AND NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURES

The Archaic period is generally subdivided into the Early (8000 BCE – 4500 BCE), Middle (4500 BCE – 2400 BCE), and Late (2400 BCE – 1200 BCE) Archaic periods. Hunter and gathering practices continued during this time, but the period also included major transitions, such as a megadrought that occurred between 6000 BCE and 3000 BCE, roughly during the middle of the period.¹⁷ This may have impacted the existence of megafauna and created the circumstance for a new generation of Archaic hunter-gatherers, who, unlike their Paleoindian and Early Archaic predecessors, primarily hunted small game.

There seems to be a relative dearth of archaeological artifacts, both faunal and prehistoric human, during this period. Discoveries have been made of resources dating back to 9000 BCE, but then there is a large gap before activity resumed after the megadrought ended. During the last two thousand years of this period, the Late Archaic period, a transition toward material culture and exploitation of the local environment occurred.¹⁸

Although archaeological artifacts are inconsistent for this period, this is the period to which the White Shaman Rock mural is dated. Beyond showing that the Indigenous populations were hunter-gatherers, the White Shaman Rock suggests a more in-depth understanding of Indigenous cultures. Interpretation of the mural and its implications about Indigenous cultures will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

LATE PREHISTORIC PERIOD, 1200 BCE – 1250 CE

The people who lived during the Late Prehistoric period made significant technological advancements, including the bow and arrow, beveled stone knives, and the use of domestic wares and pottery for cooking and storage. A significant change in faunal patterns also occurred in the Late Prehistoric period. Anthropologist J. A. Huebner concluded that there was a “sudden return of bison to South and Central Texas during the Late Prehistoric” period that “resulted from a xeric climate in the plains north of Texas and increased grass production in the Cross-Timbers and Post Oak Savannah in north-central Texas”¹⁹ (**figure 8-4**). It is possible that the changes that occurred, both in faunal patterns and in human technology, were the result of “adjustments to environmental change associated with a period of cooler weather.”²⁰

16 Clinton McKenzie, staff archaeologist, UTSA Center for Archaeological Research, “Brackenridge Park,” email correspondence with author, July 9, 2019.

17 Ulrich, “Archaeological Services,” 5-6.

18 Ulrich, “Archaeological Services,” 5.

19 Ulrich, “Archaeological Services,” 7.

20 Bobbie L. Lovett et. al., *Native American Peoples of South Texas* (Edinburg, TX: CHAPS at the University of Texas—Pan American, 2014), utrgv.edu/chaps/_files/documents/native-american-peoples-of-south-texas-pdf.pdf.



FIGURE 8–4. A painting representing two semi-nomadic groups of the San Antonio area trading goods. The Indigenous groups appear to not yet be impacted by Spanish exploration and settlement. Advanced tools and the hides of large animals are depicted. “Trade.” Acrylic on canvas board. Source: Frank Weir, 2018, Witte Museum Collection

During these three periods, the major transition that occurred is that nomadic hunter-gatherers developed several advancements in technology. This effectively transformed the ways they hunted as they continued to journey according to seasonal changes and the “map” of the river systems. Changes in wildlife also demonstrate evolutionary shifts, from the presence of megafaunal creatures, to their disappearance, to the return of large animals such as deer and bison. Extreme flooding and drought are believed to have been present throughout these periods.

PROTOHISTORIC PERIOD, 1250 CE – 1650 CE

The Protohistoric period is considered a transitional period between the prehistoric and historic periods. Identifying this period archaeologically is problematic, because a clear material culture associated with this period is lacking. Instead, archaeological sites often contain a mixture of artifacts dating from the Late Prehistoric and early historic periods. This is because the period coincides with early European exploration of the area. During this time, in 1528, the first European contact in the region occurred.²¹ This began a major transition for the Indigenous people. A nomadic hunter-gatherer way of life, which had been responsive to seasonal fluctuations, allowing for their basic survival and larger cosmic belief systems, began the sharp turn to a fixed-site agricultural way of life, a new Christianity-based belief system, and the first attempts to manage water.

21 Harbert Davenport and Joseph K. Wells, “The First Europeans in Texas, 1528-1536,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (1918): 111, [jstor.org/stable/41784623](https://www.jstor.org/stable/41784623).

INDIGENOUS CULTURE

The prehistoric people who occupied Bexar County and its surrounding areas have collectively been referred to as Coahuiltecan for over a hundred years, and they were “a clearly surviving Archaic culture.”²² Their population has been estimated to be as few as two thousand people and as many as one hundred thousand people, but there is no definitive knowledge of their numbers.²³ The term *Coahuiltecan* was derived “from the state of Coahuila, Mexico, and refers to the language spoken by a large number of Indian groups in southern Texas and northeastern Mexico during the Spanish colonial period.”²⁴ Coahuiltecan did not comprise a single tribe or nation, however. Evidence suggests that “more than five dozen ‘polities’...were scattered across a wedge- or triangularly-shaped region,”²⁵ with the San Antonio area representing its northern tip. These “small autonomous bands”²⁶ of people

occupied southern Texas below the Edwards Plateau to the Gulf coast as well as parts of the Mexican states of Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas east of the Sierra Madre Oriental.... The natives followed a hunting and gathering existence...which was subject to regional and temporal variations.... Intra-regional cultural diversity resulted from spatially- and temporally-localized resources within the area....²⁷

Coahuiltecan did not speak one language, and “no archaeological evidence suggested these groups were the same archaic peoples living in the area.”²⁸ Rather, “languages within this ‘Coahuiltecan family’ were as disparate as English, German, Dutch, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish.”²⁹

In the early 1950s, archaeologist Frederick Ruecking characterized the Coahuiltecan groups as “a semi-nomadic people with a wide territorial range whose culture was based on subsistence economy” and noted that they “successfully adapted to their environment, developing the necessary technology for procurement of food, clothing and shelter.”³⁰ The groups were “egalitarian peoples” and “the only distinctions within the groups were based solely on age and sex.”³¹ They “subsisted on the wild edible resources of the area,” but “neither food nor water was in abundance.”³² To survive, “small family groups...followed a seasonal foraging rhythm.”³³

Ethnoarchaeological research on catchment areas suggests that hunters and gatherers living in groups of about a hundred or fewer exploited an area that could be traversed in two hours or about a ten kilometer (6.2 mile)

22 Lovett and Skowronek, “Coahuiltecan of the Rio Grande Region,” 13, 14.

23 Lovett and Skowronek, “Coahuiltecan of the Rio Grande Region,” 17.

24 Lovett and Skowronek, “Coahuiltecan of the Rio Grande Region,” 13.

25 Lovett and Skowronek, “Coahuiltecan of the Rio Grande Region,” 14.

26 Lovett and Skowronek, “Coahuiltecan of the Rio Grande Region,” 15.

27 Lovett et al., *Native American Peoples*, 2014.

28 Tiffany Tanya Terneny, “A Re-Evaluation of Late Prehistoric and Archaic Chronology in the Rio Grande Delta of South Texas” (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, May 2005), accessed July 9, 2019, citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.392.2537&rep=rep1&type=pdf.

29 Lovett and Skowronek, “Coahuiltecan of the Rio Grande Region,” 13.

30 Lovett and Skowronek, “Coahuiltecan of the Rio Grande Region,” 16.

31 Lovett and Skowronek, “Coahuiltecan of the Rio Grande Region,” 17.

32 Lovett and Skowronek, “Coahuiltecan of the Rio Grande Region,” 17.

33 Lovett and Skowronek, “Coahuiltecan of the Rio Grande Region,” 17.

radius. The size of the area could vary to include larger areas which would be seasonally exploited....

The many inland groups which comprise the Coahuiltecan entity within the western Gulf region were forced to utilize almost every edible plant and animal food available.³⁴

The groups developed a system of trading that meant materials available in one location could be obtained in exchange for materials originating in another location. “The Coahuiltecan neither made nor used ceramics...which were heavy and fragile and not conducive to a mobile lifestyle. Instead more durable containers of basketry, as well as bags of skin or fiber were preferred.”³⁵ Habitations also needed to be mobile; thus they were “constructed of pole and thatch or woven mats. These were easily dismantled and seasonally moved.”³⁶

Based on the Coahuiltecan groups’ seasonal migrations and the system of trade they practiced, it is plausible that they encountered and intermingled with other native groups, including those of the Lower Pecos Canyonlands.

The environment of south Texas is considered to be a harsh one, even prior to modern times, when it was cooler and moister. It is a semiarid landscape crossed by rivers and streams which offer the only secure sources of water.... The rivers and streams acted as funnels for the movements of human and animal populations across the landscape.³⁷

Over and over, research states that water guided the Indigenous people. So what can be gleaned from the White Shaman Rock mural about the role of water, the complexity of the native Pecos culture, and the native people of southwest Texas as a whole?

Over the years, there have been various scholarly interpretations of the White Shaman Rock mural’s creation and meaning. Some believe that it was painted “over an extended period,” and interpretations dating to the early 1950s claim the imagery was “linked to a hunting cult that ritually consumed mescal beans.”³⁸ Dr. Carolyn Boyd, a muralist and anthropologist who specializes in iconographic analysis, has spent thirty years studying and painstakingly documenting the White Shaman Rock mural and other Pecos River mural sites, and she has published two books on the subject. Boyd has developed an extensive and complex interpretation of the painting.

According to Boyd, whose interpretation “draws parallels between the mural’s depictions and the narratives of the Aztec and the Huichol,”³⁹

It was long believed that these murals represented numerous painting episodes executed by different artists over hundreds or even thousands of years. Although over-painting exists, through detailed analysis of these panels, we now know that most are not a random collection of images

34 Lovett and Skowronek, “Coahuiltecan of the Rio Grande Region,” 18.

35 Lovett and Skowronek, “Coahuiltecan of the Rio Grande Region,” 18.

36 Lovett and Skowronek, “Coahuiltecan of the Rio Grande Region,” 18.

37 Lovett and Skowronek, “Coahuiltecan of the Rio Grande Region,” 4.

38 Eric A. Powell, “Reading the White Shaman Mural,” *Archaeology*, November/December 2017, accessed June 24, 2019, [archaeology.org/issues/274-1711/features/5996-reading-the-white-shaman-mural](https://www.archaeology.org/issues/274-1711/features/5996-reading-the-white-shaman-mural).

39 Carolyn Boyd, Shumla Endowed Research Professor, Texas State University, “San Antonio Springs and White Shaman Mural,” email correspondence with author, July 10, 2019.

painted over the course of time, but rather well-ordered compositions, planned arrangements of elements in a work of art to communicate an idea.

The most simplistic summarization of Boyd’s analysis of the mural’s layered meaning, in her own words, is this: “It’s a narrative about the creation of time...but the imagery also depicts the sun’s daily cycle and records the changing seasons.”⁴⁰

Gary Perez, director of the Sacred Sites Institute of San Marcos, Texas, and a member of San Antonio’s Native American Church of Yanaguana, has also studied the iconography of the mural. Perez “is descended from the Hokan speaking peoples of South Texas, and was educated in his heritage largely by his grandmother,” who was instrumental in founding the one-hundred-year-old church.⁴¹ Perez’s work supports Boyd’s interpretation that the mural represents a creation story. But his analysis, which deciphers mathematical, astronomical, and geographic aspects of the imagery, directly links it to a Coahuiltecan creation story and related ritual. He also links it to a geographic representation of the headwaters of the San Antonio River, originally called the Yanaguana, or spirit waters.⁴²

Perez’s interpretation is that “the panel depicts the four fountain springs of Texas: Comal [in New Braunfels], San Marcos, Barton, and...[the] Blue Hole” (**figure 8-5**). Scholars, including Boyd and Perez, believe the mural depicts “a celestial and cosmological map, one that may have guided people long ago in their pilgrimages to the fountain springs.”⁴³ According to Perez, “When I was invited to look at the rock art and it was explained to me in a narrative, I thought wow, they’re talking about our ceremony...but I also think you’re looking at a map of Texas...”⁴⁴ The ceremony Perez refers to is an Indigenous retelling of the creation story. In the story, the sun chases a deer into the underworld, where

they traveled...in search of the first [summer] sunrise. The sun wasn’t a very powerful sun—it was...cold, dark, and wet...the winter sun, when it’s the lowest in the sky.... When the sun is the lowest in the sky, the moon is the highest in the sky, especially a super moon.... The story says that on the full moon—the super moon, Mother Earth’s water broke.⁴⁵

The Coahuiltecan were then born from her breaking waters, the Yanaguana. Finally, after the first sunrise, the sun kills the deer and feeds it to the people.⁴⁶

As part of the ceremony, water is gathered from the four fountain springs of Texas, after which it is taken to the pilgrimage site, Yanaguana, the headwaters of the San Antonio River, “the waters of which my people were born from, according to our creation story.”⁴⁷

40 Powell, “Reading the White Shaman Mural.”

41 Matt Sirgo, “Gary Perez: Timepieces of the Ancestors,” Downtown San Antonio, December 29, 2017, accessed November 2, 2019, downtownsanantonio.org/stories/44/gary-perez-timepieces-of-the-ancestors/.

42 “Yanaguana, Lower Pecos Rock Art, and Indigenous History of San Antonio” (lecture, Headwaters at Incarnate Word, March 24, 2018), accessed November 20, 2019, headwaters-iw.org/new-events/2018/3/24/yanaguana-lower-pecos-rock-art-and-indigenous-history-of-san-antonio-lecture.

43 “Circle of the Springs: Headwaters Invites the San Antonio Community to Contribute to Building Our Circle of the Springs Garden,” Headwaters at Incarnate Word, accessed September 25, 2019, headwaters-iw.org/circle-of-the-springs.

44 Sirgo, “Gary Perez: Timepieces of the Ancestors.”

45 Gary Perez, “Barton Springs University—Indigenous Cultures and the Four Fountain Springs,” YouTube video, September 23, 2013, accessed August 10, 2019, [youtube.com/watch?v=j_jS0dqJpI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_jS0dqJpI).

46 Perez, “Barton Springs University- Indigenous Cultures and the Four Fountain Springs.”

47 Perez, “Four Fountain Springs.”



FIGURE 8–5. Detail of the White Shaman Mural, interpreted as showing elements of water. A wavy white line, possibly representing a “watery underworld,” is seen bottom third, left to right. At lower center right, four black shapes along a vertical arc, possibly representing the four springs appear. Black dots drifting up (right half of image) are interpreted to represent peyote discs used rituals. Source: Rock Art Foundation White Shaman Preserve, Witte Museum Collection

In addition to developed cosmological beliefs, Boyd interprets other clues about the Indigenous population’s developed system of language, art, basic survival, and relationship with nature. Boyd has written,

It isn’t unusual for people to think of these prehistoric hunters and gatherers as being vastly different from us, and in some ways they certainly were. They didn’t have agriculture, houses with central air and heat, cars, or the internet. They were, however, more like us than they were different. These were anatomically modern humans with the same cognitive capacity and capabilities as you and I today. They had the same brain that put a man on the moon. And, yes, they had a language—likely one with a vocabulary far richer than we can ever imagine to describe life, death, the land and the heavens.⁴⁸

48 Carolyn Boyd, “Drawing from the Past,” *Popular Archaeology*, March 1, 2014, accessed November 1, 2019, popular-archaeology.com/article/drawing-from-the-past/.

Her research shows that the murals were devised through a complex process. Preparation for the murals would have been deliberate and time consuming, whereas the actual paintings would have taken far less time. They are composed of four-color pigments—black, yellow, red, and white. With the use of a digital microscope, Boyd discovered a pattern to the application of paint that showed that the black was, counterintuitively, always applied first,⁴⁹ indicating an advanced and preconceived mural technique. Archaeological brushes made of lechuguilla fibers offer evidence of how the paint may have been applied.⁵⁰ Boyd determined that “the artists would have needed time to gather the minerals, the plants, and the animal fats they used to make their pigments” as well as time to create scaffolding, “and a ritual would likely have accompanied each step.”⁵¹

It is worth noting that “in Mesoamerica the colors red, black, white, and yellow are freighted with densely layered associations.”⁵² Each color corresponds to a cardinal direction—red is east, black is west, white is north, and yellow is south. In addition, “red represents warmth: daytime, the sun, fire. Black represents cold: night, the moon, stars, water, the underworld.”⁵³

The mural’s imagery includes an “impaled deer with black-tipped antlers” that is surrounded by “fringed black dots that were also impaled by spears,”⁵⁴ which Boyd associated with a peyote ritual. As part of her research, she studied “the art of the Huichol, a people who live in isolation in the mountains of western Mexico, and whose traditions are thought to have changed little since the arrival of the Spanish, with whom they had minimal contact.”⁵⁵ She learned that the Huichol shamans embarked on an annual six-hundred-mile pilgrimage and that they are “metaphorically guided to their destination by deer, which are closely linked to peyote.... At the end of their journey, each pilgrim shoots an arrow at a peyote cactus before gathering the disk-shaped buttons.”⁵⁶ Supporting Boyd’s interpretation, peyote disks—created from a blend of peyote and other plant materials—that date to 5,700 years ago were found by archaeologists in the 1930s near the White Shaman Rock mural site.⁵⁷ Nearer to Brackenridge Park, archaeology has documented visits to the Olmos Basin by the Tonkawas of Oklahoma as late as 1929. The Tonkawas traveled down an ancient buffalo route to collect mescal beans in Olmos Basin for peyote ceremonies.⁵⁸

It was not just the creation of peyote disks that was labor intensive; the Pecos people also hunted deer, rabbits, and rodents “using atlatls to throw stone arrow points.” They also caught and ate fish and plants. “They went to a good deal of trouble—lots of pounding and steaming and roasting—to make a digestible meal out of almost indigestible lechuguilla hearts.”⁵⁹ In response to scholars who refute her research, Boyd points out that

“there’s this idea that hunter-gatherers wouldn’t have been so concerned with celestial events and tracking the seasons, but that’s just not true.” She

49 Tyer, “If These Walls Could Talk.”

50 Tyer, “If These Walls Could Talk.”

51 Powell, “Reading the White Shaman Mural.”

52 Tyer, “If These Walls Could Talk.”

53 Tyer, “If These Walls Could Talk.”

54 Powell, “Reading the White Shaman Mural.”

55 Powell, “Reading the White Shaman Mural.”

56 Powell, “Reading the White Shaman Mural.”

57 Powell, “Reading the White Shaman Mural.”

58 Karen E. Stothert, *The Archaeology and Early History of the Head of the San Antonio River* (San Antonio: Southern Archaeological Association, 1989), 3.

59 Tyer, “If These Walls Could Talk.”

remarks that even though they would have had no crops to harvest, hunter-gatherers' lives were also deeply impacted by the changing seasons, which they would have had to carefully observe.⁶⁰

In fact, Boyd adds, "Time is written into the White Shaman mural."⁶¹ It is not just time that is written on the mural; it is a way of life—the complex culture of a civilization and an early form of a written record. The White Shaman is only one among more than two hundred known murals "within a 90-mile radius around the confluence of the Pecos and the Rio Grande."⁶²

One other distinction the mural has is the way it interacts with the seeping limestone walls. A "section of the mural is on a natural water seep that has leached the paintings of their vibrancy, but whose association with the underworld motif," according to Boyd's research, "was probably a deliberate strategy."⁶³ If this was a deliberate decision, and if Perez's research is also accurate—that the mural depicts the Coahuiltecan origin story and maps the four major springs of the Edwards Aquifer—the concept of the San Antonio River as San Antonio's life source is, like the prehistoric water itself, remarkably clear.

Relying on the rivers and springs as a map that guided seasonal travel, the Indigenous people imbued mythic qualities to water and the springs from which that water flowed. They were not alone in creating such myths, however. Dr. Janet Valenza, professor of geography and author of *Taking the Waters in Texas: Springs, Spas, and Fountains of Youth*, notes that there are many origin stories related to water, including stories of Spanish origin. As she writes, "Springs, as openings to the underworld, represent an axis mundi, or center, that connects earth, sky, and underworld.... Myths revolving around Spanish settlement of Texas gave the waters a patina of age and hence a historical continuity to their value."⁶⁴ Knowledge of the culture that was present in southwest Texas before the arrival of Europeans and the notion that the Spanish imbued similar myths to the waters provide insight into the level of cultural amalgamation that would occur over time.

60 Powell, "Reading the White Shaman Mural."

61 Powell, "Reading the White Shaman Mural."

62 Powell, "Reading the White Shaman Mural."

63 Powell, "Reading the White Shaman Mural."

64 Valenza, *Taking the Waters in Texas: Springs, Spas, and Fountains of Youth*, 46.

SPANISH EXPLORATION AND THE BEGINNING OF WRITTEN ACCOUNTS, 1535 CE – 1690 CE

Nearly two hundred years prior to the establishment of the San Antonio Missions and presidio, early explorers recorded their first encounter with the San Antonio River. “On every early expedition...there was always a Native guiding the expedition. The expedition would not move without a guide because it was essential to be able to find the established trails and also find sufficient water and pasturage for the livestock and horses.”⁶⁵

Spanish explorer Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca crossed the river in June of 1535.⁶⁶ De Vaca became a captive of the Coahuiltecan for nearly a decade and kept a journal as he grew to understand the Indigenous tribal culture that held him captive.⁶⁷ He wrote about an inland group of Indigenous⁶⁸ known as the Coahuiltecan. This signifies the earliest known contemporaneous written record of the area’s Indigenous population.

Unlike the Pecos River murals, de Vaca’s accounts are told from an outsider’s perspective. Although they lack the level of nuance contained in the murals, they provide a written description of the people. According to de Vaca, the groups varied in build and skin tone but shared a common endurance and fortitude; de Vaca noted that “the men could run after a deer for an entire day without resting and without apparent fatigue.”⁶⁹

Contradicting the idea that the Coahuiltecan were strictly nomadic and confirming that they were seminomadic is the fact that as Spanish missionaries began to arrive in Bexar County in the late 1600s “they found several villages [rancherias] along the rivers and headwaters. Some seemed to be permanent. Villages tended to be formed either at the headwaters, nearby, or, at a convenient crossing or ford.”⁷⁰ The site of these villages is significant in that it is highly possible, and even probable, that some of them would have been located along the San Antonio River on the site of Brackenridge Park.

During the years that de Vaca was a Coahuiltecan captive, and as other European explorers arrived, other groups also entered the area with the ambition to conquer. “The native people were pressed by nomadic tribes encroaching from the north and south.”⁷¹ Arrival of the migrating Indigenous population, the encroaching Lipan Apaches and Comanche tribes, and European explorers and missionaries brought sweeping changes to the Indigenous lifestyle and culture that had previously persisted.

65 Killian, “History of the Native People.”

66 Helen Simons and Cathryn A. Hoyt, eds., *A Guide to Hispanic Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 230-31.

67 W. W. Newcomb Jr., *The Indians of Texas, from Prehistoric to Modern Times* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 33.

68 Newcomb Jr., *Indians of Texas*, 30.

69 Newcomb Jr., *Indians of Texas*, 37.

70 Killian, “History of the Native People.”

71 “The Native People,” San Antonio Missions, National Park Service, accessed June 24, 2019, [nps.gov/saan/learn/historyculture/history3nativepeople.htm](https://www.nps.gov/saan/learn/historyculture/history3nativepeople.htm).

CHAPTER 9. MANAGING THE WATER, 1691–1844

Between 1691 and 1844, San Antonio transformed. Operating under *The Royal Orders for New Discoveries of 1573*, the Spanish Crown gave the church missionary system “the central role in the exploration and pacification of new lands.”¹ The landscape populated by egalitarian hunter-gatherer groups who migrated semi nomadically from one place to the next adjusting their lives according to the seasons and to fluctuations in drought and flood conditions became a landscape populated by people determined to lay claim to the land, to manage the water, and to implement a fixed way of life.

HISTORIC PERIOD BEGINS: THE MISSIONS AND ACEQUIA CONSTRUCTION, 1691 CE – 1775 CE

SAN ANTONIO IS CHRISTENED AND COLONIZED

On the feast day of St. Anthony in June 1691, more than one hundred years after Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca’s arrival in the area, Governor “Domingo Tera de los Rios and Father Damian Massanet arrived at a Payaya Indian village.”² They “asked the Payaya the name of the stream through an interpreter from the Pacpul tribe.”³ The two men were told that the name was Yanaguana. But Massanet, in honor of this holy day, named the river and its environs San Antonio. With this christening, the transformation of the area from an Indigenous landscape to a colonial landscape began (**figure 9-1**).

Over the next few years, increasing numbers of explorers and traders began to traverse the area and visit the springs of San Antonio. In Louisiana, French traders were pushing farther and farther west in order to increase their trading business and solidify land claims. Spain knew that in order to block French expansion, they would need to establish a series

1 Charles R. Porter Jr., *Spanish Water, Anglo Water: Early Development in San Antonio* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 23.

2 Maria Watson Pfeiffer and Steven A. Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” National Register of Historic Places, Texas Historical Commission, San Antonio, TX, June 15, 2011, 35.

3 Mickey Killian, “History of the Native People,” Texas Mission Indians, accessed November 20, 2019, texasmissionindians.org/.



FIGURE 9–1. A painting representing the 1691 meeting between Cabeza de Vaca’s Spanish expedition and the Indigenous Payaya of the present-day San Antonio area. “Who met the Spanish?” Acrylic on canvas board. Frank Weir, 2018. Source: Witte Museum Collection

of missions throughout Texas. Access to water was one of the key elements required for permanent habitation in an area of typically low rainfall. San Antonio Springs, which formed the San Antonio River, and San Pedro Springs, which formed the San Pedro Creek, were key elements in the establishment of the missions and in overall colonization.

As the Spanish arrived between 1600 and 1700, “they found several villages (rancherías) along the rivers and headwaters. Some seemed to be permanent,”⁴ confirming that the Indigenous population was seminomadic. “Villages tended to be formed either at the headwaters, nearby, or at a convenient crossing or ford,” indicating that some of these villages would have been located in the area of Brackenridge Park. More surprising is that some of the native people “were engaged in agricultural activities although those activities were of small scale,” with “terraces and irrigation ditches” located near the river, showing that “some of the Coahuiltecos were occasional farmers at least.”⁵ It is unclear whether these agricultural practices were native or whether they occurred after the earliest arrival of explorers in the 1500s through an exchange of cultural ideas.

In 1716, Domingo Ramón explored what was then northern Mexico. He noted the following in his diary:

This day I marched in a northeasterly direction seven leagues through some mesquite brush with plenty of pasturage, crossing two dry arroyos, and we arrived at a spring on level land which we named San Pedro. This

⁴ Killian, “History of the Native People.”

⁵ Killian, “History of the Native People.”

is sufficient to support a city. We entered a beautiful amenity of walnuts, grapevines, willows, elms, and other variety of trees, more than a quarter of a league from the San Antonio River. We were able to cross said river, which is large, but not deep, as it reaches our stirrups. We arrived upstream to look for a resting place and we found a good one, because it had a nice camping area with good trees and pasturage. We found the source of the river. Here, with the estimate of twelve ultramarines, hemp nine feet high and flax two feet high are found. Enough fish were caught for everyone and nets were used in said river with ease.^{6,7}

Ramón's description of the plants, landscape, and supply of fish in the river provides a vivid picture of the environment he and his party encountered in 1716, just before construction of the missions and presidio began. He noted that they stayed an extra day in order to allow their horses to recover before they resumed their explorations across southern Texas.

The primary residents throughout the 1700s were still Indigenous groups and tribes.⁸ To successfully settle the area, the Spanish needed a more substantial labor force than could be found among the limited number of colonists. They needed the native population working the land, preparing food, and building infrastructure (**figure 9-2**).

Spanish colonization was deeply intertwined with Christian missionary conversion. Colonizers used Christianity as a tool for converting, civilizing, and exploiting the Indigenous for the benefit of the Crown; this system was called *encomenda*. "Conquest or violence" of or toward any natives was prohibited to ensure the successful conversion of Indigenous people into tax-paying Spanish colonists, as the country did not have enough Spaniards to colonize the American frontier. This gave the friars the important roles of exploring and claiming new lands peacefully and of "preaching the gospel," which the Spanish Royal Orders decreed was the "principle reason" for the expansion of territory and creation of new settlements.⁹

Some research indicates, however, that "few American Indians converted to the Catholic faith. Most were generally indifferent to the missionaries, and differences in languages, beliefs, and everyday customs made interactions between the two groups almost impossible."¹⁰ That said, the Indigenous and more recently arrived Lipan Apache and Comanche tribes formed a kind of interdependence with the Spanish. "Missionaries needed the Lipans to build and maintain the mission structures and to farm the land," while the missions provided safe haven to the Lipan Apaches from other invading tribes.¹¹

The Spanish Crown used three elements in colonizing San Antonio: "the mission, the presidio, and the municipality,"¹² in that order. The missions evangelized to the Indigenous to create New World Catholics. The presidio soldiers provided protection to the missions and maintained control, enforcing the laws that governed the Indigenous. The nonsecular

6 An "ultramarine" is a native of Spain.

7 Debbie S. Cunningham, ed., "The Domingo Ramón Diary of the 1716 Expedition into the Province of the Tejas Indians: An Annotated Translation," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 110, no. 1 (July 2006): 54, doi.org/10.1353/swh.2006.0017.

8 Kristi Miller Ulrich, "Archaeological Services Associated with Improvements to Miraflores at Brackenridge Park, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas (Archaeological Report, No. 387. Texas Antiquities Permit No. 4653. San Antonio, TX: Center for Archeological Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio, 2008), 7.

9 Porter Jr., *Spanish Water, Anglo Water*, 21-23.

10 "The Native American Story," Bullock Texas State History Museum, accessed November 20, 2019, thetoryoftexas.com/discover/campfire-stories/native-americans.

11 "Native American Story."

12 Porter Jr., *Spanish Water, Anglo Water*, 21.



FIGURE 9–2. Engraving of Indigenous people building the acequia at Mission San José between 1720–1730. Source: Weckler, 1883, published in Charles R. Porter, Jr., *Spanish Water, Anglo Water*

arm of the city, the municipality, established last, provided population growth and expanded infrastructure.¹³

The lifestyle of the native population changed drastically with the creation and enforcement of laws. Formerly, they “had followed the rhythms of nature....Their movements were dictated by the seasonal availability of food.”¹⁴ Now their lives were highly regulated. They submitted and welcomed the control and help of the new Spanish colonizers largely because of the “spread of European diseases that, in time, decimated their population.” At the mission, they found food, shelter, and protection. In exchange, they labored in the gardens and kitchens of the missions and adopted the Catholic religion.¹⁵

THE EARLIEST MUNICIPAL WATER SYSTEM—INTRODUCTION OF THE ACEQUIAS

The most important infrastructure for survival was the acequia system that was developed during this period. The acequias served as the municipal water system for the city and surrounding agricultural areas (**figure 9-3**).

San Antonio de Valero was the first mission in San Antonio, in 1718. It was originally located a short distance west on San Pedro Creek. Construction of the San Jose mission began in 1720, and the San Juan, Concepcion, and Espada missions began around 1731.¹⁶ Each of the five missions had an acequia, which was an irrigation canal that, in combination with a system of small dams and weirs, diverted a river for agricultural and domestic use.¹⁷ The network of

¹³ Porter Jr., *Spanish Water, Anglo Water*, 21.

¹⁴ “The Native People,” San Antonio Missions, National Park Service, accessed June 24, 2019, nps.gov/saan/learn/historyculture/history3nativepeople.htm.

¹⁵ “The Native People.”

¹⁶ Porter Jr., *Spanish Water, Anglo Water*, 27.

¹⁷ “The Acequias and River Systems,” San Antonio Missions, World Heritage Office, accessed November 20, 2019, www.worldheritagesa.com/Missions/The-Acequias.

San Antonio's Acequias 1778



FIGURE 9-3. Illustration of the Spanish and secular acequias of San Antonio from Brackenridge Park, south to the Mission Espada. Source: Frank W. Jennings, *San Antonio: the Story of an Enchanted City*

five acequias enabled irrigation of lands that were not directly adjacent to the river.¹⁸ Land between the acequia and river was controlled by the mission.¹⁹

The first acequia was constructed for the Mission San Antonio de Valero. This acequia was originally constructed between 1718 and 1719 and ran from San Pedro Springs, west of the San Antonio River, to the mission.

The engineering and manpower involved in building, maintaining, and managing the acequia system was labor intensive. Charles Porter Jr., adjunct professor of history in Austin, Texas, has studied the influence of water in the early development of San Antonio from the Spanish era through the present. In his book, *Spanish Water, Anglo Water: Early Development in San Antonio*, Porter emphasizes the importance of the Indigenous population to the acequia system.

The missions absolutely required Indian labor; without working Indians, the mission could not be self-sustaining. A working acequia system was labor intensive. It had to be tended to on a daily basis. Gates had to be opened and closed, and lateral ditches to the fields had to be prepared every time water was sent to them, or the water would not get to the plants. Not only did it take strength and time to prepare a field; for the irrigation

18 David Malda, "Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River," in *River Cities: City Rivers*, ed. Way Thaisa (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2018), 248.

19 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 35.

system to be effective, it also took both skill to coordinate gate openings and continual modification of the water's path once in the field. Irrigating large fields required teamwork by many hands working together so as to distribute the water evenly. It is an art to irrigate a field of any size so that all plants can enjoy the moisture without being overwatered while others are underwatered.²⁰

Clearly, a dedicated and large labor force was necessary to maintain the mechanics of irrigation, and irrigation was necessary to supply adequate food crops for the missions and presidio.

Flooding was a hazard from the beginning of the settlement of San Antonio. Just six years after the city was founded, a major flood in 1724 damaged Mission San Antonio de Valero. This catastrophe was the reason that the mission was moved to higher ground east of the San Antonio River and then to its present location, where it would eventually come to be known as the fort, the Alamo. Its acequia was also relocated. Archaeologist Wayne Cox states that the construction of the Acequia Madre de Valero began the same year the mission was moved and continued through 1744. It originated near the present-day Witte Museum, where it ran east of the San Antonio River, traveled south to the mission, and returned to the river. This acequia, which was associated with the first mission and was the first acequia originating at the San Antonio River,²¹ would be in continuous use until acequias were decommissioned more than a hundred years later.

THE PRESIDIOS AND THE BEGINNING OF A MUNICIPALITY

In approximately 1720, the King's Highway, or El Camino Real de las Texas, was formalized as a major transportation and travel route across Texas. The beginnings of the highway had long been in place under the pilgrimage system used by Indigenous people in their travels to the springs of the Balcones Escarpment and the Peyote Gardens to the southwest of San Antonio.²² As construction of the missions and acequias began, it was important to connect the settlements through an overland transportation route. The Crown authorized the building of the King's Highway, which connected San Antonio to the rest of Texas to the east and to Mexico to the south.

Therefore, shortly after the missions were begun it was important for protection of the settlement to establish and construct a presidio. Presidios discouraged settlement pressures from the French, who had colonized areas east of Texas. The Presidio de Béjar was begun in 1722 at the headwaters of San Pedro Creek.²³ It protected the existing and future missions in the San Antonio area.

Around 1730, fifteen families from the Spanish Canary Islands, off the coast of Morocco, were recruited to travel to the colony in New Spain and settle Villa de Béjar. The Spanish

²⁰ Porter Jr., *Spanish Water, Anglo Water*, 34.

²¹ "Acequias," Mission Trails, The City of San Antonio—Official City Website, accessed October 28, 2019, sanantonio.gov/Mission-Trails/Mission-Trails-Historic-Sites/Detail-Page/ArtMID/16185/ArticleID/4230/Acequias.

²² "Yanaguana, Lower Pecos Rock Art, and Indigenous History of San Antonio" (lecture, Headwaters at Incarnate Word, March 24, 2018), accessed November 20, 2019, headwaters-iw.org/new-events/2018/3/24/yanaguana-lower-pecos-rock-art-and-indigenous-history-of-san-antonio-lecture.

²³ Donald E. Chipman and Harriet Denise Joseph, *Spanish Texas, 1519-1821* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 117.

Crown recruited enlistees by offering “land grants, irrigation rights, horses, titles of minor nobility to heads of families..., subsistence allowances throughout the journey by sea and overland, tools for farming and construction of homesteads, and the opportunity to serve in the government (*ayuntamiento*) they were to initiate.”²⁴ They arrived in San Antonio in 1731. Cultural and ethnic blending was inevitable. Coahuiltecan groups, the original inhabitants of the area, began mixing with Spanish missionary settlers and Canary Islanders, who also included people of African origins. As colonists and settlers settled the municipality, they introduced diseases. By the end of the eighteenth century, many of the remaining native Coahuiltecan would die or would be absorbed into a mixed population.²⁵

At the end of the French and Indian War in 1763, France relinquished control of the Louisiana Territory to Spain. Texas had long served as the buffer between colonial France and Spain, with presidios along the eastern border of Texas serving as a military barrier. Without the need to stem French settlement, the Texas presidios were no longer needed. Colonial Texas had always been a drain on the Crown, and Charles III of Spain moved to reduce the financial burden associated with the staffing and operation of the presidios. In 1772, Spain issued the Royal Regulations, which selectively closed many of the presidios. With the end of European financial support for the presidios and missions, a period of secularization began.

SECULAR DEVELOPMENT AND THE FORMATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS, 1776 CE – 1844 CE

Structures and lands formerly owned by the missions were abandoned, returned to the Crown and government, or sold. This set the stage for further development in San Antonio. Lands formerly owned by the church and Crown were now available for farming and settlement.

Lands close to the city, located west of the San Antonio River between the head of the river and San Pedro, were especially important for the expansion of settlement. In particular, this area was developed for farming and pasture, which helped supply food to the growing city. With the growth in agriculture, there was the need for irrigation. Between 1776 and 1778, the Upper Labor Acequia was constructed and “twenty-six long, narrow parcels (*suertes*) running from the acequia to the river were awarded to those who financed the ditch.”²⁶ The Upper Labor irrigated this land west of the San Antonio River. Remnants are visible today in Brackenridge Park in the San Antonio Zoo, although they are not interpreted for the public. A portion of the acequia is also visible in Davis Park, suggesting that it ran the length of present-day Brackenridge Park’s western boundary.

The Crown also saw the need to relocate Spanish colonial refugees to the area. In 1793, “a total of 500 soldiers, missionaries, and settlers were sent to the San Pedro area of San Antonio”²⁷ after their presidio was abandoned. The group, known as *Adaeseños*, had been living in Los Adaes, west of present-day Natchitoches, Louisiana. They were comprised of “mostly poor peasants” originally from “various towns such as Saltillo, Selayla, and Zacatecas in what is

24 Armando Curbelo Fuentes, *The Canary Islanders in Texas: The Story of the Founding of San Antonio* (San Antonio: Maverick Books/Trinity University Press, 2018), xvi.

25 W. W. Newcomb, Jr., *The Indians of Texas, from Prehistoric to Modern Times* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990), 37.

26 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 36.

27 David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 222.

today northern and central Mexico.”²⁸ Reluctantly, the refugees resettled in San Antonio on agricultural lands. Individual owners were granted land located between Mission San Antonio de Valero and the San Antonio River, in present-day Brackenridge Park.²⁹

UPHEAVALS AMID SECULAR DEVELOPMENT

Mission San Antonio de Valero came to be known as the Alamo around the beginning of the nineteenth century. The building, now a secular structure, would evolve into a contested military and prison site. The municipality remained under Spanish rule, but during the Mexican War of Independence, which began in 1810, the country sought its independence from the Spanish Crown. In this period the former mission became a contested site.

San Antonio contained many Spanish royalists, but there were also those who sided with Mexico. At the start of 1811, “a retired militia captain in San Antonio issued his own call for revolution,”³⁰ although the revolt failed. Almost two years later, near the end of 1812, “an army of three hundred or more Mexican revolutionaries and American volunteers entered Texas and captured Nacogdoches,”³¹ located near the Texas-Louisiana border. Eventually, “on August 18, 1813, the royalists and republicans clashed twenty miles southwest of San Antonio at the Battle of Medina,” where the army “crushed republicans, executing and pursuing rebels even to the Louisiana border.”³² For a year after, the royal army’s leader occupied San Antonio. There,

he continued to execute rebels, confiscate property, [and] imprison the women of San Antonio, who were forced to cook for his soldiers. During this time, some prisoners were held at the Alamo. Other expeditions were attempted but none were as serious as what occurred in 1812-1813. Their cumulative effects depopulated Texas and left it in economic disarray. Moreover, the drastic decline in population set the state for the opening of Texas to foreign immigrants as a way to repopulate the region.³³

The struggling municipality experienced a devastating flood on July 5, 1819. In his book *San Antonio: The Story of an Enchanted City*, Frank Jennings states that during this flood, the river became “a solid, overflowing stream roaring south, spread east and west from the walls of the former mission San Antonio de Valero all the way to San Pedro Creek.”³⁴ Alfred Rodriguez, former archivist of the Bexar County Spanish Archives, writes that:

rushing waters killed many residents and devastated dwellings, commercial structures, crops, bridges, [and] *acequias*, and ‘left the city in such condition that one might say the city did not exist.’ Many survivors faced hunger and destitution. Even the tillable lands were so badly damaged that nothing could be planted for some time.³⁵

28 “Los Adaes,” Texas Beyond History, accessed November 20, 2019, www.texasbeyondhistory.net/adaes/life.html.

29 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 35.

30 Bruce Winders, “San Antonio and the Alamo in the Mexican War of Independence,” Medium, September 18, 2018, accessed November 16, 2019, medium.com/the-alamo-messenger/san-antonio-and-the-alamo-in-the-mexican-war-of-independence-2db481c718db.

31 Winders, “San Antonio and the Alamo.”

32 Winders, “San Antonio and the Alamo.”

33 Winders, “San Antonio and the Alamo.”

34 Frank W. Jennings, *San Antonio: The Story of an Enchanted City* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 2002), 38.

35 Alfred Rodriguez, “Rebel Properties, Rebellion and Confiscation,” University of the Incarnate Word, accessed June 20, 2019, <https://www.uiw.edu/sanantonio/RebelPropertiesof1813.html>. Source does not cite the quotation within quote.

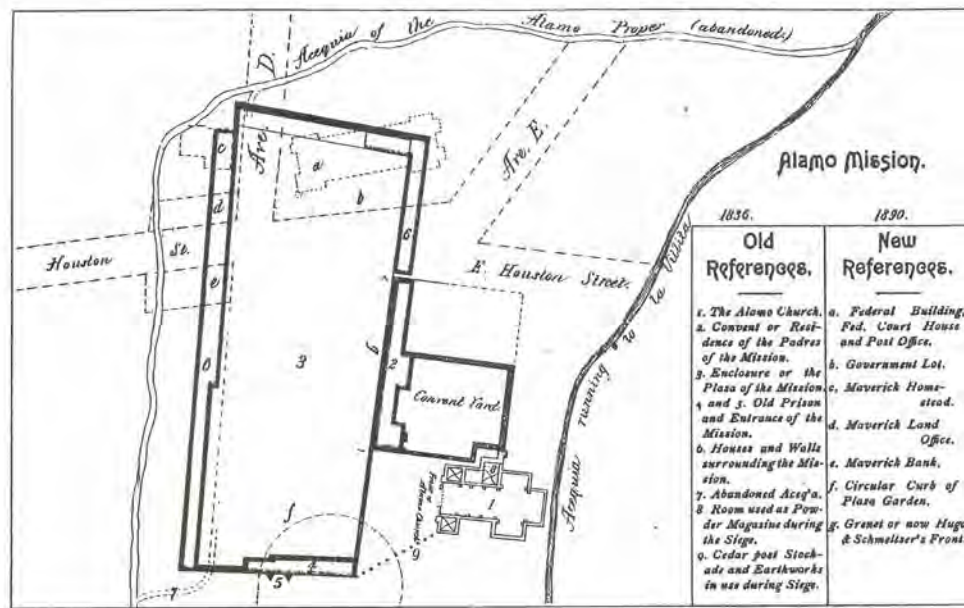


FIGURE 9-4. This survey compares the 1836 boundaries of the Alamo site with the 1890 map, showing the addition of city streets and other downtown structures. Note the delineation of the abandoned "Acequia of the Alamo Proper (abandoned)," referring to the Acequia Madre de Valero that originates in Brackenridge Park. Source: Frank W. Jennings, *San Antonio: the Story of an Enchanted City*

Flooding was an ever-present danger to those who risked living in the floodplain of the river. Not long after the 1819 flood event, Texas would become part of the Republic of Mexico. In 1821, the country gained its independence from the Spanish Crown. Another kind of flood would ensue.

[B]etween 1821, when Mexico became independent, and 1835, when the armed struggle between Mexico and the Texans began, some 35,000 Anglo Americans flocked across the border into Mexican Texas, outnumbering the Mexican Texans, or Tejanos, by a ratio of ten to one. Mexican Texans had become a relatively small minority and Anglo Americans showed a critical awareness of the distinct cultural differences.³⁶

As a result, there was growing strife between the governor in Mexico City and the increasingly Anglo residents of the Texas region. In March of 1835, the Republic of Texas declared independence from the Republic of Mexico. This set the stage for "the first major engagement of the Texas Revolution." That engagement occurred two miles south of downtown San Antonio, on the grounds of Mission Concepción, by then known as the Alamo.

Historian J. R. Edmonson writes that shortly after Texas declared independence from the Republic of Mexico, on October 28, 1835, Mexican troops battled with a group of Texan insurgents, led by James Bowie and James Fannin. The thirty-minute battle resulted in heavy losses within the Mexican Army and only one casualty among the Texans.³⁷ In February of 1836, Santa Anna marched into San Antonio, with an attack on the Alamo that resulted in one of the most famous battles in American history. The Texas Revolution lasted until the

36 Jennings, *Story of an Enchanted City*, 124.

37 J. R. Edmondson, J. R. *The Alamo Story: From Early History to Current Conflicts* (Plano, TX: Republic of Texas Press, 2000), 224.



FIGURE 9-5. Circa 1860 oil painting entitled “Lavanderas (Wash Day on San Pedro Creek)” illustrates the common usage of San Antonio’s creek and acequia resources by a mix of residents, including Indigenous Americans, Mexicans, and Germans. The artist, French-born Texan Jean Louis Theodore Gentilz (1819-1906), painted scenes of daily life in Texas. Source: San Antonio Museum of Art, gift of The J Laurence Sheerin Family

spring of 1836, when Santa Anna and his army were defeated on April 21 at the Battle of San Jacinto, just south of Houston (**figure 9-4**). With the defeat of the Mexican Army, Texas became a republic and began the process of installing the mechanics of self-government.

In 1839, shortly after the Republic of Texas gained independence from Mexico, military soldiers from Galveston on a mission to seek out Comanches in West Texas visited the San Antonio River to obtain water for themselves and their horses and to rest under the shade of the trees along the river. The head of the contingent, William F. Wilson, and his Galveston Mounted Gunmen camped at the headwaters. Wilson contracted cholera and died within days.³⁸ The agriculture that had developed in the Olmos Basin to the north and on the lands to the west of the river was already contributing to reduced water quality and increasing health problems. Wilson’s death of cholera is evidence of the emerging problem.

In 1840, “Camp Cooke” was set up at San Antonio Springs by William C. Cooke. There he positioned a portion of his 1,200-man regiment. A few years later, Camp Olmos was established north of the springs by a local mounted militia along with a group of Texas Rangers under General Zachary Taylor of the US Army as it prepared for war with Mexico.

³⁸ Gregg Eckhardt, “Hydrology of the Edwards Aquifer,” The Edwards Aquifer Website, accessed June 3, 2019, edwardsaquifer.net/geology.html.

After the creation of the Republic of Texas, the region went through a period of organization and reorganization. Lands that had formerly belonged to the Mexican government were placed under the control of local authorities. They surveyed the land and then set aside parcels for auction. The hope was that the increase in available lands would stimulate investment and development.

During the initial sales and auctions in 1843, Samuel A. Maverick, a signatory of the Texas Declaration of Independence, purchased land on the east side of the San Antonio River. He placed the property in the name of his wife, Mary. He bought the property at auction for the sum of \$267.³⁹ This same tract of land was later purchased by George Brackenridge and would form the core of his first donation to the city of San Antonio for the creation of Brackenridge Park.

Between 1776 and 1844, the first acequia for secular usage (the Upper Labor acequia) was constructed to support the municipality. With its construction, the acequia system, initially begun in 1719 to serve the missions, remained the primary means of water provision for both agriculture and potable water (**figure 9-5**). Throughout this period, flooding, agricultural practices, and disease would impact the city's waters and the health of its people, and conditions continued to worsen.

³⁹ Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 40.

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CHAPTER 10. URBAN AND INDUSTRIAL EVOLUTION, 1845–1898

At the end of 1844, the Brackenridge Park landscape was primarily agricultural. It was largely defined by the presence of the San Antonio River running through its center, the Acequia Madre de Valero to the east, and the Upper Labor Acequia to the west—each serving as irrigation corridors. Over the next fifty-three years, between 1845 and 1898, a primarily industrial landscape would emerge, reflecting the changes and growth in San Antonio.

STATEHOOD, NEW MIGRATION, TOURISM, AND THE CIVIL WAR

STATEHOOD AND NEW MIGRATION

At the end of 1845, as cholera threatened the lives of San Antonians, another sweeping political change occurred. The Republic of Texas was annexed into the United States of America. Texas's statehood coincided with political unrest in Germany and other parts of eastern Europe, and a flood of new citizens swept into Texas. The promise of cheap land and abundant opportunities for financial improvement attracted German, Italian, Polish, and Hungarian immigrants as well as more Anglo-Americans to the new state. In addition to land and commerce, "the political and artistic centers established [in San Antonio] by the Spanish made the area attractive to the German intellectual elite. From 1847 to 1861, a total of 7,634 German immigrants reached Bexar."¹

As this influx of people to San Antonio increased, cholera became a more common and recurring problem. Epidemics occurred in 1846 and 1849.² The 1849 epidemic was especially intense, resulting in the deaths of more than six hundred San Antonians.³ The combination of population growth and increased disease corresponded with the need to update, improve, and build infrastructure for the new residents. In order to provide for this, the city of San

1 Jordan Schermerhorn, "San Antonio's German Immigrants and Secession," *Journal of the Life and Culture of San Antonio*, University of the Incarnate Word, accessed November 30, 2018, uiw.edu/sanantonio/SanAntoniogsGermanImmigrantsandSecession.html.

2 Charles R. Porter Jr., *Spanish Water, Anglo Water: Early Development in San Antonio* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 96.

3 Gregg Eckhardt, "San Antonio Springs and Brackenridge Park," The Edwards Aquifer Website, accessed June 3, 2019, edwardsaquifer.net/saspring.html.



FIGURE 10-1. Stereograph of San Pedro Springs, circa 1869, taken by Ernst Wilhelm Raba. San Pedro Springs Park preceded Brackenridge Park as the city's first municipal park, but its size (under fifty acres) limited development. It did not achieve the scale or usage of an early nineteenth-century large municipal park, as Brackenridge Park would become. Source: *The Portal to Texas History*, University of North Texas Libraries



FIGURE 10-2. San Pedro Springs, circa 1877. The character of the park is evident in this image and in Figure 10-1. Source: *The Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association

Antonio needed to raise capital. In 1852, the city surveyed most of the public lands held by the government and began selling those lands to investors. That same year, the city created San Pedro Springs Park at the headwaters of the San Pedro Springs (**figures 10-1 and 10-2**). This development was a testament to the city's investment in public infrastructure. Consisting of forty-six acres, San Pedro Springs Park would become the primary public park in the city until the creation of Brackenridge Park. By 1863, San Pedro Springs Park contained a zoological display that would eventually move to Brackenridge Park, probably due to more available space for deer, elk, and bison.⁴

Laszlo Ujhazi, who fled Hungary during the tumultuous worldwide revolutions that circled the globe in 1848 and 1849, purchased land near the Olmos Basin in 1852, located north of the current-day Brackenridge Park site. There, he developed a farmstead. South of the Olmos Basin, city alderman James Sweet purchased the land containing San Antonio Springs, a complex of springs from which the San Antonio River is formed.

Around the same period, John Kampmann, who had studied “the craftsmanship and technical knowledge of building” and had apprenticed as a stonemason,⁵ immigrated from Germany to the United States, arriving in New Orleans and then traveling to Texas. He settled in New Braunfels and soon made his way to San Antonio, where he

found his first niche: variations of the simple vernacular German-Texas houses, combining the German hall and parlor house with the Texas dogtrot. These houses featured traditional German elements built with native Texas materials, coordinating masonry craftsmanship with wooden details.⁶

Kampmann would leave a legacy as “a craftsman, builder, contractor, stone-mason, construction supervisor, building designer, materials supplier, and business and civic leader for thirty-five years in San Antonio.”⁷ It would not be long before Kampmann and Ujhazi crossed paths. On the top of the hill above San Antonio Springs, Ujhazi contracted Kampmann to erect a dwelling that became known as the Old Sweet Homestead⁸ (**figure 10-3**). This home would eventually come to be owned by George Washington Brackenridge.

Brackenridge was also among the 1850s transplants to Texas. An American Midwesterner of Scottish heritage, Brackenridge and his family relocated in 1851 to Texana, Texas, near the Gulf Coast. Using money borrowed from his father, he began purchasing land in Bexar County around 1854, particularly along the Salado River in the eastern portion of the county.⁹ He would not make his move to San Antonio until 1866, but he would travel there frequently in the years between 1850 to 1857, “trading in merchandise and occasionally taking up a mortgage on the land.... Sometimes his duties took him to taverns and boarding

4 “San Pedro Springs Park,” The City of San Antonio—Official City Website, June 12, 2018, accessed September 30, 2019, sanantonio.gov/ParksAndRec/Parks-Facilities/All-Parks-Facilities/Parks-Facilities-Details/ArtMID/14820/ArticleID/2504/San-Pedro-Springs-Park?Park=216&Facility=

5 Maggie Valentine, *John H. Kampmann, Master Builder: San Antonio's German influence in the 19th century* (New York: Beaufort Books, 2014), 8.

6 Valentine, *Kampmann, Master Builder*, 33.

7 Valentine, *Kampmann, Master Builder*, 33.

8 Steve Bennett, “‘Head-of-the-River’ Immersed in San Antonio History,” *San Antonio Express-News*, July 8, 2017, accessed May 31, 2018, expressnews.com/sa300/article/Head-of-the-River-immersed-in-San-Antonio-11274319.php.

9 Marilyn MacAdams Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973, 29.



FIGURE 10–3. Engraving of the Old Sweet Homestead. Source: Maggie Valentine, *John H. Hampmann: Master Builder*

houses,...”¹⁰ and he became familiar with the city. In 1857, the development of Central Park was underway in the northeast and the Civil War was on the cusp of erupting upon the nation. This Civil War and the failed era of Reconstruction became the national backdrop that influenced Brackenridge’s actions as a philanthropist, banker, and developer in San Antonio and elsewhere in Texas.

EARLY TOURISM TO THE SAN ANTONIO SPRINGS

It was also in 1857 that noted landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted visited San Antonio and toured San Antonio Springs. With the Civil War brewing, the *New York Times* had commissioned Olmsted to travel to the antebellum South and to write about his experience there and about his observations related to slavery. Olmsted turned this travel into three volumes of writing. Of San Antonio Springs, he wrote, “The whole river gushes up in one sparkling burst from the earth.... The effect is overpowering. It is beyond your possible conceptions of a spring.”¹¹ At the time San Antonio was known to have four fountain springs that gushed into the air. The other three were Comal Springs, San Marcos Springs, and Barton Springs.¹²

Two years later, traveler Richard Everett visited San Antonio and went to the two major springs in the city. He recounted the following description of his visit:

Two rivers wind through the city, flowing from the living springs only a short distance beyond the suburbs. One, the San Antonio, boils in a vast volume from a rocky basin, which, environed by mossy stones and

¹⁰ Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 28.

¹¹ “Circle of the Springs: Headwaters Invites the San Antonio Community to Contribute to Building Our Circle of the Springs Garden,” Headwaters at Incarnate Word, accessed September 25, 2019, headwaters-iw.org/circle-of-the-springs.

¹² “Circle of the Springs: Headwaters.”

overhanging foliage, seems devised for the especial dwelling-place of nymphs and naiads. The other, the San Pedro, runs from a little pond, formed by the outgushing of five sparkling springs, which bear the same name. This miniature lake, embowered in a grove of stately elm and pecan trees, is one of the most beautiful natural sheets of pure water in the Union—so clear, that even the delicate roots of the water lilies and the smallest pebbles may be distinctly seen.¹³

In the same year, a journalist for *DeBow's Review* recounted his visit to San Antonio and the people he encountered.

The San Antonio river runs directly through the city. It has its source ten miles out of town. The Mexican population is gradually, by degrees, disappearing from this city, although the Mexicans now number some fifteen hundred in Bexar county. On a clear sunshiny day, on the banks of the river, scores of Mexican women may be seen washing.¹⁴

AN INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE EMERGES: THE LIMESTONE BUILDING BOOM AND THE CIVIL WAR

When the Civil War erupted in America in December of 1861, San Antonio experienced increased activity, although the area was not directly involved in any major battles. Most of the intense fighting during the war occurred in the southern states to the east. In San Antonio, agriculture, industry, military-home manufactures, domestic activities, personal hygiene, fishing, and residential development continued.

The new US city, experiencing a booming population and increased tourism, began leasing lands to meet budgetary needs. Among the leases, limestone quarries operated and helped meet the needs of the growing population. “Stone was needed to sustain the city’s building boom, and the City Council chose to lease the quarry to private interests.”¹⁵ The city retained its primary quarry tracts, but it also sold some of the quarry land. As an architect and a builder, Kampmann took advantage of the opportunity and purchased a nineteen-acre tract of land in 1863. He constructed a small stone building there, which dates to approximately 1870. Kampmann maintained his own mansion in the city, so it is believed that the small limestone house was built in conjunction with his quarry activities.¹⁶ These quarries were located on the Brackenridge Park landscape in today’s Brackenridge Park, in the Sunken Garden Theater, Japanese Tea Garden, and San Antonio Zoo. The Kampmann house, located southwest of the current First Tee and north of Mulberry Street, is extant today, but it is in ruins.¹⁷

The year that Kampmann purchased his nineteen acres, the Confederate States of America “purchased 75 acres on the San Antonio River in order to construct a tannery and sawmill—

13 Eckhardt, “San Antonio Springs and Brackenridge Park.”

14 J. D. B. DeBow, “Western Texas,” *DeBow's Review, Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial Progress and Resources* 26, No 1 (January 1859):115-116, accessed September 25, 2019, name.umdl.umich.edu/acg1336.1-26.001.

15 Maria Watson Pfeiffer and Steven A. Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” National Register of Historic Places, Texas Historical Commission, San Antonio, TX, June 15, 2011, 37.

16 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 19.

17 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 36.

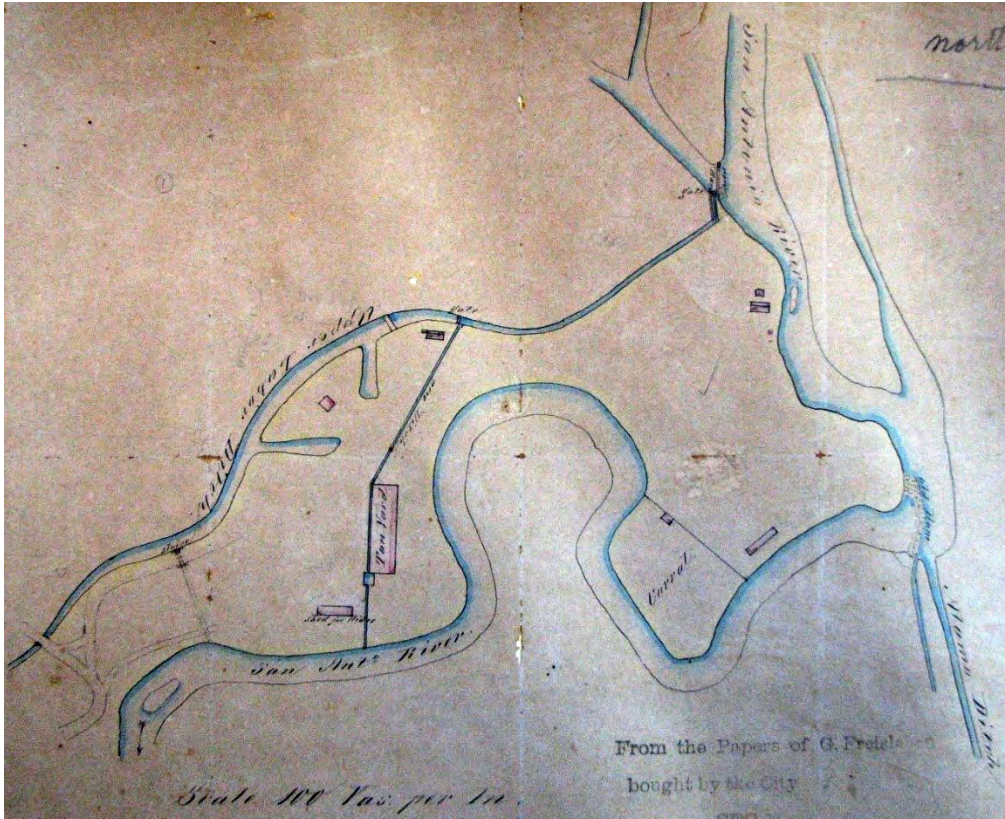


FIGURE 10-4. 1865-1868 map of Confederate tannery and surrounding features drawn by Gustave Freisleben, City Engineer. A “Tan Yard” and “Shed for Hides” are visible along a canal that supplied water to the tannery. The San Antonio River is represented at the right and bottom of map. The Upper Labor Ditch is shown above the “Tan Yard,” left side of map, and a “Corral” and the Alamo Ditch are shown at bottom right. It appears that water was diverted from the Upper Labor Ditch due to the gate location downstream from the canal. Source: Municipal Archives of the City of San Antonio.

part of their effort to establish ‘a system of home manufacturers.’”^{18,19} For its construction, the city council “granted permission for the Confederate government to quarry hard rock from No. 24 and 25 quarries at no charge”²⁰ (figure 10-4). Part of the labor force at the tannery and lumber mill was comprised of enslaved workers who built the structures, installed the machinery, and then worked producing the leather and lumber needed for the war effort.

The tannery and mill were reportedly capable of processing 15,000 hides annually and 3,000 feet of lumber daily. Water was provided by a hewn stone raceway that ran between the Upper Labor ditch and San Antonio River. When advertised for sale after the war in 1857, the facility consisted of “twelve stone lime vats, fifty-two wooden vats, seven stone pools..., one steam saw-mill capable of 3,000 feet of lumber daily..., [and] one small stone building.”

When the Civil War ended in 1865, the tannery and sawmill continued to be in operation briefly, and “the City Council became alarmed that the occupants were making unauthorized use of water flowing through the raceway.”²¹ In 1867, the United States Bureau of Refugees,

18 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 37-38.

19 Home manufacturers were comprised of boots, saddles, uniforms, bandages, and hats, and basically any item required to outfit units of war and care for soldiers.

20 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 38.

21 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 38.

Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands listed the property for sale. A year later, however, the property was damaged in a storm, and it “stood in ruins for two more years.”²²

After a protracted, years-long negotiation, the city of San Antonio purchased the seventy-five acres back from the federal government in 1870 for \$4,500.²³ San Antonio recovered more quickly than areas that had been devastated by war. Still, the end of the Civil War brought more changes to the city. San Antonio would experience more industrial transformations.

GEORGE BRACKENRIDGE AND THE EARLY SHAPING OF A CITY AND ITS PARK

Several significant events coalesced in San Antonio in the years between 1866 and 1869. George Brackenridge, who had left Texas at the start of the Civil War, returned to the state and settled in San Antonio. With the quarries still in use after the end of the war and other activities on the horizon, Brackenridge founded the San Antonio National Bank. Yet another cholera epidemic struck the city. And a French immigrant named Jean Baptiste Lacoste established the San Antonio Ice Company, which paved the way for San Antonio Water Works and the end of the use of acequias in San Antonio.

In early 1866, with backing from his friend James Stillman, who by war’s end “was one of the richest men in America,”²⁴ Brackenridge opened the San Antonio National Bank. When he was away from Texas during the Civil War, three of his brothers enlisted in the Confederate Army. Brackenridge himself sided politically with the Unionists, but he was an opportunist. He “became a war profiteer in the Matamoros cotton trade and with his family and a friend, he formed the cotton firm of Brackenridge, Bates, and Company,”²⁵ although he refused to accept specie, the Confederate currency of the time. Nonetheless, his profiteering, along with his family’s ownership of enslaved people prior to the Civil War,²⁶ put him in an ethical quandary, for which he would later attempt to make amends through philanthropic endeavors.

San Antonio National Bank was an astute business response to the growth of the industrial Midwest, where the need for beef increased in cities such as Chicago and Pittsburgh and in other commercial corridors. The open ranges of West Texas provided extensive landholdings on which farmers produced huge herds of cattle. These herds were then driven by drovers to the large railroad yards of Topeka, Kansas City, and other cities with rail connections. Most drovers lacked sufficient capital to purchase large herds until they were able to get them to market and sell them to brokers before they were either shipped further north or butchered. The cattle range business became the core of Brackenridge’s revenue and substantial profits, and he developed personal connections with some of the most important cattlemen in Texas.

That same year, J. B. Lacoste established the San Antonio Ice Company.²⁷ According to an April 5, 1877, *San Antonio Express* article, Lacoste operated the company on the banks of the

22 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 38.

23 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 38.

24 “Brackenridge, George Washington,” *Handbook of Texas*, Texas State Historical Association, August 19, 2016, tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fbr02.
“Brackenridge, George Washington.”

25 “Brackenridge, George Washington.”

26 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 166.

27 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 41.



FIGURE 10-5. Circa 1890 photo of a family using an acequia for laundering and daily water needs. The image, captured by Mary E. Jacobson, illustrates the common usage of acequias even after the development of a formal municipal water system in San Antonio. Source: Lewis F. Fisher Collection

San Antonio River, which was the source of fresh water for his ice-making machinery.²⁸ Lacoste's involvement in the ice-making business prepared him for the creation of the waterworks over the next decade. During this time, there were multiple floods on the river, which caused extensive damage. A major flood in 1865 and another flood in 1868 caused extensive damage to the federal government land on which the tannery had been located.²⁹ Finally, the cholera epidemic of 1866 caused local doctors to promote the establishment of "a safe municipal water system"³⁰ (figure 10-5). Over three hundred people died within a two-month period, and the outbreak was not completely eradicated until 1869.³¹ But Reconstruction politics and lack of public interest prevented progress on establishing a citywide municipal system.

Instead, two events occurred that would bring about a citywide municipal water system, and both events would also be instrumental to the future formation of Brackenridge Park. First, in 1869, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word came to San Antonio from France to provide support in fighting the epidemic. They founded what later became Santa Rosa Hospital.³² Second, the same year, George Brackenridge purchased, in his mother Isabella's name, the Old Sweet Homestead from George Barnes.³³ The "home was set on 108 acres at the head of the San Antonio River."³⁴ The family renamed the house Fernridge, derived from the portion of the family name "bracken," which is the Scottish word for fern.³⁵ With the Brackenridge family now in control of the headwaters and surrounding land, George Brackenridge began to consolidate his landholdings along the San Antonio River.

28 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 40.

29 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 38.

30 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 39.

31 Carmina Danini, "Early Primitive Conditions Led to Disease Outbreaks," *San Antonio Express-News*, February 14, 2015, accessed November 6, 2019, [expressnews.com/150years/education-health/article/Early-primitive-conditions-led-to-disease-6082054.php](https://www.expressnews.com/150years/education-health/article/Early-primitive-conditions-led-to-disease-6082054.php).

32 Bennett, "Head-of-the-River."

33 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 127.

34 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 127.

35 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 36, 39.



FIGURE 10-6. Circa 1940-1950s photograph of Pump House No. 1, perhaps the oldest intact industrial building in Brackenridge Park, constructed in 1878 and located on the San Antonio River in Brackenridge Park. Source: Witte Museum Collection

In 1872, two years after the city of San Antonio purchased the tannery tract land from the federal government, “a local newspaper began to campaign for repurchase of the head of the river property.” The city began negotiations with Brackenridge, entering into a \$50,000 contract.³⁶ But there was “public outcry over Brackenridge’s potential profit,” and the sale did not occur. When the city began partitioning and auctioning the tannery tract land in 1875, Brackenridge purchased “four of the upper five lots in the tannery tract adjoining and west of the river.”³⁷ Brackenridge and his brother also took an option on a two-hundred-acre tract owned by Mary Maverick, and they completed the purchase in 1876 for the price of \$25,000.³⁸ In this way, Brackenridge amassed the land that he would eventually return to the city for the purpose of creating a large municipal park.

NEW INDUSTRIES EMERGE IN THE AMERICAN CITY

THE MUNICIPAL WATER SYSTEM

With the cholera epidemic not yet eradicated and local physicians advocating for the city to address water sanitation, the stage was set for a more advanced water system. It was not the disease epidemic that spurred change, however. Instead, “the need for more water for fighting fires” is what finally prompted a new system. When the city of San Antonio voted to approve the contract for the creation of the municipal water system, J. B. Lacoste already had experience supplying waterworks in Mexico. His ice-making plants in Kansas City, Austin, and San Antonio also ensured that he had the technical knowledge necessary to transport water through the use of a network of pipes and pumps. On July 5, 1878, the city council formally accepted the permit to open the system to the public.

36 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 36, 39.

37 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 40.

38 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 40.

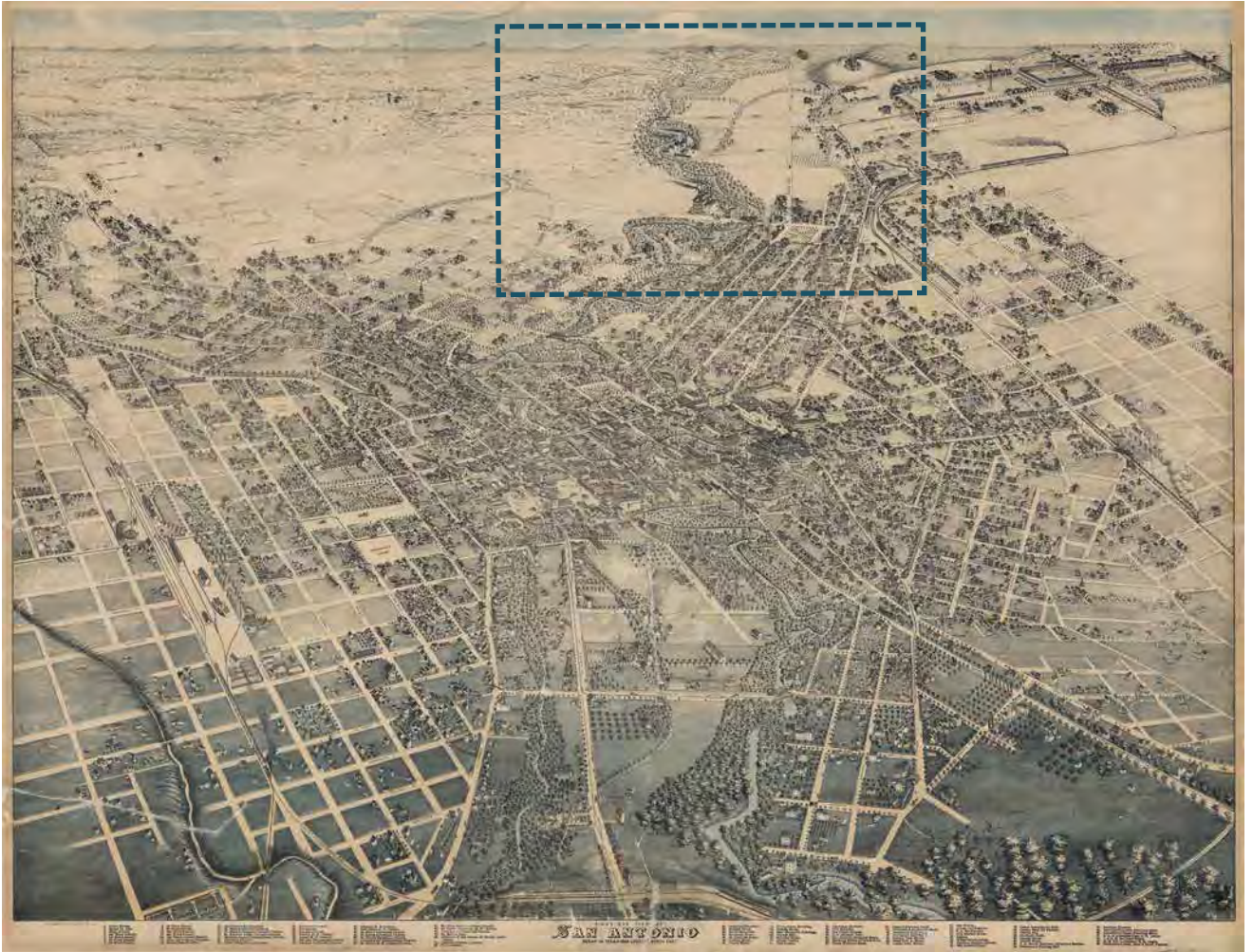
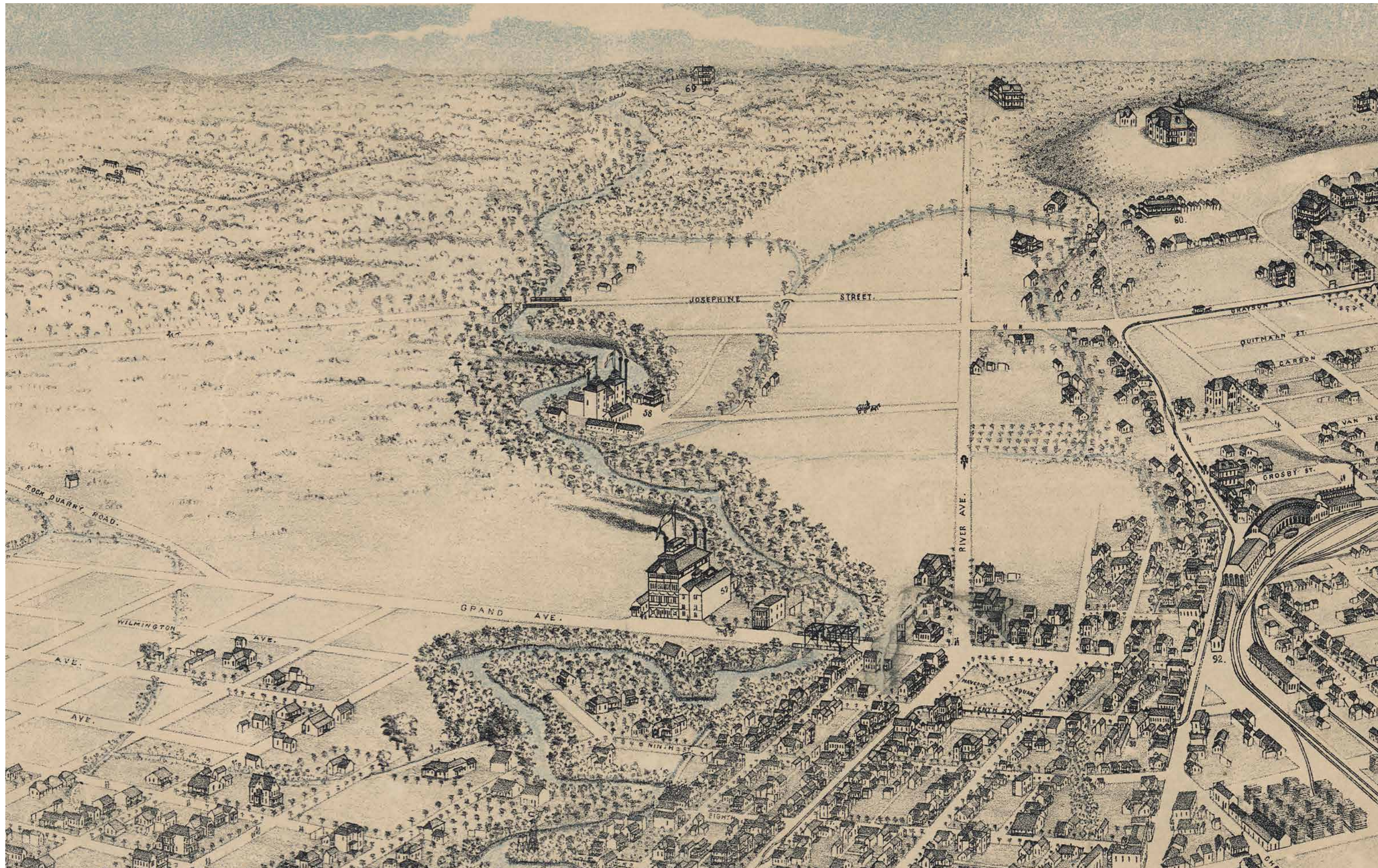


FIGURE 10-7. 1886 Bird's Eye View of San Antonio. The original image on left shows the growth and industrialization of the city. In the enlargement, Rock Quarry Road can be seen at center left; the Head of the San Antonio River and George Brackenridge's house can be seen at top center (69); the City Brewery (58) is visible at bottom right, with downtown San Antonio below. Josephine Street marks the southern end of Brackenridge Park, where the Tunnel Inlet is located. Source: Brackenridge Park Conservancy



Within the next two years, the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway was completed to San Antonio,³⁹ and J. B. Lacoste began planning for the construction of the municipal waterworks after the city council approved the contract.⁴⁰ He “was given permission to use the city’s rock quarry for building material.” In addition, “he was required to begin construction within six months of the railroad’s arrival in San Antonio”⁴¹ As part of the construction,

a raceway was excavated and a one-story stone pump house was built.... The 40-foot-wide raceway began on the river’s west bank near the dam of the Upper Labor acequia, crossed the old tannery property, and re-entered the river at the pump house approximately 650 feet to the south. The raceway’s nine-foot fall provided power to drive turbines and pumps.⁴² **(figure 10-6).**

Municipal utility systems are typically capital intensive. Lacoste attempted to keep up with the ever-growing demand of the public for fresh, potable water, which involved laying additional piping throughout the city. Lacoste’s water system lacked adequate capital to keep up with demand, however. He borrowed heavily from the San Antonio National Bank, pledging the waterworks stock as collateral.

ALAMO PORTLAND AND ROMAN CEMENT COMPANY

In San Antonio’s early history, stone was the primary building material used for the construction of the missions, for paving streets, and for building residential and commercial properties. A newspaper article from 1922 in the *San Antonio Light* discussed the use of rock from the quarries north of downtown, including those in present-day Brackenridge Park. Lots 20 and 27 were used for years as a city rock quarry:

Rock for paving Presidio street, now Commerce, for paving Flores street, building river walls and ditches, the old Menger Hotel and city hospital, and it is believed the old city hall, was obtained from this quarry.

The city at one time leased the quarry and a lime kiln and cement works were established there. The property in question is now the beautiful Alpine Drive and Japanese sunken garden, which was built by Park Commissioner Ray Lambert.⁴³

There most likely are many other residential and commercial properties whose material origins are related to the rock quarries in Brackenridge.

Around the same time that San Antonio Water Works formed, in 1879, William Loyd, a visiting hunter from Britain, discovered limestone rock that he believed suitable for the production of cement. Loyd worked with George H. Kalteyer, a local druggist trained in chemistry in Germany, and W. R. Freeman, an engineer who was involved with the design of Lacoste’s water system.⁴⁴ Kalteyer determined that the limestone contained the proportion of lime and clay ideal for the production of Portland cement. The following year, a group of investors organized the “Alamo Portland and Roman Cement Company,” later shortened to

⁴⁴ Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 43.

the Alamo Cement Company.⁴⁵

In 1880, the quarries closed, and the Alamo Portland and Roman Cement Company took their place, operating in the same industrial landscape (**figure 10-7**). The company operated from 1880 until 1908, when it outgrew the site and took advantage of a more favorable shipping location further north, outside the city and adjacent to rail lines. The smokestack chimney and brick kilns that were used during the production of the Alamo Portland and Roman Cement Company would eventually be incorporated into design elements of Brackenridge Park. They still stand at the edge of the Japanese Tea Garden in Brackenridge Park (**figure 10-8**).

TRANSITION TO THE TURN OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

By 1880, the quarries were no longer in operation, and the Civil War tannery and sawmill complex was also no longer in use and had been abandoned. Brackenridge had been determined to make retribution for his family's ownership of slaves, almost as soon as he settled in San Antonio after the Civil War.⁴⁶ His father had owned two slaves, and his brother John Thomas had owned half interest in one slave, according to the 1860 census.⁴⁷ In 1881, Brackenridge "consolidated his ownership of the upper five lots of the tannery tract...and chose to sell those lots that were immediately east and north of the quarry."⁴⁸ He then "supervised the demolition of a Confederate armory and the building of a Negro school from the stones."⁴⁹ The original Freedmen's School building was "funded with \$4,000 from the proceeds of the sale" of the tannery.⁵⁰

These changes signify a transition to the nineteenth century. By 1880, one-third of San Antonio's population was German, and "a greater percentage of Germans lived in towns and cities than was true of the Texas population at large."⁵¹ Residential real estate was also available in the area close to what would become Brackenridge Park. In 1883, the city advertised the following property for sale:

8 city lots 20x60 yards, 2nd ward, on Dallas street, near Maverick's Grove crossing. Improvement: 1 small frame house, 5 rooms, 1 stable for horse and buggy and forage, 1 conservatory, good well of water. The whole half block well fenced and planted out with shade trees; fruit in variety, and



FIGURE 10-8. The Portland Alamo Cement smokestack, circa 1920s. Portions of the Japanese Tea Garden structure are visible behind the smokestack. Source: Witte Museum Collection, Image #1986-117G(5)

45 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 43.

46 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 166.

47 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 166.

48 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 44.

49 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 166.

50 Raymond Kresla, "A History of Douglass Academy," Douglass Academy, 2008, accessed November 19, 2019, schools.saisd.net/upload/page/9922/docs/A_History_of_Douglass_Academy.pdf.

51 Terry G. Jordan, "Germans," *Handbook of Texas*, Texas State Historical Association, June 15, 2010, accessed June 25, 2019, tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/png02.

bearing: roses and shrubs, and all can be irrigated.⁵² (figure 10-9)

As San Antonio Water Works grew, Lacoste struggled with inadequate capital to be able to keep up with growing demand as the population of the city expanded, both in numbers

and in geographic extent. Brackenridge, through the San Antonio National Bank, had loaned Lacoste money to keep the struggling enterprise afloat. By 1885, Brackenridge gained controlling interest in the company. Brackenridge reorganized the company as the Water Works Company and invested an additional \$500,000. With adequate funding in place, the Water Works Company rapidly expanded. Brackenridge lay additional pipes and constructed a second canal on his own land.

The same year that he gained control of the water company, Brackenridge took steps to further consolidate his holdings along the San Antonio River. His brother John transferred his interest in 1,400 acres to George. This included 1.5 miles of frontage on the river and land north of Fernridge in the Olmos Basin. He also continued to buy additional property to consolidate his holdings.⁵³ In 1885, Brackenridge purchased the de la Garza family tract consisting of fifteen acres, which was located in the area that would become the north end of the park. The property

included the dam and head gate of the Alamo acequia [Acequia Madre de Valero] where the ditch was diverted from the San Antonio River. To the south, the de la Garza property included a return or waste channel of the Alamo acequia that joined the river below the park.⁵⁴

George Brackenridge thus became the sole owner of 1,600 acres in the vicinity of the San Antonio River and its tributaries.

With increasing interests in land along the river, Brackenridge not only expanded the coverage of the water utility but continued to improve the water plant. Beginning

at the original pump house, Brackenridge constructed an earthen canal and a second pump house, located today on the Brackenridge Park Golf Course. “The earthen canal left the river at a bend below the original pump house and culminated at the new pump house to the south. In addition, the old river channel that once ran east of the building was rerouted to the

LIST OF PROPERTY
FOR SALE BY
Herbert, Waites & Co.,
No. 7 Acequia St.

CITY PROPERTY.

- 1 A handsome stone residence, containing 8 rooms, all modern improvements, situated corner of Brooklyn, Augusta and Dallas streets.
- 2 One house and lot on Avenue D, containing 12 rooms, fine water, suitable for boarding house.
- 3 House and lot, stone house, containing 6 rooms, corner South Flores and Arsenal street, west side.
- 4 Frame house with 4 rooms, South Presa street.
- 5 One house and lot on Jackson street, one block from street car track, house containing five rooms, plenty of good water on the premises.
- 6 A good stone house and lot on Acequia street, corner Quincy street, house contains 5 rooms, good water, stable and kitchen, all in good repair.
- 7 One house and lot, corner Ave. C and Ninth street. Frame building, 4 rooms with outbuilding used as a shop, 18x30.

A stone house, 5 rooms, dining room and kitchen, stable, good well of water; lot 55 varas front by 100 varas deep; finely situated; shade trees.

20 acres of land, situated near head of river, never-failing spring of water, plenty of timber; well adapted to a henery. Offered at a bargain.

6 city lots 20x60 varas, 2nd ward, on Dallas street, near Maverick's Grove crossing. Improvements: 1 small frame house, 5 rooms, 1 stable for horse and buggy and forage, 1 conservatory, good well of water. The whole half block well fenced and planted out with shade trees; fruit in variety, and bearing; roses and shrubs, and all can be irrigated.

LANDS.

1000 acres land in Grimes county, four

DIAMONDS, AND WATCHES

FIGURE 10-9. 1883 advertisement in *The San Antonio Light*, listing properties for sale near Brackenridge Park. Source: Newspapers.com, newspapers.com/image/36853181/#

52 "List of Property for Sale by Herbert, Waites & Co., No. 7 Acequia St." January 30, 1883, 3, *The San Antonio Light* at Newspapers.com, accessed November 19, 2019, [newspapers.com/image/36853181/#](https://www.newspapers.com/image/36853181/#).

53 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 42.

54 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 36.



FIGURE 10–10. Circa 1947 photo of the large Victorian mansion (left) George Brackenridge constructed immediately adjacent to the Old Sweet Homestead (right) in 1887. Brackenridge lived there with his mother and sister. Source: University of Texas at San Antonio, Libraries Special Collections, *San Antonio Light* Photograph Collection, MS 359

west,” leaving behind a dry channel that still remains.⁵⁵ The next year, he continued to make improvements, constructing a “Mill Race or Second Waterworks Canal” in 1886.⁵⁶

Also in 1886, Brackenridge constructed a large Victorian mansion directly adjacent to the Sweet Homestead. He imported rare materials from Europe and South America for its construction, built a large library to house his growing book collection, and created spaces adequate for large-scale entertaining (**figure 10-10**). Brackenridge was devoted to his mother and sister, and the three of them lived together most of their lives. Isabella Helena McCulla Brackenridge died in 1886 at the age of seventy-five, before the new Victorian mansion was complete. George and his sister Eleanor moved into the house, where they remained for the next decade before moving to a penthouse suite atop one of his banking enterprises.

Newspaper articles from the period between 1885 and 1890 contain references to “Brackenridge Park.” It would not be until 1899 that the park was formally established by the donation of the original section of land, but the local citizens must have considered the area in the vicinity of the house a park. A September 27, 1890, notice in the local German newspaper was signed by “Geo. W. Brackenridge.” The notice refers to “Brackenridge Park” and mentions the “Pumphouse.”

During the 1880s, there were weather extremes in San Antonio, with periodic droughts and

⁵⁵ Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 42.

⁵⁶ Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 34.



FIGURE 10–11. Circa 1880s, a trio of visitors standing on a makeshift crossing of the San Antonio River near the headwaters. The gentleman, believed to be George Brackenridge, is handing a filled glass to the lady facing him. Two men are perched in a tree on the far left. The photo illustrates human interaction with the river, a precursor to the low-water crossings built in the following century. Source: University of Texas at San Antonio, General Photograph Collection, Image # 088-0326

flooding throughout the decade. Some years, the river dried up completely. The acequias, which had been operable for over a hundred years, were no longer in use as the San Antonio Water Works Company took their place. Brackenridge found that in order to provide adequate supplies of water for his customers, he would have to drill wells and install pumping stations. Wells and pumping further reduced the flow of water from the various local springs.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Brackenridge noted that the San Antonio River was often dry and did not resemble the river that he had lived along for more than forty years. In 1897, Brackenridge sold his home at Fernridge and the land at the head of the river, including the headwaters, to the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.⁵⁷ Sale of this land to the Sisters would be instrumental in separating the upper course of the river, which would flow through the future Brackenridge Park, from its impressive headwater spring complex.

Before the turn of the nineteenth century, the landscape had transformed. No longer

⁵⁷ Bennett, "Head-of-the-River."

servicing agricultural needs, the Acequia Madre de Valero and the Upper Labor Acequia had become obsolete—they were both unhealthy and incapable of meeting the water needs of the population. In their stead stood remnants of a building industry reflecting major urban growth—limestone quarry walls, ruins of the Civil War tannery and sawmill, and the newer marks of municipal water management, including pump houses and a raceway and other associated ditches. At the same time, the general public was already using Brackenridge’s land as a park in the latter half of the nineteenth century (**figure 10-11**). For instance, in 1885, the “First Presbyterian church and Sunday-school held a very fine picnic at the McLane place, north of Brackenridge park, last Saturday.”⁵⁸

Brackenridge, perhaps in a reflective state and certainly in a philanthropic place in his life, must have recognized both the sweeping changes to this landscape the general public’s desire to use the land for passive recreation, and the site’s intrinsic beauty. Artesian wells drilled by his own water works were depleting the river. He wrote to a friend in the late 1890s, “I have seen this bold, bubbling, laughing river dwindle and fade away... This river is my child and it is dying...”⁵⁹ It was during this time that he “directed his attention to the preservation of the remainder of his riverlands in their natural state,” and as a result, the city’s first large municipal park would soon be formally created.

58 “Picnics,” May 18, 1885, 1, *The San Antonio Light* at Newspapers.com, accessed November 20, 2019, newspapers.com/image/221348301/.

59 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 141.

CHAPTER 11. SAN ANTONIO'S MUNICIPAL PARK, 1899–1949

At the dawn of the new century, George Brackenridge made his initial donation of property to the city of San Antonio—199 acres and “the bulk of his riverland.”¹ The property was part of the real estate holdings he had amassed over the previous forty years through personal investment, banking, and waterworks ventures. With his donation, Brackenridge included the stipulation that the land, located along the east side of the San Antonio River, “could never be used except as a park.”² After San Pedro Springs Park, it would be San Antonio’s second public park, and the city’s largest.

Brackenridge Park is among a cohort of American municipal parks in major cities that arose in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century. These parks—New Orleans’s City Park (1850–1861), Chicago’s Lincoln Park (1865), San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park (1870), Dallas’s Fair Park (1880), and Houston’s Hermann Park (1914), to name a few—trace their earliest influences to New York’s Central Park (1856) and the City Beautiful movement, which took root in America with the 1893 World’s Columbian Exhibition in Chicago and continued to have an influence through the 1920s.

Brackenridge Park was established in December 1899, officially opened to the public in 1901, and developed extensively between 1914 and 1949. All of the municipal “Pleasure Ground” parks that emerged between 1850 to 1899 were primarily designed using picturesque principles—utilizing the democratic informality of winding roads and walks and “an overall composition of smoothness, harmony, serenity, and order, with an occasional reminder of the awesome grandeur of a mountain, a deep crevasse, long waterfall, or steep crag.”³ In the case of Brackenridge Park, the San Antonio River would take primacy. The park landscape, with its form and boundaries so clearly derived organically according to the form of the river and the Upper Labor Acequia west of the river, would once again be transformed (**figure 11-1**). What had become a setting for largely utilitarian industrial purposes imposed on the

1 Marilyn MacAdams Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973), 161.

2 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 161.

3 Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), 24.

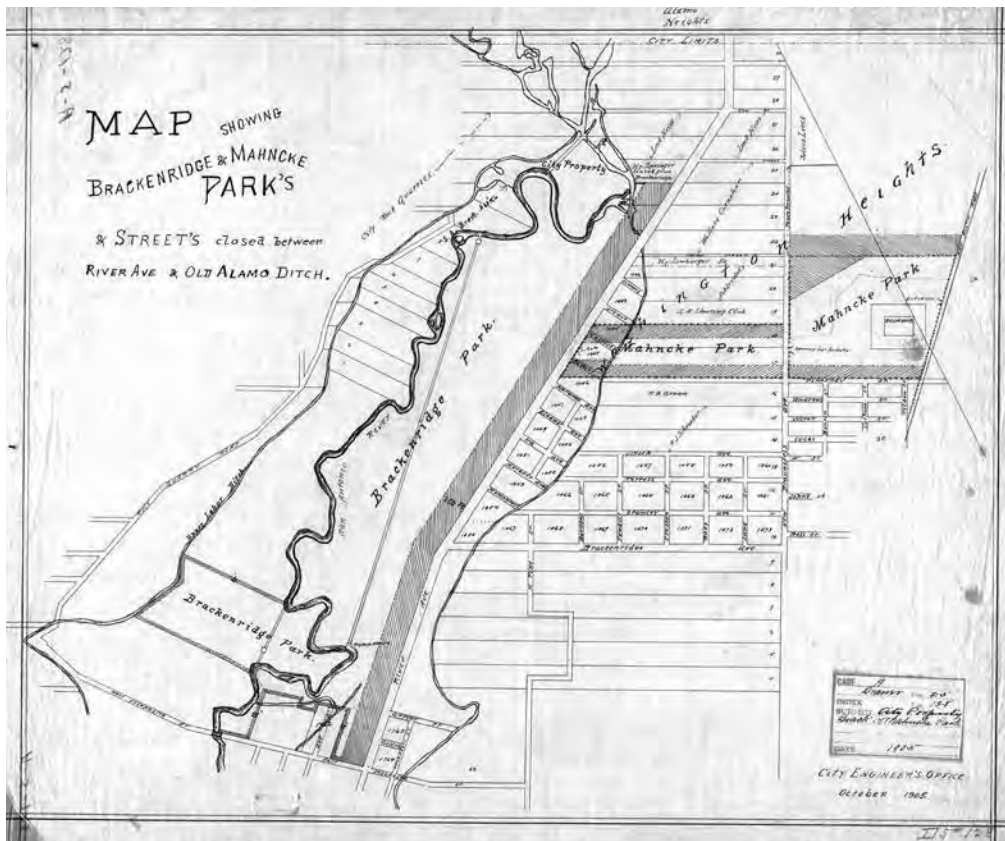


FIGURE 11-1. This 1905 map shows the overall layout of both Brackenridge Park and Mahncke Park to the east. Mahncke Park's limits encompassed the old reservoir that still served as the source of the city's drinking water. Source: San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department

canvas of a riparian setting would become a recreational setting impacted by the larger movements and trends in American park design but expressed through local materials, traditions, and cultural influences.

A DRIVING WOODLAND PARK: THE BRACKENRIDGE VISION, 1899 CE – 1914 CE

LUDWIG MAHNCKE LAYS OUT THE ROADS

As the city of San Antonio grew, pressure on the underlying aquifer had reduced the flow of the artesian springs throughout the city, most notably of the spring at the head of the river. Brackenridge bemoaned the river's declining health. At this stage in his life, he had started the process of divesting himself of property and money and sought to leverage his assets for the public good.

One of Brackenridge's best friends and business associates was the businessman Ludwig Mahncke. The two men had worked closely together on several issues and opportunities within San Antonio. Mahncke was involved in city government in addition to having business connections. After Brackenridge's donation was in place, Mahncke became acting superintendent of parks, and the first major change was enacted on the new park. "Under Brackenridge's watchful eye," a defining system of carriageways was conceived of, distinguishing Brackenridge as a driving park to be experienced from carriage or automobile.



FIGURE 11-2. This carriage way in Brackenridge Park demonstrates the informal and organic way that circulation was planned in the park. Infrastructure such as curbs and paving is limited or nonexistent. Source: Witte Museum Collection

Brackenridge's vision may have been influenced by Central Park, which popularized the concept of American parkways in the first half of the century. As a response to the dual ideal of the park surrounded by suburbs, Olmsted had envisioned parks and parkways as the thread that would stitch together residential developments, thereby inserting landscape ribbons and nodes to buffer housing density. Much of the Central Park budget was reserved for the circulation strategy of separating vehicular routes with pedestrian and equestrian paths. Bridges, tunnels, and underpasses eliminated crossings so traffic could flow unimpeded. The result was a "refined system of roads and paths, as well as places to congregate and promenade, all were combined in a single work of landscape art: the public park."⁴ By making movement through the park as effortless and carefree as possible, "the designers allowed for thousands of individual visitors to appreciate landscape scenery personally."⁵

In Brackenridge Park, Mahncke "laid out a drive that skirted the river and for which Brackenridge furnished an entrance and exit over his fringe. Brackenridge then built a sturdy fence all the way around the park except at the two entrances."⁶ From its inception, Brackenridge Park was a regional expression—distinctly San Antonian—of a larger park design movement. By late February 1901, the initial layout of the park's drives and walkways was complete. In a 1901 article titled "San Antonio's Lovely Breathing Spots," a writer for the *El Paso Herald* described the character of the park at the time of its opening:

Brackenridge Park, just inside the north edge of the city limits...is also one of the most beautiful natural parks to be found anywhere. It is traversed by a winding river and numerous ditches and with nice macadam driveways under the majestic oak, stately elm or everlasting pecan, it is a recreation spot fit for the Gods. Its beauty is beyond description and the greatest effort of the writer would but feebly portray its wonders. It has just been opened to the public."⁷

The following year, journalist and newspaper owner James Pearson Newcomb wrote about the park and the way its roads followed the natural topography of the land. Newcomb also

4 Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 18.

5 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 22.

6 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 162.

7 "San Antonio's Lovely Breathing Spots," *El Paso Herald*, February 25, 1901, accessed August 23, 2018, newspapers.com/image/77719234/.

commented on the surprising number of landscape experiences experienced by a visitor. He described Brackenridge as containing “primeval forest land”⁸ and wrote,

The drive wound “with the sinuosity of the river channel, curving and dipping with the natural lay of the land, care being taken not to disturb the throne of a single monarch of the forest.... What splendid old trees, with their crowns high in the sunshine and their trunks in the shade. At every turn there is a delightful surprise; now you are descending seemingly into a darker, more secluded portion of the forest, to rise again into an open.”⁹
(figure 11-2)

In addition to the road along the San Antonio River and through the woodland area of the park, Alpine Drive provided yet another experience. It further demonstrates the regionally specific manner in which the system of roads was implemented in Brackenridge as compared to those roads laid out for Central Park. “Lambert proposed a ‘winding driveway for motor cars and other vehicles on the cliff of the rock quarry.’”¹⁰

It may have taken several years for the entire system of circuitous roads to be implemented (figure 11-3). This is evident in a June 30, 1905, *San Antonio Express* article that commented on Brackenridge’s vision for a boulevard system that would “contain 800 acres and provide fifty miles of drives”¹¹ running through the park and surrounding it.

Brackenridge’s aptitude for foreseeing the future and capitalizing on opportunities may have been another part of his motive for envisioning a system of park roads and boulevards in the city. The first recorded horseless carriage in San Antonio was an electric vehicle used by the Staake Brothers Livery Service in 1899. The first gasoline vehicle arrived in 1901.¹² Mount Rainier National Park officially allowed automobile tourism beginning in 1907,¹³ and in 1908, Henry Ford introduced the Model-T to the country. “The San Antonio City Council introduced its first set of written road rules in March 1910, at more or less the same time the police department acquired its first automobiles and motorbikes.”¹⁴ Whatever the motivation was, the system of roads created by Brackenridge and Mahncke continues to shape the park today. Along with its roads, the park would come to be defined by its impressive tree canopy.

A PASTORAL PLEASURE GROUND SURROUNDED BY THE BUSTLE OF STRETCARS

Brackenridge Park quickly began adopting activities and amenities typical of picturesque Pleasure Grounds that had become popular in the United States after the emergence of Central Park. The San Antonio park was behind the national trend, but it was impacted

8 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 162.

9 Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist*, 162.

10 Maria Watson Pfeiffer and Steven A. Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” National Register of Historic Places, Texas Historical Commission, San Antonio, TX, June 15, 2011, 53.

11 “...and Boulevard...may be given San Antonio,” *San Antonio Express*, June 30, 1905, PDF documentation from Maria Pfeiffer collection.

12 Hugh Hemphill, “Automobiles in San Antonio, 1899-1916,” Texas Transportation Museum, accessed May 22, 2019, txtransportationmuseum.org/history-car.php.

13 Donna R. Braden, “Automobiles Enter the National Parks,” Past Forward: Activating the Henry Ford Archive of Innovation, The Henry Ford Center, August 12, 2016, accessed May 22, 2019, thehenryford.org/explore/blog/automobiles-enter-the-national-parks.

14 Hemphill, “Automobiles in San Antonio.”



FIGURE 11-3. 1921 “Ward Map of San Antonio Including Suburbs Both North and South.” This map is one of the most illustrative records of the carriage-way system within Brackenridge Park as it existed in 1921. Source: San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department

nonetheless. Meanwhile, areas surrounding the park developed more urbanized transportation infrastructure, which would eventually attract suburban development.

As soon as Brackenridge Park became accessible to visitors, public events were planned. In April 1901, a local businessman, Colonel E. H. Jenkins, hired a military band to perform in various places around San Antonio. One location mentioned was “Muth’s garden,” where they played “every Thursday night beginning April 11 and at one of the various parks every Sunday afternoon. The first [concert] was given yesterday in San Pedro Springs park. Brackenridge park will come next.”¹⁵ Jenkins was the head of the San Antonio Traction Company, which constructed and maintained the streetcar lines in the city of San Antonio. Throughout the end of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century, streetcars first drawn by mules and later powered by electricity were opening expanded routes throughout downtown and to the growing suburbs in the city.

¹⁵ “The San Antonio Street Railway Will Provide Free Recreation for the People,” *El Paso Herald*, April 1, 1901, accessed August 23, 2018, newspapers.com/image/77727489/.



FIGURE 11-4. Image of a streetcar on River Avenue (today Broadway), near Brackenridge Park. Note the pastoral character that the curved roads and trees intermingling with newer urban development, represented by the streetcar. Source: Texas Transportation Museum

By 1905, the streetcar lines extended along what was then called River Avenue (and today is called Broadway Street) on the eastern edge of Brackenridge Park (**figure 11-4**). In 1905, an article in the *San Antonio Gazette* profiled the extent of the streetcar lines that were being constructed throughout the city. “The River avenue line reaches a magnificent rural hotel and passes alongside Brackenridge park, which contains two hundred acres of nature and her most beautiful products trained in systematic order by the hand of man.”¹⁶ The River Avenue line connected Brackenridge Park to Maverick Park, Convent of the Incarnate Word, Alamo Heights, the head of the river, and, according to wild speculation at the time, Davy Crockett’s home.

The article also includes references to growing herds of buffalo, elk, and deer at the park. The animals were “pastured along River Avenue near today’s Lions Field Clubhouse”¹⁷ (**figure 11-5**). In addition to building herds through natural increase, Mahncke was also bringing in buffalo and elk from other locations. In October 1902, “a number of buffaloes and Elks from the Goodnight ranch in the Panhandle [were] received at San Antonio for the Brackenridge park.”¹⁸

Throughout most of its early history, there were fishing opportunities at San Pedro Park. Following suit, the city promoted fishing at the newer Brackenridge Park.¹⁹ In May 1903,

16 “San Antonio Gas & Electric Company and San Antonio Traction Company,” *San Antonio Gazette*, August 12, 1905, accessed August 23, 2018, newspapers.com/image/38698596/.

17 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 49.

18 “Texas Notes,” *The Brownsville Herald*, Oct 23, 1902, accessed August 23, 2018, newspapers.com/image/70967402/.

19 “Black Bass Are Received,” *Austin American-Statesman*, May 21 1903, accessed August 23, 2018, newspapers.com/image/359469237/.



FIGURE 11-5. A small group of Elk browse and forage in one of the open areas of the park, circa 1910. Source: Witte Museum Collection

park managers stocked the San Antonio River with eleven thousand black bass. “Twelve thousand young black bass were received here today from the government hatchery at San Marcos. Eleven thousand will be placed in the San Antonio river at Brackenridge park and 1,000 will be placed in the West End lake.” At the same time, the *Austin-American Statesman* notes that the first elk ever born in San Antonio had arrived at Brackenridge Park.²⁰

In 1906, George Brackenridge sold the San Antonio Water Works company to a St. Louis, Missouri, capitalist named George J. Kobusch. Kobusch and his investors renamed the company the San Antonio Water Supply Company. They also blocked access to the park across the strip of land they owned on the east edge of the park.²¹ The action by the new waterworks owners exacerbated the existing schism between Brackenridge and Bryan Callaghan, which dated to Callaghan’s previous mayoral terms. Following his reelection, Mayor Callaghan was so outraged at Brackenridge that he renamed the park “Water Works Park” to exclude Brackenridge’s name. But Mayor Callaghan died in 1912, and the following year, the city council restored the name Brackenridge Park in recognition of the central contribution that Brackenridge had made to the city of San Antonio, not just in the park but also in the city’s education and health communities.

Ownership of the waterworks had now passed to absentee owners, but the developments at Brackenridge Park continued, albeit more slowly. The growing collection of animals at the park now encompassed “six buffalo, nineteen elk, forty-three deer, four goats, one sheep, four swans, three geese, forty-nine peafowls, thirteen white turkeys, twelve bronze turkeys,

20 “An Elk Born in San Antonio,” *Austin American-Statesman*, May 21, 1903, accessed August 23, 2018, newspapers.com/image/359469237/.

21 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 50.

two silver pheasants, two Mexican pheasants, and three guineas.”²² From the beginning Ludwig Mahncke had nurtured the existing collection and obtained more fowl and farm animals. But a dispute between Mahncke and Mayor Callaghan over finances resulted in Mahncke’s resignation in January 1906. Two months later, he died of pneumonia.

As the original park superintendent and a friend of Brackenridge, Mahncke had been instrumental in developing the park during its early years. He installed the circulation system in the park, and he acquired animal collections—some exotic to San Antonio. Mahncke served as an alderman from 1897 to 1906, so had a voice in city government that he used to promote parks development.²³ In the interim, the burgeoning suburban enclaves to the north of downtown, in an area of the city that was located on higher ground and less likely to flood, continued to expand in area and density.

SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT SURROUNDING BRACKENRIDGE PARK

In October 1906, a few months after Mahncke’s death, Henry Steingruber was named parks commissioner for the city of San Antonio. Steingruber was a horticulturist by training. The years of his tenure were characterized by grounds improvements and maintenance but did not include significant changes to the overall park, its layout, or its elements. A boom in development occurred in the areas surrounding Brackenridge Park, however, particularly to the north and east. Developers purchased tracts of land and advertised the new and expanding neighborhoods and their association with Brackenridge Park.

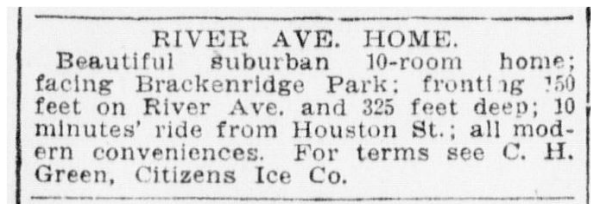


FIGURE 11-6. “River Ave. Home” facing Brackenridge Park for sale, October 9, 1906. Source: *The Daily Express* at *The Portal to Texas History*, University of North Texas Libraries

The residential lots close to the park were highlighted in sales promotions. The principle whereby property is more valuable because it is located close to a park, museum, or other amenities is called the proximate principle.

On October 9, 1906, Mr. C. H. Green of the Citizens Ice Company advertised a house for sale on River Avenue facing the park (**figure 11-6**). The ad read, “Beautiful suburban 10-room home; facing Brackenridge Park; fronting 150 feet on River Ave. and 325 feet deep.”²⁴ The lot must have been the site of a substantial home, as 150 by 325 feet translates to 1.12 acres.

Also in October 1906, the Halliday Sweet Company advertised lots for sale in the neighborhood of Park Grove on River Avenue. “Everything is lovely and looking better from day to day in our beautiful addition covered with grand and stately trees, fronting magnificent Brackenridge park and only two blocks from Mahncke park on River avenue.”²⁵

22 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 49.

23 David P. Green, *Place Names of San Antonio: Plus Bexar and Surrounding Counties*, 3rd ed. (San Antonio: Maverick Books, 2011), 80.

24 “River Ave. Home,” *San Antonio Daily Express*, October 9, 1906, accessed July 26, 2014, texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth441064/m1/8/zoom/?q=riveravehome&resolution=1.5&lat=4751&lon=1502.75.

25 “Halliday = Sweet Co., a Mountain Home,” *San Antonio Gazette*, October 20 1906, accessed August 23, 2018, newspapers.com/image/38699654/.

San Antonio Gazette.

MONEY TALKS

\$156,950 Sales of building sites up to date of the Terrace. This tells what people think of Laurel Heights Terrace

Conceded by all who see it the most beautiful residence property in all San Antonio :-: :-:

ITS ADVANTAGES

<p>Superb location. An extension of the East of Laurel Heights, magnificent view of entire city.</p> <p>Solid rock foundation, no need for settling walls.</p> <p>Artesian water in front of every lot.</p> <p>Four parks in the Terrace. Beautiful Brackenridge park adjoins Terrace on the East.</p> <p>High class improvements. Building materials. No chance No wires or poles. No unattractive building lines. Concrete sidewalks.</p>	<p>Direct and rapid street car service, in line under construction. Historic street.</p> <p>Near Public and Private Schools. No need for taxi, pore jet and a glorious view and refined neighbors.</p> <p>As an investment it is sure and certain. For those there is nothing as rapid as this.</p> <p>\$156,950 shows what the people think of the property. Just no take you not to see the Terrace.</p> <p>A few hundred dollars treated here will make a competitor for all age.</p>
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Adams-Kirkpatrick Company
Hicks Building. San Antonio, Texas.

FIGURE 11-7. The Adams-Kirkpatrick Company advertised lots for sale in Laurel Heights, May 15, 1907. Realtors noted: “Four parks in the Terrace. Beautiful Brackenridge park adjoins Terrace on the East.” Source: *San Antonio Gazette*, Newspapers.com

Most Complete Home in San Antonio



Beautiful Suburban Residence in the Neighborhood of the Country Club, the Rendezvous of Fashionable Society.

This splendid property—recognized as one of the finest homes in the South—is offered for sale at a great sacrifice to settle an estate. There are sixteen rooms exclusive of halls, bath rooms, storerooms, etc., with all the comforts and conveniences afforded by modern construction and the most perfect that money could buy, being equipped with light, heat, water, call bell service, etc. There is a large brick stable, a garage, ample servants' quarters, with two and one-half acres of ground shaded with a forest of native oak and pecan trees. The car line passes immediately in the rear of the property—and splendid macadam driveways leading into the city and country. The Country Club and Brackenridge Park are located adjacent to Alamo Heights, making this the choice residence part of San Antonio.

The beautiful Alamo Heights suburb is now undergoing great improvement and rapid development and is experiencing a steady increase in values. It is a most favorable time to acquire property in this picturesque suburb. For an ideal Southern home—for the winter home of a wealthy Northern man or for a high-grade select family hotel—no more charming site or more valuable property is to be found in the State.

FOR PRICES, TERMS AND ILLUSTRATED BOOKLET, WRITE
R. H. RUSSELL & CO., 315 Navarro St., San Antonio, Tex.

FIGURE 11-8. R. H. Russell & Co. advertises a suburban residence in the neighborhood of the Country Club, Feb. 29, 1908. The advertisement mentions proximity to Brackenridge Park as an amenity associated with the home. Source: *The Daily Express at the Portal to Texas History*, University of North Texas Libraries

The Adams Kirkpatrick Company advertised lots for sale in the Laurel Heights portion of the Terrace (figure 11-7). Realtors noted that there were “four parks in the Terrace. Beautiful Brackenridge park adjoins Terrace on the East.”²⁶

In February 1908, R. H. Russell & Company advertised the “Most Complete Home in San Antonio,” located in the Alamo Heights neighborhood (figure 11-8). The advertisement notes that the lot is

two and one-half acres of ground shaded with a forest of native oak and pecan trees. The car line passes immediately in the rear of the property—and splendid macadam driveways leading into the city and country. The Country Club and Brackenridge Park are located adjacent to Alamo Heights, making this the choice residence part of San Antonio.²⁷

Advertisements of this nature that specifically mention Brackenridge Park were found in local newspapers throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century. Neighborhoods such as Montclair, Army Terrace, Brackenridge Place, and many others were known for higher elevations and relative safety from flood events and for access to the kinds of amenities desired by the growing middle class. Access to good roads, public transportation, clean water, and park proximity were all touted as reasons to buy in these neighborhoods.

SLOW PROGRESS IN THE PARK, 1906 CE – 1915 CE

With Mahncke's death, the park entered a period of stasis, in which regular maintenance occurred but few significant elements were added to the park. In 1907, capital improvements and maintenance work were completed in several parks in San Antonio. The *San Antonio Gazette* ran a story stating, “The roadways and paths in San Pedro park were re-graveled, the lake cleaned, fences repaired, new turning gates and floating roosts constructed, ditches dug for drainage and this in addition to the routine work of park maintenance”²⁸ (figure 11-9).

26 “Adams = Kirkpatrick Company,” *San Antonio Gazette*, May 15 1907, accessed August 23, 2018, newspapers.com/image/38700180/?terms=san+antonio+gazette.

27 “Most Complete Home in San Antonio,” *San Antonio Daily Express*, February 29, 1908, accessed July 26, 2014, texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph442357/m1/8/?q=most%20complete%20home.

28 “More City Finance,” *San Antonio Gazette*, April 20 1907, accessed August 23, 2018, newspapers.com/image/38699956/.



FIGURE 11-9. A photo shows the linear pool area at San Pedro Springs with a large number of visitors, both in the water and standing along the paved skirting. Source: Gregg Eckhardt, edwardsaquifer.net.

The fact that the majority of maintenance in Brackenridge Park involved clearing underbrush, maintaining the roads, and caring for the herds of animals underscores its continued pastoral setting. The same article in the *San Antonio Gazette* states that “cleaning underbrush and maintaining the several miles of driveway in Brackenridge park has been the principal work there, in addition to caring for the herds of animals and the flocks of fowls.”²⁹

A 1909 tour book of San Antonio states,

There is no one in San Antonio who does not speak with pride of Brackenridge Park, which may be reached by River Avenue Car, but as it contains three hundred and twenty-five acres, and more than twenty miles of winding roads, it is well for the visitor to take a cab or automobile. This park is one of the most perfect specimens of true sylvan beauty that the world affords.

The river winds and twists its sinuous way through the entire length of the park, affording many delightful rambles and pictures bits for “snap shots.” A stroll down Lover’s Lane, will make one feel that he has truly reached the Lotus land. Large live oaks, laden with Spanish moss, form graceful arches over the broad drive ways. Herds of deer, elk and buffalo, together with many herds and beautiful birds, already form the beginning of an interesting Zoo. (figure 11-10)

²⁹ “More City Finance.”

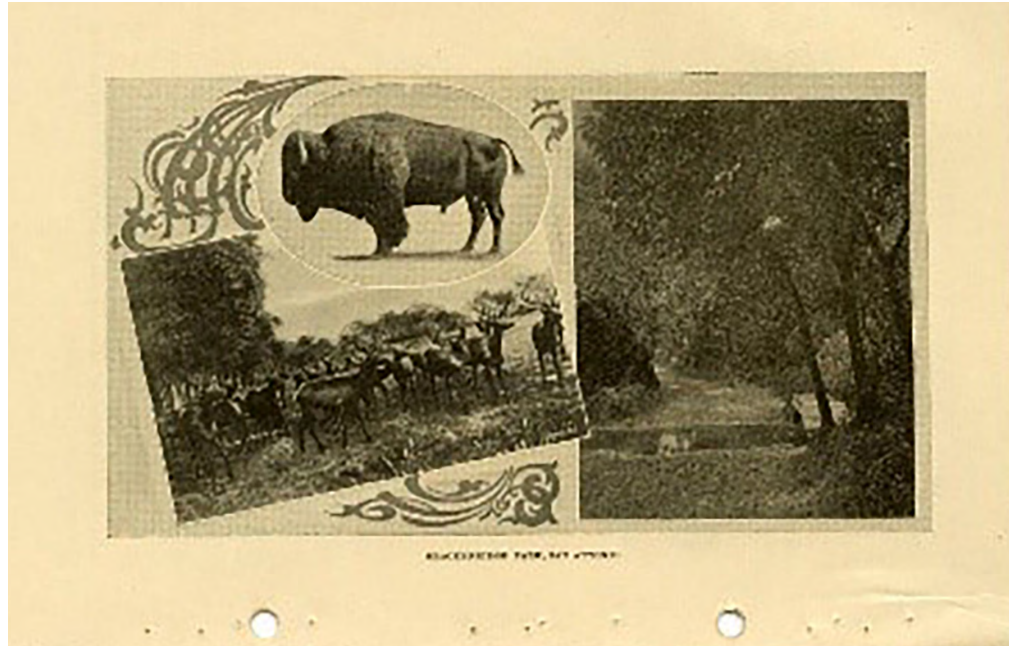


FIGURE 11–10. Bison, large numbers of elk, and a carriage way or bridle path are shown in this tourist brochure extolling the virtues of various San Antonio sites. Source: University of Texas at San Antonio, Digital Collection

DECLINE OF INDUSTRIAL USES, PARK ACCESS, AND INCREASED THREATS TO THE SAN ANTONIO RIVER

As the park landscape established itself firmly within ten years of its founding, the industrial activity occurring along the San Antonio River continued to decline. The Alamo Cement Company operated nearby until 1908. In need of better access to railroad lines, it outgrew its quarry location in current-day Brackenridge Park. The company moved to a three-hundred-acre site north of the city and began to transition to the new location over the next few years until finally abandoning the original site. That same year, “a survey revealed that as many as fifty-two ‘squatters’ were living in houses in the quarry area. Most were likely former quarry employees.”³⁰

At the same time, the city turned its attention to the park’s visibility and the community’s access to the site. An effort to provide defined entries took place over much of 1908. The aldermen and city council were concerned about a walled strip of land owned by the waterworks and its negative impact on public access to the park. That February, the city council passed an ordinance enabling the city to take by condemnation six passageways, allowing additional and quicker points of entry into the park; these included “five from River Avenue and one from Avenue A or Josephine Street.”³¹ In April of that year, the city made an offer to purchase the walled area owned by the San Antonio Water Supply Company. A *San Antonio Gazette* article noted that “at present the city owns only the interior” of the park and that “Mayor Callaghan has taken the stand that the city should own the entrances to the park as otherwise the park is in reality private property.”³² By July, the council had approved an

30 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 59.

31 “Pass Ordinance Condemning Land for Entrances: More Passageways Are Provided for Brackenridge Park-- Funeral Ordinance Passed,” *San Antonio Express*, February 4, 1908, accessed June 1, 2018, newspapers.com/image/30921797/.

32 “City Makes An Offer to Purchase Entrance to Brackenridge Park,” February 4, 1908, *San Antonio Gazette*, accessed June 1, 2018, newspapers.com/image/39229869/.

expenditure of \$6,700 to purchase 6.83 acres of this same land for the park, and “entrances were opened along the park’s eastern edge on River Avenue (Broadway) and to the south on Avenue A and Schomann Street.”³³

Southwest of Brackenridge Park, declining visitorship to San Pedro Park’s small, private zoological garden forced the zoo’s closure in 1911. Efforts to relocate animals and exhibits to Brackenridge Park would soon move forward with a new zoo making its home within the setting of one of the abandoned quarry sites.³⁴

As the park developed and the city grew, natural resources connected with the aquifer continued to be negatively affected. A drought in 1910 impacted the amount of water being carried through the Edwards Aquifer, and the “seemingly magical artesian wells” began to dwindle in capacity. Char Miller’s environmental history of San Antonio, *On the Border*, details the continuing impacts of the 1910-1911 drought:

It was reported that the river was reduced to only a faint trickle and was inadequate for conveying even the city’s waste. The headland springs were no longer contributing water to the river. The little water that flowed was the by-product of several breweries and industries along its banks. To combat this, the city installed several pumps over abandoned artesian wells north of downtown. The pumps extracted water from the aquifer and poured it directly into the river channel where it would flow toward the city.^{35, 36} **(figure 11-11)**

In his book *Riverwalk*, historian and San Antonio native Lewis Fisher profiles not only the downtown portion of the river and its transformation but also the relationship between the upper course of the river and its formative springs in the history of the city. The drought of 1910 continued into the next year. Fisher notes that “deep cracks opened in its dried mud.”³⁷ A citizens committee was formed and went before Mayor Callaghan in an attempt to spur the city into action. The mayor agreed with the committee and authorized the “installation of a fifty-horsepower pump at an abandoned artesian well by the river at the northern end of Brackenridge Park.”³⁸ Pumping began, and the amount of water pumped and the number of hours that the pump ran each day both quickly accelerated. Finally, the river began to flow again, and city residents visited the river to see the lush new growth and the return of fish.³⁹

In the summer of 1912, the long-serving Mayor Callaghan died suddenly, and the twenty-five-year political career and associated political machine that he controlled came to an end. Augustus H. Jones, a reform candidate familiar with ranching, banking, and the City Beautiful movement, was elected mayor.⁴⁰ Looking around the country, Mayor Jones sought to elevate San Antonio’s status to the level of cities such as Boston, Chicago, Denver, and

33 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 50.

34 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 51.

35 David Malda, “Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River,” in *River Cities: City Rivers*, ed. Thaisa Way (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2018), 251-52.

36 A comprehensive citywide sewage system was installed in 1893, many years after municipal water was available to San Antonio citizens. Nevertheless, the acequias continued to be used as depositories for various forms of refuse. An alderman in 1880 noted that the river and local creeks were “sewers provided by nature.” Char Miller, *On the Border: An Environmental History of San Antonio* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2005), 5.

37 Lewis F. Fisher, *River Walk: The Epic Story of San Antonio’s River* (San Antonio: Maverick Books, 2007), 28. Fisher, *River Walk*, 29.

38 Fisher, *River Walk*, 29.

39 Fisher, *River Walk*, 29.

40 Fisher, *River Walk*, 30.

Cleveland. Jones noted that “several dozen other cities already had formal plans.”⁴¹ In order to move San Antonio forward, the mayor created a City Plan Committee and appointed as its vice chairman architect Atlee B. Ayres of Ayres & Ayres.⁴² Ayres swung into action and “made river beautification his top priority along with upgrading facilities and rescuing dying trees in Brackenridge and San Pedro parks.”⁴³ Meanwhile the continuing drought was

taking its toll on the city’s tree canopy. With the induction of a new mayor and the formation of committees to study and improve the entire river, a new era of progress arrived in San Antonio.

The last quarter of 1913 began when the most serious flood in over ten years hit San Antonio. On October 1st, “a record twenty-four-hour rainfall of 7.08 inches began that sent waters of the San Antonio River and San Pedro and Alazan creeks rising two to four feet an hour.”⁴⁴ In December, a smaller flood struck the city and caused more damage. Two major floods in three months were of great concern to San Antonio residents. A committee studied the area north of the head of the river in the Olmos Basin, where previous recommendations dating as far back as 1845 had been made to manage the area to address flooding.⁴⁵ The 1913 study resulted in a recommendation that a dam be constructed on the south side of the Olmos Basin where it flows into the San Antonio River just north of Brackenridge Park. Interest in construction of the dam at Olmos ultimately waned, however, just as other solutions for the site had in the past. The project would finally move forward in the next decade, following yet another devastating flood.

CITY BEAUTIFUL MAKES ITS WAY TO BRACKENRIDGE PARK, 1915 CE – 1929 CE

Around the turn of the century, the City Beautiful movement emerged from the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, also known as the Chicago World’s Fair.⁴⁶ The exposition was intended to introduce America to “the products of



FIGURE 11–11. A photo captures part of the system of wells and pumps that was drilled in 1891. During a drought in 1910, it is possible that the city reopened these wells to restore flow to the river. Source: Charles R. Porter, Jr. *Spanish Water, Anglo Water*.

41 Fisher, *River Walk*, 30.

42 Fisher, *River Walk*, 30.

43 Fisher, *River Walk*, 30.

44 Fisher, *River Walk*, 34.

45 Lewis F. Fisher, *American Venice: The Epic Story of San Antonio’s River* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2015), 18.

46 “The City Beautiful Movement,” New York Preservation Archive Project, accessed June 3, 2019, nypap.org/preservation-history/city-beautiful-movement/.

men’s handiwork and mechanical skill”⁴⁷ from around the world. Through its collection of exhibits at a grand scale—including art galleries, electrical light displays, demonstrations of agricultural and transportation advancements, horticultural displays, and replicas of statues, all set in stark white classical buildings and against a parklike backdrop—Americans were introduced to a new version of the world.

While programming for early municipal parks had primarily focused on passive uses, it became increasingly important to policy makers to provide more cultural activities within park grounds. During the City Beautiful movement, there was a shift in park aesthetics, as civic additions such as museums, conservatories, architectural memorials, and zoos were included within large municipal parks. Park settings were made for grand buildings and monuments rather than scenes of landscape beauty.⁴⁸ The Columbian Exposition “justified the museums, botanical gardens, zoological gardens, aquariums, arboretums, meteorology observatories, and music halls we see in parks today.”⁴⁹

It took several years for the City Beautiful movement to reach San Antonio. But in the sixteen years following the formal creation of Brackenridge Park in 1899, a sequence of events would occur that would set the stage for the multitude of City Beautiful-inspired projects in Brackenridge Park. Mahncke, the first park superintendent, died in 1906, and a series of commissioners followed that had short tenures and operated with tight budgets.

Elsewhere in the city, at San Pedro Park, the private zoological display closed in 1911, with some animals transferred to Brackenridge. The death in 1912 of the tight-fisted mayor and political operative Bryan Callaghan ushered in a new era of progressive politicians interested in the principles of the City Beautiful movement and a new emphasis on planning. Another big event happened in 1913, when two major floods struck the city in October and December.

Against this backdrop of fundamental changes, John Raymond “Ray” Lambert was elected commissioner of Parks and Sanitation in 1915.⁵⁰ When Lambert took office, he immediately requested a significant budget increase for his department—from \$27,000 to \$60,000, an increase of 220 percent. The new progressive era of city leadership had begun, and San Antonio searched for ways to improve the physical, cultural, and infrastructural quality of the growing city. The river and its scenic beauty became an important focus of citizen involvement. Most of the large-scale improvements in the park occurred during this twelve-year burst of growth. With the election of Lambert, new energy infused the parks department.

47 Norman T. Newton, *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1978), 365.

48 Carr, *Wilderness by Design*, 36.

49 Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, 14.

50 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 51-52.

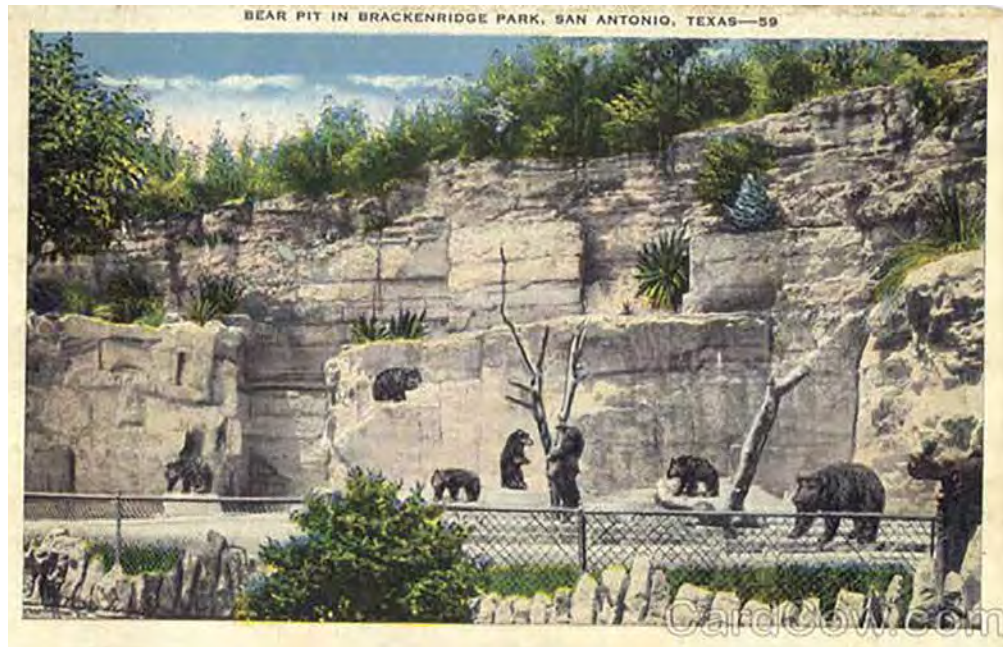


FIGURE 11–12. Post card illustrating the use of the quarry walls to create a dramatic backdrop and security for the bear exhibit at the zoo at Brackenridge Park. Source: Witte Museum Collection

LAMBERT LEADS THE CHARGE FOR CHANGES

Lambert's first two years as the park commissioner set in motion a new energy within the parks department. Having served as an alderman for many years prior to his election to the park board, he already knew the politics and financial constraints as well as and the civic leaders whose help he would need to move his ideas forward. During his twelve-year tenure, some of the most important and defining cultural institutions, park amenities, and features were added to the park. These include the Eleanor Brackenridge Playground, the Brackenridge Park Golf Course, the Brackenridge Park Zoo, the Japanese Tea Garden and tea pavilion, the Texas Star Sunken Garden, Lambert Beach, the kids' Donkey Ride and corral, the Donkey Barn, the Mexican Village, the automotive camping area, the relocation and installation of historic bridges from downtown San Antonio, the addition of multiple important pieces of art and sculpture—specifically the *faux bois* art of Dionicio Rodriguez—and, finally, the Witte Museum. The total effect on the park was comprehensive. By the end of Lambert's service, almost every area of existing parkland had been developed in some way.

THE BRACKENRIDGE ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN, 1915

When Ray Lambert took office as park commissioner, the city council had already set aside the land for the zoo. Lambert felt that that the abandoned quarries to the west of the approved site had distinct advantages compared to the original twelve acres set aside by the city. As Lambert stated, “We can put a zoo here, which will be a world better and won't cost too much. Nature has done most of the work.”⁵¹ Clearly, nature had been assisted by various commercial and industrial activities that had occurred on the site in the previous

51 Quoted in Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 51.

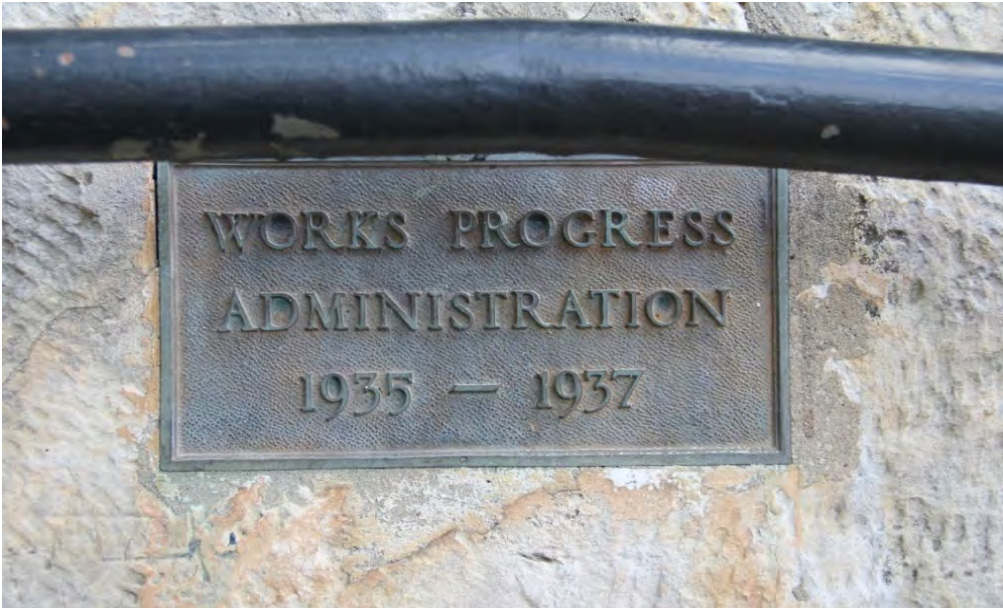


FIGURE 11-13. Works Progress Administration plaque located at Koehler Pavilion, 1935-1937. Source: Elizabeth Hilburn, published in "The Living New Deal"

century. The operations of the quarry and the extraction of blue argillaceous limestone for conversion to cement had played a pivotal role in the condition of the site that was chosen for the zoo. Using the existing quarry as a backdrop, additional installations and exhibits were built and more animals were acquired.⁵²

As a member of local government, Lambert understood the importance of building support with the community who advocated for the zoo. "Lambert gained the support of zoo advocates and began transforming the old rock quarry into the city's zoological garden (figure 11-12). Additional deer, elk, and buffalo pastures were created, the old Upper Labor Ditch became the center of the bird exhibit, and quarry walls were terraced for animal displays."⁵³ The San Antonio Zoological Society was founded in 1928 and began the process of transferring operational control of the Brackenridge Park Zoological Garden. This process was completed in 1931. "The society continues to operate the zoo today under agreement with the City of San Antonio."⁵⁴

ELEANOR BRACKENRIDGE PLAYGROUND, 1915

Among Ray Lambert's first projects in Brackenridge Park was the installation of a playground in honor of Eleanor Brackenridge, George's sister. Eleanor was a leading advocate for child welfare in addition to being involved in the women's suffragette movement and an early advocate for prohibition. The early form of the playground is not known. The playground has been rehabilitated many times during the last century, however, mostly due to advances in the safety of playground equipment and the need to provide more inclusive access.

52 Frank W. Jennings, *San Antonio: The Story of an Enchanted City* (Austin, TX: Eakin Press, 2002), 267.

53 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 51.

54 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 51.

KOEHLER PARK, 1915

Located on the west side of the San Antonio River south of the zoo, the eleven-acre parcel where Koehler Park is located within Brackenridge Park was donated to the city of San Antonio by Emma Koehler in 1915, shortly after the death of her husband. The Koehler family owned Pearl Brewery, and they intended that the consumption of alcoholic beverages would be allowed within the boundaries of their donated land, whereas alcohol is forbidden within the rest of the park. The entrance columns are believed to have been constructed at this time, before the pavilion was in place. The entrance columns are “massive red sandstone columns with decorative iron work set on each side of St. Mary’s Street.”⁵⁵ There is some evidence of an early pavilion that was rehabilitated in the mid-1920s, with the perimeter stonework pattern and material being used as an indicator of age.⁵⁶ The Works Progress Administration performed work on the Koehler Pavilion from 1935 to 1937, and a plaque commemorates the WPA’s contribution to the pavilion structure (**figure 11-13**). A patio was added in 1982 when the structure was renovated.⁵⁷



FIGURE 11-14. A. W. Tillinghast, noted early golf course designer, inspects the scene at Brackenridge Park in preparation for his design for the course. Source: Art Stricklin, Links, Lore, & Legends.

BRACKENRIDGE PARK GOLF COURSE, 1916

In the early decades of the twentieth century, golf was a sport growing in popularity around the country, and in order to promote tourism and additional recreational opportunities, George Brackenridge wanted a municipal course within the boundaries of the park. Brackenridge donated additional land for the creation of the first public course in Texas. The land had formerly been his hunting grounds and included an existing rustic lodge. Several private golf courses were already in operation in San Antonio, but winter visitors typically did not belong to the local private courses, so in effect they had nowhere to play golf while visiting the city. An organization called the San Antonio Hotel Men’s Association, which was the local branch of the Hotel Men’s Mutual Benefit Association of United States and Canada, encouraged Brackenridge to help create a public course. This group of hoteliers realized that by providing additional golfing opportunities to the general public, there would be a corresponding increase in occupancy (and thus profits) in their hotels.⁵⁸

Operating out of an office in Beverly Hills, California, and another location in New York City, A. W.

55 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 16.

56 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 13.

57 “Koehler Pavilion—San Antonio TX,” Living New Deal, accessed July 9, 2019, livingnewdeal.org/projects/koehler-pavilion-san-antonio-tx/.

58 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 54.

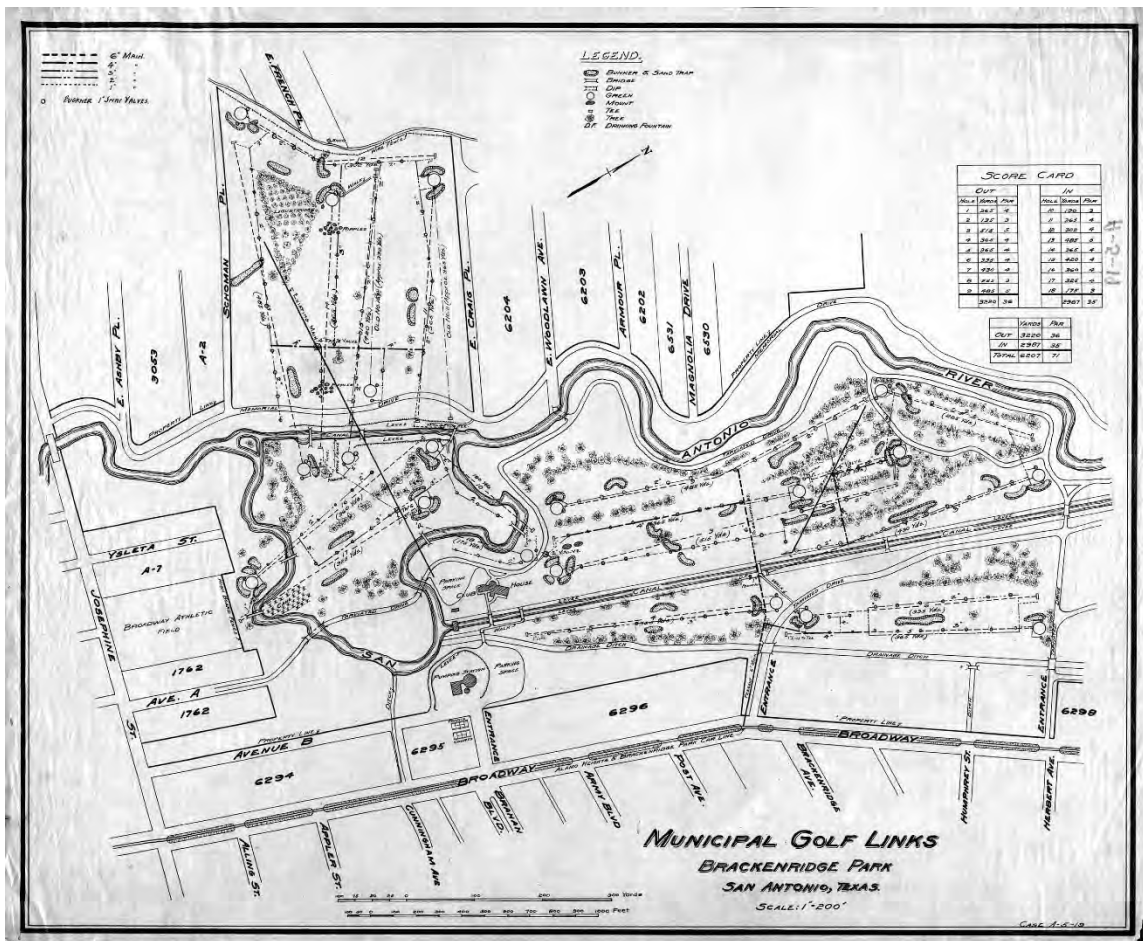


FIGURE 11–15. Undated map of the Brackenridge Park Municipal Golf Links after their completion. Source: San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department

Tillinghast was selected to design the course at Brackenridge. Tillinghast was considered the best golf course designer in the country at the time and throughout much of his career (figure 11-14). The course was designed with grass greens, which was considered a novelty at the time. In 1919, shortly after Tillinghast completed the course at Brackenridge (figure 11-15), John Bredemus—widely considered to be the father of Texas golf—arrived in San Antonio and became the golf pro at Brackenridge. He went on to design most of the early golf courses in the state of Texas.⁵⁹

Sports editor of the *San Antonio Evening News* Jack O’Brien was the original creator and of the idea for the Texas Open, a national showcase for the best golfers in the country. Working with John Bredemus at Brackenridge, he planned and organized the first event, held at Brackenridge in the winter of 1922. The Texas Open was held at Brackenridge until 1959. John Erwin, golf historian and former pro at the Brackenridge course, stated that “this is the most historic course in the state. Anybody who is anybody has played here.”⁶⁰ Tillinghast also designed the Oak Hills Country Club, which hosted the Texas Open twenty-four times from 1960 to 1994.⁶¹

59 Art Stricklin, *Links, Lore, and Legends: The Story of Texas Golf* (Lanham, MD: Taylor, 2005), 6-7.

60 Stricklin, *Links, Lore, and Legends*, 19.

61 Bill Mallon and Randon Jerris, *Historical Dictionary of Golf* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 294.



FIGURE 11–16. Bathers at Lambert Beach. The original pump house is partially obscured by a large movie screen attached to the side of the building. Chairs, benches, and diving boards provide multiple amenities for the visitors. Source: Witte Museum Collection

LAMBERT BEACH AND BATHHOUSE, 1915, 1917, 1925

While the newly acquired land for the golf course was being developed by Tillinghast in 1915, Lambert turned his attention to the construction of a large swimming area at what was to be called Lambert Beach. Lambert used rockwork to build platforms and sited the beach adjacent to the oldest of the two pump houses that were part of the San Antonio water system (**figure 11-16**).

The United States entered World War I on April 6, 1917. This set in motion the apparatus of war and the training of soldiers who then went across the Atlantic to Europe to fight. In order to accommodate the millions of soldiers in training, young men arrived at bases throughout the country, where they learned marksmanship, horsemanship, and the other skills required in war. In San Antonio, Fort Sam Houston served as the center of operations for the army. Recognizing the need to provide recreation and entertainment for the young men before they were sent overseas to Europe, city leaders in San Antonio planned improvements in parks and on city lands.

SAN ANTONIO BATHING BEACH TO BE ENLARGED. Special to The American. SAN ANTONIO, Texas, June 12. The bathing beach at Brackenridge park is to be extended half a mile so that it will provide facilities for 25,000 persons, was the announcement by Commissioner Ray Lambert at a meeting of the war recreation board at the St. Anthony hotel Tuesday noon. Mr. Lambert also said that a dam will be built immediately at Elmendorf lake and this will provide another bathing place. Mayor Bell said the city would do all in its power to provide amusements for the soldiers.⁶²

62 "San Antonio Bathing Beach to Be Enlarged," *Austin American-Statesman*, June 13, 1917, accessed May 22, 2019, newspapers.com/image/384470665.

WOODEN-LEGGED MAN IS HERO IN WORLD OF BOYS AND BURROS IN BRACKENRIDGE PARK, SAN ANTONIO'S MUNICIPAL PLAYGROUND

It's "Peg" This and "Peg" That When Youngsters Go Donkey Riding.

"Peg's" business picks up in the afternoon. While an occasional patron drifts along in the morning and early afternoon, from 2 o'clock until dark is the busy time. But Saturday and Sunday are the busiest days; then the children are free and make the most of their freedom.

To the uninitiated, it must be explained that "Peg" is the "donkey man" at Brackenridge Park. If he were had any other name, it is totally useless now, for "Peg" is as useful and affectionate a name for a wooden-legged man as any child could think of, and so he is "Peg" to all of the children.

It is Peg this and Peg that and "Peg, hold my street-car ticket," and "Please keep my hat, Peg," and "Please let me ride Blue, Peg," and "Here's some gentiana, Peg," and "I want to ride in front, Peg," and so forth and so on while the burros stand by patiently and the children pull and haul and clamor for their ride.

A Henry Club Man.

Of course, everybody knows that these burros are the Rotary Club burros, or rather the Rotary Club presented the burros to the children of San Antonio last year, and ever since then they have been jogging around the park with one or two or three children on their backs. Everybody knows also where they are kept, in the corral just across the river from the bathing beach.



"Peg," the keeper of the burros regarded as a godfather, and he unflinchingly and playing the role of his youthful proteges upon a ride, though they were his own beloved ones. By both boys and girls alike he is children, settling their differences.

FIGURE 11-17. Local man becomes the "donkey man" at Brackenridge Park. The donkeys and funding were supplied by the Rotary Club of San Antonio. Source: Brackenridge Park Conservancy

Soldiers training at Ft. Sam Houston regularly used the swimming area along with the polo grounds and other areas of the park for military training and recreation. Further improvements were made to Lambert Beach in 1925, when "concrete stairs and landings were added to provide easy access to the river, and a stone bathhouse replaced rustic dressing rooms."⁶³

RIFLE RANGE, DONKEY TRAILS, LIONS FIELD, DAVIS PARK, 1916

With these popular attractions in place, the park continued to accumulate land and amenities. In 1916, the city acquired several parcels of land that increased Brackenridge Park's acreage. The first property obtained during that year was a 1.33-acre tract of the Kampmann property. The municipal rifle range was then located on the property, where it remained in operation until 1927.⁶⁴ The donkey trail was also established in 1916, when the San Antonio Rotary Club donated twelve burrows for children to ride in Brackenridge Park⁶⁵ (figure 11-17).

With the increasing number of recreational opportunities in Brackenridge Park, visitation increased. The city purchased lands that now comprise Lions Field from the San Antonio Water Supply Company.⁶⁶ The Lions Club of San Antonio then raised funds and donated a children's playground on the land. Later, they constructed a clubhouse, which has been replaced with a newer Lions Field Adult and Senior Center (figures 11-18 and 11-19). Brackenridge himself donated the land that is now Davis Park, named in honor of county judge James R. Davis.⁶⁷

63 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 12.

64 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 37.

65 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 57-58.

66 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 56.

67 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 59.



FIGURE 11-18. Children ride the Merry-Go-Round at Lions Field. In the background is River Avenue (Broadway) and the neighborhood on the east side of the avenue. Source: Brackenridge Park Conservancy



FIGURE 11-19. An undated photo of the Lions Club Fieldhouse at Brackenridge Park. The building has since been expanded and updated. Source: Brackenridge Park Conservancy



FIGURE 11-20. An automobile drives through the low-water crossing at Tuleta Drive. Juxtaposed in the background is a small horse and carriage. The early configuration of the crossing shows random-sized stone as edge markers. Later, the stone was replaced with elevated concrete “pads” to allow pedestrians to cross in a safer manner. Source: Jay Loudon, Work5hop.

Brackenridge was nearing the end of his life, but he was not finished with his donations to the city to further develop the park. In late 1916, he purchased additional lots and reacquired lots that he had sold in 1878. In early 1917, he donated these acquisitions, totaling thirty-five acres, to the city “in recognition of the work done by the City of San Antonio under the supervision of the Honorable Ray Lambert, its commissioner, in developing the scenic beauty and usefulness to the public of the tract of land ... known as Brackenridge Park.”⁶⁸

Once several substantial park elements were in place and more land had been acquired and donated to the city for park purposes, the remaining quarry tracts provided the next opportunity for development, and Ray Lambert set about creating new elements and venues within Brackenridge Park.

LOW-WATER CROSSING, 1917

The low-water crossing is one of the iconic experiences at Brackenridge Park, and it was established early in the park’s development. Historically, low-water crossings are designed to provide a bridge across a water body; they are designed to be submerged during high water flows and to provide safe vehicular passage during low water flows.⁶⁹ The first low-water crossing in Brackenridge Park was constructed to connect people from the east side of the river to attractions located west of the river in Koehler Park.⁷⁰ A concrete base supports stones arranged across either side of the crossing, defining a lane across the river. These stone sections are spaced to enable water to flow (**figure 11-20**).

68 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 58.

69 Kim Clarkin et al., *Low-Water Crossings: Geomorphic, Biological, and Engineering Design Considerations* (Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture, October 2006), accessed November 22, 2019, fs.fed.us/eng/pubs/pdf/LowWaterCrossings/LoWholeDoc.pdf.

70 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 16.



FIGURE 11–21. Visitors traverse various elevated stone walkways in the sunken garden. The existing quarry walls and path markers along Alpine Drive are visible at the top of the photo. Source: Brackenridge Park Conservancy

JAPANESE TEA GARDEN, 1917

Originally called the lily pond, Lambert transformed abandoned quarry space into a sunken garden with significant water elements, stone paths and bridges, and a Japanese tea house and outdoor pavilion for guests to view the garden and purchase tea and food (**figure 11-21**). A Japanese tea garden was first seen in the United States at the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago, where it was "among the finest in the whole exposition."⁷¹ According to an 1893 article on the event, the garden contained three different parts, and one could enjoy a traditional tea service ceremony. Included in the garden was

the Japanese temple of Hooden... situated on the Wooded Island, surrounded by the Japanese rose garden. None is permitted to enter its sacred portals but the fragile beauty of its decoration may be viewed from the outside. The decorations are beautiful, and are an evidence in themselves of the calm patience o [sic] this wonderful race. There are rare paintings and vases. Sculptured columns and carved walls....

In the Agricultural building Japan is not behind the kindred nations. The exhibit of course is much different from anything we would see in this country, consisting of teas, spices,

medicinal plants, curious woods and unknown shrubs—unknown to western minds—and many unsayable names....

It is an undisputed fact that the Japanese are the most polite, polished and mannerly people on earth. In genuine politeness the French are far behind the Japs, as barbarism is behind civilization.⁷²

America's early exoticism of Japanese culture is evident from this article, and the display must have impressed many. After the Columbian Exposition exhibit, the first permanent Japanese tea garden to appear in the United States opened in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park in 1894 (**figure 11-22**).

71 "World's Fair Letter," *Argonia (KS) Clipper*, June 30, 1893, accessed November 9, 2018, newspapers.com/image389451815.

72 "World's Fair Letter."

Over twenty years later, at Brackenridge Park, the Japanese Tea Garden became one of the most distinctive attractions.

Lambert worked with prison labor to build an irregularly shaped garden that measured approximately four hundred by three hundred feet. Rock from the quarry was used to build an island, two pools, bridges, and paths. The city nursery provided tropical plants and the Public Service Company donated the lighting system for the driveway and pond. A Japanese-style pagoda, roofed with palm trees from city parks, was built overlooking the polo field.⁷³ (figure 11-23)

The tea house itself was managed by a Japanese family, the Jingu family (figure 11-24). But the American climate toward the Japanese changed drastically after the beginning of World War II and the bombing of Pearl Harbor, and shortly after, the Jingu family was asked to leave. The space was renamed the Chinese Tea Garden. It was decided that the faux bois entrance columns and sign would not be changed, as they were created by Rodriguez, are culturally significant, and maintain their original integrity. In 1984, the original name was restored in a rededication ceremony.



FIGURE 11–22. Announcement of the installation of the Japanese Tea Garden at Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Prior to the construction of the Japanese Tea Garden at Brackenridge, the popularity of these features had become a common in parks throughout the country. Source: *The San Francisco Call*, Apr. 13, 1901, Newspapers.com

THE TEXAS STAR GARDEN, 1917

Adjacent to the Japanese Tea Garden to the southeast is the Texas Star Garden, or Sunken Garden. The garden was designed with the lone star of the Texas flag as its organizing motif (figure 11-25). The upper right area of one historic photograph shows the original stage that was used for outdoor choral and theatrical performances. In the same photo, Alamo Heights is visible in the distance. The stage later became the site of the Sunken Garden Theater.

73 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 59.



FIGURE 11–23. View of the Japanese Tea Garden. The Japanese Pagoda is visible, and well as the quarry walls and unique rockwork located throughout the garden. Source: Witte Museum Collection



FIGURE 11–24. Photo of the Jingu family members standing on a faux box bridge in the Japanese Tea Garden, taken in the 1930s. Note the family's western attire, indicating their own assimilation into American culture before being asked to leave after the December 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor. Source: Jingu family, published by KSTX-FM.



FIGURE 11-25. In the far right side of the postcard, you can see the original stage that was used for outdoor choral and theatrical performances. Later, the state became the site of the Sunken Garden Theater, which was enlarged and expanded during preparations for the Texas Centennial of 1937. Source: Witte Museum Collection



FIGURE 11-26. This photograph shows the condition of the buildings that Ray Lambert christened the “Mexican Village.” This image was evidently captured before the buildings were renovated and used as a tourist destination. Source: Brackenridge Park Conservancy

MORE PARK LANDS, 1918

More land was added to the park in 1918, when the city purchased a “250-foot wide strip between Koehler Park and Josephine Avenue, the park’s southern boundary.”⁷⁴ Part of Ray Lambert’s logic was that the adjoining property owners who faced the park would “enjoy the advantage of park frontage and therefore cooperate with his plan.” Frontage on parklands generally results in an increase in property values, as the owner has easy access to the park and the advantage of borrowed scenery.

TOURIST CAMP, 1919 - 1934

With the arrival of automobile tourism and limited hotel and motel space, many parks around the country developed areas for campers to locate a campsite and stay overnight or longer. The tourist camp at Brackenridge was originally located on the northwest side of the park along the river. It was later moved to another site on the southern edge of the park. In 1934, the city council, under pressure from commercial hoteliers, closed the camp.⁷⁵

MEXICAN VILLAGE, 1920

Situated along the base of the quarry wall where the cement plant had been located are the abandoned structures of what Ray Lambert called the Mexican Village (**figure 11-26**). Merchants sold various Mexican foods, handiworks, and art. Artisans worked and sometimes lived in the small stone houses constructed for that purpose, and it is thought that some of these merchants had been employees at the quarry who remained in place after it moved.⁷⁶ After World War II, various artists occupied the structures where the village was located. These artists then combined with the Mill Race Studio, located in the Second Pump House. Together, they formed the cultural core of the wider art community in San Antonio at the time.⁷⁷

POLO FIELD, CIRCA 1921

The thirty-five acres of land that George Brackenridge donated to the city in 1917 became one of the largest open spaces in the park. Ray Lambert originally wanted the tract to be a large garden and had city engineer W. S. Delery draw up the plans for a botanical garden, but Delery’s plan was never installed. Instead, an alternate proposal by the Polo Club to locate their club and playing fields on the tract prevailed, and it became their home for the next sixty-five years⁷⁸ (**figure 11-27**).

74 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 57.

75 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 60.

76 Patsy Pittman Light, *Capturing Nature: The Cement Sculpture of Dionicio Rodríguez* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 41.

77 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 61.

78 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 62.



FIGURE 11–27. Polo players compete at the polo field at Brackenridge. The field opened in 1921 and remained operational until the late 1980s. Source: Brackenridge Park Conservancy

MIRAFLORES, 1921 TO 1930

Aureliano Urrutia was born in 1872 in Xochimilco, “once a unique agricultural area built upon a network of lake and canal systems, which is now a suburb of Mexico City and a World Heritage Site.” Urrutia was a noted surgeon who had been Mexico’s interior minister until he fled in 1914 during the Mexican Revolution. At the age of 42, he immigrated with his family to San Antonio, where he established and built a large medical practice and lived until his death in 1975 at the age of 103.⁷⁹

Urrutia loved the arts, history, and the community that he had left in his native Mexico. Desiring to “express his memory of his birthplace and his love for Mexico...Urrutia used Miraflores as his outlet for creative expression, and between 1921 and 1930 he fashioned the property into a fantastical garden of statuary, fountains, pools, and meandering waterways” (**figures 11-28 and 11-29**). His elaborate and somewhat decadent design for the garden used artistic elements to provide a “lesson in the uniqueness of Hispanic culture”; Urrutia may have envisioned the gardens as an eventual gift to his adopted city that would illustrate to its people the historic imprint of his native culture.⁸⁰ Certainly, one can see from historic photographs that the site referenced and paid homage to the waterways of Xochimilco. The preeminence of waterways in his adopted San Antonio may have reinforced his decision to make of the landscape composition a celebration of the beauty and power of water.

79 Elise Urrutia, “Miraflores: Dr. Urrutia’s Lost Garden,” *Rivard Report*, Institute for Nonprofit News, October 2, 2016, accessed July 12, 2019, therivardreport.com/miraflores-dr-urruvias-lost-garden/.

80 Urrutia, “Miraflores: Dr. Urrutia’s Lost Garden.”



FIGURE 11-28. Miraflores arch of Spanish Talavera mosaic tile. The structure originally stood near the corner of Broadway and Hildebrand Avenue and is now at the San Antonio Museum of Art. Source: Texas Public Radio, www.tpr.org/post/mystery-behind-san-antonios-miraflores-park-uncovered



FIGURE 11-29. American Institute of Architects members attending a national convention in 1931. Attendees are gathered in the elaborate setting of stone seats, raised pools, and stone walkways at Miraflores. Source: Bill Fisher



FIGURE 11-30. The St. Mary Street Bridge in 1921 during the flood that fall. From this original location, the bridge was disassembled and moved to Brackenridge Park. Source: Texas A&M, aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/plantanswers/riverwalk/Pages/slide11.html

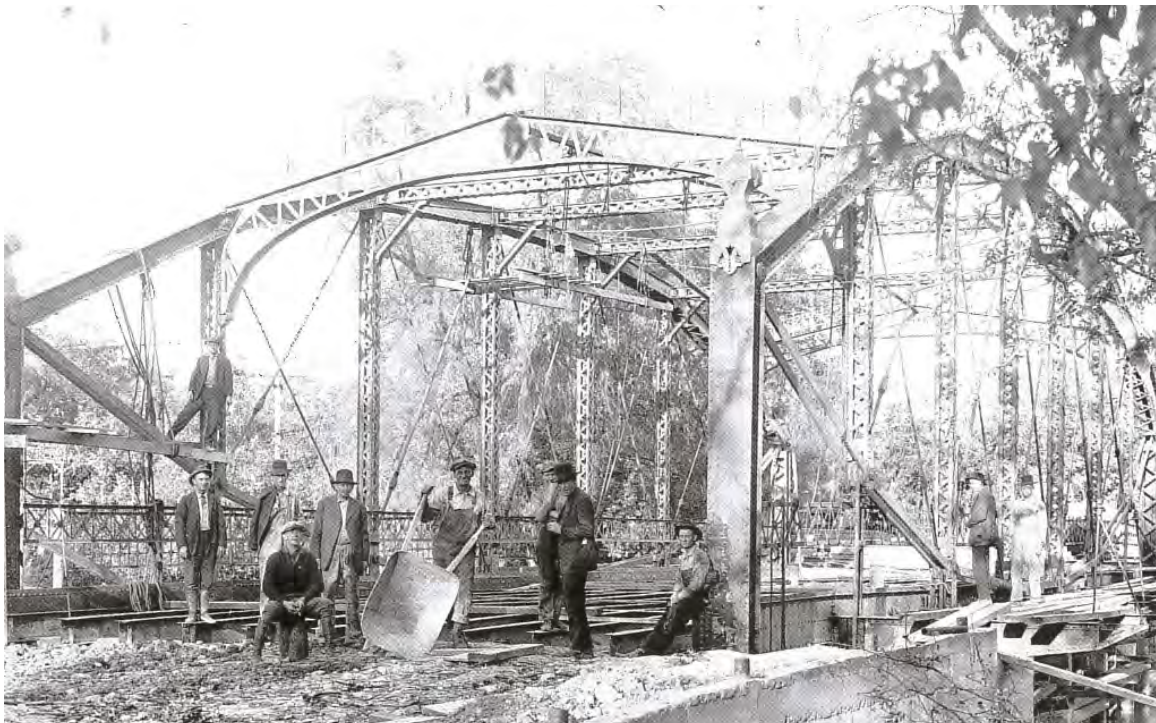


FIGURE 11-31. Workers reassemble the “Letters of Gold” bridge from its former location on South St. Mary Street. Source: Lewis F. Fisher

In 1960, at the age of 88, Urrutia retired and sold his homeplace. It suffered decay and abuse as it came under corporate ownership, which had no use for such a feature as an outdoor sculpture garden and water feature. Since 2005, a remnant parcel of Miraflores that contains the highest concentration of cultural artifacts has been owned by the city of San Antonio. Today the site is under the management of Brackenridge Park.

THE FLOOD OF 1921 AND INSTALLATION OF NEW BRIDGES

One of the most devastating floods to strike San Antonio occurred September 9–10, 1921. “The 1921 flood, loosed by a cloudburst in the Olmos basin north of the city, took forty-nine lives, left fourteen missing, and caused more than \$8 million in property damage. In the two catastrophic days, rainfall in the Olmos Creek watershed ranged from seventeen inches in the upper area to about eleven inches near San Pedro Avenue. The flood inundated parts of downtown San Antonio with eight to nine feet of water, even reaching the mezzanine of the Gunter Hotel on Houston Street at St. Mary’s. It was only one of fifteen deadly floods that had, with little warning, menaced and mauled San Antonians from time to time since 1819.”⁸¹ One of the most notable and lingering issues after the 1921 flood was that thirteen of the twenty-seven bridges that crossed the river—mostly in downtown San Antonio—were no longer safe after the floods.⁸² Some were quickly repaired, while others remained in place but were no longer usable. One of the bridges that could not be repaired in place was the Letters of Gold Bridge at South St. Mary’s Street (**figure 11-30**). The bridge was disassembled and reconstructed in 1925 just above the first pump house and Lambert’s Beach⁸³ (**figure 11-31**). The second bridge had been located at Fourth Street. This bridge was rebuilt on the southern edge of Lambert Beach and was designated a pedestrian crossing.

The flood of 1921 changed the face of San Antonio. It catalyzed the citizens to finally act to construct the long-recommended dam at the southern edge of the Olmos Basin. Flood control was a critical issue that not only affected the residents and businessmen of the city but also negatively impacted tourism.

Flooding wasn’t the only issue the city had to address. “Beginning in 1920, the city attorney filed suits against the ‘squatters’” who had been living in the abandoned quarry areas. These squatters were thought to be former quarry workers, and it is believed that some were Mexican laborers who transitioned to administering concessions in the Mexican Village.⁸⁴ Lambert had begun developing these quarry areas, and the presence of squatters was not likely considered beneficial for attracting visitors. And as tourism increasingly became one of San Antonio’s chief economic drivers, protecting the city’s infrastructure and the image of the its amenities became increasingly important.

81 Steve Bennett, “‘Head-of-the-River’ Immersed in San Antonio History,” *San Antonio Express-News*, July 8, 2017, accessed May 31, 2018, pp. 38-39, expressnews.com/sa300/article/Head-of-the-River-immersed-in-San-Antonio-11274319.php.

82 Fisher, *River Walk*, 63-64.

83 Fisher, *River Walk*, 65.

84 Light, *Capturing Nature*, 41.

SAN ANTONIO AS A WINTERTIME DESTINATION, AND WATER AS A MANAGED RESOURCE

The arrival and popularity of the automobile radically changed tourism patterns throughout the country, and this was definitely true of San Antonio. Middle-class tourists now had access to many of the recreational opportunities that had formerly been available only to the wealthy. By the end of the twentieth century's first decade, tourism was thriving in San Antonio, and city boosters were quick to highlight the many opportunities for recreation and the pleasant, sunny weather that the visitor could enjoy during the winter months. For example, a 1917 promotional article titled "Ask the Flaglers, Huntingtons, Big Fellows of America to Spend Winters in San Antonio" proclaimed:

We have done much to capitalize our heritage; we have spread abroad the message that here are the most interesting missions, the best climate, the purest water, the warmest, most constant sunshine in all America.... And lately, when we began to lay the floor of the city, by well paved streets, inviting the Northern visitor to bring here his automobile we, realizing that good roads in the country offering long and enjoyable rides were not in themselves sufficient to pass entirely the time of these visitors, looked at our parks, laid out a magnificent municipal golf course, began making a thing of beauty of the old quarry by Brackenridge Park, started a zoological collection in this wonderful natural setting; laid out a Japanese garden, and offered another playground where when the blizzards blow and the sleet cuts and the cold numbs in the frozen North, summer days with green foliage, smiling red roses, and the musical tinkle of waterfalls, make as a bad dream to the sojourner from the North the cold weather of December and its succeeding months.⁸⁵

Clearly, the developers and city fathers of San Antonio saw their city and the recreational opportunities offered throughout the area—from the Gulf of Mexico to the "immortal story of the Alamo"—as enticing as any place in the country and even comparable to the French Riviera. The next week, another local paper followed its announcement that a new polo field was opening with a list of recreational amenities in the city: "MUNICIPAL POLO FIELD. A municipal polo field is now among the possibilities at Brackenridge park. This will give San Antonio a municipal baseball park, a municipal golf course, a municipal target range, a municipal bathing beach and a municipal tennis court."⁸⁶

With the success of the multiple recreational offerings in San Antonio, leaders in Austin, the state capital, began to take notice and began to promote Austin's Barton Springs as a public amenity. They then promoted new public golf facilities in Austin, recognizing that "it would be possible, also, to construct a nine-hole public golf course similar to the municipal golf course in Brackenridge Park at San Antonio, which has drawn thousands of winter tourists to the city."⁸⁷

⁸⁵ "Ask the Flaglers, Huntingtons, Big Fellows of America to Spend Winters in San Antonio," *San Antonio Express*, January 21, 1917, accessed July 14, 2014, texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph433641/m1/29/?q=flagler.

⁸⁶ "Municipal Polo Field," *Austin American-Statesman*, January 28, 1917, accessed August 23, 2018, newspapers.com/image/358050425/?terms=municipal+polo+field.

⁸⁷ Charles G. Norton, "Dam Saves Flood Waters for Rice Growers' Benefit," *The Austin American-Statesman*, May 22, 1917, accessed August 23, 2018, newspapers.com/image/384463764.



FIGURE 11–32. An early photograph of the Witte Museum prior to the 1961 expansion. The original building was designed by the architecture firm of Ayres and Ayres. Source: Lewis F. Fisher and Maria Watson Pfeiffer. *San Antonio Architecture: Traditions and Visions*

As leaders throughout the state were looking at San Antonio's recreational attractions as a model for their own cities, the state of Texas was grappling with issues related to water availability and repeated flooding in other rapidly developing cities throughout the state—places such as Dallas and Houston. In 1917, the citizens of the state passed a constitutional amendment that gave authority to the legislature to create “special purpose political subdivisions of the State to serve regional areas ... generally coincidental with river basins and to be generally known as river authorities.”⁸⁸ This was the beginning of the multiple regional river and bayou authorities that serve to regulate and manage water as a resource for industry, tourism, and residents throughout Texas.

FAUX BOIS, THE WITTE, AND BRIDGEWORK IN THE PARK

The year after the 1921 flood, plans went forward to build a new clubhouse at the golf course. The city chose acting Brackenridge golf pro John Bredemus to assist them in the design and construction of the new building. Three years later, the famous sculptor Gutzon Borglum moved to San Antonio in 1924 to begin work on a statue in honor of Texas trail drivers. Borglum set up shop in Pump House #2 on the grounds of Brackenridge Park, where he remained for many years. Borglum's most important commission was for the design of the four presidents at Mount Rushmore.⁸⁹ Borglum did not win the commission for the trail drivers' sculpture, the commission that originally brought him to San Antonio, but he became an important force in development along the river and in the artistic community.

The city of San Antonio did not have a public museum in the first two decades of the twentieth century, but plans and construction were underway to create a museum at San Pedro Springs Park. In 1925, San Antonio businessman Alfred G. Witte died and left the city with a substantial bequest of \$75,000 to construct a museum. His bequest included two stipulations: that “a museum of art, science and natural history...be built in Brackenridge Park and [that it be] named for his parents.”⁹⁰ This significant donation, along with the restrictive requirements for the name and location, resulted in the immediate termination

88 “About San Antonio River Authority,” San Antonio River Authority, accessed June 6, 2019, sara-tx.org/about.

89 Fisher, *River Walk*, 77.

90 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 64.



FIGURE 11-33. The Rodriguez Wooden Footbridge has 33 pairs of vertical tree trunks and resembles an arbor. Source: University of Texas San Antonio.

of museum construction at San Pedro Springs Park. Subsequent plans for the location and for architectural changes to the new building were then updated for construction at Brackenridge Park (**figure 11-32**).

Around 1925, the city commissioned Mexican-born faux bois artist Dionicio Rodriguez to create several pieces for the park. Five of his projects, and possibly more, are located in the park.⁹¹ Among these is “the covered ‘wooden’ footbridge, located north of the large iron truss bridge.”⁹² The wooden footbridge

is a curved structure resembling an elongated arbor; it parallels a bend in the road and spans a flood channel of the San Antonio River. The design features thirty-three pairs of vertical tree trunks that support horizontal branches. Handrail branches are infilled with intertwined cross branches.⁹³

(**figure 11-33**)

Rodriguez created several pieces for Brackenridge Park in the 1920s and many other elements in San Antonio, Texas, and throughout the South. The magazine *Popular Mechanics* wrote about his work in 1927, noting that “stripped bark exposed the channel made by some wood borer, a spot where some industrious woodpecker sought a grub. Park attendants say this bridge even fools the woodpeckers.”⁹⁴ The faux bois work in Brackenridge, that made by Rodriguez, and that made by his followers are some of the elements that give the landscape a playful, handmade feeling.

91 Light, *Capturing Nature*, 41.

92 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 63.

93 Light, *Capturing Nature*, 41.

94 Light, *Capturing Nature*, 41-42.



FIGURE 11-34. Lover's Lane walkway connected the Japanese Tea Garden and the zoo. Source: University of Texas San Antonio.

HISTORIC CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE PARK

By the close of the Ray Lambert era in 1927, many of the park's signature elements were in place. The Brackenridge Golf Course, the Japanese Tea Garden, Lambert Beach, the San Antonio Zoo, and the Witte Museum had been planned and constructed. A local photographer named Albert Schaal recorded scenes around San Antonio and published them in a book, *Beautiful San Antonio, Texas: And a Few Points of Interest near San Antonio, 1927-1931*. The original images for the book are now housed at UTSA in their digital Special Collections. Several photographs from this book show scenes in Brackenridge Park that no longer exist. Some of the most poignant show intentional and designed connections between various cultural institutions in the park, specifically between the Japanese Tea Garden and the zoo, and from the zoo, through the park's beach and softball areas, across the San Antonio River, and to the Witte Museum. Lambert's development of these institutions and the park, then, demonstrate his distinct intention that these institutions be considered *of the park* and not separate or apart from it.

A walkway called Lover's Lane connected the Japanese Tea Garden to the zoo (**figure 11-34**). Schaal's photograph of the same name portrays a wooden arbor of small tree trunks in a rectangular pattern, a sand or dirt path, rock edging, and vines growing up the sides and overhead to shade the visitors walking between the two attractions. It includes a person standing at the end of Lover's Lane, with the arbor extending into the distance.

Another important connection that no longer exists is the pedestrian bridge constructed of rock that crossed from the back of the Witte Museum over the river to the playground, the softball field, Lambert Beach, and eventually the San Antonio Zoo (**figure 11-35**). A map titled "Points of Interest" showing a half-mile and one-mile radius from the Witte Museum through Brackenridge Park also traces the path from the Witte, through the park, and to the zoo.

LAMBERT'S LEGACY AT BRACKENRIDGE PARK

In 1917, the *Austin American-Statesmen* published an article about Ray Lambert in its Who's Who in Texas and Why section (figure 11-36). Local businessman and politician J. H. Kirkpatrick was asked about Lambert as a potential candidate for mayor. Kirkpatrick noted Lambert's accomplishments and skills:

He had in mind the many beauty spots that have been created in the city under the administration of Ray Lambert as commissioner of parks and sanitation. Because of the peculiar lay of the city, due to the crooked streets and the still more crooked river there are many lots which run to a point with the result that in many places triangular plats are formed which are too small for [building] plots and which have lain idle merely as so much waste land.⁹⁵

The *Austin American-Statesman* went on to note that "he has devoted a great deal of time to Brackenridge park until it is today one of the finest parks of this kind in the United States, and a visit to San Antonio would not be complete without a drive through Brackenridge Park."⁹⁶ Lambert saw the odd-shaped parcels and abandoned limestone quarry walls as opportunities and planted them with ornamental plants and trees, and his additions are largely responsible for the park's continued regional vernacular development.

With many of his signature projects in place, Ray Lambert, already in failing health, succumbed to pneumonia on December 23, 1927. His contributions to the San Antonio park system and to Brackenridge Park are many. Most of the core features of the park were established during Lambert's tenure as park commissioner. With Lambert's death, a new commissioner stepped into the role that Lambert had so effectively navigated. Joseph Rubiola succeeded Lambert immediately upon his death, a position Rubiola held until 1941.⁹⁷



FIGURE 11-35. Madarasz Bridge between the back of the Witte and the Ilka Nursery site owned by the Madarasz family in the nineteenth century. Source: Brackenridge Park Conservancy



FIGURE 11-36. J. Ray Lambert was Superintendent of the San Antonio Parks Department from 1915 to 1926. His legacy in the park resulted in major progress when most of the elements of the park were put in place. Source: The Cultural Landscape Foundation

⁹⁵ "Who's Who in Texas and Why," *Austin American-Statesman*, June 29, 1917, accessed September 30, 2019, newspapers.com/image/384475130/.

⁹⁶ "Who's Who in Texas and Why."

⁹⁷ Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 65.

THE NEW DEAL ERA AND CONSERVATION OF THE RIVER, 1930 CE – 1949 CE

The introduction of pastoral and picturesque landscapes and large urban municipal parks beginning in the 1850s gave birth to Brackenridge Park in 1899. The presence of the San Antonio River, portions of the Acequia Madre de Valero, the Upper Labor Acequia, and then the circuitous roadways that traversed the park served as its earliest defining frameworks. The park experienced its second major period of development when the City Beautiful movement found its way to San Antonio under the leadership of Ray Lambert. Regional vernacular layers continued to be expressed in the park.

With the advent of World War II, development and construction in the park began to slow. But prior to the advent of war, the Great Depression and New Deal legislation brought federal dollars to San Antonio, and this prompted the third period of major development in Brackenridge Park.

During the Great Depression, parks nationwide provided huge opportunities to employ hundreds of workers doing basic tasks with rudimentary tools under several New Deal programs. Headed first by the Reconstruction Finance Administration and the Works Progress Administration (WPA), Depression-era projects updated infrastructure, installed new recreational areas and buildings, and virtually remade the landscape of some parks. Such changes are especially prominent in Brackenridge Park, where an extensive list of items was accomplished with the aid of WPA funds and workers. During this period, approximately \$90,000 was earmarked for projects to improve the infrastructure of Brackenridge Park and its zoo and of Koehler Park.⁹⁸ This layer of development was accomplished under the leadership of “Jake” Rubiola, who served as park commissioner from 1927 to 1941. Rubiola, taking advantage of the New Deal-era programs and funding, expanded development to include not just amenities but infrastructure along the entire river.

SUNKEN GARDEN THEATER AND ENTRY, 1930–1937

In 1930, the city requested plans from designers for the Sunken Garden Theater, and local architect Harvey P. Smith and sculptor Gutzon Borglum each submitted designs. Borglum was nationally renowned and had been making his studio in Brackenridge Park since moving to San Antonio in 1924, but Smith was chosen over Borglum. Located within one of the Brackenridge Park quarries, the rounded perimeter walls to the northwest side of the theater provide significant acoustical advantages for visitors.

A few years later, the Texas centennial celebration provided many opportunities for commemoration throughout the state. Because the celebration happened during the Great Depression, substantial federal funding was available to aid in building improvements, new construction, and the addition of landscape features as part of the New Deal. As part of the centennial celebration in San Antonio, the “Sunken Garden Theater was expanded and improved in 1937. Architects for the Centennial project, completed by WPA, were Harvey P. Smith, George Willis and Charles T. Boelhauwe.”⁹⁹ As part of the overall improvements to the theater, “dressing rooms and stage support buildings, restrooms, and seating were constructed”¹⁰⁰ (figure 11-37).

98 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 65.

99 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 66.

100 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 66.



FIGURE 11–37. The Sunken Garden Theater was expanded and improved as part of the Texas Centennial held in 1937. Source: Witte Museum Collection

Sometime in the 1930s, likely during or after World War II, an Easter tradition emerged in Brackenridge Park. Local historian Maria Pfeiffer has noted that St. John Lutheran Church helped sponsor the Easter sunrise service¹⁰¹ that took place in the Sunken Garden Theater. According to a 1950 *San Antonio Express* article, it was estimated that 2,000 people attended the service that year¹⁰² (**figure 11-38**). It is not clear whether this event was initially a primarily Mexican American event. However, by the 1950s, a substantial Easter tradition continued in the park and was embraced by the Mexican American community.

REPTILE GARDEN AND PIONEER HALL, 1933

On the other side of the park along Broadway, the Reptile Garden was constructed in 1933 just north of the Witte Museum. The Reptile Garden housed alligators, snakes, and turtles and was an early New Deal project under the National Youth Administration (NYA) program. Originally comprised of wood and wire fencing, the exhibit was moved twice before it was reconstructed of stone in 1937. The Reptile Garden closed to the public in 1975,¹⁰³ but the structures remained in that location until 2016, when an expansion of the Witte Museum called for their removal.

101 Maria Pfeiffer, historian, “Brackenridge Park Cultural Landscape Report,” email correspondence, November 19, 2018.

102 “Park and Zoo Draw Huge Crowd,” *San Antonio Express*, April 10, 1950, accessed November 12, 2019, newspaperarchives.com.

103 “Koehler Pavilion—San Antonio TX.”

Park and Zoo Draw Huge Crowd

Brackenridge park Monday was recovering from its biggest **Easter** celebration in history, Stewart King, park superintendent reported.

King and other **park** officials estimated that between 6 a. m. and 11 p. m. Sunday the grounds were visited by 75,000 to 100,000 San Antonians and out-of-town visitors.

At one time picnics spread from Hildebrand ave. to Josephine st.

TENTS PITCHED

Many families pitched tents at their **picnic** site.

All established **picnic** units in the **park** were occupied or being held for later use by 7 a. m. Sunday.

First scheduled affair was at 6:30 a. m. It was a sunrise service at the Sunken garden theater. Around 2000 persons attended.

The museum and reptile garden reported around 4300 visitors Sunday.

More than 5000 rode the boat in the San Antonio river and the miniature train. More than 17,000 attended the zoo.

Included in the zoo total were 6387 children under 12 who got in free.

King said he believed it was the biggest day on record at the zoo.

POLO AND BASEBALL

He estimated 6500 people attended a polo match and two baseball games.

King said all **park** crews were "snowed under" Monday by the confetti and eggshell litter in the **park**.

He said the Olmos Basin **park** and Concepcion **park** were also flooded with picnics.

FIGURE 11-38. April 10, 1950 San Antonio Light article noting the Easter celebration in Brackenridge Park. The article indicates that the tradition of camping at established sites precedes 1950. Source: Maria Pfeiffer Collection

The same year the Reptile Garden was completed, Pioneer Hall was conceived and constructed in preparation for the Texas Centennial in 1937. It is important to note that the full name of the memorial is the Pioneers, Trail Drivers, and Rangers Memorial in San Antonio. The pioneers were the early Texas settlers, the trail drivers were an important resource in Texas as cattle production increased following the Civil War, and the Texas Rangers are legendary for their responsibilities in maintaining law and order throughout one of the largest states in the country comprised of primarily rural land.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Mike Cox, "A Brief History of the Texas Rangers," Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum May 28, 2019, texasranger.org/texas-ranger-museum/history/brief-history/.



FIGURE 11-39. The Starter House at Brackenridge Park was constructed during the Great Depression by the National Youth Administration. Source: livingnewdeal.org

GOLF COURSE IMPROVEMENTS

The NYA program constructed several projects at the Brackenridge Park Golf Course. These included a starter shack constructed at the first hole of the course (**figure 11-39**). This structure was constructed with native limestone, like many other buildings in the park and around San Antonio.¹⁰⁵ NYA workers also constructed tee boxes, a caddy house, drinking fountains, and “three stone bridges, built to span both the old water works channel and river.”¹⁰⁶

NEW INFRASTRUCTURE: ROCK RETAINING WALLS, TULETA DRIVE, PICNIC AMENITIES, AND LOW-WATER CROSSING, CIRCA 1935-1940

Several infrastructure projects occurred in Brackenridge Park as part of the WPA and NYA programs of the New Deal. Perhaps the most important ecological and character-defining change was the construction of rock retaining walls along the San Antonio River, beginning south of the historic softball field and extending to Tuleta Drive. The park was now about thirty-five years old, and the riparian corridor was already beginning to experience erosion, impacting the trees that lined the river and the water quality. The rock walls fit the historic rustic, whimsical, and handcrafted aesthetic of the park and provided erosion control. In addition, “rock-curbed parking areas were constructed to protect tree roots and unsightly

¹⁰⁵ Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 56.

¹⁰⁶ Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 20.



FIGURE 11-40. Undated photo of the Low-Water Crossing at Avenue A in the southern area of the park. Source: Witte Museum Collection

ball moss was removed.”¹⁰⁷ These limestone walls and rock curbs added another regional vernacular layer to the park’s physical appearance.

A picnic area, located south of Joske Pavilion and extending to Tuleta Drive, was also created. Nineteen picnic units were constructed, including “concrete and stone tables, benches, and barbecue pits—built by WPA workers.”¹⁰⁸ Each picnic table is inset with a glazed tile number, and some include bronze plaques.

The city forester, Stewart King, who became a noted landscape architect, supervised a project to build Tuleta Drive, from Broadway to the recreation area at Brackenridge.¹⁰⁹ This project complemented the newly constructed Witte Museum, and it served to create a strong interior vehicular connection between the museum and the rest of the park. A 1921 map shows a similar interior road extending from Broadway through the park that would have been lost with the construction of the Witte.

Perhaps because of the popularity of the original 1917 low-water crossing, a second low-water crossing was constructed in 1939 (**figure 11-40**). “Avenue A runs south from Mulberry Avenue between the golf course and the river’s east bank. It originally branched east through the golf course, and it also connected to River Road by way of a low water crossing.”¹¹⁰ The structure is closed today, but it remains in use by pedestrians and fishermen.

107 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 65.

108 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 13.

109 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 65.

110 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 21.

SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY

In 1937, the same year that the reptile exhibit and Pioneer Hall were constructed, the San Antonio River Authority was created to provide a comprehensive management organization for the entire San Antonio River and its watershed. Only by taking a holistic view of the river could management agencies continue to address repeated flooding and protect life and property along and adjacent to the river.¹¹¹ SARA’s “jurisdiction covers 3,659 square miles—all of Bexar, Wilson, Karnes and Goliad Counties.”¹¹²

In 1946, another severe flood hit downtown San Antonio. After that flood, the various entities and businesses who had an interest in the river formed a coalition to address the continued flooding and damages. Flooding hurt tourism when businesses were closed during cleanup, repair, and rebuilding. Flooding cost money. And flooding caused loss of life, with the death of six San Antonio residents in the 1946 flood. It was increasingly clear that further steps would have to be taken to deal with repeated flooding. The construction of the Olmos Dam had helped, but even an engineered plan of that scale was not enough. Larger and more comprehensive interventions were needed.

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE MODERN ERA

In the 1950s, the country would be impacted by the forces of the civil rights movement, and, in particular, integration of public spaces would occur widely. The federal urban renewal movement would create highway infrastructure projects that would later come to be seen as detrimental due to their negative impact on traditionally African American communities. Often, public spaces were also affected by these projects.

As these changes swept the nation, and after three generations of park development that emphasized programming and the addition of park amenities, the importance of open space with no programming or prescribed uses gained wider acceptance within urban park planning.¹¹³ In addition, movements increased toward park preservation and improving the ecological sustainability of parks. These trends would all play out in Brackenridge Park.

111 “The People’s Waterway,” San Antonio River Improvements Project, San Antonio River Authority, accessed June 8, 2019, sanantonioriver.org/river_history/history.php.

112 “About San Antonio River Authority.”

113 Cranz, *Politics of Park Design*, 137.

CHAPTER 12. BRACKENRIDGE PARK ENTERS THE MODERN ERA, 1950–PRESENT

As the modern era began, the foundations of Brackenridge Park were in place. An extensive network of pathways and bridle paths existed within and around the perimeter of the wilderness grove. The presence of exotic animals, introduced at Brackenridge Park during its earliest years, had expanded, finding a dedicated home in the zoo located on park grounds. Playgrounds and ball fields were implemented throughout the park, and performance space was provided at the Sunken Garden Theater and Tuesday Morning Musical Club. The Japanese Tea Garden was an iconic attraction. Portions of the river were still being used for swimming and recreation. The Witte was firmly established, with its extensive collection of Texas ephemera and paintings, and the golf course was the home of the Texas Open. The regional vernacular feeling was rooted and expressed through the collection of rock-house buildings, faux bois, attractions set into former quarries, Works Progress Administration retaining walls, and other features. With these in place, priorities began to shift.

When World War II ended in 1945, American soldiers returned to a country and a world that were vastly different than they had been just four years earlier. The Great Depression had ended, and there was new energy in the United States. The economy boomed, and economic and social possibilities seemed endless.

Returning soldiers from minority communities came home with a more urgent desire for equality—financial, social, and political—than did their nonminority counterparts. Social unrest related to inequality bubbled up across the nation in the 1950s and began to take effect in earnest in San Antonio in the 1960s. As a result of the unrest, new policies were introduced in San Antonio. City policies became more deliberately inclusive of black Americans and of Mexican Americans who had both been discriminated against in the public realm.

The urban renewal movement also took shape, bolstered by federal funding that prioritized new highways and new suburbs and the demolition of older buildings and neighborhoods. This movement impacted Brackenridge Park in that a highway expansion project dovetailed with the preservation movement. Awareness of ecological resources also increased after the

1950s, and in Brackenridge Park, the river's primacy and poor health became more apparent. The growing interest in historic preservation and the rise in environmentalism enshrouded the pressing need for updated and new infrastructure within the park's boundaries. As projects began, the park's prehistoric and historic archaeological layers, along with the site's regional vernacular features, took on new meaning. In recent years, protection of archaeological, cultural, and ecological resources has become a pressing issue.

NEW FEATURES AND IMPROVEMENTS AT BRACKENRIDGE PARK

The 1950s through the present have brought little in the way of grand gestures such as those that had been completed prior to 1950. Instead, most improvements have been incremental and revolved around maintenance and rehabilitation. Two exceptions are the 1960s fight over the McAllister Freeway (US 281) and the San Antonio Tunnel Inlet on the southern end of the park, completed in 1997.

Between these two seminal events in park history, various improvements were made that added to park offerings. In 1950, the Tuesday Morning Musical Club building, designed by Atlee B. and Robert M. Ayers, and the Lions Field softball field were completed. The musical club itself, "established in 1901..., was reportedly the first music club for women in Texas."¹ The next year, in 1951, the Sheriff's Mounted Posse Building was constructed west of the polo field. The sheriffs used the building for a decade before moving southeast of downtown San Antonio in order to take advantage of a larger stable and more space for training.

The polo field was used seasonally, which allowed for the use of the land during the off-season. Frank Machock, a private concessionaire and San Antonio golf pro, "cleared and sodded the field and built a snack shop, putting green and miniature golf course."² Machock worked in San Antonio, Austin, and Houston during his lifetime. He was well-known within the golfing community statewide. The driving range was operated independently until 1988, when the city of San Antonio began management of the range.³ In the late 1980s, polo stopped being played at the park, which opened the way for a permanent change in use and management. This land was the last bequest for the park by George Brackenridge and now creates additional revenue for the golf association.



FIGURE 12-1. The Brackenridge Park Eagle, Dec. 01, 1959. Source: *San Antonio Express-News*, photo 7638970

1 Maria Watson Pfeiffer and Steven A. Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," National Register of Historic Places, Texas Historical Commission, San Antonio, TX, June 15, 2011, 69.

2 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 69.

3 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 69.

In 1957, the track of the Brackenridge Eagle miniature train, which was later renamed the San Antonio Zoo Eagle Miniature, was expanded to a length of 3.2 miles (**figure 12-1**). The train carries passengers from the Witte Museum to the zoo, crossing the river in two locations. The Eagle can drop off and load passengers at several depots along its route, and it acts as

an important connection between the cultural institutions and the park. The zoo retains all ticket proceeds from the operation of the Eagle, however.

In 1968, the golf club was renovated by Johnson and Dempsey architects. The Mahncke bust, which had been located in Brackenridge Park for decades, was moved to Mahncke Park, land that George Brackenridge had donated to honor the life of Ludwig Mahncke.

In the spring of 1968 and continuing through early fall, San Antonio hosted a world's fair event called HemisFair. One of the features of the fair was a gondola sky tram, which went from the fair site, just northwest of downtown, north to Brackenridge Park (**figure 12-2**). Rising maintenance and operational costs and increased concerns about safety forced the city to remove the ride in 1999. Aerial circulation features are not common in parks, so this one was especially popular with the visiting public during the time of its operation.

In 1977, the Catalpa-Pershing drainage project was implemented along the western boundary of Brackenridge Park. It runs along Avenue B near Broadway. The open, concrete-lined ditch was constructed “to collect storm water runoff from the area northeast of Brackenridge Park including the Mahncke Park neighborhood and Fort Sam Houston.”⁴ Water carried in the Catalpa-Pershing “continues to flow down the channel until it empties into the San Antonio River near US 281. The length of the open

channel is approximately 5,300 ft.”⁵ The drainage ditch, its form dated, although this style of channelization remains popular to this day. The ditch represents one part of the continuum of the city's ongoing efforts to manage floodwater.

Overall, there have been mostly incremental changes in the park during the past fifty years, except in the areas in which the zoo and the Witte Museum are located. Zoos by their very nature require continuous change as best practices related to the keeping of animals are instituted and research provides data that encourages changes in habitat structure and maintenance. At the Witte Museum, more intentional connection between the building entry and Broadway, strategic management and development of its collections, and successful fund-raising have been instrumental to growth. On the east side of the park, a three-story,



FIGURE 12–2. This image shows overhead portions of the HemisFair skyride in place, while construction continued on the infrastructure at the ground level. Source: Brackenridge Park Conservancy.

4 Nesta J. Anderson, Maria Pfeiffer, and Brandy Harris, *Archeological Monitoring of the Catalpa-Pershing Channel Improvements Bexar County, Texas, Texas Antiquities Permit No. 5739* (San Antonio: Atkins, 2012).

5 Anderson, Pfeiffer, and Harris, *Archeological Monitoring*.

350-car parking garage, designed by Lake Flato, was completed in 2009. It serves visitors to the Witte Museum and to other areas of the park at no cost. A notable feature of the garage is the eight-thousand-square-foot wire and galvanized-metal trellis, or “living screen,” that surrounds it and gestures to environmentally responsible practices.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMPLEXITY IN SAN ANTONIO IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA

The story of integration in San Antonio is fraught with complex views about the role of ethnic groups in the city. When African Americans and black Americans fought for full voting rights and economic equality through fair labor laws, places such as Selma, Alabama; Birmingham, Alabama; and Jackson, Mississippi, experienced major convulsions of violence and civic disruption. For the most part, San Antonio avoided the more violent aspects of the civil rights era. Yet, like every other southern community in the early 1950s, San Antonio followed the color line.⁶

There was no citywide segregation ordinance in San Antonio. But throughout the city, “custom and the Police Department enforced a racial separation that proved as binding. Blacks and whites patronized their respective municipal parks and playgrounds, rest rooms, drinking fountains, hotels, restaurants, and schools.”⁷ Because the city experienced a culture of segregation, which “was woven into the fabric of San Antonio life,” without impassioned violence related to white supremacy movements and organizations, “from the point of view of the majority of whites, segregation was simply a style of interaction that had been accepted from the past without thought and had continued into the present without protest.”⁸

In 1960, San Antonio was the third-largest city in Texas, with a population of 588,000. Only 44,605 black and African American people lived in the city—12,000 more than in 1950—constituting just 7 percent of the population. But approximately 40 percent of the population was comprised of Mexican Americans.⁹ Because

the black community was quite small..., whites did not perceive blacks as having the numerical base, and thus the power, to mount an effective challenge to their political, economic, social, or racial status.... A significant Mexican American population also obscured the dividing line of color. The Mexican Americans were considered nonwhite and were subjected to social and economic discrimination. Yet they enjoyed civil rights, had access to public accommodations, and were recognized as a legitimate constituency by the local political structure.

INTEGRATION POLICIES AND ETHNOGRAPHIC USES AT BRACKENRIDGE PARK

Use of the park for public celebrations by African Americans predates the civil rights era. But it demonstrates the adherence to separate spaces, as crossing this boundary was granted only when special consideration was requested. In May 1912, Commissioner Ray Lambert went before the city council and “outlined to the council his idea with regard to laying out

6 Robert A. Goldberg, “Racial Change on the Southern Periphery: The Case of San Antonio, Texas, 1960-1965,” *The Journal of Southern History* 49, no. 3 (1983): 351, [jstor.org/stable/2208100](https://www.jstor.org/stable/2208100).

7 Goldberg, “Racial Change on the Southern Periphery,” 351.

8 Goldberg, “Racial Change on the Southern Periphery,” 351.

9 Goldberg, “Racial Change on the Southern Periphery,” 350.

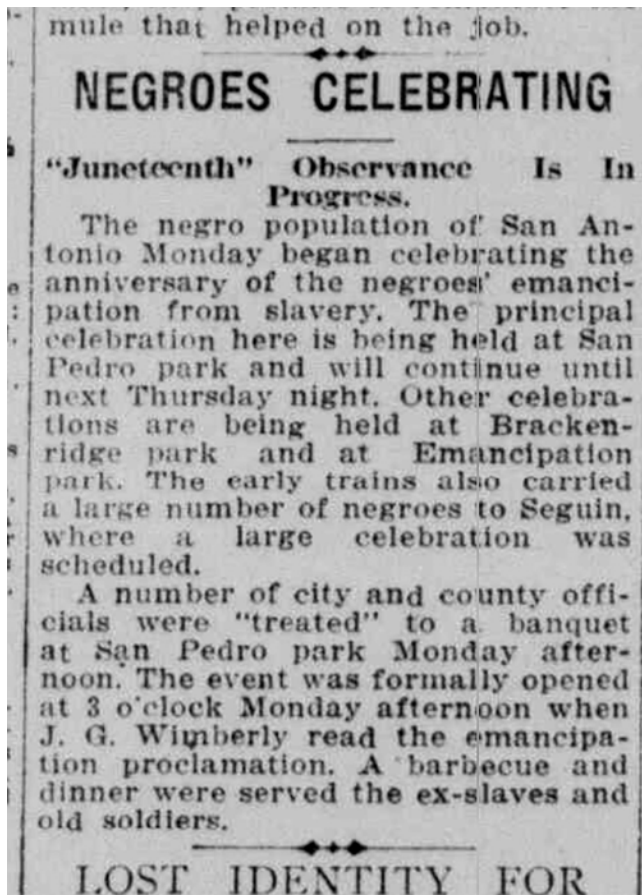


FIGURE 12-3. Juneteenth celebrations occurred in several places in San Antonio and at Seguin. While the primary gathering occurred at San Pedro Park, a group also gathered at Brackenridge Park. Source: *San Antonio Light*, Dec. 3, 1916. Source: *San Antonio Light*.

a park for negroes on that part of Brackenridge Park beginning at Josephine street, on the east side of the river, and extending several hundred feet north.”¹⁰ The end of the article states: “A petition from negroes to be allowed to use Brackenridge Park for the Emancipation Day [Juneteenth] celebration will probably be granted, provided the celebration is confined to this new park.”¹¹ In 1916, a *San Antonio Light* article notes that the principal celebration of Juneteenth in the city was happening at San Pedro [Springs] Park but that other celebrations occurred at “Brackenridge park and at Emancipation park” (figure 12-3). The article goes on to state that trains carried a large number of celebrants to Seguin, where a large celebration was planned.¹²

The Brackenridge Park Golf Course did historically allow Mexican Americans to use the course. As early as 1938, the Pan American Golf Association (PAGA) had formed; this group of Mexican American golf enthusiasts were regular players at the golf course.¹³ Although Mexican Americans were allowed to play on the course, they “weren’t invited to play in city-sponsored amateur events and the group was required to pre-pay rental fees.”¹⁴ But noted local landscape architect and architect and historian Everett Fly related that the course did not allow African American players; instead black and African American people were only allowed to be caddies. As early as 1944, African American golf caddies

at Brackenridge petitioned for the right to play golf on the public course where they already worked. It would take a decade before changes were made.

Around 1950, a distinct Mexican American tradition emerged in Brackenridge Park—one that persists today. Families began camping in the park along the banks of the San Antonio River over Easter weekend. They cook out and participate in a variety of games, such as piñatas, sack races, egg hunts, and cascarones—dyed and hollowed-out eggshells that have been dried and stuffed with confetti to later be cracked open over someone’s head. For many, the weekend concludes with a community prayer.¹⁵

The event actually originated in the 1930s, likely during or after World War II. From related news clippings, it is not clear whether the tradition was initially a primarily Mexican American event. Local historian Maria Pfeiffer has noted that St. John Lutheran church helped sponsor

10 “Engineers Want More Pay,” *San Antonio Light*, May 23, 1912.

11 “Engineers Want More Pay.”

12 “Negroes Celebrating,” *San Antonio Light*, June 19, 1916.

13 Eric Moreno and Chris Warren, “Brackenridge Park Golf Course Turns 100,” *San Antonio Magazine*, September 2016, accessed November 22, 2019, sanantoniomag.com/September-2016/Brackenridge-Park-Golf-Course-Turns-100/.

14 Moreno and Warren, “Brackenridge Park Golf Course Turns 100.”

15 Emilie Eaton, “San Antonio Family Has Celebrated Easter at Brackenridge for 66 Years,” *San Antonio Express-News*, April 21, 2019, accessed November 22, 2019, expressnews.com/news/local/article/San-Antonio-family-has-celebrated-Easter-at-13784182.php.

the Easter sunrise service¹⁶ that took place in the Sunken Garden Theater. According to a 1950 *San Antonio Express* article, the event had become a picnic and tent tradition, and that year, “75,000 to 100,000 San Antonians and out-of-town visitors” spend the day at the park, where “Many families pitched tents at their picnic site. All established picnic units in the park were occupied or being held for later use by 7 a. m. Sunday.”¹⁷ By the 1950s, a substantial Easter tradition continued in the park and was embraced by the Mexican American community. This is evidenced by published photographs and recollections belonging to San Antonio’s Mexican American community.

The event has become so steeped in the park’s identity and history that many families return generation after generation to the very same spot to camp each year (figure 12-4). This tradition informs the park’s identity, while it is also a reflection of San Antonio’s larger identity. Similar traditions exist throughout South Texas, but there are no known similar traditions in other cities with significant Mexican American populations, making it a distinctly San Antonio Tejano tradition. It is not clear why the Mexican American community took hold of this event in the 1950s, but the timing coincides with social changes that were underway in San Antonio related to equality in public spaces.

“This annual spring outing is reminiscent of the Romerías, the spring outings in Spain where the townspeople hike to a spot in the countryside to honor a saint or visit a hermitage with prayer and food.”¹⁸ Hand in hand with this tradition is the presence of the cascarones, which are found in other Mexican American communities and throughout Mexico. Both the hike to the countryside around Easter that has taken root in South Texas and the cascarones likely came during Spanish missionary and colonial settlement of the area. While the camping tradition has outgrown Brackenridge and expanded into other parks, it seems to have first taken hold at Brackenridge.

Around the time that the Easter tradition became widely popular with the Mexican American community, “prodded by a lawsuit by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the City Council passed an ordinance desegregating municipal parks, golf courses, and tennis courts.”¹⁹ But the exclusion of African Americans from public swimming pools took a more insidious turn when the threat of polio was used throughout the South



FIGURE 12-4. Photo of a member of the Cerna family standing near a handmade sign announcing fifty-six years of celebrating Easter at Brackenridge Park. Source: Ricardo Romo

16 Maria Pfeiffer, historian. “Brackenridge Park Cultural Landscape Report.” Email correspondence, November 19, 2018.

17 “Park and Zoo Draw Huge Crowd,” *San Antonio Express*, April 10, 1950, accessed November 12, 2019, newspaperarchives.com.

18 Norma Cantú, “Crack the Cascarón: A Texan Mexican Easter Tradition Continues,” *Folklife Magazine*, Smithsonian Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage, April 20, 2019. Accessed May 30, 2019. folklife.si.edu/magazine/cascarones-easter-tradition-continues.

19 Goldberg, “Racial Change on the Southern Periphery,” 357.

as the purported excuse to close the pools. This effectively prevented full integration of facilities in many locations. Pools, buses, and railroad stations, as well as “all activities in municipal buildings” in San Antonio, would formally be integrated two years later, in 1955.²⁰

It would be eight more years before private businesses used by the public, such as stores and hotels, would also comply with desegregation policies, with “the city’s financial, governmental, and social establishments” signing “a public announcement published in all San Antonio newspapers” in June 1963. The announcement read:

Desegregation of publicly-used facilities is no longer a matter for debate. It must become a universal and immediate reality if San Antonio is to avoid the regrettable events of other cities across the face of the United States of America.²¹

The year that this formal announcement and its accompanying ordinance passed, the Brackenridge Park Golf Course, by law, opened city-sponsored golf events to its Mexican American community, “and in ‘63 PGA member Tony Holguin won the Texas Open at Brackenridge.”²² The same year, the course would begin to legally include African American golfers.

THE RISE OF PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION IN BRACKENRIDGE PARK

FIGHT OVER US 281 AND INCREASED PRESERVATION ACTIVITY

While the preservation movement in San Antonio had a long history, starting with the Alamo in 1879, it has been both galvanized and expanded in the modern era. Some have focused on the preservation of cultural resources, while others have focused on conserving ecological resources.

The end of the 1950s began with a pivotal fight over park property. As the population of San Antonio grew, more-efficient freeways and more driving lanes were part of the strategy to provide faster and safer routes to the suburban enclaves located north of downtown. The Texas Highway Department proposed the expansion of US 281, effectively carving off a portion of Brackenridge Park that included parts of the old quarry sites and adjoining built resources.

The fight over the taking of park property for highway purposes was spearheaded by the San Antonio Conservation Society (SACS). Founded in the 1920s by a group of city boosters during a period of rapid expansion in the city and upon the realization of the importance of the many historical buildings and landscapes in San Antonio, the organization was intended to protect the resources that were the key to the growing tourism industry in San Antonio. Originally founded by artist Emily Edwards and civic activist Rena Maverick Green, SACS “became the first [preservation organization] in America to seek preservation of both the historic built environment and the natural environment.”²³ The organization led opposition efforts to the freeway expansion, filing suit in 1967 to block the project. This resulted in a

20 Goldberg, “Racial Change on the Southern Periphery,” 357.

21 Goldberg, “Racial Change on the Southern Periphery,” 358.

22 Moreno and Warren, “Brackenridge Park Golf Course Turns 100.”

23 Lewis F. Fisher, *Saving San Antonio: The Preservation of a Heritage*, 2nd ed. (San Antonio: Maverick Books, 2016), 2.

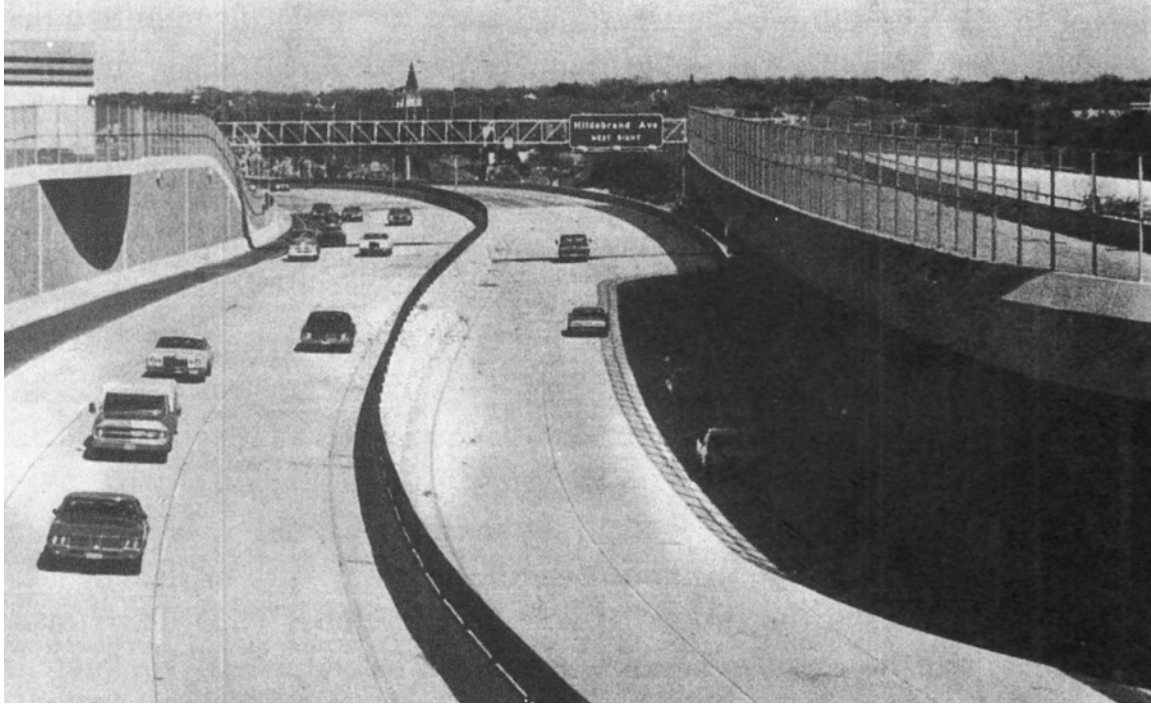
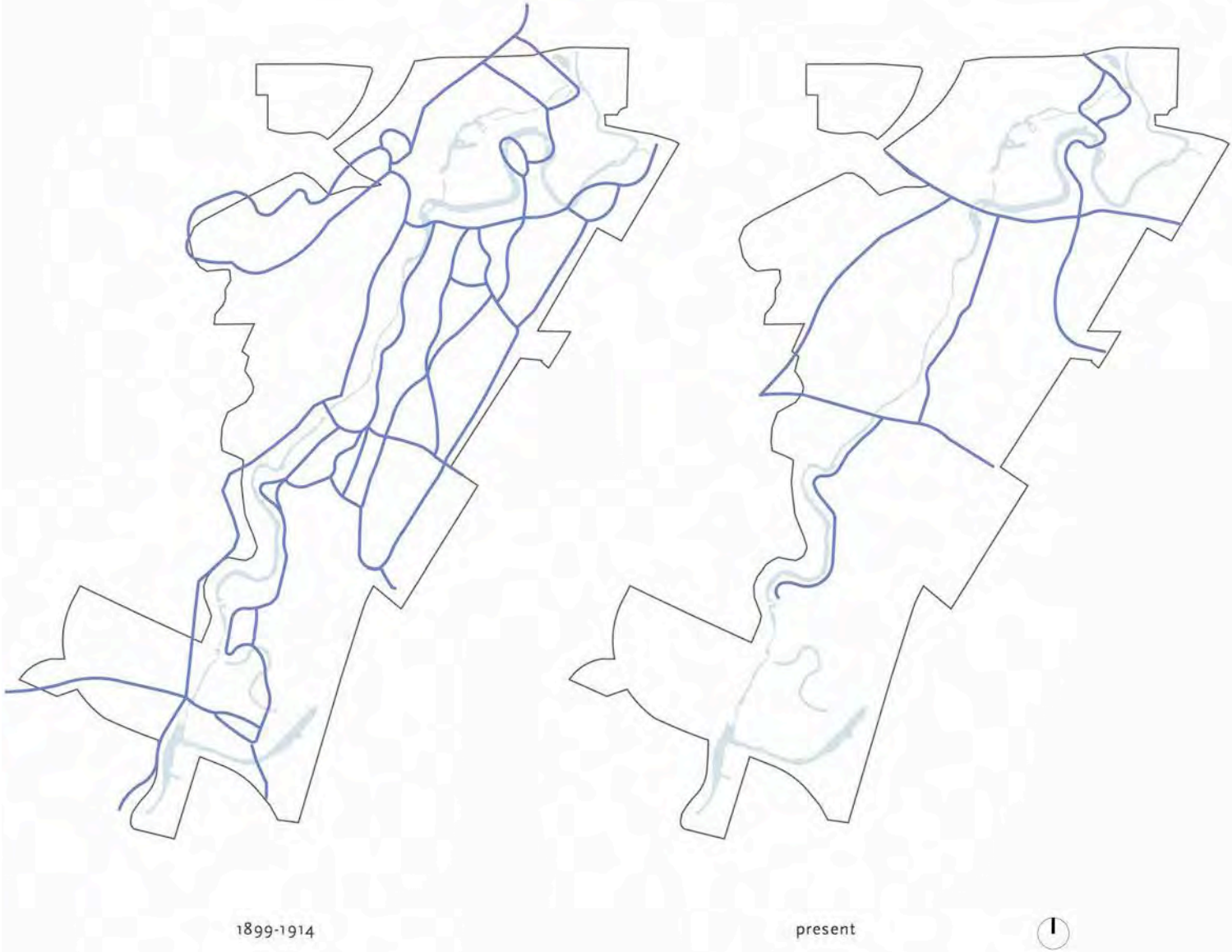


FIGURE 12-5. A view of McAllister Freeway. The completed new lanes are visible at the left. The elevated and cantilevered Alpine Drive, preserved as part of the McAllister Freeway fight, is visible at the right. Alpine Drive overlooks the Japanese Tea Garden. Source: Lewis F. Fisher

ten-year battle to reroute the planned expansion. The battle was ultimately lost with the exception of minor modifications. In the end, Alpine Drive was preserved in place by carving out an area underneath it for the new lanes of US 281. The effect was to maintain the drive as a cantilevered road with the freeway passing just below (**figure 12-5**). It is also worth noting that Brackenridge Park's original and iconic system of vehicular drives, implemented between 1899 and 1914 were largely diminished over time, with some converted to pedestrian paths (**figure 12-6**).

The decade of the 1960s was also a time when the National Park Service (NPS) began a nationwide effort to document sites and nominate them to the National Register. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 provided the legislation that created the National Register. At Brackenridge Park, the first element to be nominated to the National Register was the Alamo Portland and Roman Cement Works. The nomination was completed and accepted in 1976. This nomination included one acre and five contributing structures. The structures were the kiln chimney and four workers' cottages in the immediate vicinity of the kiln.

During the past fifty years, preservation efforts, though piecemeal, have occurred in Brackenridge Park, comprised of a series of renovations, rehabilitations, and simple repairs. The limestone rock that San Antonio is famous for is also somewhat porous, depending from which quarry the stone was extracted and the depth from which the stone was sourced. This fact necessitates the continuous monitoring of buildings, walls, and other limestone structures to ensure that they are safe. In 1981, the lower pump house, used by the Borglum Studio during the first half of the twentieth century, was repaired. Shortly thereafter, Koehler Pavilion was rehabilitated and updated to serve the changing needs of visitors. In addition



DRIVE COMPARISON

FIGURE 12-6. A comparison of Brackenridge Park's vehicular drives, showing the elaborate circuitous system in 1914 and its diminished state in the present. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

to the rehabilitation, “an adjoining concrete patio was constructed overlooking the river.”²⁴ The architectural firm of Carragonne and Reyna supervised the work on the pavilion and overlook. The Sunken Garden Theater was renovated in 1984 at a cost of \$320,000. The theater’s seating was replaced, and ancillary structures were renovated or built.²⁵ The San Antonio Zoo at Brackenridge was further expanded in 1987. Its lease on forty-six acres allows it to expand, rehabilitate, and revise exhibits following formal requests for improvement submitted to and approved by the city. During the 1990s, the Upper Labor Dam was “partially excavated and documented and then covered for protection” of the resource.²⁶

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

As a result of the McAllister Freeway fight, awareness was heightened of the park as an important archaeological resource, and the need to document such resources took on a new urgency. In 1979, Susanna R. Katz and Anne A. Fox authored the “Archaeological and Historical Assessment of Brackenridge Park, City of San Antonio, Texas.” The survey work detailed in the report was completed in 1976 in preparation for a 1979 master plan for Brackenridge Park. The report employed a comprehensive view of the park’s resources and especially the potential that the land within the park had to provide additional information related to the prehistory, protohistory, and early history of San Antonio. This early survey identified “15 prehistoric and 27 historic sites and features within the boundaries of Brackenridge Park,”²⁷ and “reflect[ed] a variety of activities which have been carried out over a period of several thousand years.”²⁸

That same year, Fox authored a report on archaeological, architectural, and historical sites along the San Antonio River from Olmos Dam to South Alamo Street. This report also recorded important sites on San Pedro Creek from San Pedro Park to Guadalupe Street, and it provides a more comprehensive record of areas along both major water bodies within San Antonio. San Pedro Creek and the San Antonio River have provided important resources for the growth and prosperity of the city and region. Since Fox’s report, much more archaeological work has been conducted in Brackenridge Park. Most of it has been driven by development projects slated for the park rather than by research.

In 2011, remnants of the Acequia Madre de Valero and its associated dam were discovered near the Witte Museum. This resulted in an extensive survey and corresponding tests around the locations of the dams and acequias. A year later, during the construction of an ultraviolet water filtration system in the San Antonio Zoo, a “20-foot-long covered stone sluiceway” was unearthed and determined to be part of the original acequia system—namely, the Upper Labor Acequia, constructed beginning in 1760. “Buried under 5 feet of fill with its ends hidden by a decorative wall, heavy brush and mud,” an article reported, “the culvert looks like it was built for carrying excess water to the San Antonio River.”²⁹

24 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 13.

25 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 17.

26 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 10.

27 Susanna R. Katz and Anne A. Fox, *Archaeological and Historical Assessment of Brackenridge Park, City of San Antonio, Texas. Archaeological Survey Report, No. 33* (San Antonio: Center for Archaeological Research/The University of Texas at San Antonio, 1979), 22.

28 Katz and Fox, *Archaeological and Historical Assessment*, 22.

29 Colin McDonald, “Piece of History Is Found near Zoo,” *My San Antonio*, November 22, 2012, accessed October 2, 2019, mysanantonio.com/news/environment/article/Piece-of-history-is-found-near-zoo-4060630.php.

New opportunities for preservation emerged as part of the identification and documentation of the resources. In 2013, Brackenridge Park was named a Texas State Antiquities Landmark, the highest designation within the state of Texas.³⁰ Changes within the Texas Historical Commission created the opportunity for Brackenridge Park to seek an elevated status. The Texas Historical Commission expanded the review standards to include standing structures as part of their overall assessment of the significance of a cultural landscape. This change allowed Brackenridge Park to include the historic bridges, the faux bois art of Dionicio Rodriguez, the remaining buildings of the Alamo Cement plant, and the buildings associated with the San Antonio Water Works, the Brackenridge Park Golf Course, the Witte Museum, Pioneer’s Hall, and the San Antonio Zoo.

A NEW GENERATION OF FLOOD MANAGEMENT

The state of Texas has a history of devastating floods followed by severe droughts. The role that water management has played in San Antonio’s development has been markedly evident from the inception of the acequia system in 1719. This system, while not evident today, continues to exist beneath the surface, and its original purposes remain relevant today (**figure 12-7**). The entire agricultural harvest for a year can be lost if drought lingers during the growing season. George Brackenridge learned this lesson during the drought of 1858, when he lost the majority of his financial assets due to agricultural losses from a dry-land farming venture. Likewise, nearly sixty years later,

in 1917, the voters of Texas, recognizing the necessity of developing and conserving the State’s water resources and inspired by devastating floods of 1913 and 1914, passed a Constitutional amendment allowing the Legislature to create special purpose political subdivisions of the State to serve regional areas, generally coincidental with river basins and to be generally known as river authorities.³¹

A string of drought years between 1954 and 1956 created yet more urgency around this issue, which brought about the formation of the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). Founded in 1957, the TWDB looks at water from a statewide perspective, coordinating between the various regional agencies to ensure an adequate and clean water supply for the state’s growing economy. Roughly fifty years after the creation of the TWDB, the regional drought in 2011 created a new urgency within the TWDB. Many areas have recovered, albeit slowly, but increasing demand and population growth are putting pressure on state water supplies.³²

30 Eileen Pace, “Brackenridge Park Named State Antiquities Landmark,” Texas Public Radio, October 24, 2013, accessed November 20, 2019, tpr.org/post/brackenridge-park-named-state-antiquities-landmark.

31 “About San Antonio River Authority,” San Antonio River Authority, accessed June 6, 2019, sara-tx.org/about.

32 “What the Texas Water Development Board Means to You,” State Impact Texas, NPR, accessed November 20, 2019, stateimpact.npr.org/texas/tag/texas-water-development-board/.

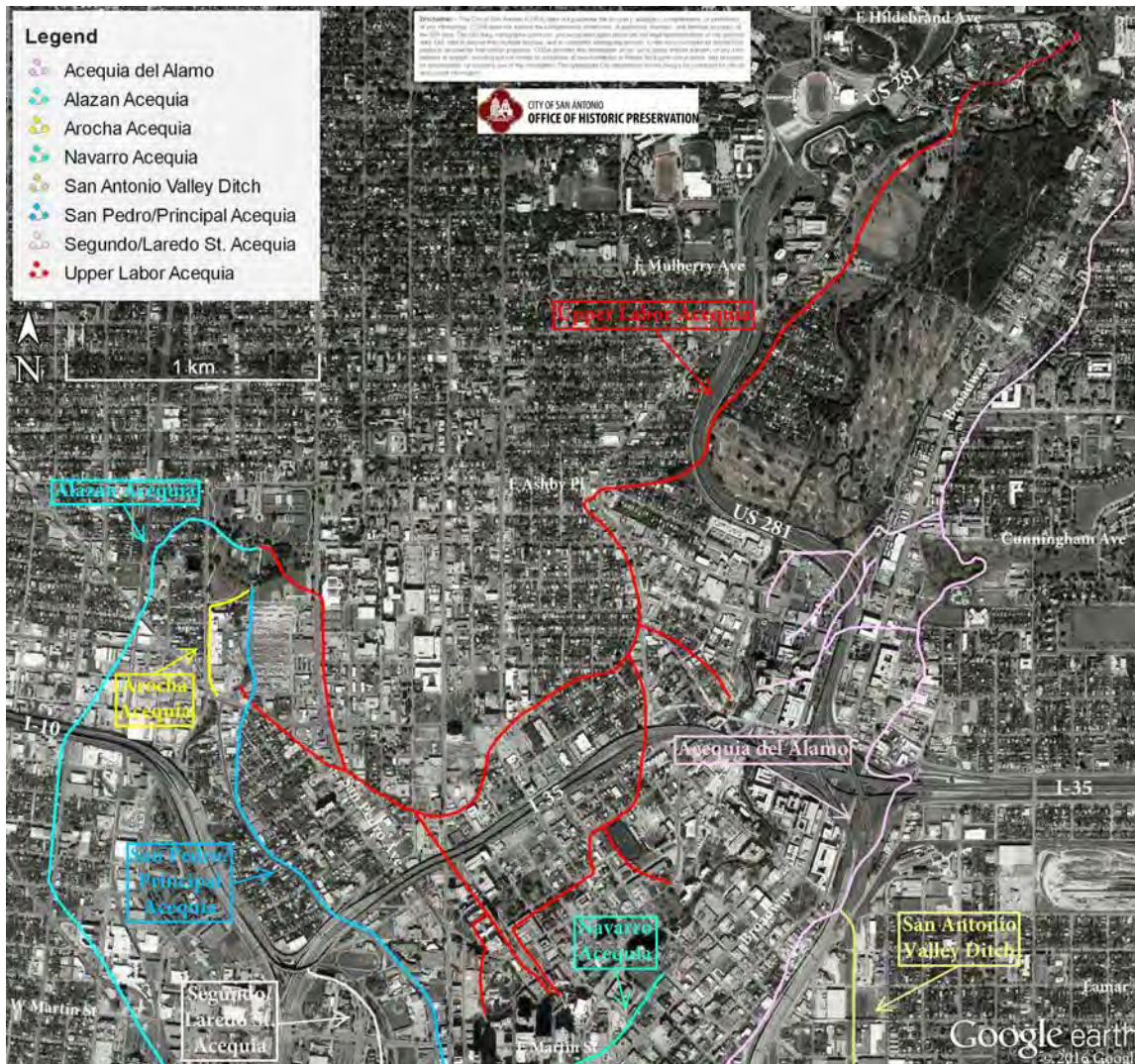


FIGURE 12–7. Overlay map showing San Antonio’s historic acequia system on the grid of the city today. Brackenridge Park is pictured in the upper right corner. Source: “San Antonio Missions: Nomination for Inscription on the World Heritage List”

A more recent seminal event in the management of water in Texas was the creation of the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA), established by the Texas legislature in 1993. A series of lawsuits questioning the legitimacy of the EAA, however, delayed its operational onset until 1996. In concert with groundwater conservation districts (GCDs), the EAA has the “power of eminent domain, the power to issue permits for drilling of water wells anywhere in the Edwards Aquifer jurisdiction, and the power to regulate the amount of water pumped.”³³

Within San Antonio, the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) responded to the continued dangers associated with flooding along the San Antonio River by initiating, in partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers, the first of two tunnels. The first, the San Pedro Creek Tunnel, was completed in 1991. It carries “floodwaters 150 feet beneath downtown San Antonio and releases it downstream.”³⁴

33 Charles R. Porter Jr., *Spanish Water, Anglo Water: Early Development in San Antonio* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 131-32.

34 “The People’s Waterway,” San Antonio River Improvements Project, San Antonio River Authority, accessed June 8, 2019, sanantonioriver.org/river_history/history.php.



FIGURE 12-8. A panoramic view of Tunnel Inlet Park, showing the open character of the southern-most point of Brackenridge Park. This portion of the park does not currently feel integrated with the rest of the park, but it demonstrates the varied character of the riparian corridor. Source: Suzanne Turner Associates

In 1993, construction began on the second tunnel. The effort was intended to

bifurcate the river in the name of flood prevention. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in a collaboration with the San Antonio River Authority, built a tunnel (twenty-four feet in diameter) one hundred feet below the heart of the city center. The tunnel, like the Great Bend cutoff channel from decades earlier, allows water to be diverted from the most critical investments at times of risk without affecting the appearance of the river the rest of the time. In 2002, the tunnel was put to the test and proved successful in diverting water from a massive storm that would have otherwise inundated downtown.³⁵

In 1997, the San Antonio River Tunnel Inlet was completed. The entrance to the tunnel begins in Brackenridge Park at its lower boundary near Josephine Street and carries water underneath the city to an outlet downstream (**figure 12-8**). The infrastructure serves a dual purpose, relieving the effects of both flooding and periods of drought.

When not actively being used as a flood bypass, the tunnel becomes an aquifer. Water is drawn in at the southern outflow and, with minimal pumping, it is pumped up into the river at the north end of the city where the tunnel begins. The flood tunnel allows the three-mile stretch of the river in the city center to function as a hydraulic loop, ensuring that there will be water in the river year-round regardless of rainfall or the condition of the aquifer. Once again, the linear flow of water was looped back on itself to support San Antonio's daily life.... The tunnel ensures that the river will reliably and perennially flow.³⁶

It is widely recognized and accepted that the completion of this second tunnel prevented what would have been widespread flooding during a flood event in 1998, the year after its completion.

35 David Malda, "Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River," in *River Cities: City Rivers*, ed. Thaisa Way (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2018), 255.

36 Malda, "Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River," 255.

Growing public understanding that the river and its systems are a regional resource and the desire to undo some of the environmental damage of the last part of the twentieth century have resulted in a range of projects. These projects aim to address flooding and drainage and to address aesthetic and ecological opportunities that the river provides.

All recent river work has not come in the form of large-scale infrastructural projects. Over the past decade, through a close collaboration among the Army Corps of Engineers, the San Antonio River Authority, the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, and numerous dedicated groups of residents, the character of the San Antonio River to the north and south of downtown has seen dramatic transformation as well. Once fortified and channelized in the name of flood prevention, the stewards of the river now consider ecological health and community access important. Native plants and trees grow along more gradual and varied slopes with a network of pedestrian and bicycle paths running above. Residents are returning to the river through this linear park.³⁷

As a result of this change in focus, amenities such as the Mission Reach and the Museum Reach provide connections to the river, with recreational opportunities for visitors and citizens.

Another serious flood event occurred in 2002. It has become increasingly obvious that in order to address the repeated flooding that has continued to impact the city, it will be necessary to embrace a holistic regional approach to water management.

A new generation of flood management emerged in this community in 2002 with creation of the Bexar Regional Watershed Management (BRWM) partnership. This partnership among Bexar County, the City of San Antonio, SARA and 20 suburban cities takes a holistic, regional approach to managing flood control, storm water and water quality. The program established uniform design, operation and maintenance standards; coordinates local, state and federal funding; and provides an opportunity to measure and evaluate the quality of services delivered to citizens of Bexar County.³⁸

In addition to changes being made in Brackenridge to address water management, portions of the park were constructed, renovated, or repaired between 2003 and 2006 with the use of city bond funds. The affected areas included picnic grounds and associated furniture and structures, the Joske Pavilion and the adjacent playground, some of the river walls, the Dionicio Rodriguez footbridge, and hiking trails. The work also provided for irrigation using recycled water, the conversion of interior roadways to pedestrian trails, the installation of public art, the renovation of the Lions Field playground, and adjustments to the park entrance at Funston Place.³⁹

37 Malda, "Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River," 255.

38 "People's Waterway."

39 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 70.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Brackenridge Park Conservancy (BPC), formed in 2008 to preserve and enhance “the park’s natural, historic and recreational resources.”⁴⁰ More recently, Brackenridge Park became the recipient of San Antonio city bond issues that have resulted in resources devoted to maintenance and improvements at the park. These improvements range from cultural components to ecological projects, including one at the Catalpa-Pershing drainage area.

In the early 1980s, sociologist Galen Cranz categorized the different eras of park design according to changes in four broad uses. These included the picturesque-inspired Pleasure Ground park, which Brackenridge Park reflected between 1899 and 1914; the City Beautiful-inspired reform park, reflected in Brackenridge between 1915 and the 1930s; the recreation facility, enacted largely because of the Works Progress Administration and which Brackenridge reflected from the mid-1930s to approximately 1949; and the open-space system, prompted by the preservation movement. In 2004, Cranz updated these categories with a fifth model of park development,⁴¹ the sustainable park, driven by a growing ecological conservation movement.

The partnership between the BPC, SARA, and the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department in commissioning this cultural landscape report speaks volumes about the city’s growing recognition that cultural and ecological resources in its parklands must be considered together. Put another way, park leadership is keenly aware that cultural preservation and ecological conservation are not two sides of one coin but instead sharing each side of the coin. This partnership resulted in the inclusion of the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center to assess the site’s ecology and participate in creating recommendations for the park’s preservation Treatment. These decisions, viewed broadly, demonstrate that the city of San Antonio and its large municipal park are steeped in what Cranz called the sustainable park, which realizes more sustainable development and practices in concert with human uses.

40 “Mission & History,” Brackenridge Park Conservancy, accessed September 25, 2019, brackenridgepark.org/about/mission-history.

41 Galen Cranz and Michael Bolan, “Defining the Sustainable Park: A Fifth Model for Urban Parks,” *Landscape Journal* 23, no. 2 (2004): 102–20, doi.org/10.3368/lj.23.2.102.

On August 18, 2019, San Antonio mayor Ron Nirenberg and a citizen’s advisory committee voted to endorse a Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. This action was approved by the city council at their meeting on October 17, 2019. “If adopted, Nirenberg floated the creation of a citizen’s advisory commission to help oversee its implementation.”⁴² Overall, the plan takes a comprehensive view of each of the issues that contribute to and that mitigate the negative consequences of global warming. The plan calls for the San Antonio region to achieve carbon neutrality by the year 2050. As the city’s chief sustainability officer, Doug Melnick spearheaded the effort.

Progress is not just measured in days, months, and years. One hundred and twenty years into Brackenridge Park’s history, it is evident that the park has adapted to ever-changing needs in the community, in city administrations, and in the environment. Brackenridge Park, as a municipal park of substantial size and cultural and ecological significance, is uniquely positioned to lead the region in reimagining what an urban cultural park with an overriding ecological foundation can mean to the community. Along with other world-renowned cultural sites in San Antonio, cultural tourism and ecotourism might be developed to new levels for those who appreciate the combination of culture and environment that the park embodies.

42 Brendan Gibbons, “October Vote Set for City’s Climate Plan,” *Rivard Report*, Institute for Nonprofit News, August 19, 2019, accessed November 4, 2019, therivardreport.com/october-vote-set-for-citys-climate-plan/###targetText=The%20plan%20will%20go%20before,Oct.%2017%2C%20Nirenberg%20said.&targetText=The%20document’s%20newest%20draft%20maintains,gases%20driving%20rapid%20global%20warming.



-  Park Property Extents
-  River
-  Vehicular Drive
-  Adjacent Parcel Lines

Vehicular drives made up much of the development on site during this period. The property boundary was limited to the east and south sides of the river.

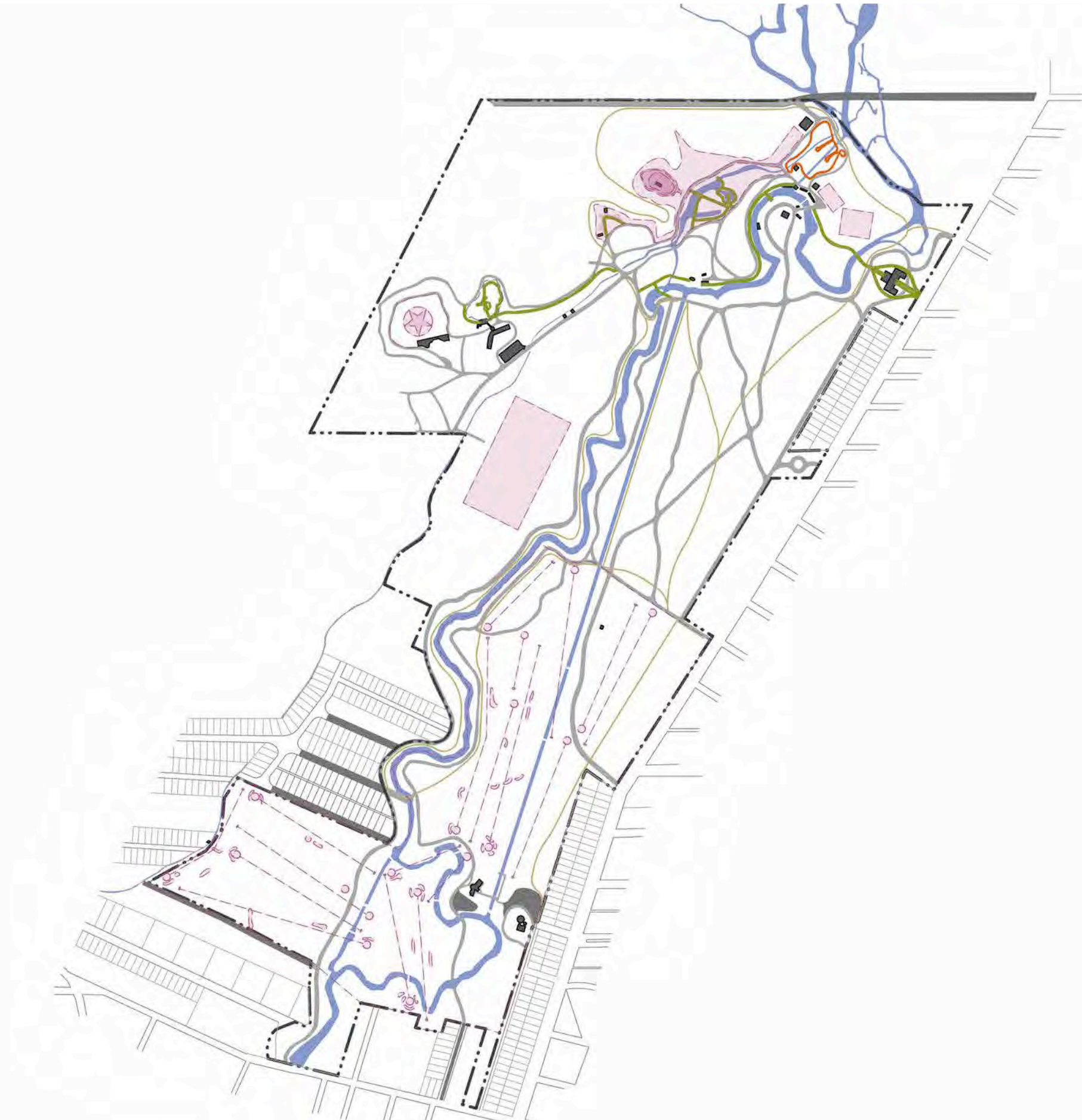
Sources: maps dated 1908, and 1921 were analyzed to produce this period description.

1899 - 1914

**BRACKENRDIGE PARK
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT**

By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 12-9. Period Plan: 1899 – 1914. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



-  North
-  Park Property Extents
-  River
-  Vehicular Drive and Parking
-  Building
-  Pedestrian Path
-  Donkey Path
-  Bridle Path
-  Programmed Space
-  Adjacent Parcel Lines

During the period of 1915-1929, the site became much more programmed with recreation and proscribed activity. The zoo, golf course, ball fields, and tennis courts were all built during this period.

Circulation grew from just vehicular drives to include pedestrian paths, donkey rides and bridle paths.

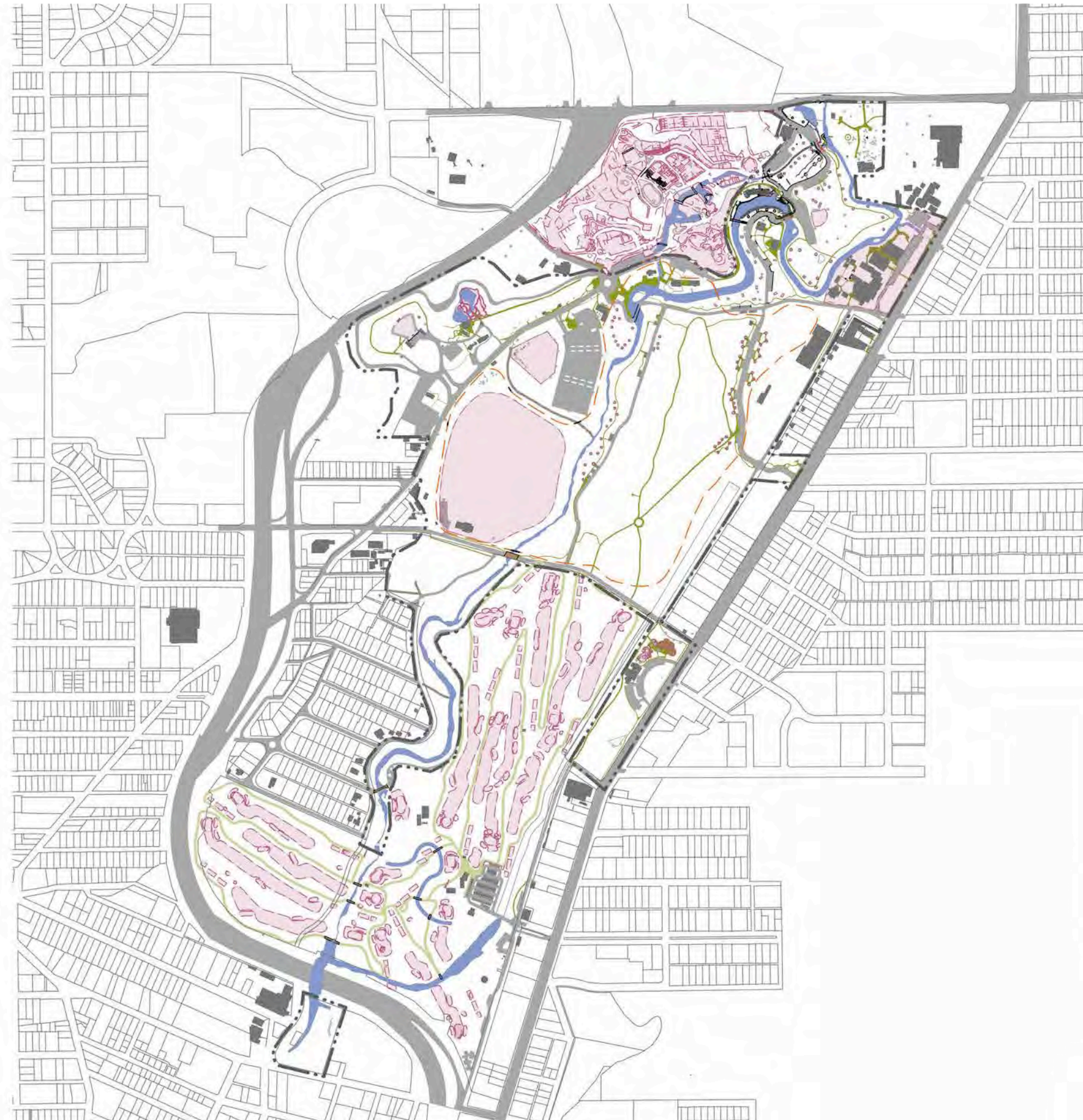
Sources: a map dated 1929 was analyzed to produce this period description.

1915 - 1929

BRACKENRDIGE PARK CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 12-10. Period Plan: 1915 – 1929. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



-  North
-  Park Property Extents
-  River
-  Vehicular Drive and Parking
-  Building
-  Pedestrian Path
-  Pedestrian Path within Golf Course
-  Programmed Space
-  Recreational Rail
-  Parcel Lines

In the present period, parking lots have expanded to accommodate more public parking, and the Zoo system and Witte Museum have both grown.

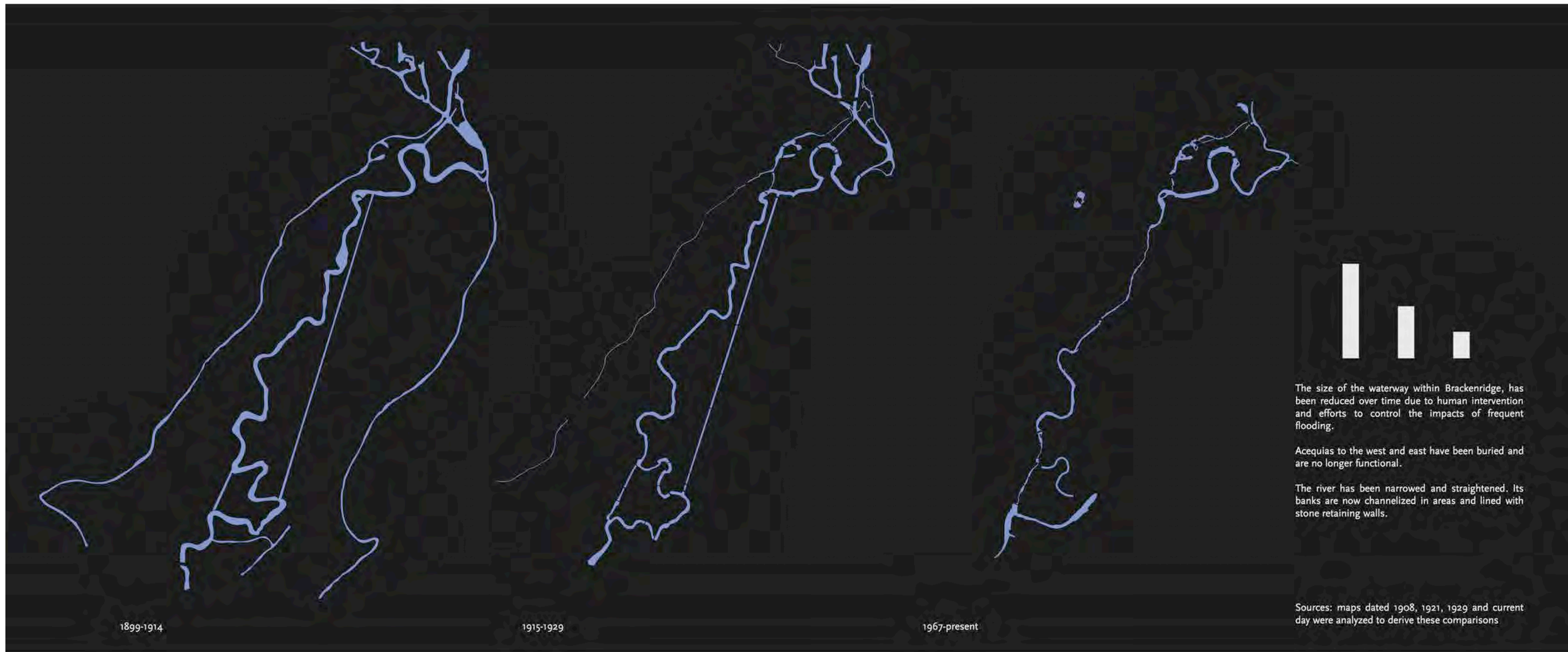
Circulation is comprised of vehicular drives, pedestrian paths and the recreational rail; the donkey and bridle paths are gone.

Sources: current day mapping was analyzed to produce this period description.

1967 - PRESENT

BRACKENRDIGE PARK
 CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
 By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 12-11. Period Plan: 1967 – present. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



HYDROLOGY - FORM

BRACKENRDIGE PARK
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 12–12. Period Plan Comparison of Programmed Space. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

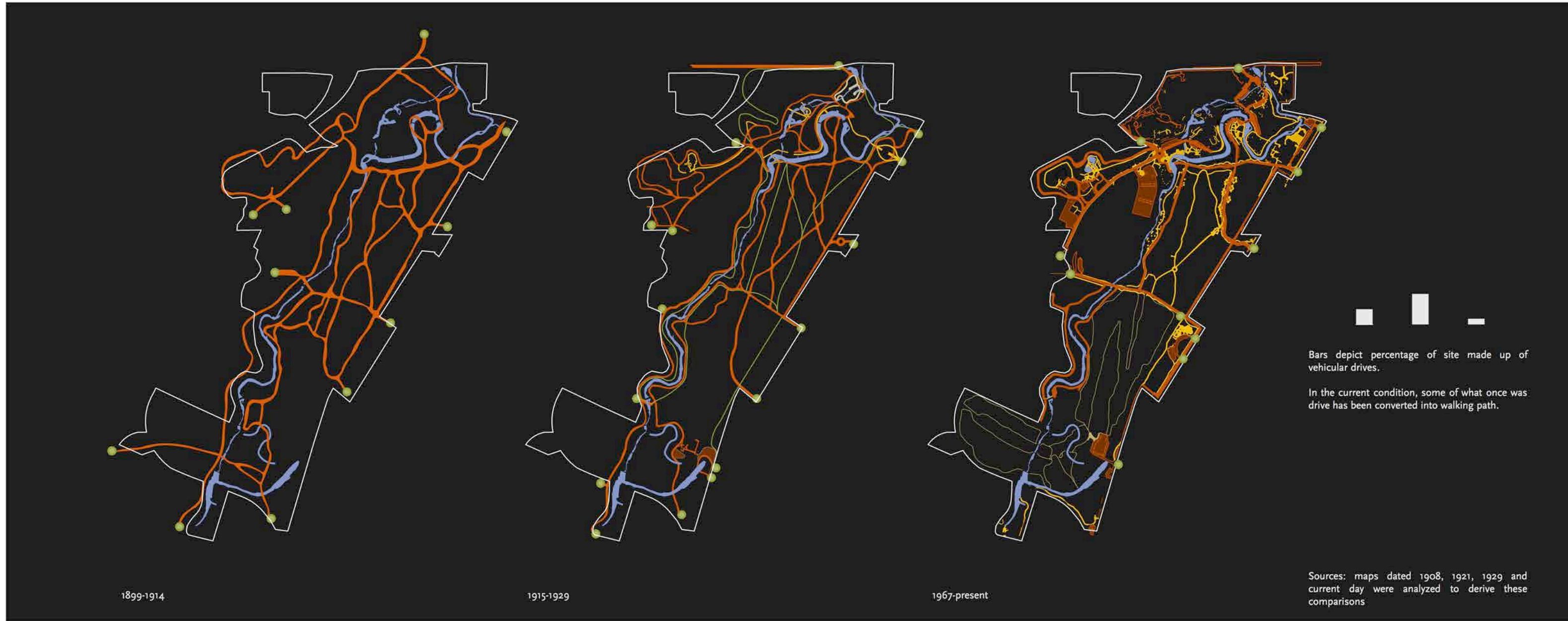


PARK BOUNDARY

BRACKENRDIGE PARK
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 12-13. Period Plan Comparison of Park Boundaries. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



CIRCULATION

BRACKENRDIGE PARK
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 12-14. Period Plan Comparison of Circulation. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

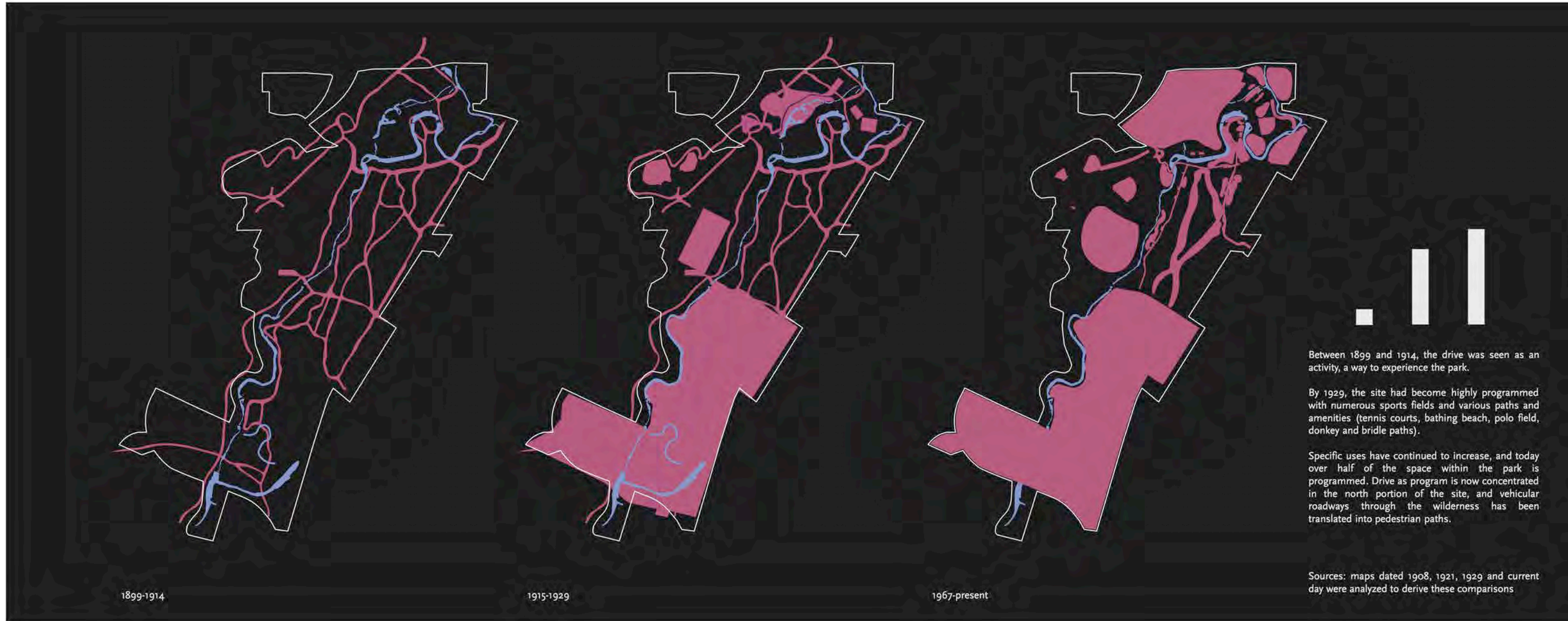


BUILDINGS

BRACKENRDIGE PARK
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 12-15. Period Plan Comparison of Buildings. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



PROGRAMMED SPACE

BRACKENRDIGE PARK

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 12-16. Period Plan Comparison of Programmed Space. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

PART THREE: PRESENT

Introduction to the Present

Chapter 13: Existing Conditions

Chapter 14: Analysis and Evaluation

From an emphasis on buildings, they have come to understand the equal importance of the gardens, open spaces, and streets around them—that is, of the connective tissue that binds the built world into an organic, life-sustaining whole.

James Marston Fitch,
Historic Preservation, Management of the Built World, 1990

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRESENT

Two chapters in a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) focus on the present state of the landscape. The chapter “Existing Conditions” (chapter 13 in this CLR) is provided to “clearly identify and describe the landscape characteristics that comprise a cultural landscape.”¹ In short, this chapter summarizes the existing conditions of the landscape. In the chapter “Analysis and Evaluation” (chapter 14), the site’s contexts (part one of this CLR), the history of the site (part two of this CLR), and the existing cultural and ecological conditions throughout the park landscape (detailed in chapter 13) come together. Analysis and evaluation “is a critical step for sorting and integrating natural and cultural resource data so it can be used to develop appropriate treatment strategies.”²

Documenting the existing conditions of a landscape with a history and scale of such magnitude is a complex endeavor that requires a tailored and methodical approach. In order to capture the breadth of the park’s current state, chapter 13 is organized as follows.

SUMMARY OF SITE HISTORY

An abbreviated history of the site, which has been extensively detailed in the preceding chapters, is provided before the assessment of existing conditions begins. This serves to reorient readers to key aspects of the site’s history, especially those that may be relevant to its conditions today or in the future.

LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

The Landscape Context section summarizes the park’s surrounding geographic complexity, including a description of its adjacent properties. This is to ensure that the park can be assessed as part of its larger urban fabric. This section also includes a summary of the park operations, which directly impact the current conditions and will need to be considered as a part of “Treatment” (chapter 15).

1 Robert Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*. U.S. Department of the Interior. National Park Service. Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships. Washington DC, 1998. 56.

2 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan. *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*.

IEWS AND VISTAS

Views and vistas are detailed in both the narrative and in a diagram to lay a foundation for one important way visitors experience this landscape today. The site's topography, which largely impacts the site's views and vistas, is also diagrammed.

After the foundational background information, the complete assessment of existing conditions begins.

LANDSCAPE SYSTEMS

Because major landscape systems are fundamental to creating a framework for the Brackenridge Park landscape, the existing conditions of the larger systems are discussed. These include the conditions of

- buried prehistoric and historic **Archaeology**;
- the no-longer-healthy or accessible upper course of the **San Antonio River and Riparian Corridor**;
- damaged or hidden **River Structures**—acequias, dams, ditches, tunnels, and retaining walls;
- threatened **Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology**, made up of historic tree canopies and dwindling plant communities;
- not entirely evident or inviting **Entry and Arrival Areas**;
- confusing **Circulation through the Park** that does not adequately provide access to the park's numerous landscape experiences;
- unclear **Edges between Cultural Institutions**—including the Japanese Tea Garden, Witte Museum, San Antonio Zoo, Brackenridge Park Golf Course, and several others—that mask their historic relationship with the park;
- the park's regionally distinctive and one-of-a-kind **Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art**. In relationship to this system, the site's overall spatial organization and programming is also discussed briefly and thoroughly diagrammed.

CHARACTER ZONES

After the major landscape systems are discussed, the site is discussed by character zone. Fifteen character zones have been delineated according to their geographic location in the park. They have been defined and named by assessing the layered cultural components and ecological variety that exists within each geographic area. Each zone possesses a unique experiential quality that is a result of its cultural and ecological layering. Sometimes the components of each zone seem to be in harmony, and sometimes they seem to be in discord. A character zone map is included to illustrate the name and location of each zone.

Development of the existing conditions chapter has been aided by field surveys and two documents: the 2011 National Register Nomination Form and the 2018 Wildflower Center

Ecological Site Assessment. The first document provides an excellent delineation of the cultural assemblages in the park, whereas the second provides a thorough assessment of the current conditions of the site's major ecological areas.

Throughout the discussion of the site's existing conditions, diagrammatic map analysis is included to clarify or illustrate the textual assessments.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION OVERVIEW

Although the development of the existing conditions is a complex endeavor, the analysis and evaluation of a landscape may be even more complex. It is in the analysis and evaluation that the past and present are considered together for the first time. The primary goals of the analysis and evaluation of a landscape are to identify which components of the landscape are considered historically and/or culturally significant according to National Park Service standards and to determine whether the historically or culturally significant landscape components retain integrity in their present state. To this end, chapter 14 contains the following seven components.

- 1. Periods of Significance.** A brief explanation of Brackenridge Park's multiple periods of significance is provided in order to help CLR users understand this landscape's cultural complexity and how the periods impact the analysis of significance and integrity.
- 2. Landscape Systems Analysis.** Due to Brackenridge Park's size and complexity, the analysis and evaluation focuses first on eight critical landscape systems that comprise a defining framework for the park. The eight systems are Archaeology, San Antonio River and Riparian Corridor, River Structures, Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology, Entry and Arrival Areas, Circulation through the Park, Edges between Cultural Institutions, and the Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art.
- 3. Features Analysis by Character Zone.** To drill down to a finer level of detail, seventeen character zones within the park have been delineated. Each zone contains important cultural landscape features that are in proximity to one another and, in some instances, share common elements. These features are also analyzed and evaluated.
- 4. 2011 National Register Documentation Review.** A National Register Nomination Form for Brackenridge Park was completed in 2011. As part of this CLR's analysis and evaluation, the previous statement is included to contribute to the historic record and as a comparison for the updated statement near the end of the chapter. In addition to reviewing the 2011 statement of significance, this CLR analysis and evaluation gives specific recommendations for amendments to the 2011 National Register Nomination Form.
- 5. Statement of Significance.** Based on the site's significance and recommended National Register updates, the chapter proposes an updated statement of significance.

6. **Determination of Integrity.** Finally, a determination of integrity is made. This determination addresses whether characteristics and features that are culturally meaningful (significant) are physically intact enough for their meaning (significance) to be visible and/or easily understood by people who experience the park.
7. **Summary of Significance and Integrity.** A color-coded table is included at the end of the chapter that summarizes the site’s level of significance, level of integrity, and potential for treatment, which would elevate its level of integrity in the future. This table is intended as a quick reference to illustrate the site’s significance and potential, and it can also be used to better understand the Treatment recommended in chapter 15.

Understanding the existing conditions of a site and analyzing and evaluating the site’s significance and integrity based on an integrated assessment of the landscape’s relevant contexts, historic development, and present condition are critical actions. Together, the chapters “Existing Conditions” and “Analysis and Evaluation” lay the groundwork for the development of a Treatment Plan (chapter 15). Treatment is the work carried out to achieve a cultural landscape’s long-term preservation goals—in effect, it is an *action plan*. It is the most important tool that park leadership can possess in planning for Brackenridge Park’s future, for both what will be preserved and what will change.

CHAPTER 13. EXISTING CONDITIONS

SUMMARY OF SITE HISTORY

The Brackenridge Park landscape was once familiar territory for mammoths and other prehistoric life and was part of a migratory ritual route for Indigenous Americans. It is the origin of one of this country's earliest democratized water systems, executed through a Spanish system of acequias and built by Indigenous people to irrigate and provide potable water to the Spanish missions and colonial settlements (1719-1724). After secular settlement in the area, agricultural fields on the west side of the river were irrigated by the Upper Labor Dam and the Upper Labor Acequia (1770s-1850s). It was the site of early industrial development in the form of limestone quarries that first built up the city (1850s-1880). During the nineteenth century, there were extensive quarry operations on the northwest side of the park (1850s-1880), a Civil War Confederate tannery and sawmill in which enslaved people labored (1863-1865), and a cement company, which, by the hands of workers, further contributed to the building and expansion of San Antonio (1880-1908). The most consequential commercial enterprise on the landholding was that associated with the San Antonio Water Company, founded by J. B. Lacoste and ultimately owned by George Brackenridge. Buildings and vestiges of landscape features from the operation of the water works are extant on the site.

The land that George Brackenridge owned, in proximity to his house above the head of the river, was already being used as a park by the public in the latter half of the nineteenth century. For instance, in 1885 the "First Presbyterian church and Sunday-school held a very fine picnic at the McLane place, north of Brackenridge park."¹ With Brackenridge's donation to the city of the first 199-acre tract, this landscape became a grand, shady, scenic driving park and a river swimming hole that attracted locals and tourists from around the country (1899).

¹ "Picnics," *San Antonio Light*, May 18, 1885, accessed November 20, 2019, newspapers.com/image/221348301/.

Once the legal title to the original parcel of land was transferred to the city, Ludwig Mahncke, a close friend of Brackenridge's, quickly laid out carriageways following the principles of the picturesque promulgated by Andrew Jackson Downing in the first half of the nineteenth century. Downing's general principles of park design were then used by many of the best landscape designers, including Frederick Law Olmsted for Central Park and for his other designs throughout the East Coast and Midwest, during the second half of the nineteenth century. By 1899, there were scores of precedents throughout the country for this style of landscape, which included intersecting carriageways, picturesque views, and the combination of circulation and existing and constructed water features. During the remainder of Mahncke's tenure as park commissioner, the major improvements in the park related to the acquisition and display of various domestic and native animals within portions of the park boundaries. Deer, bison, elk, and cattle were pastured and displayed at Brackenridge, a treatment that provided for public viewing of animals not often seen in San Antonio and for reduced maintenance costs through grazing, which kept the lawns and pastures of the park cropped at a level between mown and open prairie. After Mahncke's death in 1906, there were a series of park superintendents, but there were very few improvements to the park during the approximately ten-year period between Mahncke and Ray Lambert.

When Lambert became parks superintendent in 1915, he quickly set in motion a building boom in the park, which did not end until the advent of World War II, long after Lambert's death in 1926. What resulted was a well-developed park that provided a great variety of visitors' services but had neither a clear sense of spatial organization nor a hierarchy of significance. Due to access to the quarries on the north edge of the property, there was plenty of stone for the construction of buildings and structures, and the abandoned quarries became the focus of rehabilitation for new park functions.

The park's limestone quarries eventually became exceptional, dramatic backdrops to what is today the historic San Antonio Zoo (1915), the Japanese Tea Garden (1917), and the outdoor Sunken Garden Theater (1930). The park became a canvas for public art—the whimsical faux bois bridges, benches, and tables created by Mexican-born Dionicio Rodriguez as well as works by other notable artists. It is the original and longtime home to what is today a first-class natural history museum, the Witte (1926). It was a public space in which civil rights for African Americans and Mexican Americans were once denied or limited but eventually enacted (1950s, 1960s). In 1997, it became home to an engineering marvel, the Inlet Tunnel, which protects downtown San Antonio from flood events and, alternatively, maintains the flow of water to the river during drought. The park also contains many other defining layers.

LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

Brackenridge Park is located approximately two miles northwest of downtown San Antonio and is comprised of land donated by George Brackenridge and the Koehler family, land purchased by the city, and land that was held by the city through Spanish colonial land grants. The park is within the city of San Antonio, Bexar County. The site is composed of two linear areas of land on the east and west sides of the San Antonio River. The northwest and western edge of the park rises approximately 750 feet above mean sea level (MSL) at its highest point, which is the southern limit of the Balcones Escarpment. The lower edge of the



FIGURE 13-1. Birds-eye view of Brackenridge Park in relation to Downtown San Antonio. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

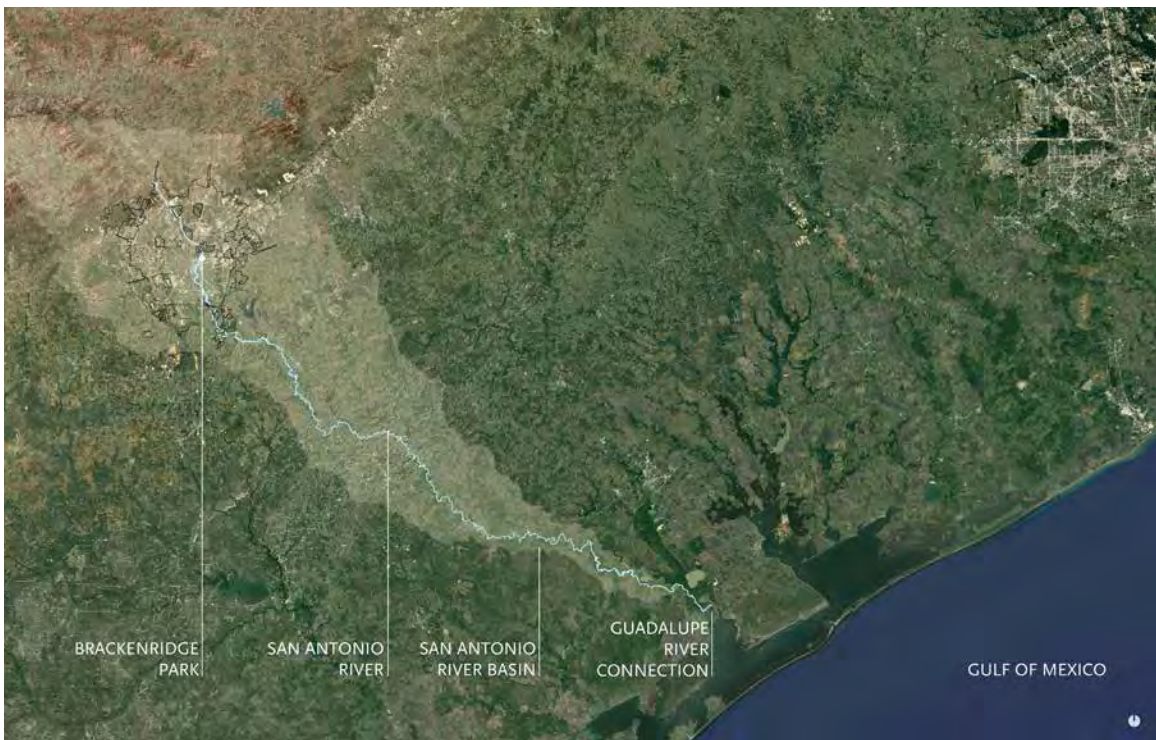


FIGURE 13-2. Regional Watershed Context Map. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

park is approximately 665 feet above MSL. It is at this lowest point in the park that the river enters the San Antonio River Flood Control Tunnel (**figure 13-1**).

Olmos Basin to the northwest of the site drains south and joins the major springs of the San Antonio River, which then continues through San Antonio south and east before flowing into the Guadalupe River. The Guadalupe River flows to Mission Lake and San Antonio Bay, which then connects to the Gulf of Mexico (**figure 13-2**).

ADJACENT PROPERTIES

Nearby cultural and historic sites include the continuation of the Alamo Acequia beyond the boundaries of the park to the Alamo site, the Upper Labor Dam and Upper Labor Acequia complex that continues through the site onto adjoining property to the west and south, the Blue Hole located at the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, the Sweet Homestead, the Brackenridge Victorian mansion, Alamo Stadium, Mahncke Park, the DoSeum Children's Museum, the South Texas Museum of Popular Culture, the San Antonio Botanical Garden, and Fort Sam Houston.

Brackenridge Park is surrounded by a mix of residential neighborhoods, commercial corridors, the campus of the University of the Incarnate Word to the north, Highway 281 to the west, and Broadway, a major north-south thoroughfare that leads from downtown north to several suburban neighborhoods. The primary neighborhoods just to the western border of the park are Monte Vista, Midtown, The Strip, Tobin Hill, and River Road. All of these neighborhoods are separated from the park by Highway 281, the exception being the River Road neighborhood, which directly adjoins Brackenridge Park on the southwest edge. To the east of the park lie the neighborhoods of Westfort and Mahncke Park, and Alamo Heights is to the northeast. The string of businesses located between Broadway and Avenue B on the southeast side of the park effectively serves as both a physical and mental barrier that blocks views into the park and negates the sense that the driver or bike rider on Broadway is just a few feet away from the largest park in the city. The exceptions to this barrier are the entrances at Brackenridge Drive and at Tuleta Drive and the associated structures of the Witte and Pioneer Hall, but even these are not park indicators, as they are situated in close proximity to Broadway and impede the views into the park and river beyond. The largest area that is directly facing Broadway is the portion of the park called Lions Field, directly across from the Doseum (**figure 13-3**).

PARK OPERATIONS

Brackenridge Park is owned by the city of San Antonio, and three entities contribute to its oversight, management, and stewardship: the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, San Antonio River Authority (SARA), and Brackenridge Park Conservancy (BPC). The San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, previously under the direction of Xavier Urrutia (from January 2009 to July 2018), is responsible for maintaining not only Brackenridge but also approximately 240 other parks throughout the city.² SARA, created in

² "About Our Parks," San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, City of San Antonio, accessed June 6, 2019, sanantonio.gov/ParksAndRec/About-Mission/About-Us.

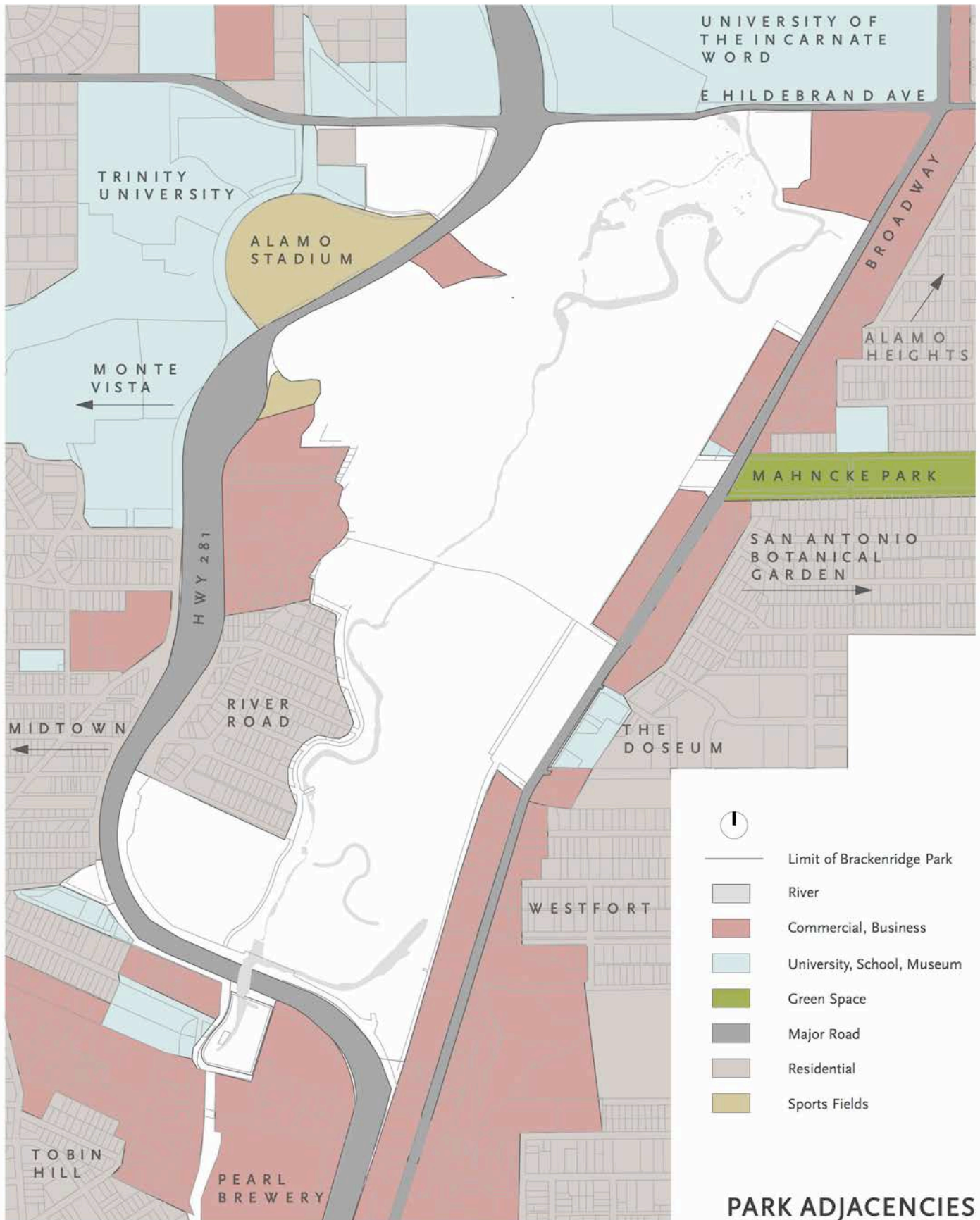


FIGURE 13-3. Brackenridge Park Adjacencies. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

1937 and currently under the leadership of Suzanne Scott and governed by an elected board of directors, is responsible for “developing and conserving” the San Antonio River.³ SARA is, therefore, instrumental in protecting the park’s ecological resources and improving the water quality of the river, which runs through the park. The BPC, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization directed by Lynn Osborne Bobbitt and governed by a volunteer board of directors, acts as the park’s primary preservation steward and advocate. The BPC was formed in September 2008, and its founding board was elected in February 2009.⁴

Prior to the BPC’s formation, the San Antonio Conservation Society “played an active role in the park’s preservation,” serving as its steward since the society’s founding in 1924. In the early 2000s, the conservation society formed a Brackenridge Park committee and engaged Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, the San Antonio native known for founding and leading the Central Park Conservancy, to prepare a white paper “about the creation of an organization dedicated solely to the protection of Brackenridge Park.”⁵ It was out of this process that the BPC originated.

Working closely with the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, BPC “raises funds for projects that benefit the park, implements park-based programs and projects, advises City staff and City Council, supports the evolution and implementation of plans for the park, and acts as a forum for users to address common issues and build consensus.”⁶

There is no general entrance fee for the park. Each cultural institution or entity in the park charges admittance from its patrons. The San Antonio Zoo, Brackenridge Park Golf Course, Witte Museum, San Antonio Zoo Eagle miniature train (formerly the Brackenridge Eagle), and the golf driving range all collect fees. The revenue generated from these entities is shared with the city under various service contracts. This money flows to the city’s general fund, with a small annual amount received by the entire park for maintenance and improvements. Recent city bond issues have resulted in new funding for the preservation and rehabilitation of selected park elements. The city also provides limited maintenance through the Parks and Recreation Department. The BPC goal is to provide additional funding in the future to enhance maintenance. The Parks and Recreation Department is the authorized administrative department that undertakes maintenance, but emergency repairs and improvements such as tree trimming and the addition of sidewalks can be handled by other city entities on occasion without knowledge of the BPC and with a lack of coordination. An example is a recent project to install sidewalks without prior coordination by the Parks and Recreation Department or the BPC. The project was stopped before construction began.

VIEWS AND VISTAS

Views are the occurrence of expansive and/or panoramic scenes that unfold naturally, often in relationship to a site’s topography. Vistas are designed and controlled, generally to frame a linear range of vision, with a contrived and focused intent (**figures 13-4 and 13-5**). Views into the park are limited by rows of commercial enterprises on the east side of the park along

3 “About San Antonio River Authority,” San Antonio River Authority, accessed June 6, 2019, sara-tx.org/about.

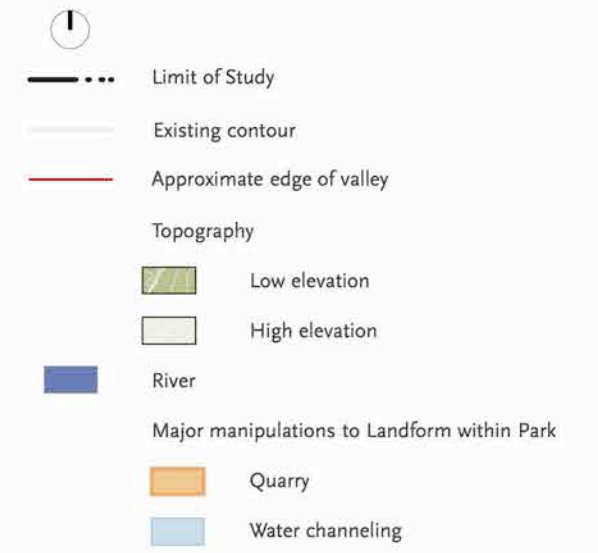
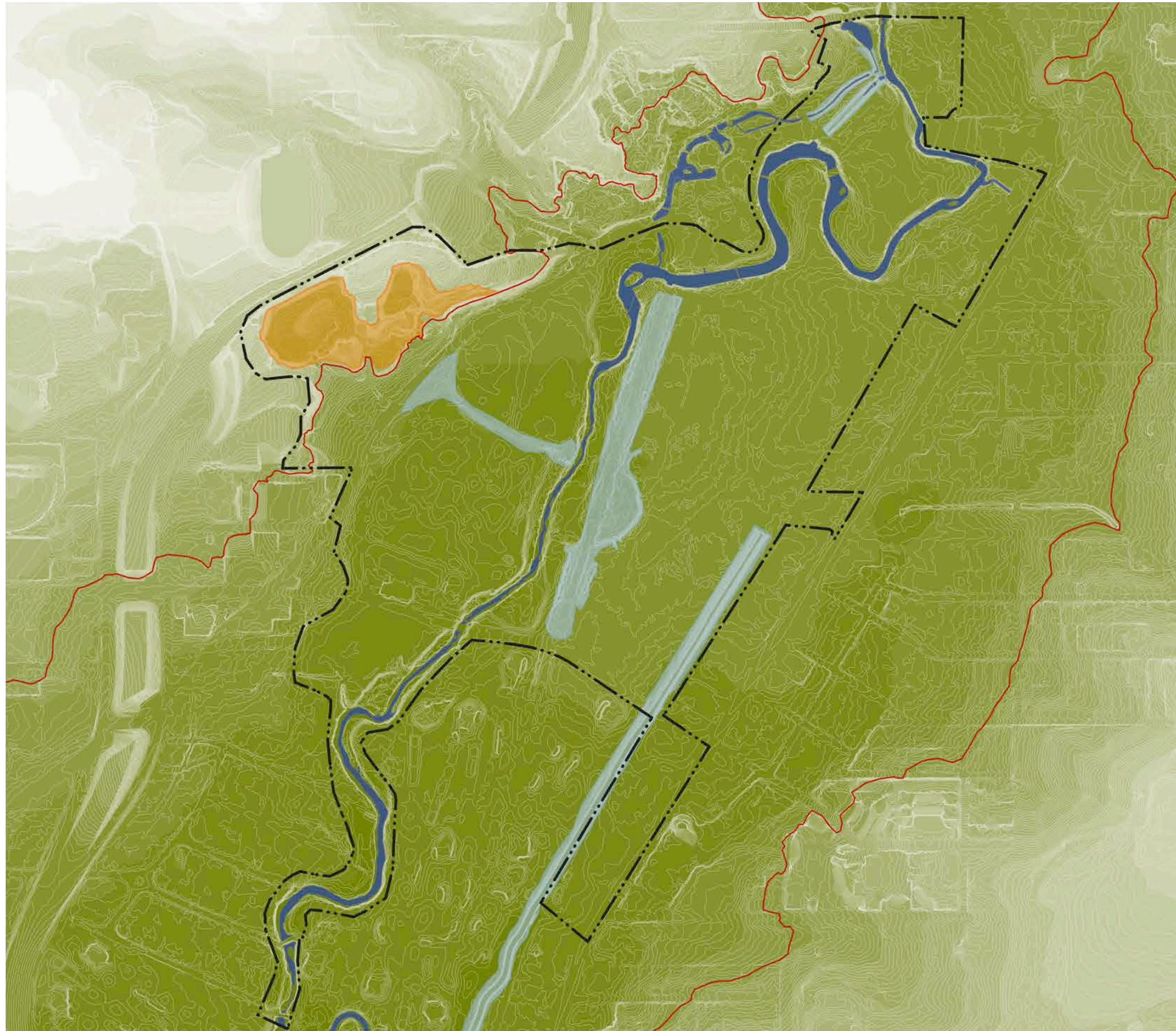
4 “Mission & History,” Brackenridge Park Conservancy, accessed September 25, 2019, brackenridgepark.org/about/mission-history.

5 “Mission & History.”

6 “Mission & History.”



FIGURE 13-4. Diagram of existing views and vistas. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



The site sits in a low valley, with higher land to either side.

Excavation at the quarry sites created large hollows within the land which now house the Sunken Garden Theater and Japanese Tea Garden.

Attempts to divert water for human use or to control volume in times of flooding have resulted in large, man-made channels, scoured into the earth. These imprints remain as deviations in the site's existing topography.

TOPOGRAPHY AND LANDFORM

BRACKENRDIGE PARK
 CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
 By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 13-5. Diagram of existing topography and landforms. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

Broadway. On the west side, Highway 281 blocks views of parklands. Alternatively, one of the best views in the park is from Alpine Drive looking down into the Japanese Tea Garden and the Sunken Garden Theater complex. Also, linear views up and down the river course provide both foreground and distant views, and the water body itself provides the reflective plane, with the banks of the river providing the framing view.

Vistas are experienced in two large areas—the Wilderness Grove and throughout the Brackenridge Golf Course. The curving picturesque vistas in the Wilderness Grove are the result of the carriage and automobile roads designed by Ludwig Mahncke, probably in collaboration with an engineer or surveyor. Throughout the United States, many early park circulation designs were completed by a city employee acting as a designer. Because most had surveying and engineering backgrounds, they were familiar with using contours within the landscape to keep construction costs lower and to provide for adequate and efficient drainage. In New Orleans, City Park’s master plan for the circulation sequence in the oldest portion of the park was completed by city surveyor Edward Pile. Later work in the park in the 1930s was conducted by a landscape architecture firm from Chicago. This design and construction sequence arrangement was typical during the period when Brackenridge was surveyed and the circulation system put in place. The vistas found in this area are confined, focused, and tunnel-like, as paths cut into thick understory and dense canopy.

The Brackenridge Park Golf Club was the direct result of the famous course architect A. W. Tillinghast, who designed golf courses throughout the country. Tillinghast was considered one of the best course designers of the first half of the twentieth century. “Tillie,” as he was nicknamed, was known for using the most advanced methods of course construction and was respected for his integration of existing landscapes into his designs. Tillinghast’s work was further refined by John Bredemus, who was known to climb trees at Brackenridge in order to see the course layout and existing views. The combination of a nationally known course architect and a regional expert led to an enhanced visitor experience at the golf course and provided extensive vistas throughout the course.

The roads that wind through and cross the park require both automobile and pedestrian bridges. The bridges are fundamental to the views and vistas that are experienced by visitors as they cross the San Antonio River at various locations.

The Japanese Tea Garden also offers unique height in the park, and vistas in this semi-enclosed space were carefully created to leverage the prospect of the site’s topography and to enhance the visitor’s experience. Multiple locations provide vertical vista highlights of the garden and pond below.

Cinematic views are experienced on the open-air miniature train, the Eagle, which takes passengers on a 3.2-mile ride through the upper portion of Brackenridge Park.⁷ The route winds through dense woods, a tunnel, a bridge, and various open areas where the rider can see the larger views and framed vistas in the park. The low-water crossing at Tuleta is another location at which cinematic views are seen by motorists traversing the river.

⁷ Maria Watson Pfeiffer and Steven A. Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” National Register of Historic Places, Texas Historical Commission, San Antonio, TX, June 15, 2011, 69.

ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Due to size of the property and the complexity of natural and cultural features within the site, it is helpful to assess the existing conditions of the landscape characteristics and features in two ways: (1) in terms of the critical landscape systems that define the park’s framework and (2) in terms of the seventeen character zones that have been delineated (figures 13-6 and 13-7). The character zones are defined by collectively assessing the historic character and the cultural components and ecological variety that exist within the landscape. Each zone possesses a unique experiential quality that Treatment Recommendations (chapter 15) will aim to protect or amplify.

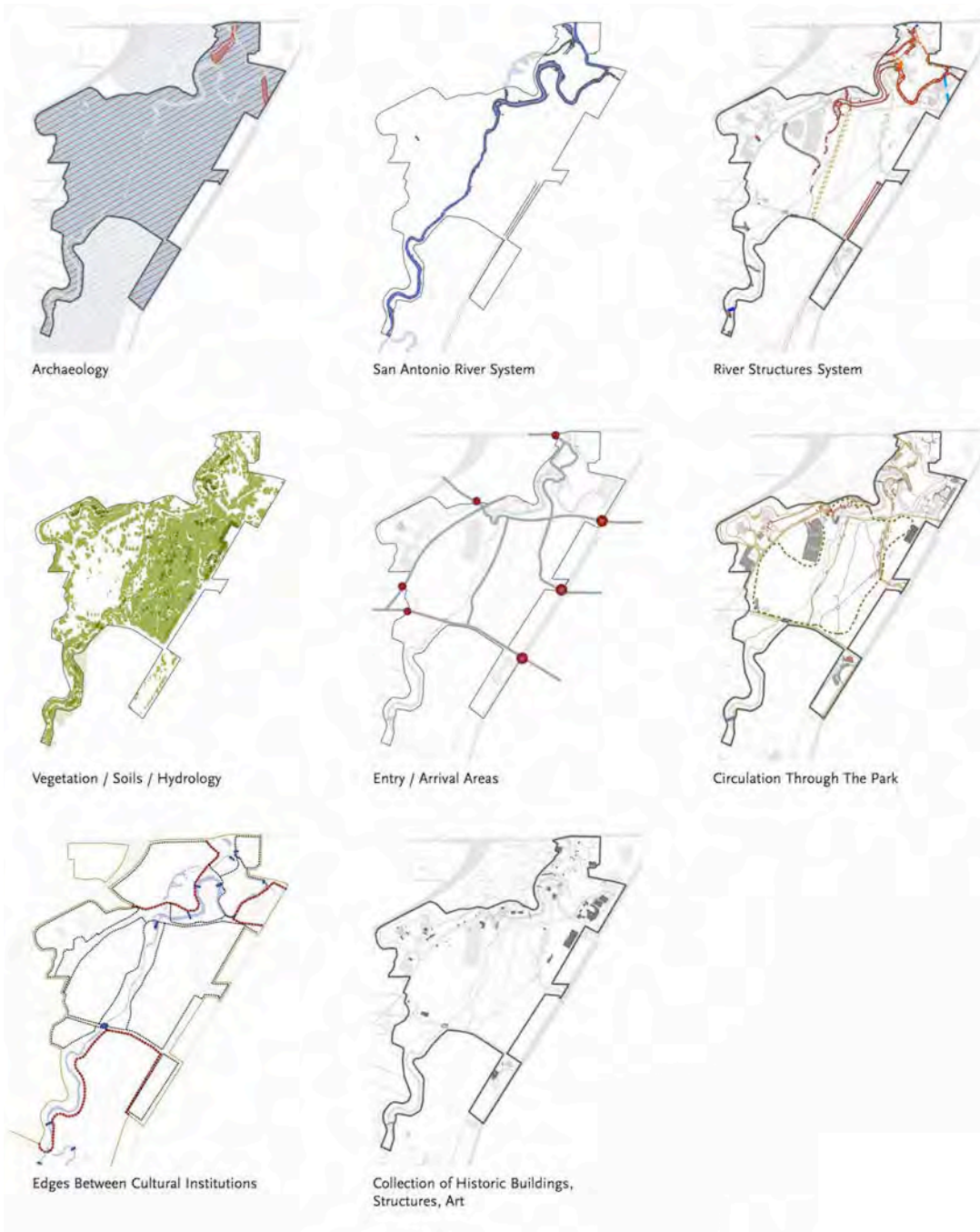


FIGURE 13-6. Brackenridge Park’s Landscape Systems. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

SYSTEMS



FIGURE 13-7. Character Zones Map. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

LANDSCAPE SYSTEMS



Archaeology

ARCHAEOLOGY

Although archaeological resources are present throughout the Brackenridge Park site, for the most part, they are not visible. Archaeological investigations within Brackenridge Park have identified nearly ten thousand years of prehistoric use of the park, and more detailed work on the earliest components along with the discovery of even earlier materials extends the prehistoric use of the park to twelve thousand years. Historic archaeological studies have focused on two aspects of the park’s infrastructure—the San Antonio Water Works and the Spanish colonial acequias and dams. To date, archaeological investigations typically have not been completed, for preservation and interpretation purposes. They have typically been conducted in relation to infrastructure improvements and in some cases to locate no-longer-apparent sites that appeared in historical documents.



FIGURE 13–8. View of erosion along banks of the San Antonio River, August 2019. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

SAN ANTONIO RIVER/RIPARIAN CORRIDOR



San Antonio River System

The upper course of the San Antonio River flows through Brackenridge Park and is the heart of a riparian area, an area where the river meets the land⁸ (figures 13-8, 13-9, and 13-10).

Riparian communities contain a high percentage of water loving plants..., plants capable of handling wet and dry conditions..., and quick establishing, fast growing species...as well as longer lived, slower growing species... A healthy riparian community contains a diverse mix of trees, shrubs and herbaceous species, though the ideal composition will

vary between ecological sites. The integrity of the riparian area strongly influences the health of the waterway. Healthy riparian areas stabilize the bank, clean water entering the river, shade and add organic matter to in-stream habitat and serve as important habitat and travel corridors.⁹

The San Antonio River and riparian area in Brackenridge Park are generally in poor condition. Erosion is widespread along the riparian edges of the river, with some areas experiencing severe erosion where runoff from adjacent neighborhoods races through drainage outlets, scouring the banks of the river. Filter zones along the river edges are not adequate to clean runoff from the surrounding landscape. Flow regimes are interrupted by drought, and water quality is significantly affected by large numbers of egrets, ducks, geese, and other bird species within the park. According to the Wildflower Center Ecological Site Assessment,

Steep slopes indicating severe erosion, bank exposure and lack of a vegetative buffer [are] evident in many areas. Compacted soil is contributing to loss of bank stability and reduced water infiltration and filtration capacity. Substantial populations of invasive species are present throughout the riparian area. It should be noted that these conditions are quite common in urban parks.

Although ecological issues affect the water quality in the river, as a landscape element, the river continues to be the cultural center of the park. The river is no longer accessible to people in the way it was historically, however. It is not healthy enough for swimming, fishing, or boating activities.

8 Michelle Bertelsen, "Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment," (San Antonio, TX: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas at Austin, 2019).

9 Bertelsen, "Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment."



FIGURE 13-9. Diagram of existing hydrology form. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

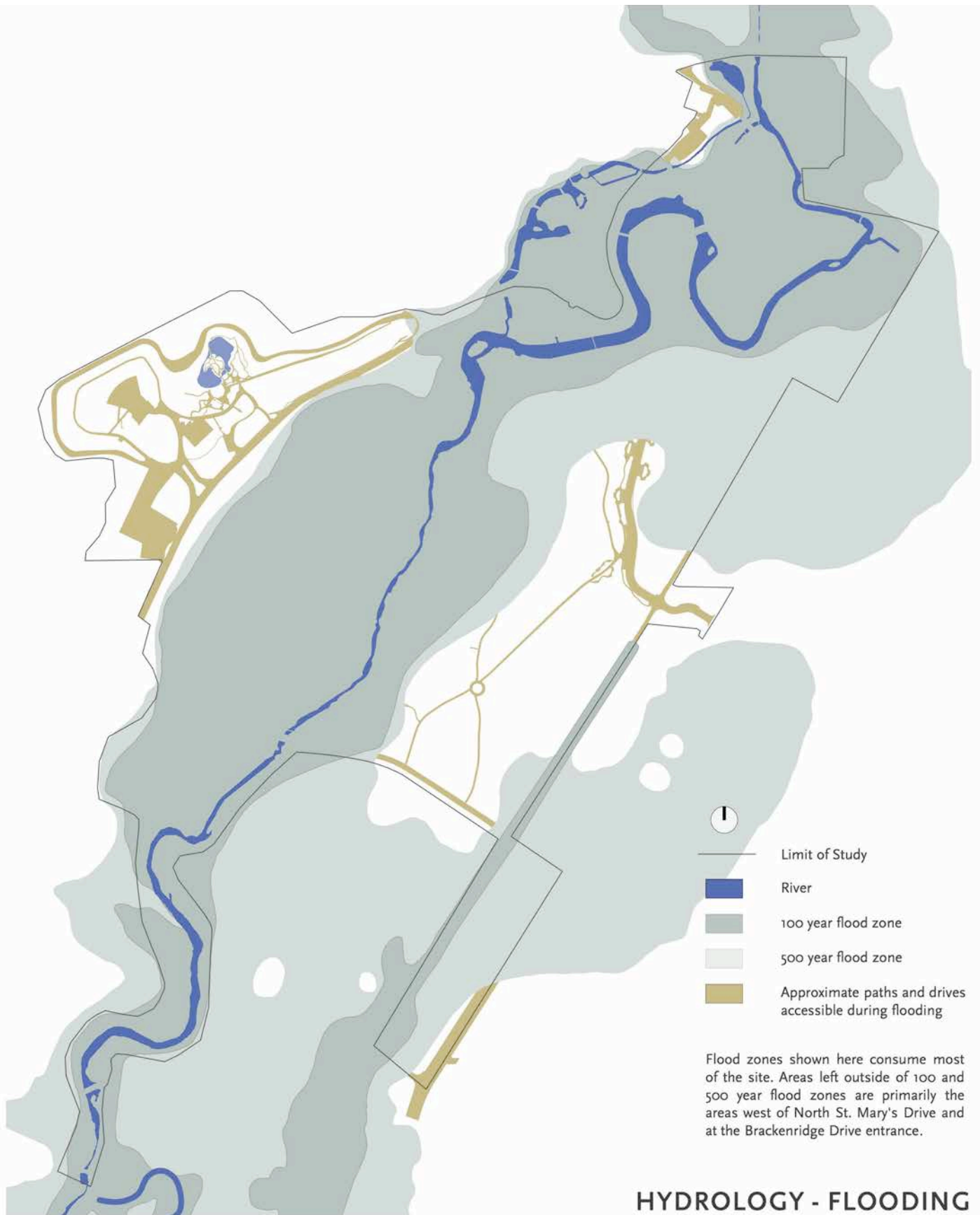


FIGURE 13-10. Diagram of existing flood zones. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



RIVER STRUCTURES

The system of river structures present in association with the San Antonio River includes acequia and dam structures, raceways, retaining walls constructed from local stone, and low-water crossings (**figures 13-11 and 13-12**). Overall, their existing conditions are of medium quality. By their very nature, structures associated with water require much more intensive and frequent maintenance (**figures 13-13, 13-14, and 13-15**).

Constructed by the National Youth Administration late in the New Deal era, the river walls between East Mulberry Avenue up to Tuleta Drive have periodically been damaged by flooding events and damage from tree roots. The walls have been repaired on an as-needed basis. There is a current effort to repair them in a comprehensive way to maintain stability, safety, and appearance for a longer period of time. The existing condition of the walls is poor to good depending on their location along the river. Their design is problematic in areas, as they are perpendicular to the river and create a difficult transition between park visitors and the water.



FIGURE 13–11. View of river walls, southwest of bathhouse, February 2019. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



FIGURE 13–12. View of river walls, south of zoo, February 2019. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

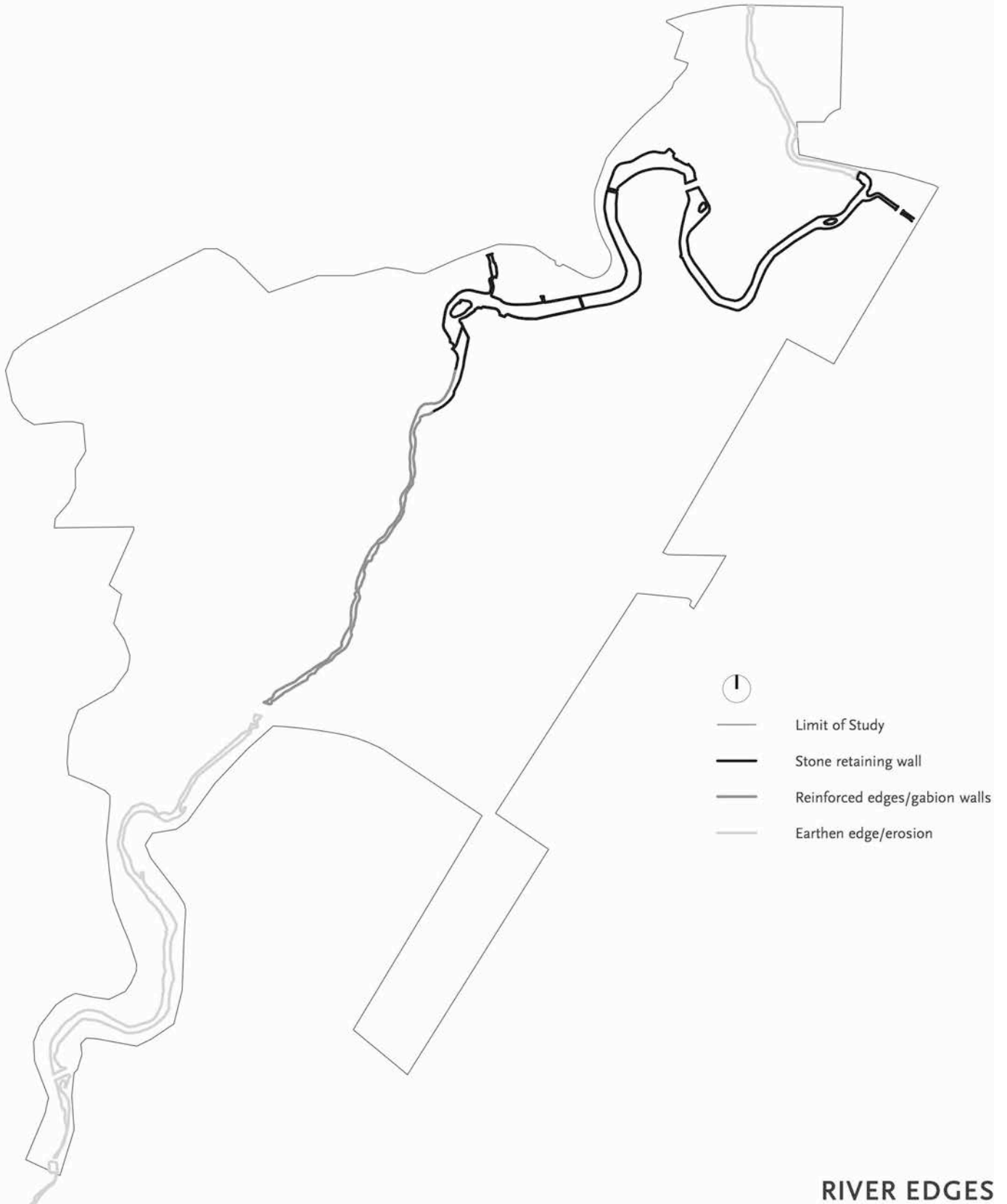


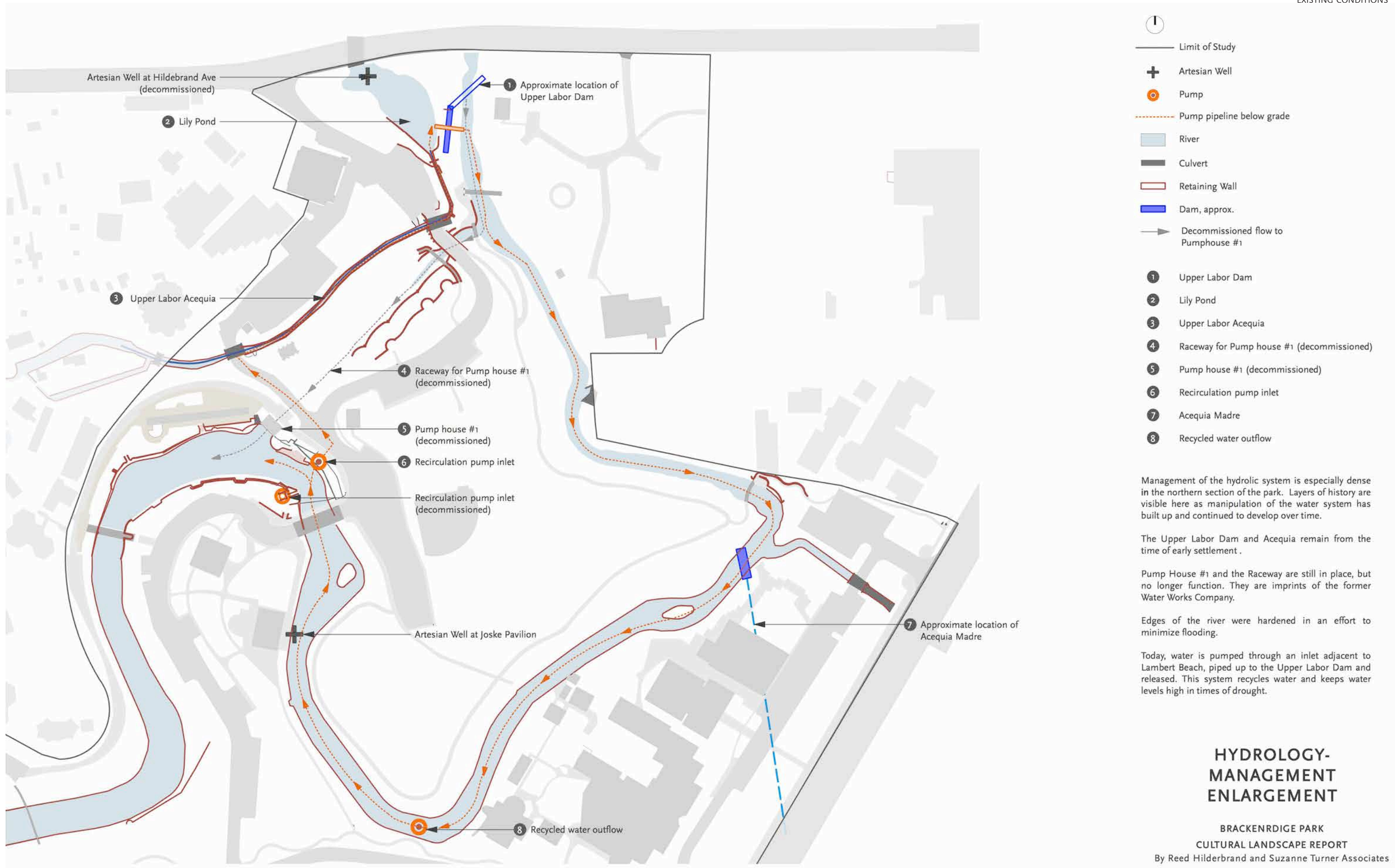
FIGURE 13–13. Diagram of existing river edges. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



HYDROLOGY-MANAGEMENT

BRACKENRDIGE PARK
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FIGURE 13-14. Diagram of existing hydrology management. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



Management of the hydrolic system is especially dense in the northern section of the park. Layers of history are visible here as manipulation of the water system has built up and continued to develop over time.

The Upper Labor Dam and Acequia remain from the time of early settlement .

Pump House #1 and the Raceway are still in place, but no longer function. They are imprints of the former Water Works Company.

Edges of the river were hardened in an effort to minimize flooding.

Today, water is pumped through an inlet adjacent to Lambert Beach, piped up to the Upper Labor Dam and released. This system recycles water and keeps water levels high in times of drought.

HYDROLOGY- MANAGEMENT ENLARGEMENT

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CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 13-15. Enlargement from 13-14 of existing hydrology management. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



Vegetation / Soils / Hydrology

VEGETATION/SOILS/HYDROLOGY

Due to the multiple ecological areas within the park, the variety and species diversity of vegetation in the park is broad (**figures 13-16, 13-17, 13-18 and 13-19**). These ecological areas consist of the riparian edges along the San Antonio River, the uplands that drain into the river, and the Balcones Escarpment on the northwest edge of the park.

Vegetation consists of deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers, native indigenous plants, and ornamental horticultural additions that are used for seasonal interest. In addition to the native and introduced horticultural components of vegetation, there are many invasive plant species that

crowd out native plants and that do not provide a healthy habitat for native birds and small mammals.

The northern cultural core of the park is more open, with managed lawns, tree clusters spaced throughout the landscape and along the river, and more ornamental plantings associated with buildings and structures. The grove in the center of the park is largely forested, with a dense understory of small shrubs, vines, and ground cover. This portion of the park is not extensively managed and creates feelings both of enclosure and separation. Some visitors consider this portion of the park too isolated and dense and express the view that they don't feel safe when in the grove.

The largest component of the park is the golf course. Open fairways with tree plantings frame and direct views along and between the different holes on the course, and the nature of the sport of golf requires extensive areas of lawn grass. Fences separate the course from the larger park landscape. Plantings in the zoo and the Japanese Tea Garden are primarily exotic and are associated with the different cultural needs of these two areas.

The Wildflower Center Ecological Site Assessment (Appendix C) contains a more extensive and scientific explanation of the soils, hydrology, and vegetation in Brackenridge Park.

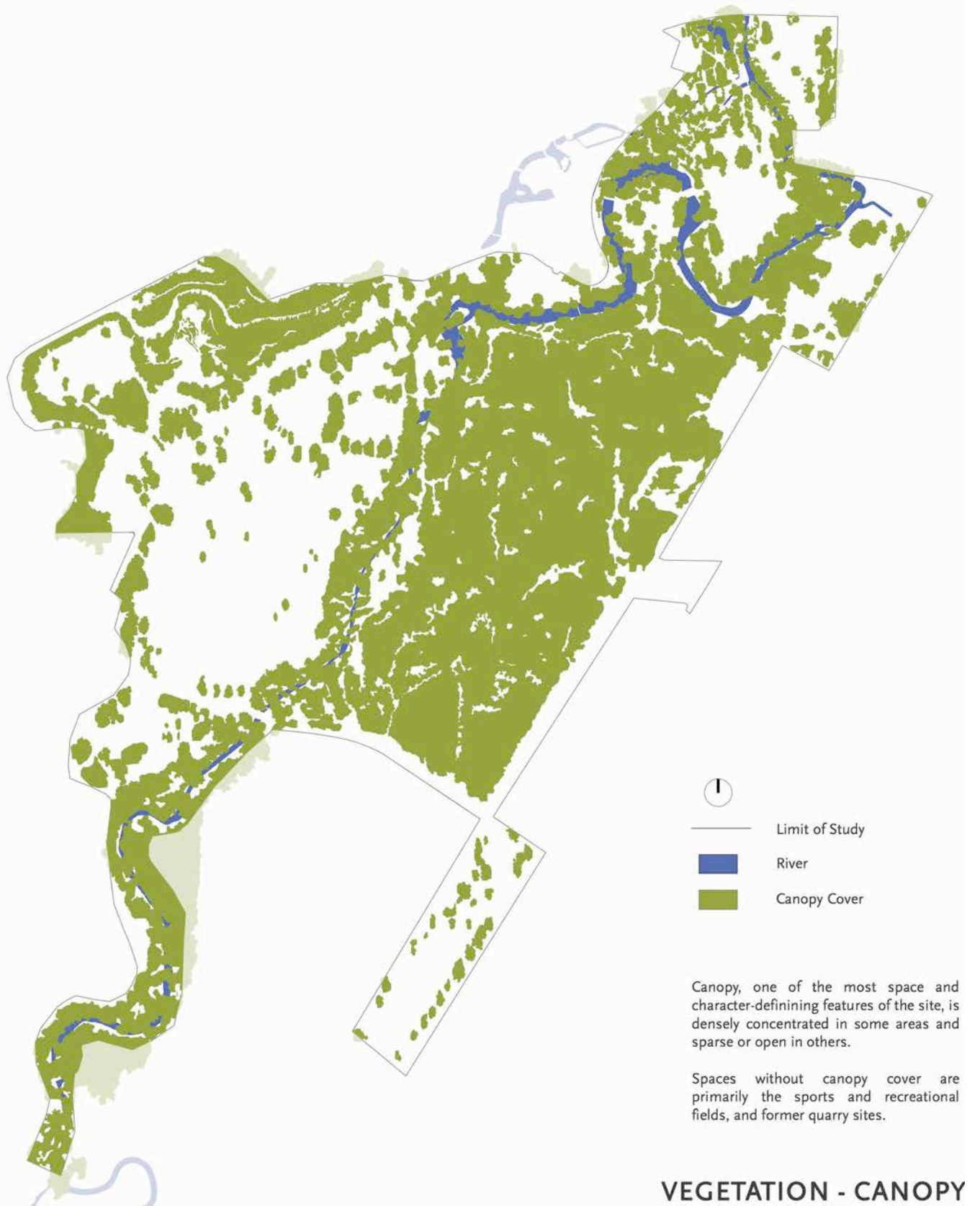


FIGURE 13-16. Diagram of existing canopy. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

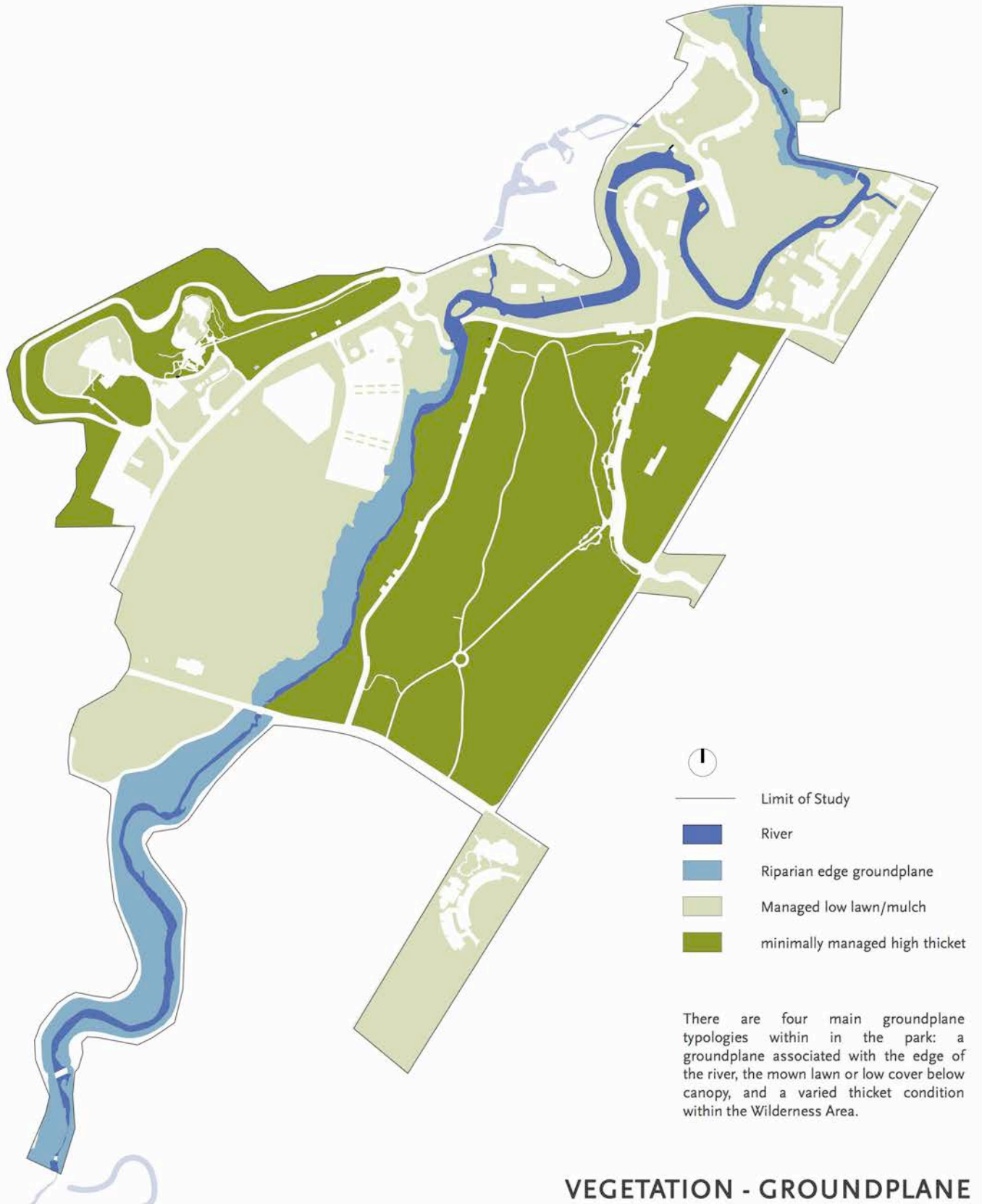


FIGURE 13-17. Diagram of existing ground plane vegetation. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

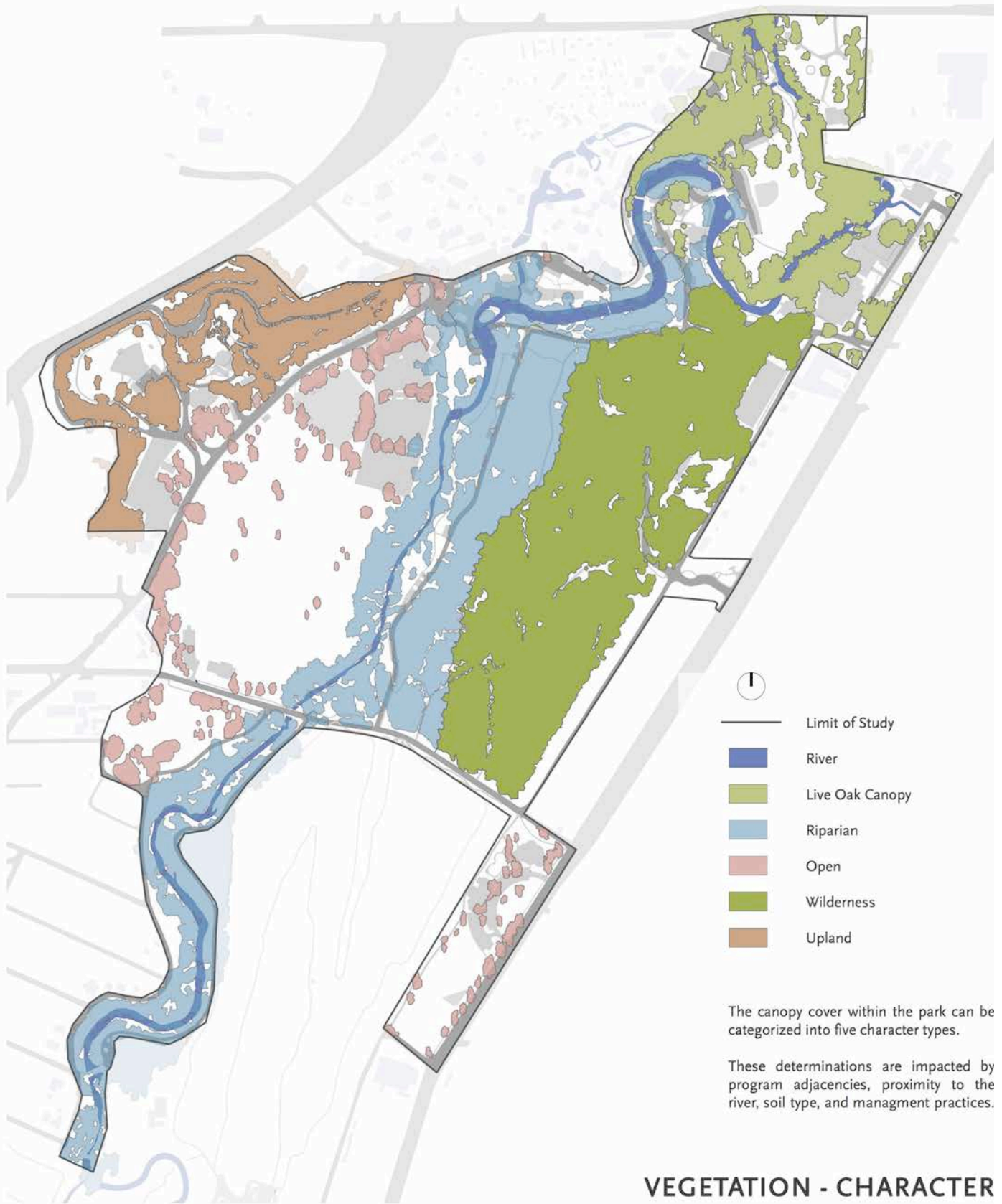


FIGURE 13–18. Diagram of existing varied character of vegetation. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



FIGURE 13-19. Diagram of existing ecological health. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



Entry / Arrival Areas

ENTRY AND ARRIVAL AREAS

These are primarily driven by the suburban and modified urban settings that surround the park. In some places, there was an existing street grid that was modified as the park was intensively developed beginning in the 1910s. The golf course in particular required the closure of some roads that crossed the park. The following assessment of existing conditions starts at the top of the park and moves south to the bottom of the park.

The northernmost edge of the park is Hildebrand Avenue, a wide five-lane east-west corridor that separates the park from the University of the Incarnate Word. The primary potential pedestrian

entry into the park is the large locked gate at Miraflores Garden. Along the northern edge, automobile entry into the park is provided at Brackenridge Road. As the visitor turns into the park on Brackenridge Road, a large parking lot in the foreground is the most visible feature, serving multiple maintenance buildings at the edge of the parking lot and the Donkey Barn. There is a triangle of parkland on the east side of Brackenridge Road that contains a lily pond and that borders the San Antonio River. Brackenridge Road ends at the Lambert Beach Softball Field, where more parking is provided for visitors.

The eastern edge of the park (above Mulberry) is bordered by Avenue B, directly west one block from Broadway Street. Running from south to north along Avenue B, entrances exist at Mill Race Road, East Mulberry Avenue, Brackenridge Drive, and Tuleta Drive (**figure 13-20**). The only place where there is a significant stretch of parkland adjacent to Broadway Street is along the Lions Field portion of Brackenridge. Unfortunately, the Lions Field property borders the Catalpa-Pershing drainage channel and then looks out over the golf course. There is little to evoke the sense of a picturesque series of plantings or the large grove just to the north of East Mulberry within the park.

Along the western edge of the park, the border is defined primarily by McAllister Freeway, which separates the park from all the neighborhoods to the west except for the River Road neighborhood. Just north of the River Road neighborhood are two surface roads that intersect just within the park—North St. Mary's Street and Mulberry Avenue. Just below the zoo, Tuleta Drive enters the park beneath the elevated freeway. One block from the western edge of the park, a roundabout is located at the intersection of Tuleta Drive and North St. Mary's Street, with Tuleta continuing on to Broadway to the east and North St. Mary's Street terminating at the roundabout. On either side of the Tuleta Drive entrance are parking lots that serve the Animal Defense League of Texas office and zoo offices and maintenance buildings.



FIGURE 13–20. View of Tuleta Drive entrance, February 2019. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

Along the lower third of the river’s border are two roads that follow the river course—Avenue A, which ends in a loop at the Avenue A/River Road low-water crossing, and River Road on the western side of the river. River Road borders the River Road neighborhood and provides multiple access points into the neighborhood.

Connections to the surrounding communities are weak. Barriers to safe access to the park are on all four sides of the park, comprised of wide roadways and freeways and the commercial buildings located along the east and west sides of the park.



Circulation Through The Park

CIRCULATION THROUGH THE PARK

The overall circulation system in the park is not clear to a visitor experiencing the park for the first time (**figures 13-21 and 13-22**). Wayfinding signage at intersections is generally nonexistent.

Connections within the park consist of two east-west streets: East Mulberry Avenue and Tuleta Dr., with Red Oak Road connecting the two. Red Oak begins at East Mulberry and ends at Tuleta, serving as the only spine within the park that connects to the two crossing roads within the park. Brackenridge Drive enters the park at The Acorn, a School for Young Children, and curves to the north across Tuleta Drive, where it changes to Brackenridge Way. It then reconnects with

Brackenridge Drive just to the east of the older pump house and across the San Antonio River at the “Letters of Gold” Mayor Callaghan Bridge.

The system of carriageways that were introduced in the park shortly after its formal designation in 1899 now serve as wide walking and jogging paths (**figure 13-23**). Automobile circulation is no longer allowed on these internal park pathways. Access is by foot along and across roads after the visitor has parked in the parking garage at Tuleta Drive or in one of the miscellaneous parking lots throughout the park (**figure 13-24**). The Waterworks Loop provides a linear sidewalk at the eastern edge of the park along the Catalpa-Pershing ditch and Avenue B. Sidewalks along roads are mostly nonexistent. Auto circulation around the grove still exists, and the east-west routes through the park are heavily used in the morning and late afternoon as people go to and from work.

Lions Field Trail merges with Brackenridge Park Trail, which continues south-southwest to the lower edge of the park, where it turns west and then goes under McAllister Freeway to the Flood Control Tunnel Inlet Park. From there, the trail continues south to the River Walk, connecting the park to the center of visitor activities in the city.

A secondary means of transportation is provided by the San Antonio Zoo Eagle miniature train (formerly the Brackenridge Eagle), which gives visitors a very good overview of the upper portions of the park above the golf course.

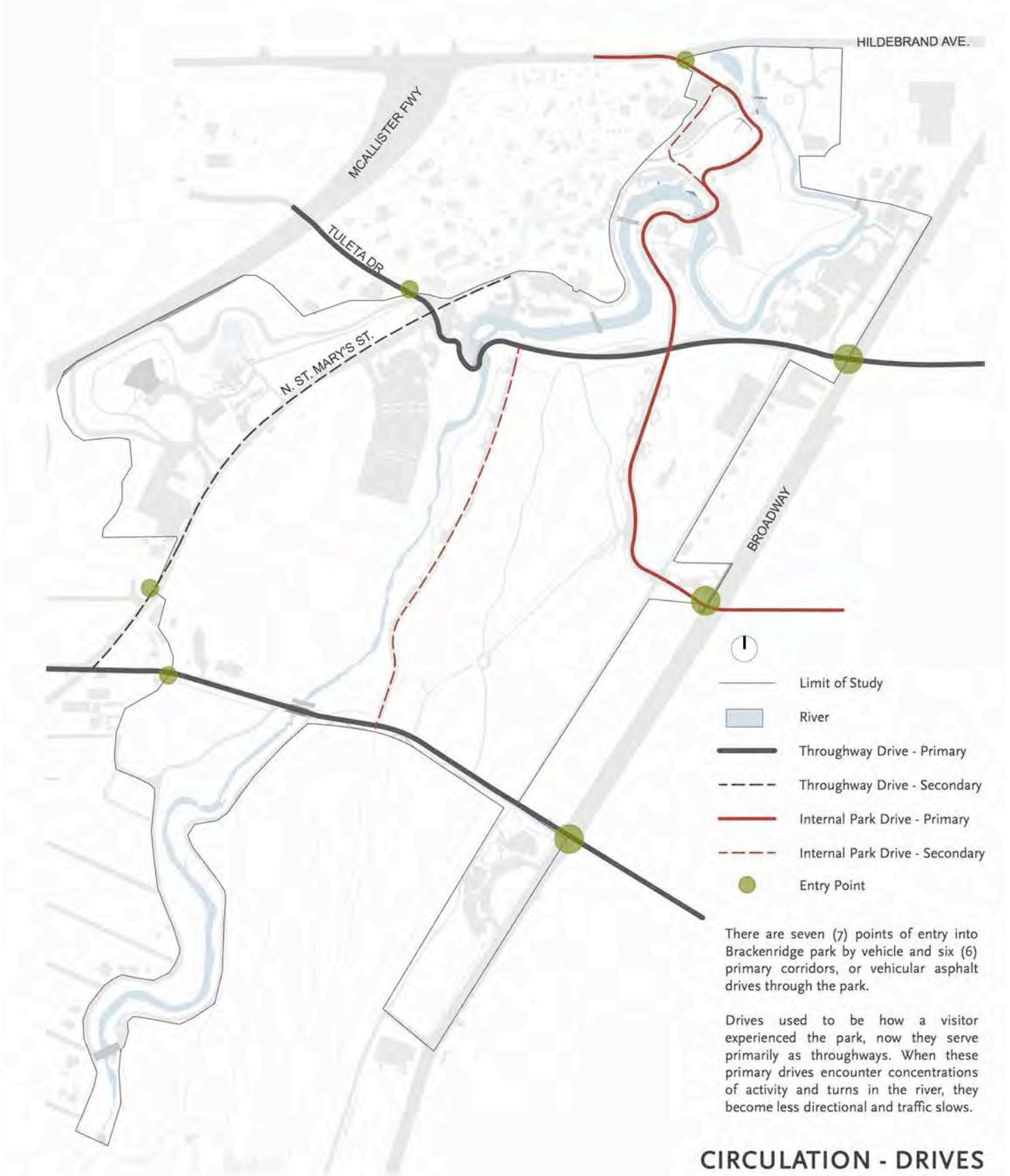


FIGURE 13-21. Diagram of existing vehicular drives. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



FIGURE 13-22. Composite diagram of existing circulation features. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



CIRCULATION - PEDESTRIAN PATHS

FIGURE 13-23. Diagram of existing pedestrian paths. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

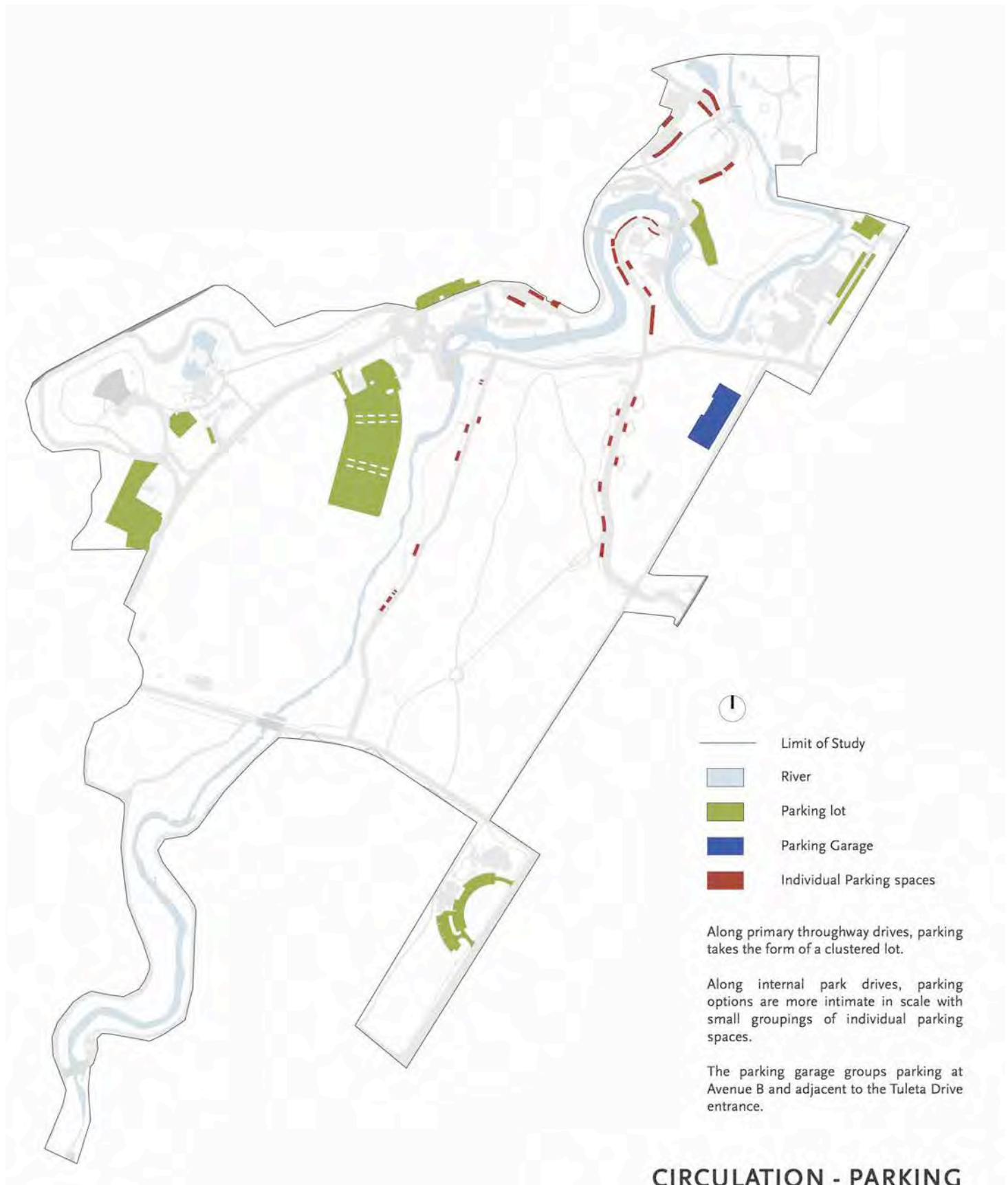


FIGURE 13-24. Diagram of existing parking in park. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



Edges Between Cultural Institutions

EDGES BETWEEN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

There are a series of internal boundaries in the park that limit free movement by pedestrians and automobiles. The most obvious barrier, which is one of the park's most important features, is the river. River crossings by roadway are not pedestrian friendly, and pedestrian bridges that cross the river are limited. The northernmost crossing is at Joske Pavilion, and the next one to the south is along the Steel Truss Bridge at Brackenridge Road and Brackenridge Way. There is a crossing just below the previous one between the BPC offices and the treatment plant at the zoo, and there are paths just to the north of the Tuleta Drive crossing, the East Mulberry Avenue crossing, and the

River Road crossing. There are three golf cart crossings within the golf course, and there is a railroad crossing at Avenue A and East Mulberry Avenue.

Protection fencing surrounding the zoo and the golf course serves as a pedestrian barrier to access, necessitated by the need to collect fees and the need to protect pedestrians from hazards at both locations (**figures 13-25 and 13-26**). The rock quarry walls at the zoo, the Japanese Tea Garden, and the Sunken Garden Theater are geologic, physical barriers created by the edge of the Balcones Escarpment (**figure 13-27**).



FIGURE 13–25. View of zoo edge adjacent to Upper Labor acequia, August 2019. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



FIGURE 13–26. View of zoo edge adjacent to bathhouse, February 2019. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



INTERNAL EDGES

FIGURE 13-27. Diagram of existing internal edges in the park. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



Collection of Historic Buildings,
Structures, Art

COLLECTION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, AND ART

A limited set of commercial structures is in place that related to the extractive industries associated with the river and escarpment. The oldest industrial building on the site is the northern Pump House #1, which was the initial pumping station for the San Antonio Water Works. Remnants of the Confederate tannery and sawmill are also no longer extant. Remnants of the Alamo and Portland Cement Company, the smokestack and some worker's homes, remain to this day. The small stone structure built by the Kampmann family is now in ruins, and the purpose for this structure is still unknown.

After the donation of parkland to the city, herds of domestic and wild animals of various types were brought to the site through transfer from San Pedro Park and through acquisition. This required fencing, gates, and probably barns of some sort for the storage of grain, corn, hay, and other supplies for the animals that later formed the basis of the zoo.

In 1915, Ray Lambert became parks commissioner, and with prodigious energy and the ingenuity of an engineer, he set in motion the construction and installation of a large number of the buildings and structures that now stand in the park (**figure 13-28**). His background as a stonemason surely provided him with the necessary construction skills to ensure that the work was of a high quality that would stand the test of time and use. This burst of activity in Brackenridge Park began in 1915 and lasted for most of the next twenty-five years, until the beginning of World War II. Collectively, there are numerous structures on the site today (**figure 13-29**).



FIGURE 13–28. View of stone architecture, lower pumphouse number two. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

Spatial organization is the description of the three elements that combine to create space in the landscape—the ground, the vertical planes, and the overhead planes that together organize the visualization of the landscape by the viewer.

The overall spatial organization of Brackenridge Park is defined by proximity to the San Antonio River, which runs down the general center of the park and has land along each side of it. The park is generally shaped like an extended rectangle, with the eastern and western borders of the park forming the longest edges (**figure 13-30**).

Programming is the description of various land uses that occur on the landscape. One of the historic uses in Brackenridge Park, picnicking, persists today, along with serving as a space for arts, education, sporting events, gathering, running and walking, and other uses (**figures 13-31 and 13-32**).



FIGURE 13-29. Map of existing structures throughout the park. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

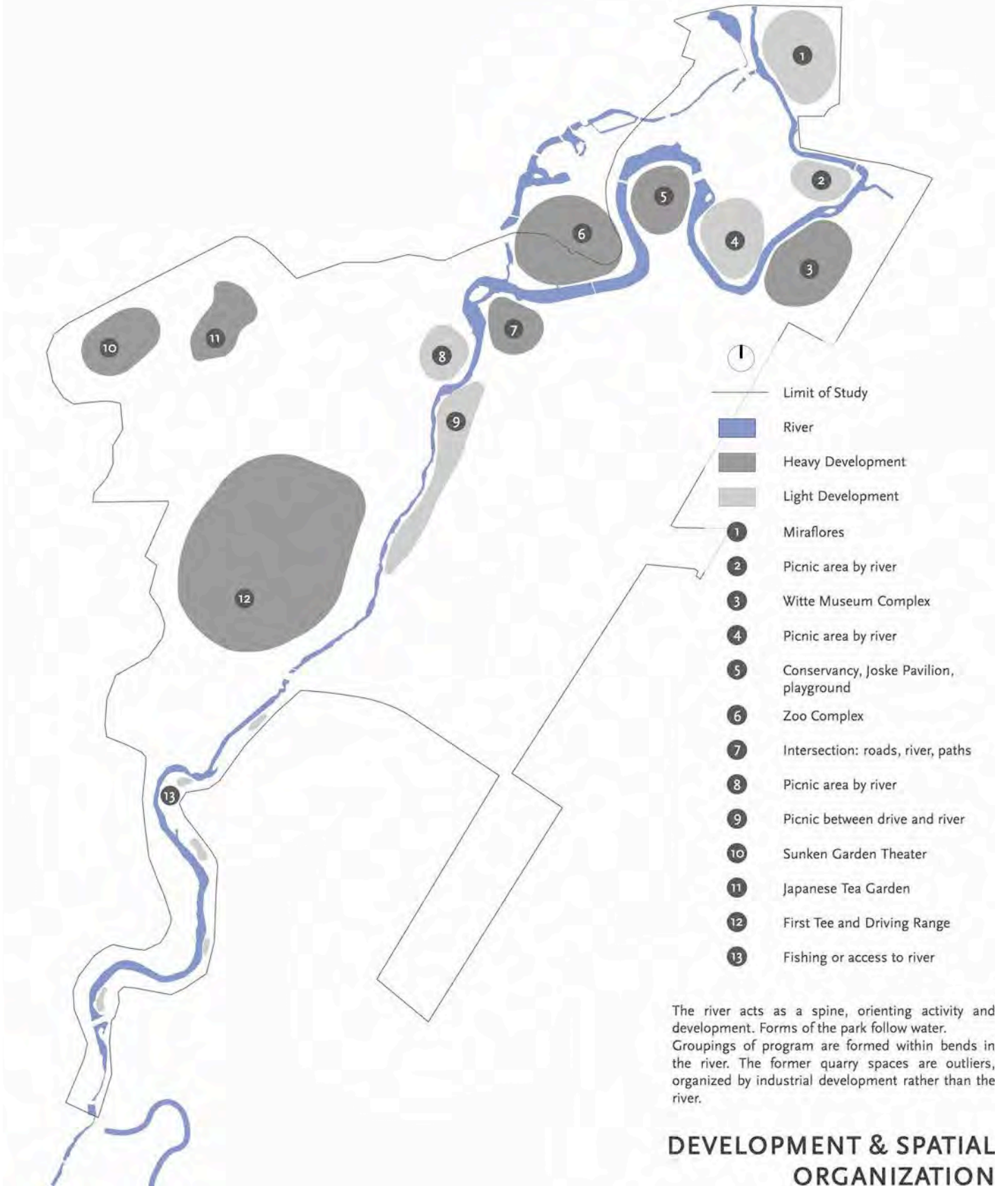


FIGURE 13-30. Diagram of existing development and spatial organization. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

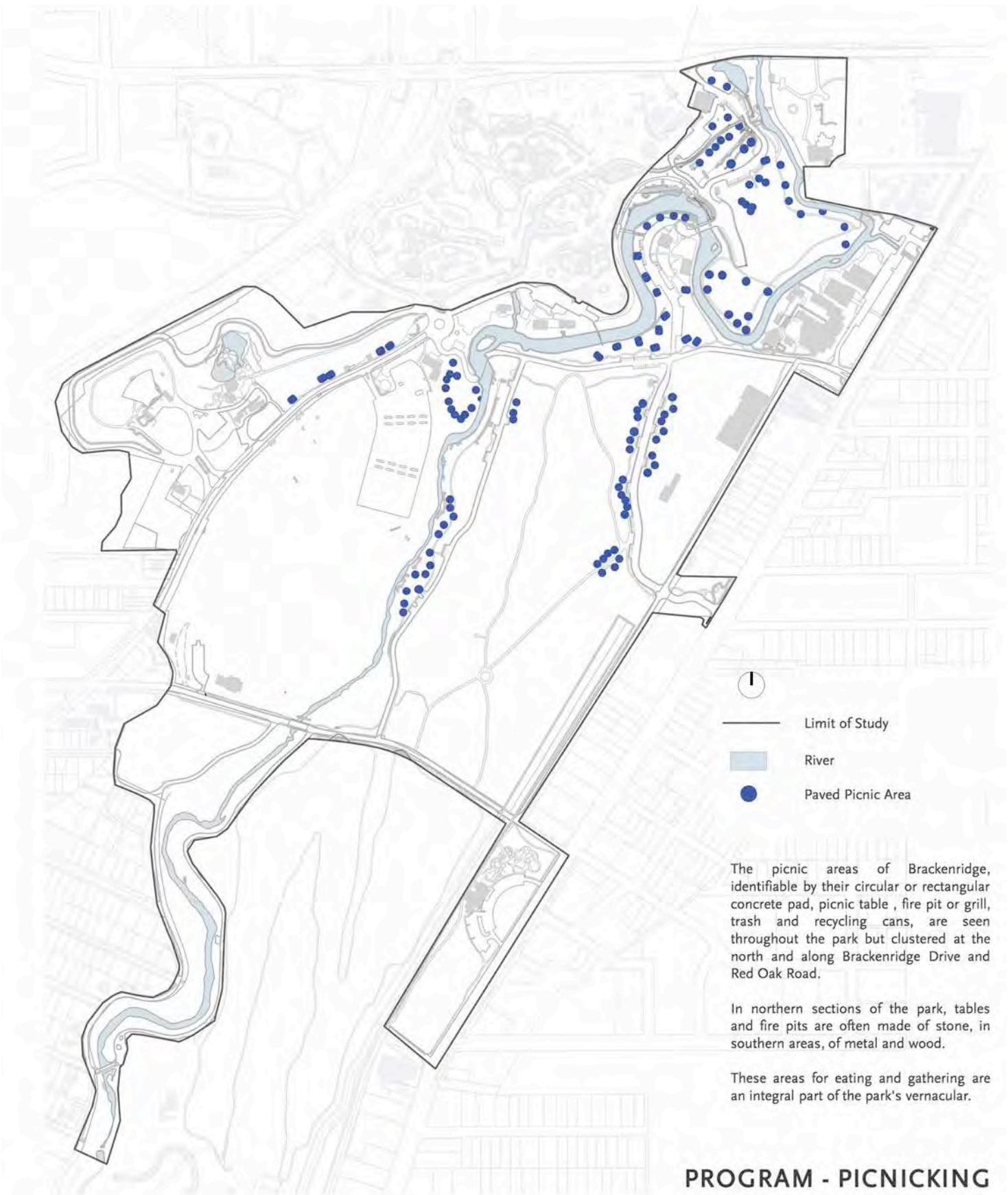










FIGURE 13-31. Diagram of designated programming for picnicking areas. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



-  Limit of Study
-  River
-  Arts + Education
-  Sports
-  Events
-  Gathering/Picnic
-  Garden + Vegetated Walk
-  Unprogrammed free space

Park users have a variety of options and ways to enjoy and use the park.

There are institutions within the park that offer educational opportunities in science and art.

Sports fields and paths offer options for recreational pursuits.

Pavilion structures and the Sunken Garden theater host gatherings and events.

Quieter pursuits are focused within the Wilderness Areas and along the river south of Mulberry Avenue.

PROGRAM AND USE

BRACKENRDIGE PARK
 CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
 By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 13-32. Diagram of existing park programming and uses: Program and Use. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

CHARACTER ZONES

In order to better assess the existing conditions of the park landscape, the site has been divided into fifteen character zones. Although (figure 13-33, 13-34, 13-35, 13-36, 13-37). While there are many dissimilar features within and between zones, it is better to consider the contiguous nature of the different features as a whole. When treatment decisions are made, they will likely affect all of the different elements within each zone, so it is better to analyze the zone as a whole and then look at the individual components.

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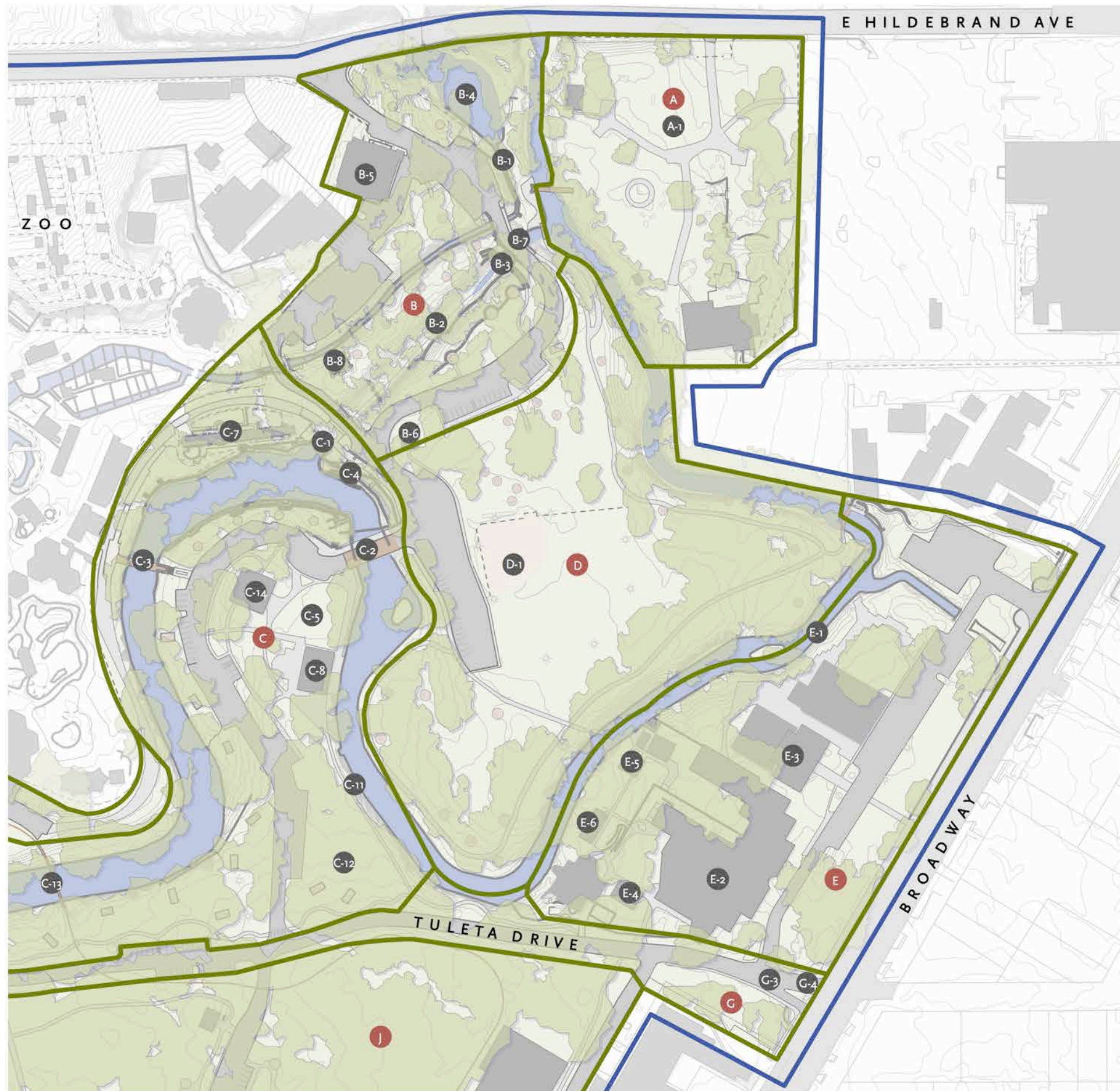
— Limit of Brackenridge Park
 — Character Zones within Area of Study

- Character Zone**
- A** Miraflores
 - B** Lily Pond, Bridges, Acequia
 - C** Historic center and Live Oaks
 - D** Picnic/Softball at Bend
 - E** Witte and edge at Broadway
 - F** Quarry village
 - G** Transitional zone
 - H** Sport fields
 - I** Central Riparian
 - J** Vegetated Grove
 - K** Catalpa Pershing
 - L** Davis Park
 - M** Southern Riparian
 - N** Lions Field
 - O** Tunnel Park
 - P** Zoo
 - Q** Golf Course

OVERALL SITE PLAN

BRACKENRDIGE PARK
 CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
 By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 13-33. Overall Site Plan. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



- Limit of Brackenridge Park
- Character Zones within Area of Study

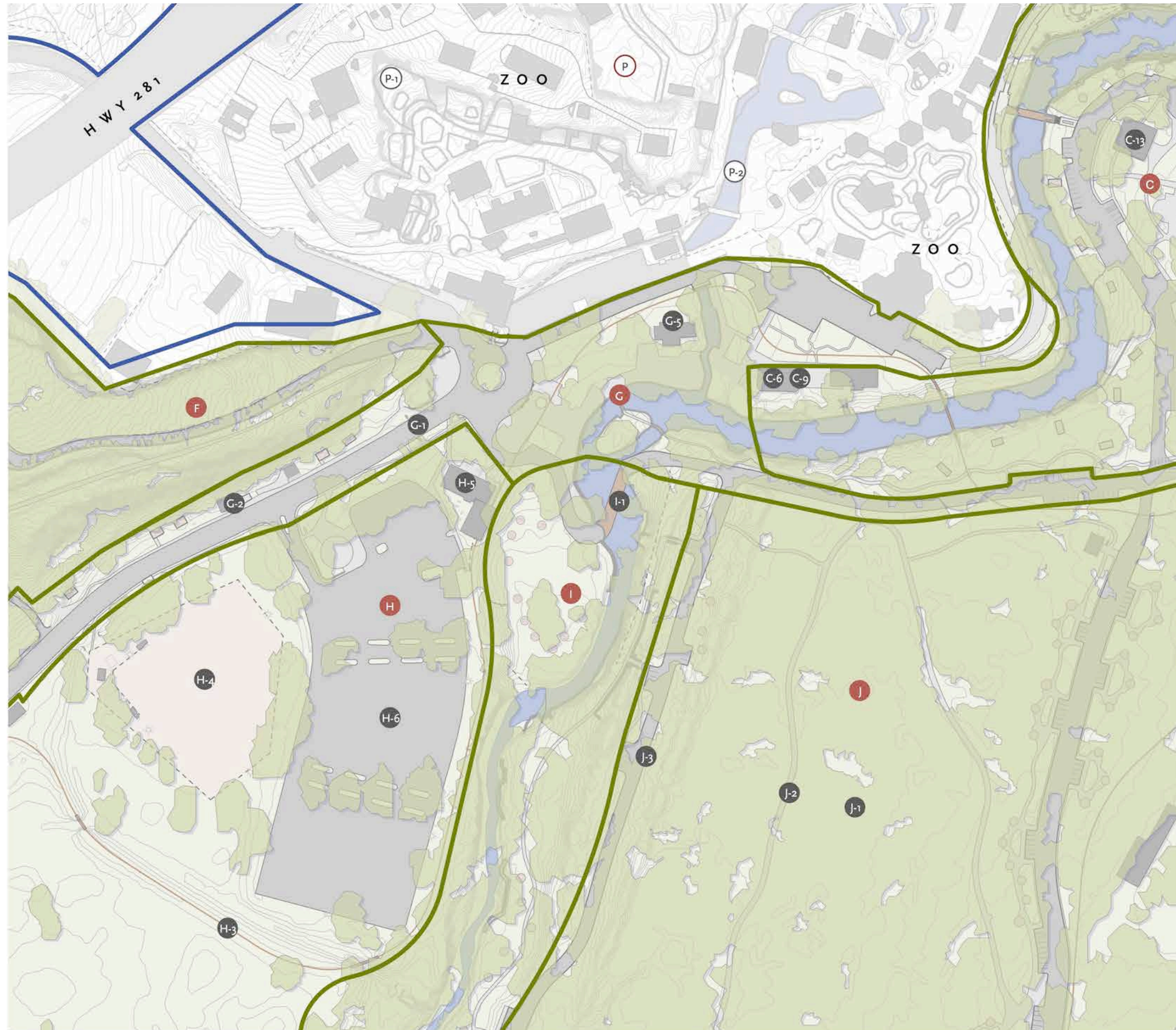
FEATURE BY CHARACTER ZONE

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Miraflores A-1 Miraflores B Lily Pond, Bridges, Acequia B-1 Upper Labor Dam + Acequia B-2 Water Works Raceway B-3 Stone Foot Bridge B-4 Lily Pond B-5 Donkey Barn B-6 Lambert Beach Bathroom Building B-7 Dionicio Rodriguez Bridge B-8 Electric Pump House #3 C Historic center and Live Oaks C-1 First Water Works Pump House C-2 Berlin Iron Truss Bridge C-3 Arched Iron Truss Pedestrian Bridge C-4 Lambert Beach C-5 Eleanor Brackenridge Playground C-7 Lambert Beach Bathhouse C-8 Joske Pavilion C-11 San Antonio River Walls C-12 Historic Picnic Area C-13 Miniature Train Bridge C-14 Joske Pavilion Bathrooms, Brackenridge Park Conservancy Office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> D Picnic/Softball at Bend D-1 Lambert Beach Softball Field E Witte and edge at Broadway E-1 Acequia Madre de Valero E-2 Witte Museum E-3 Pioneer Hall E-4 Ruiz House E-5 Navarro House E-6 Twohig House G Transitional Zone G-3 Tuleta Drive Entrance G-4 Perimeter wall and entry gate |
|---|--|

CULTURAL CORE ENLARGEMENT

BRACKENRIDGE PARK
 CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
 By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 13-34. Cultural Core Enlargement shown in Figure 13-4. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



- Limit of Brackenridge Park
- Character Zones within Area of Study

FEATURE BY CHARACTER ZONE

- C** Historic center and Live Oaks
 - C-6 Koehler Pavilion
 - C-9 Koehler Pavilion Restrooms
- G** Transitional Zone
 - G-1 Koehler Park Entrance Columns
 - G-2 Saint Mary's Street Restrooms
 - G-5 Cypress Pavilion
 - G-13 Joske Pavilion Bathrooms, Brackenridge Park Conservancy Office
- H** Sports Fields
 - H-3 Recreational Railroad
 - H-4 Tony Martinez Softball Field
 - H-5 Eagle Train Depot and Gift Shop
 - H-6 Public Parking Lot
- I** Sports Fields
 - I-1 Tuleta Drive Low Water Crossing
- J** Vegetated Grove
 - J-1 Wilderness Area/East Grove
 - J-2 Wilderness Loop
 - J-3 Red Oak Road
- P** Zoo
 - P-1 Quarry Walls
 - P-2 Upper Labor Diversion Channel

ZOO EDGE ENLARGEMENT

BRACKENRIDGE PARK
 CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
 By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 13-35. Zoo Edge Enlargement shown in Figure 13-4. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



- Limit of Brackenridge Park
- Character Zones within Area of Study

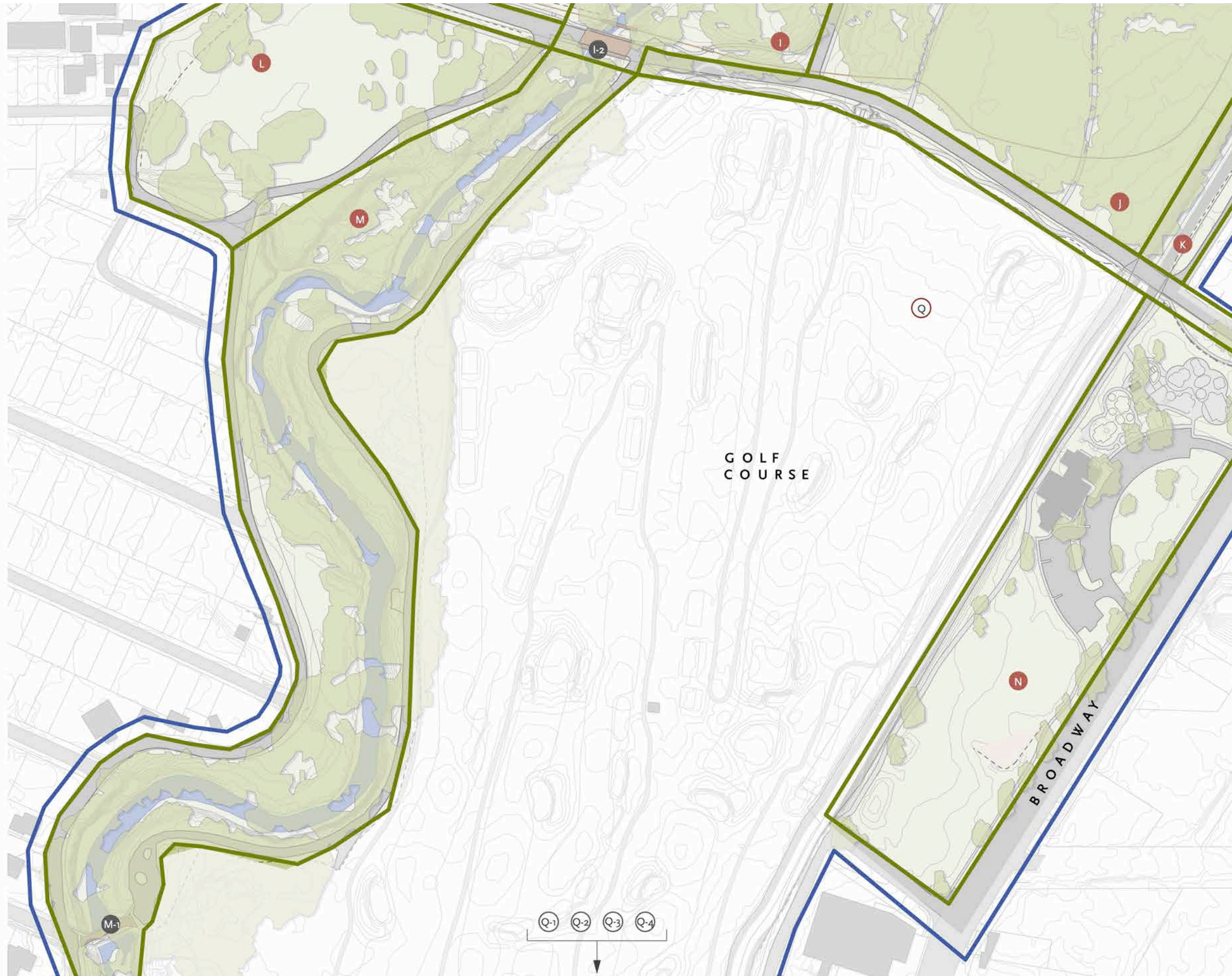
FEATURE BY CHARACTER ZONE

- F** Quarry Village
 - F-1 Quarry Walls
 - F-2 Kampmann House ruins
 - F-3 Alamo Portland and Roman Cement Works
 - F-4 Alpine Drive
 - F-5 Japanese Tea Garden
 - F-6 Mexican Village
 - F-7 Sunken Garden Theater
- G** Transitional Zone
 - G-6 Tuesday Musical Club
 - G-7 North Saint Mary's Street Parking
 - G-8 Japanese Tea Garden Parking
- H** Sports Fields
 - H-1 Driving Range/Polo Fields
 - H-2 Sherrif's Mounted Posse Building
 - H-7 Sunken Garden Depot

**SUNKEN GARDEN THEATER
AND JAPANESE TEA GARDEN
ENLARGEMENT**

BRACKENRDIGE PARK
CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

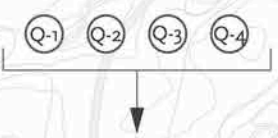
FIGURE 13-36. Sunken Garden Theater and Japanese Tea Garden Enlargement shown in Figure 13-4. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



- Limit of Brackenridge Park
- Character Zones within Area of Study

FEATURE BY CHARACTER ZONE

- I Central Riparian
- I-2 Mulberry Street Bridge
- J Vegetated Grove
- K Catalpa-Pershing
- L Davis Park
- M Southern Riparian
- M-1 Avenue A Low-Water Crossing
- N Lions Field
- Q Golf Course
- Q-1 Lower Pump House
- Q-2 Brackenridge Park Golf Course Clubhouse
- Q-3 Electric Pump House Station #2
- Q-4 Brackenridge Park Golf Course Clubhouse



SOUTH END PARK ENLARGEMENT

BRACKENRIDGE PARK
 CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
 By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 13-37. Site Plan: South End Park Enlargement shown in Figure 13-4. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



FIGURE 13–38. View into Miraflores from the bank of the San Antonio River. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

ZONE A: MIRAFLORES GARDENS (CIRCA 1923)

Spatial Organization. The fifteen acres that now comprise Miraflores Gardens survived from larger gardens begun in 1921 (**figure 13-38**). The area was acquired in 2005 by the city of San Antonio and added to the National Register in 2006; it was declared a State Archaeological Landmark in 2009. The area is bounded by the San Antonio River to the west and south, the telephone company building to the east, and Hildebrand Avenue to the north. The primary ceremonial entrance into Miraflores Gardens fronts Hildebrand Avenue. Spatially, the various sculptures and follies are placed throughout the entire site, providing a progression of experiences for the visitor.

Land Use. Miraflores was created and is still used as a display area for the sculpture collection that Dr. Xavier Urrutia purchased or commissioned. Miraflores is a sculptural manifestation of the life of Urrutia through the re-creation of elements that he experienced during his extensive travels.

Circulation. Circulation into the site is through the entrance gates on Hildebrand and across a bridge that traverses the San Antonio River. Circulation within the site was prescribed by pathways through and within the sculptures and also by random circulation in order to more closely experience the sculptural elements in the garden.

Vegetation. The vegetation in Miraflores consists of a random selection of trees on the eastern edge of the garden, with a dense overstory along of the edge of the park that fronts the San Antonio River. There are minimal shrubs, with most of the ground plane covered with grass.

Buildings and Structures. There are no buildings associated with Miraflores. The built works on the site are small structures and then small-scale features, primarily sculptures.

Views and Vistas. The view to the San Antonio River and across Hildebrand Avenue are the two primary positive views from within Miraflores. A vista framed by the entrance gate leads the eye across Hildebrand north to the edge of the University of the Incarnate Word. The view west to the parking lot and telephone company building is undesirable.

Small-Scale Features. The majority of Miraflores is covered with small-scale features, primarily sculptures. The sculptures were damaged by the inappropriate addition of several feet of fill at an earlier date, and some of the sculptural elements are now missing.

Archaeological Sites. The site was declared a State Archaeological Landmark in 2009 and has the potential to contain significant archaeological material. It is in direct proximity to the San Antonio River, and excavations are underway at the site.

ZONE B: LILY POND, BRIDGES, ACEQUIA

The San Antonio River enters Brackenridge Park at the upper north portion of the site, near the intersection of Hildebrand Avenue and Brackenridge Drive. Three forms of water exist in this zone—a tranquil pool of water known as Lily Pond, a historic irrigation and water supply canal at the site of the original Acequia Madre de Valero/Alamo Dam, and the San Antonio River itself (**figures 13-39 and 13-40**). The Upper Labor Acequia dam and the beginning of its irrigation channel, which flows to the zoo, is also located in this portion of the park. The constructed Lily Pond is located west of the river, while the dam and initial channel of the Acequia Madre de Valero/Alamo Dam are east of the river.

Spatial Organization. Spatially, this character zone is defined by water and roadways. The river flows on the eastern edge of the site, and man-made water features are on both sides of the river.

Land Use. A variety of land uses occurs in this character zone. The constructed water features of Lily Pond and the acequia are connected to the river. An important roadway bisects this zone and serves as the northern entrance to the park. Maintenance areas associated with the park and with the zoo are located in the western portion of this character zone.



FIGURE 13-39. View of the historic irrigation channel that delivered water to Pump House #1. Source: Suzanne Turner Associates.



FIGURE 13–40. View of an exposed portion of the Upper Labor Dam as it exists today. A Rodriguez Dionicio Bridge is visible at left. Source: Suzanne Turner Associates

Circulation. Circulation in this zone is primarily automotive and runs north-south within the zone, connecting with Brackenridge Way at the lower southwest end of the zone. Pedestrian circulation is limited and minimal. Most areas in this zone are accessed from parked cars.

Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology. This area has scattered tree canopies throughout most of the zone, with a denser line of trees along each side of the river.

Cultural Features. Constructed much later in the history of the waterworks, Pump Station #3 was built in 1940 and is an electrified pump station. Earlier pump stations operated on gravity and velocity in order to activate their pumping operations and force water through the extensive network of pipes that then branched out into the city.

Master faux bois artist Dionicio Rodriguez is known especially in Texas for his sculptural technique of using concrete and iron to create fanciful and large-scale faux bois works. The Dionicio Rodriguez Bridge at Brackenridge, built in 1926, is one of the largest of its kind, and the scale and complexity make it especially unique. The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) notes that “the structure is considered to be one of Rodriguez’s masterpieces.”¹⁰

Constructed of concrete and stone in 1900, the Stone Footbridge spans the old waterworks channel. The supporting infrastructure of the footbridge appears to be an early introduction. There is some evidence that the earlier buttresses on each side of the channel were once the support for a larger bridge between Koehler on the west and Brackenridge on the east.¹¹ Koehler has long been considered an element within Brackenridge and is treated as part of the park. The footbridge is in good condition.

10 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 11.

11 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 11.

Constructed from stone in 1926 to provide bathrooms and shower facilities, the rectangular Lambert Beach bathroom structures were added as an amenity for women bathers. The bathhouse structures were designed by Emmett Jackson. Both structures have since been modified for storage and unisex baths. The roofs are replacements of what were probably green barrel ceramic tile. The buildings themselves are in good condition, although their current use is not consistent with design and construction intent.

ZONE C: CULTURAL CENTER AND LIVE OAKS

This zone contains a range of elements that date from the earliest commercial activity before the park was formally established up through the period of major development that spanned from 1915 through the 1950s.

At the north end of the park, there is a density of historic elements that collectively constitute a cultural core or district. These include the Witte Museum, the San Antonio Zoo, the Japanese Tea Garden, the Sunken Garden Theater, Miraflores Garden, and the dams and acequias of the Upper Labor and the Alamo. This is also where the earliest elements of the waterworks company are located.

Spatial Organization. The area that contains the first waterworks pump house also contains the two major pavilions in the park, the headquarters of the BPC, the Eleanor Brackenridge Playground, and the Works Progress Administration (WPA) picnic area and live oak canopy. Lambert Beach is located within this stretch of the river and is centered on the original pump house. Each feature relates to the river and its large oxbow curve within the zone. The elements relate to the river either through direct proximity or through vistas that lead the visitor's eye toward the watercourse.

Land Use. This area of the park is heavily programmed toward planned events at the two pavilions, family picnics, and children's play. It is difficult for the visitor to connect with the river in this zone due to issues related to the egret colony and associated reduced water quality. Open space is limited because of the extensive programming in this zone. Land use is typical of dense urban parks.

Circulation. The patterns of circulation in this zone are driven by the river as it flows through this area. Roads, elements, and pedestrian movement are all related to the watercourse. Automobile movement is on Brackenridge Way and on Tuleta Drive on the southern edge of the zone.

Vegetation. The densest concentrations of vegetative cover in this zone are associated with the trees along the river and the mature live oaks that provide shade in the picnic area.

Buildings and Structures. The oldest commercial building in the city of San Antonio is the original pump house, constructed in 1878. The pavilion structures were both constructed in the second decade of the twentieth century. The building that houses comfort stations and the BPC is newer, but the materials in this building and the building's overall form, with a broad overhanging roof made of terra-cotta tile, establish a sense of permanence and continuity.

Views and Vistas. Views up and down the river are good but not long. The oxbow shape of the river course in this zone results in shorter views along the water's edge. Vistas are shaped

by proximity to the river and the intentional placement of trees that border the river. Open areas have been maintained and provide visual access to the river. Buildings shape space and control the views throughout this northern part of the park.

Small-Scale Features. Architectural elements are scattered across the landscape. Most are constructed of limestone, with the material quarried locally, often on-site.

Cultural Features. An original component of the San Antonio Water Works, Pump House #1 was built in 1877-1878 and was the original building that housed the pumps forcing water into the pipes that then supplied the city with potable water. The raceway exiting the pump house returns to the river on the south side of the pump house building. “Stone rubble wing walls curve from the building along the river.”¹² The NRHP nomination states that “this pump house is the oldest intact industrial building remaining in San Antonio.”¹³

Originally constructed in 1915 as Ray Lambert was beginning his work as head of the parks department, Lambert Beach is adjacent to Pump House #1. The first iteration of the swimming area was as a “gravel-lined pool in the natural river channel.”¹⁴ In 1925, Lambert rehabilitated the area and “concrete stairs and landings were added to provide easy access to the river, and a stone bathhouse replaced rustic dressing rooms.”¹⁵ Stone retention walls and steps leading down to the river are either badly deteriorated or partially collapsed. The bathhouse structures were designed by Emmett Jackson. Both structures have been modified for storage and unisex baths. The roofs are replacements of those that were probably green barrel ceramic tile. The buildings themselves are in good condition, although their current use is not consistent with design and construction intent.

The elements of the larger beach complex are in poor condition overall. Lambert Beach is currently the home of a nesting egret colony. Their rookery has created water-quality issues in the San Antonio River at Lambert Beach and up- and downstream, depending on water flow.

The Miniature Train Bridge was constructed in 1957 as part of an expansion of the miniature train ride. The small-gauge rail lines were extended over the river on a Warren through truss structure where they exit from a tunnel. The bridge is in good condition.

Below Lambert Beach, the lenticular Iron Truss Bridge is the most elaborate of the four iron bridges ordered by the city from Connecticut’s Berlin Bridge Company in 1890. It was installed across the San Antonio River at South St. Mary’s Street. While the other three bridges, which survive, had the names of the mayor and city commissioners modestly placed on side trusses, this bridge had the names on plaques prominently mounted from the trusses above.

Cost-conscious residents used this to attack the city’s political boss, Mayor Bryan Callaghan, for extravagance in ordering the bridges. He barely survived reelection in what became known as “the Letters of Gold campaign.” After being heavily damaged in the 1921 catastrophic flood, the pedestrian bridge was moved in 1925 and repaired to cross the river near Lambert Beach in Brackenridge Park. The bridge, with large, arched trusses, leads

12 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 12.

13 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 12.

14 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 12.

15 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 12.



FIGURE 13-41. View of Arched Iron Truss Bridge, 1890. Source: Witte Museum Collection

from Brackenridge Park to the Koehler unit of Brackenridge Park. It was originally on Fourth Street in downtown San Antonio.¹⁶ The condition of the bridge is fair.

Originally constructed in 1890 in downtown San Antonio, the Arched Iron Truss Bridge was damaged in the 1921 flood that devastated the city (**figure 13-41**). In 1925, the bridge was moved to Brackenridge Park, repaired, and placed back into service at a point just on the northern edge of Lambert Beach.

Constructed in 1926, the Joske Pavilion was designed by Emmett Jackson. It is a Spanish colonial revival open-air structure with a clay-tile roof and opposing chimneys at each end. Stairways by each chimney provide access to small balconies from which visitors can view the river and playground. The pavilion is in excellent condition.

Constructed in 1925, the Koehler Pavilion was built at approximately the same time as the Joske Pavilion. There is some evidence that remnants of a previous pavilion were incorporated into the 1925 version. In 1982, the Koehler was renovated and an adjoining patio was added that overlooks the river. The architects for that project were Carragone and Reyna.

The faux bois Koehler Pavilion table and two benches, built in 1925 and located just north of the pavilion, are another example of Rodriguez's palapa motif. Their condition is good.

Constructed circa 1930, the rectangular masonry structure that houses the Koehler Pavilion restrooms is capped by a gable roof with deep, projecting porch overhangs to provide visitors

¹⁶ Lewis F. Fisher, *American Venice: The Epic Story of San Antonio's River* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2015), 14.



FIGURE 13-42. View of historic WPA Picnic Grounds under tree canopy on west side of the San Antonio River, Tuleta Drive, February 2019. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

protection from the elements. Its original use is unknown. At some point, the small building was rehabilitated to provide restroom facilities.

One of the most iconic features in the park to those who have long been visitors is the 1938-1940 WPA-era picnic grounds, set within a live oak and native tree canopy on Tuleta Drive (**figure 13-42**). Each table is marked with a numbered tile or with an inset bronze plaque, denoting the structure's connection with the WPA. The area also includes stone barbecue pits in the same style as the tables and benches. The numbered and labeled picnic tables have had concrete pads installed around them to provide a clean eating area for picnickers. Modern water fountains have also been added to the assemblage. The picnic area is in good condition.

The Koehler Pavilion picnic shelter dates to circa 1982 and is located on the south side of the Koehler. Its condition is good.

Surrounding the Joske Pavilion is the Eleanor Brackenridge Playground, originally installed during the 1920s. The playground has been periodically rehabilitated to update the play components to fulfill current needs and to comply with safety and code requirements. The playground was last updated and enlarged in 2003. Its condition is good.



FIGURE 13-43. View of the Lambert Beach Softball Field, built circa 1950. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

ZONE D: PICNIC/SOFTBALL AT BEND

The picnic and softball fields at the bend of the river were installed circa 1950. They are contemporary features that provide an active form of recreation in the park. The softball field is one of three ball fields located in the park. The three individual fields are single sites; there is no grouping of fields in close proximity.

This area is surrounded on three sides by a large bend in the river that serves as a connecting open area between the Witte zone (E) and the cultural center (C) to the west. Spatially, the area is generally flat, and a ring of trees provides shade along the river's edge.

Land Use. This zone is used for active recreation at the Lambert Beach Softball Field (**figure 13-43**) and for family gatherings within the picnic area. The area is highly programmed, but when the softball field is not in use, park visitors can spread blankets and use the area for other purposes.

Circulation. Circulation is generally more active at the surrounding edges of this zone where the Joske Pavilion Trail provides both paved and crushed stone pathways along the river. Within the zone, visitors can experience the site across grass lawns.

Vegetation. Vegetation at the ground plane is mostly comprised of extensive lawn areas, the riparian edge along the river, and random large and small trees in the picnic areas.

Buildings and Structures. No significant buildings or structures exist in this zone.

Views and Vistas. Most Zone D views are internal, with openings in the riparian tree canopy that allow vistas to the Witte and to areas along the river (**figure 13-44**).

Small-Scale Features. This area contains several small-scale features. Those associated with the Lambert Beach Field are the light poles, fencing, aluminum viewing stands, and dugout



FIGURE 13–44. View of the back of the Witte Museum, looking across the San Antonio River. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

structures. In the picnic areas, there are multiple covered picnic tables on concrete pads, and many have grills at the edges.

Cultural Features. The Lambert Beach Softball Field and associated picnic units of various materials are located between the main road and the San Antonio River just below the Dionicio Rodriguez Footbridge. The softball field dates to approximately 1950, while the various picnic tables are circa 1990. The introduction of recreation units within the park started very early in its history. The golf course was first during the 1910s, followed closely by the polo field and swimming areas.

ZONE E: WITTE AND EDGE AT BROADWAY

The Witte Museum and its Broadway edge serve as both an entrance and an iconic feature at the northeast side of Brackenridge. The first building on the ten-acre Witte Museum site, located on the Brackenridge Park campus, was acquired by the city in 1908. It was a two-story building designed by Ayres & Ayres Architects. It has been transformed repeatedly since its initial construction in 1926. The Witte Museum, the adjacent Founders Hall, and the newly constructed Witte annex serve as a hard edge, which hides the river and the picturesque scene immediately to the west of the complex.

Land Use. Land use is comprised of the various museum entities with associated parking and visitor services. There are three historic homes that were relocated to the site, but the integrity of their context was compromised when they were relocated into a noncontributing setting.

Circulation. Visitors access the Witte museum complex by parking in proximity to the Witte zone, parking on Brackenridge Way and walking along Tuleta Drive to the complex, or parking in the Brackenridge Park Parking Garage just to the south in Zone J. Additional parking is provided in the North Parking Lot and the Allensworth Parking Lot across Broadway. Pedestrian circulation encircles the site and provides multiple access points to the four buildings that comprise the complex.

This three-story, 350-car structure located on the west side of Avenue B provides parking for visitors to Brackenridge and the Witte Museum. The garage was designed by Lake Flato Architects and was completed in 2009. It features an eight-thousand-square-foot wire and galvanized metal trellis, or “living screen,” surrounding the garage and gesturing to environmentally responsible practices.

Vegetation. Vegetation in the Witte zone is comprised of random tree cover and a line of trees along the river. The ground plane is primarily grass lawn.

Buildings and Structures. Zone E is architecture centric, with multiple museum buildings occupying the majority of the zone.

Views and Vistas. Visitors experience Broadway as a dense urban corridor, with commercial buildings lining the vista to the east. The river is visible to the west in the foreground, with the larger park complex in the distance. Views up and down the river provide a connection to the hydrology and recreation within the zone.

Small-Scale Features. There are multiple small-scale features associated with the Witte complex, but one of the most recent and also more prominent is the Will Smith Amphitheater behind Founder’s Hall facing the river. Designed by Lake Flato Architects, the space connects the museum complex with the river and provides additional outdoor seating for visitors.

Archeological Sites. While the general archaeology of the land that comprises Brackenridge is probably the most important aspect of the overall site, the existence of the dam and head of the Madera Acequia elevates this zone to the highest level of importance. Every effort should be made to expose, protect in place, and interpret this key feature in the history of San Antonio. This built feature is the earliest evidence of colonial settlement and the beginning of the mission period.

One of the earliest infrastructure projects in San Antonio was the Acequia Madre de Valero and the dam, which diverted water from the San Antonio River to the Mission San Antonio de Valero, commonly known as the Alamo. The dam and acequia were built in 1719 and rediscovered in a 2010 archaeological investigation, which revealed that the acequia had been modified over the years as uses changed. Much of the structure of the dam has collapsed into the river. The existing condition of this feature has been highly compromised through neglect and accidental demolition.

Cultural Features. Constructed as part of the Texas Centennial celebration, Pioneer Hall was intended to recognize pioneers, trail drivers, and the Texas Rangers. The three groups were an important part of the development of the Texas rangelands and cattle industry. Architects Phelps & Dewees and Ayres & Ayres designed the building, which was completed in 1937. Ayres & Ayres had been the architects for the Witte Museum, so the vocabulary of the two buildings was consistent at the time of completion. Pioneer Hall is designated as a Texas State Archaeological Landmark.¹⁷ The existing condition of Pioneer Hall is excellent. The building has been maintained and the infrastructure updated during the seventy years since its completion. The building was acquired by the nearby Witte Museum, which had Lake Flato Architects renovate, restore, and connect Pioneer Hall with the enlarged Witte building. It reopened in 2012 as the Robert J. and Helen C. Kleberg South Texas Heritage Center. It is a contributing structure within Brackenridge Park.

The construction of the Witte Memorial Museum in 1926 resulted in the first public museum in San Antonio. The land on which the museum is constructed was acquired by the city in 1908 following a negotiation between the city and the San Antonio Water Works. An extensive renovation of the Witte in 1962 obscures the original Ayres & Ayres facade. The building is in

¹⁷ Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 9.

excellent shape due to frequent maintenance and renovations. The building houses various exhibits related to natural history in the San Antonio region. Current exhibits at the Witte include the “New Witte Museum and the Zachry Family Acequia Garden opened in 2017 with a new H-E-B- Lantern, Valero Great Hall, Naylor Family Dinosaur Gallery, McLean Family Texas Wild Gallery and Kittie West Nelson Ferguson People of the Pecos Gallery.”¹⁸

Originally constructed circa 1760, the one-room Jose Francisco Ruiz House is made of plastered stone rubble. The home was originally located in downtown San Antonio on Dolorosa Street, facing Military Plaza. It was the home of Texas Declaration of Independence signer Jose Francisco Ruiz. It was saved from demolition by preservation groups before being moved to Brackenridge Park in 1943 on land adjacent to the Witte. The condition of the Ruiz House is good.

The small limestone Celso Navarro House was originally constructed in 1835. The block home was built by the father of Texas Declaration of Independence signer Jose Antonio Navarro and uncle of Jose Francisco Ruiz. In 1947, it was moved to Brackenridge Park near the Witte Museum after escaping destruction for a downtown high school’s athletic field.¹⁹ The condition of the Navarro house is good.

Constructed circa 1841, the two-story stone John Twohig House was the home of the Irish-born merchant and banker of the same name. It originally stood on the banks of the San Antonio River near South St. Mary’s Street until it was marked for demolition for the new location of San Antonio Public Service Company parking. The company paid for its move and reconstruction on the banks of the river behind the Witte Museum. The 430 sacks of cement donated to the effort by the Portland Cement Company arrived just before a wartime freeze on the use of cement went into effect, making this the last WPA project completed in Texas. It was first used as headquarters for both the Historic Buildings Foundation and the San Antonio Garden Center.²⁰ The Twohig house was relocated to Brackenridge Park in 1942. The condition house is good.

Constructed by WPA workers and Witte Museum contractors during 1936 and 1937, the perimeter wall and low entry gates along Broadway were designed to delineate the space between Broadway and the museum buildings to the west. There are entry points that open to sidewalks both at the Witte and at Pioneer Hall. Running from the northeast corner of the Brackenridge Park property, the wall extends south to Tuleta Drive. An integral stone bench is designed as part of the wall, serving as seating for visitors or as a queuing area for those waiting on transportation. The walls have been maintained over the years and appear to be in good condition.

18 “History,” The Witte Museum, accessed October 23, 2019, witemuseum.org/history/.

19 Lewis F. Fisher, *Saving San Antonio: The Preservation of a Heritage*, 2nd ed. (San Antonio: Maverick Books, 2016), 102–3, 115, 228–29; Lewis F. Fisher and Maria Watson Pfeiffer, *Traditions and Visions: San Antonio Architecture*, ed. Julius M. Gribou, Robert G. Hanley, and Thomas E. Robey (San Antonio: American Institute of Architects, 2007), 224, 227; Bess Carroll Woolford and Ellen Schulz Quillin, *The Story of the Witte Memorial Museum* (San Antonio: San Antonio Museum Association, 1960), 60–78.

20 Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 102–3, 115, 228–29; Fisher and Pfeiffer, *Traditions and Visions*, 224, 227; Woolford and Quillin, *Story of the Witte Memorial Museum*, 60–78.

ZONE F: QUARRY VILLAGE

The quarry edge created by commercial rock mining beginning in the earliest days of San Antonio's history provides the backdrop for three distinct cultural landscapes in the park: the zoo, the Japanese Tea Garden, and the Sunken Garden Theater (**figures 13-45 and 13-46**). The quarry walls serve to regulate the height of the features within each of these three elements, and they demonstrate the materiality of most of the park's constructed features, that of limestone rubble and block.

Spatial Organization. Quarry Village runs in a northeast-southwest direction along the edge and base of the Balcones Escarpment. To the west is the McAllister Freeway, and at the southeast edge is a transitional zone that is defined by automobile circulation.

Land Use. This heavily programmed zone consists of the zoo, the tea garden, and the Sunken Garden Theater. The zoo and the Japanese Tea Garden are both oriented toward visitor experience and participation. The theater is used intermittently when performances and events are scheduled.

Circulation. Both the zoo and the Japanese Tea Garden have associated parking. The Sunken Garden Theater is accessed by parking at the Japanese Tea Garden or at the Tuesday Musical Club and then walking along the road into the amphitheater area or onto a pathway that brings the visitor into the area in front of the stage from the south side.

Alpine Drive, which evolved from what was originally Quarry Road, was planned as a scenic overlook with views of the Japanese Tea Garden and the Sunken Garden Theater. It begins at Tuleta Drive at the edge of the zoo, circles above the old quarry locations, and descends back down at a terminus at North St. Mary's Street. The right-of-way was "preserved and reconstructed as part of the US Highway 281 mitigation plan" but is now closed to vehicular traffic. Condition is variable, especially considering that it was designed for vehicular traffic but is now accessible only for walking/hiking.

Vegetation. Plantings within these three elements vary widely. Within the zoo area, the plantings are meant primarily to provide shade and habitat. At the Japanese Tea Garden, the plantings are very ornamental in nature, with a xeric edge at the top of the feature along Alpine Drive. The Sunken Garden Theater is open in order to provide maximum visual access between visitors and the performances on the raised stage. There is a dense backdrop of tree canopy at the rear of the stage and between the tea garden and the theater. A vegetated canopy provides some separation from the freeway to the west.

Buildings and Structures. The zoo is the most densely developed area of buildings and structures within Quarry Village. Due to continuing improvements in habitat and zoological best practices, this area continues to evolve and is updated as needs arise. The Japanese Tea Garden consists of multiple structures constructed of material from the site, including a large pavilion with monumental columns, a small restaurant and kitchen building, and the pathways, bridgeways, and pools associated with the ornamental plantings and koi fish collection.

Views and Vistas. Each component of Quarry Village is composed primarily of internal vistas within each of the three major venues. The quarry wall serves as a focal backdrop, with the eastern edge comprised of either buildings or vegetative canopy that frames the scene.



FIGURE 13-45. View of the Japanese Tea Garden as it exists today, taken from the pavilion above the gardens. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



FIGURE 13-46. View of Sunken Garden Theater from Alpine Drive. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



FIGURE 13-47. View of Mexican Village structures and cement company smokestack. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

Cultural Features. Immediately to the southwest of the Japanese Tea Garden is the Sunken Garden Theater. Using another quarry site as its backdrop, the theater faces the quarry wall, with visitors seated with their backs to the wall. Early in the theater’s development, Lambert and others realized the advantageous acoustics in the rounded quarry walls. Originally constructed in 1930, the theater was further expanded and additional amenities were installed in recognition of the Texas Centennial. The latter work was completed in 1937.

Several renovations have occurred over the years since the theater’s initial construction. The latest renovation was completed in 1984 at a cost of \$320,000. The Sunken Garden Theater is a Texas State Archaeological Landmark.²¹

The Japanese Tea Garden is constructed in one of the former quarry locations. Ray Lambert used prison labor to transform the quarry into gardens. The excavated stone left a natural backdrop to create the garden “walls” and water garden below. More stone was excavated to build the tea structure and adjoining restaurant. The entire complex was renovated in 2007 and is in excellent condition.

Located at the base of the tea garden and cement works smokestack, four small houses comprise the Ray Lambert-named Mexican Village, which served as a crafts and food service area beginning in 1920 (**figure 13-47**).

Located on land that formerly belonged to John H. Kampmann, the small stone structure known as the Kampmann House is now a ruin, covered with overgrowth and vines. The original use of the house is not known.

Constructed by the company circa 1880, the kilns and smokestack of Alamo Portland and Roman Cement Works still stand as a reminder of the industrial history of parts of Brackenridge Park. The original plant was powered by a steam engine and ground ten barrels of cement a day, including cement for the new Texas capitol in Austin. The surviving smokestack and kilns are connected by a walkway to the adjacent main quarry, now the Sunken Garden.²² The smokestack in particular is an identifying element in the landscape because of its height.

ZONE G: TRANSITIONAL ZONE

This transitional zone starts on Broadway and runs through the heart of the park before turning southwest along Quarry Village, and it provides access from both the east and west edges of the park. The zone first passes the Witte Museum, continues along the northern edge of Wilderness Grove and then the southern edge of the zoo, crosses the San Antonio River, and then continues on by the Japanese Tea Garden and the Sunken Garden Theater (**figure 13-48**).

Spatial Organization. Zone G runs on a southwest to northeast diagonal and is one of the main ways that automobiles can access the park.

²¹ Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 18.

²² Diana J. Kleiner, “Alamo Cement Company,” Handbook of Texas Online, accessed July 25, 2019, tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/dlauy.



FIGURE 13–48. Transitional zone on North St. Mary's Street between the Japanese Tea Garden and the San Antonio Zoo. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

Land Use. Zone G land use is primarily for transportation and includes both roads for automobiles and tracks for small-gauge trains.

Circulation. This zone is a transportation zone that provides access between many of the most important elements of the park.

Vegetation. Along the North St. Mary's corridor, the vegetation is mostly scattered trees along the roadway. Once automobiles turn west onto Tuleta Drive, the canopy is denser on both sides of the roadway, probably indicative of an existing grove of trees that predates the formal creation of the park in 1899. Under the canopy, a mixture of native and invasive plants covers the ground plane and creates a barrier from the surrounding landscape.

Buildings and Structures. Zone G serves as a transitional zone, but in its lower southernmost corner is the Tuesday Musical Club. Two unique public bathroom structures are on the north side of North St. Mary's Street where it intersects with the entrance to the zoo parking lot.

Views and Vistas. There are multiple vistas along both roadways, but there are limited views from the transition zone. Vistas are short and are oriented to elements within the park.

Cultural Features. Constructed shortly after the donation of the Koehler Park land to the city by Emma Koehler, the Koehler Park entrance columns date to circa 1915. The monumental red sandstone columns with decorative iron work flank each side of St. Mary's Street as it enters the Koehler Park unit. They carry plaques recognizing Emma's husband, Otto Koehler, who was an early brewer of note in San Antonio.

South of the entrance to Koehler Park on the west side of St. Mary's Street are two restroom buildings. Both buildings were constructed circa 1922 of rubble stone and roofed with standing seam metal. The probable designer is Will Noonan.



FIGURE 13-49. View of sports field north of the Brackenridge Driving Range and the First Tee site. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

Additional faux bois works by Dionicio Rodriguez are located throughout the park. This palapa-roofed bench, built in 1925, is sited between the Koehler Park entry gates and the San Antonio River close to the low-water crossing. Its condition is good.

The building that serves as headquarters for the Tuesday Musical Club was constructed in 1950 by the members of the club. It was designed by Ayres & Ayres and consists of an auditorium, stage, and seating for three hundred. Multiple busts are located in the north and south recesses, and concrete stairs provide access from each elevation. A sculpture in honor of the founder of the club, Anna Hertzberg, is located between the building and St. Mary's Street. The subject is a Pan-like figure playing a flute, mounted on a tall pink granite base. The sculpture was designed by Pompeo Coppini and Waldine Tauch.²³

ZONE H: SPORTS FIELDS

Located throughout Brackenridge Park are sports fields that provide a variety of active recreational experiences. The former polo field, bounded by North St. Mary's Street on the west, East Mulberry Avenue on the south, and the San Antonio River on the east, is now used as a driving range and also serves as the home of the First Tee youth charity (**figure 13-49**). The driving range is managed by the Brackenridge Park Golf Course parent organization.

Spatial Organization. The entire complex of sports fields and parking is located to the east of the North St. Mary's corridor. At the southern edge of the zone, East Mulberry Avenue serves as the border of the driving range and First Tee complex. Northeast of this area is the softball field and zoo parking. The San Antonio River runs along the eastern edge of the zone.

Land Use. Zone H consists primarily of land used for recreation and a large parking lot that serves the softball field and the zoo.

²³ Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 18.

Circulation. Automobile circulation in Zone H is primarily along North St. Mary’s Street and on the Eagle train. Circulation is internal, with minimal sidewalk service. For pedestrians, North Mulberry Trail enters the zone at the southeast edge at the river and continues along the golf driving range area. As the trail approaches the intersection of North Mulberry and North St. Mary’s, it turns south and continues as South Mulberry Trail.

Vegetation. Vegetation in Zone H consists of random mature canopy trees along North St. Mary’s Street and some shade trees at the softball field and scattered around the zoo parking areas. A vegetated riparian edge borders the river.

Buildings and Structures. The polo club building has been repurposed into the pro shop for the driving range. The First Tee organization headquarters are also located in this building. Along North St. Mary’s Street is the Sunken Garden Depot for the miniature train.

Small-Scale Features. To the north of the driving range is a series of open-air picnic tables and concrete pads. These are in variable condition.

Views and Vistas. Vistas across each of these areas within the zone are not prescribed and consist of open land with little delineation. Along the river, the watercourse has few small bends, so it provides a long vista up and down the length of the river.

Cultural Features. Located east of St. Mary’s Street across from the Japanese Tea Garden, Sunken Garden Theater, and Tuesday Musical Club, the polo field/golf driving range is one of the largest open areas in the park. Built circa 1920, the site was used as the polo field for area residents until the 1980s. In 1952, the polo club and the golf course shared use of the land as a golf driving range. After polo ended in the park, the field’s only use was for the golf driving range. A clubhouse for golfers was constructed in 1980 and now also serves as the headquarters for First Tee, which teaches golf to inner-city children.²⁴

The miniature train that traverses Brackenridge Park is located directly across from the Koehler Park entry gates. The Brackenridge Eagle Train Depot was constructed circa 1980.

The nondescript Sheriff’s Mounted Posse building, constructed on the site of the posse’s former location, was originally used as a stable and tack storage for the sheriff’s office. In 1961, its use became primarily associated with the driving range to its east, and it is now used to repair golf clubs and for storage.

ZONE I: CENTRAL RIPARIAN

The portion of the river below the low-water crossing on Tuleta Drive runs in a generally northeast-southwest direction, with long vistas up and down the river and a riparian mixed edge of native and invasive plants on either side of the river (**figure 13-50**).

Spatial Organization. Zone I consists of a linear section of the river, generally running at an angle from north to south. Where Zone I crosses under East Mulberry Avenue, it then enters the golf course zone.

²⁴ Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 19.



FIGURE 13–50. View of low-water crossing on Tuleta Drive. The Eleanor Brackenridge Playground and Brackenridge Park Conservancy office are visible in the background. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

Land Use. The riparian corridor lies between the vegetated grove on the east and the sports fields zone on the west. This corridor is more natural and less managed, with a blend of native and invasive riparian plants on each bank of the river.

Circulation. The central riparian zone is used by fish, birds, and small mammals as a circulation route through the center of the park. The pedestrian Waterworks Loop runs down the east side of the zone along the river and just to the west of Red Oak Road

Vegetation. This riparian zone corridor consists of an overstory of native and invasive plant material, with a lower shrub layer, and a narrow line of trees along the river. Most of the plantings appear to be volunteer material, with no organized planting scheme.

Views and Vistas. Views along the riverbanks provide open sight lines up and down the river course.

Buildings and Structures. There are no buildings or structures within the central riparian zone.

Small-Scale Features. There are a number of picnic tables and concrete pads located on the east side of the river within this zone and a larger number of picnic areas on the west side of the river just below the Tuleta Drive low-water crossing.

Cultural Features. One of the signature features in the park connects the east and west sides of the river on Tuleta Drive. This low-water crossing, built in 1917, is lined on each side with linear stones placed at regular intervals that allow water to flow through and across the feature and help guide automobiles as they drive to the other side of the river.



FIGURE 13-51. View of old carriage way converted to a jogging/walking path within Vegetated Grove. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

ZONE J: WILDERNESS GROVE/EAST GROVE

The vegetated grove serves as the largest contiguous block of mature canopy vegetation in the park. This grove serves as the eastern edge of the park along Avenue B, one block west of Broadway.

The collection of trees that serve as the center of the park are part of the earliest land donation from George Brackenridge. Brackenridge purchased the land from the Mary Maverick family, and the area is referred to in this CLR as Wilderness Grove. The grove is centered in the park on a north-south axis, and it serves as the largest wooded and shaded portion of the park. It is bisected by historic carriage ways that now serve as walking and jogging paths (**figure 13-51**).

Land Use. The primary land use in Zone J is for active recreation within a forested landscape.

Circulation. Circulation borders the zone on all four sides: Tuleta Drive on the north, Red Oak Road on the west, Mulberry Avenue on the south, and Avenue B on the east. In the middle of this zone on the east side, Brackenridge Drive enters off of Broadway and Avenue B and then turns north, where it intersects with Tuleta Drive. Pedestrian circulation exists within the park on historic carriage and automobile roads now repurposed to prohibit cars. This encourages safe movement by pedestrians within this large zone.

Vegetation. The mature hardwood canopy in the grove provides one of the largest and oldest concentrations of vegetative cover within the city of San Antonio. This area is in danger due to the age of the canopy and the density of the undergrowth. According to the Wildflower Center, a canopy fire could decimate the grove because of the age of the trees and the availability of combustible materials on the ground plane.

Views and Vistas. Views within the grove are focused along the picturesque trails that traverse the site in diagonals, creating various connection points within the circulation system.

Buildings and Structures. The primary building within Zone J is the large parking garage at the corner of Avenue B and Tuleta Drive that services the park and provides parking close to the Witte. This building is a dominant structure on the edge of the park. Another building within the grove is the depot where the miniature trains are stored at night and where engines are switched out. The depot is hidden deep within the grove and is not visible to most park pedestrians. It is visible to the east of Brackenridge Drive by automobile traffic.



FIGURE 13–52. View of Catalpa-Pershing drainage ditch located on the west side of Avenue B. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

Small-Scale Features. The memorial plaque to Eleanor Brackenridge is a small-scale feature within the vegetated grove at Brackenridge. The National Register nomination states that a “simple bronze plaque is mounted at the base of a large oak tree in the center of the wooded area adjoining a walking path. The plaque was erected in 1925 by the Women’s Christian Temperance Union on the first anniversary of Eleanor Brackenridge’s death.”²⁵ The WCTU was one of her favorite charities, and she gave early support to the suffrage movement as well. The condition of the plaque is good. A small number of sculpted pieces of art are located throughout the East Grove.

Originally located downtown on Alamo Plaza, the Dionicio Rodriguez Hollow Log Shelter was moved to Brackenridge Park in 2006 and sited along a walking trail within the original grove. The sculpture is in good condition.

Designed and created by Pompeo Coppini in 1969, the seated bronze figure of George Brackenridge is located immediately to the north of Funston Street at its intersection with Broadway. Coppini died in 1957 without completing the bronze sculpture. Evidently, though, he had created the mold for the sculpture, which was later cast under the direction of Waldine Tauch, a longtime colleague of Coppini’s. It was finally placed at Brackenridge Drive in 1960. It was later reoriented in 2006 when the entrance to the park at that location was reconfigured.

²⁵ Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 14.

ZONE K: CATALPA-PERSHING

The Catalpa-Pershing is a concrete drainage channel that was originally constructed in 1977 and modified in 2011.²⁶ The channel is located west of Avenue B behind the commercial strip along Broadway and fronts Wilderness Grove and the Brackenridge Park Golf Course. The open concrete-lined ditch was constructed “to collect storm water runoff from the area northeast of Brackenridge Park including the Mahncke Park neighborhood and Fort Sam Houston.”²⁷ Water carried in the Catalpa-Pershing “continues to flow down the channel until it empties into the San Antonio River near U.S. Highway 281. The length of the open channel is approximately 5,300 ft.”²⁸ Catalpa-Pershing’s constructed profile is similar to other concrete-lined channels of the period. This style of channelization remains popular to this day. There is currently a project in development to transform the Catalpa-Pershing back into a more natural wildlife- and pedestrian-friendly watercourse (**figure 13-52**).

Spatial Organization. The Catalpa-Pershing is oriented in a northeast to southwest linear direction on the edge of Brackenridge Park.

Land Use. The channel’s purpose is as a drainageway for the area between Broadway and Avenue B and from the vegetated grove to the golf course.

Circulation. There is no circulation associated with the Catalpa-Pershing channel.

Vegetation. Vegetation along the Catalpa-Pershing is minimal and consists of random trees and shrubs on one or both sides of the channel.

Buildings and Structures. The concrete drainage ditch itself is the primary structure in the Catalpa-Pershing.

Views and Vistas. There are no significant views along the channel.

Small-Scale Features. There are no small-scale features in this zone.

ZONE L: DAVIS PARK

Davis Park is located to the north of the River Road neighborhood and is bounded on the east by River Road and the San Antonio River, on the north by East Mulberry Avenue, and on the west by a commercial strip (**figure 13-53**). The ten acres that comprise the park were donated for park purposes in 1917 and named in honor of County Judge James R. Davis.²⁹ A portion of the Upper Labor Acequia is buried beneath this site. The edge of Davis Park consists of groupings of trees and some individual shrubs and is open in the center, providing an area that is adaptable to many forms of recreation or leisure. The landscape originally connected to a now-demolished stable to the west of the park, outside the park boundaries. An asphalt walking path was installed in 2010.³⁰

26 Nesta J. Anderson, Maria Pfeiffer, and Brandy Harris, “Archeological Monitoring of the Catalpa-Pershing Channel Improvements Bexar County, Texas, Texas Antiquities Permit No. 5739,” (San Antonio: Atkins. 2012), 17.

27 Anderson, Pfeiffer, and Harris, “Archeological Monitoring of the Catalpa-Pershing.”

28 Anderson, Pfeiffer, and Harris, “Archeological Monitoring of the Catalpa-Pershing.”

29 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 59

30 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 21.



FIGURE 13–53. View of Davis Park, with a marker noting the presence of the Upper Labor acequia. The depression in the ground indicates the location of the former acequia. Source: Suzanne Turner Associates

Spatial Organization. Davis Park is separated from the rest of Brackenridge by roads on the north, east, and south and by a commercial development on the west. The park is closely associated with the River Road neighborhood due to its proximity and access. There is no parking available at the park, so most people park on surrounding neighborhood roads and access the park from the perimeters.

Land Use. Davis is a passive park with no prescribed recreational activities. The park is open in the center with random tree and shrub plantings around the perimeter.

Circulation. Circulation at Davis is largely derived from pedestrian desire lines and access from the perimeter. There is a sidewalk on the northern edge of the park along East Mulberry Avenue. The sidewalk continues on to the west, where it connects with the commercial businesses along North St. Mary’s Street.

Vegetation. The vegetation at Davis provides a variety of cover at the park and consists of a combination of overhead canopy, small to medium-sized trees, and a grassed lawn.

Views and Vistas. There are internal views within the site and views east to the river, north to the driving range, and south into the River Road neighborhood.

Buildings and Structures. There are no buildings or structures in Davis Park.

Small-Scale Features. There are no small-scale features in this zone.

Cultural Features. The cedar-rail fence that surrounds the park is a remnant from the period when the park was still used for equestrian purposes. The NRHP nomination notes that the fence defined an old horse trail associated with a no-longer-standing stable to the west.



FIGURE 13-54. View of southern riparian corridor south of the Brackenridge Park Golf Course. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

ZONE M: SOUTHERN RIPARIAN

Spatial Organization. Zone M consists of a linear stretch of land that borders the river on both sides and runs south between the golf course on the east and the River Road neighborhood on the west. This stretch of the river has more curves than the central riparian section of the river but not large bends like those in the historic core of the park (**figures 13-54 and 13-55**).

The portion of the San Antonio River that flows through the Brackenridge Park Golf Course alternates between a narrow riparian corridor and open banks that blend into the surrounding golf course links. The course topography drains into the river and into Catalpa-Pershing.

Land Use. The southern riparian section of the river is primarily associated with hydrology on the site.

Circulation. There is limited pedestrian circulation along this riparian corridor, but there is automobile circulation on the east as Avenue A runs to a terminus loop where there used to be a low-water crossing, now closed to automobile traffic. On the west side of the riparian edge is River Road. The southern edge is bounded by the golf course.

Vegetation. Both sides of the river contain an overstory riparian edge of varying widths. At the ground plane, there is some native understory and some grassed areas.

Buildings and Structures. The Avenue A low-water crossing is the most significant structure on the site.



FIGURE 13–55. View of southern riparian corridor on the west side of the Brackenridge Park Golf Course.
Source: Reed Hilderbrand

Cultural Features. Constructed by the NYA in 1939, the low-water crossing is located at a terminus on Avenue A between the golf course and the river. The crossing is closed to vehicular traffic but is still used by pedestrians and people fishing. The crossing is stamped with the notation “NYA 1939.”

The Mulberry Street Bridge crosses the river at Mulberry Street and was rehabilitated in 2011. It is in good condition.

ZONE N: LIONS FIELD

Located between Broadway Street and the Catalpa-Pershing drainageway, Lions Field is home to the Lions Field Adult and Senior Center and its associated parking, a playground, a small baseball or softball field, and various trails and sidewalks that encircle it (**figure 13-56**). The field is the most prominent area of Brackenridge Park visible to a large number of commuters on a daily basis. It and the Witte complex are the only two areas of the park that physically front Broadway. Whereas the Witte site is fully developed, Lions Field has only one central building and very little tree canopy.

When the Water Works Company planned to sell this strip between Brackenridge Park and Broadway for building lots in 1916, community protests led the city to purchase the land for park use that same year.³¹ This portion of Brackenridge Park now houses a clubhouse and playground that were originally constructed in 1925 and have since gone through multiple renovations. A life-sized lion sculpture, designed by Louis Rodriguez, is mounted on a stone pedestal at the entrance to the park.

At the south end of Lions Field is a softball diamond. “Stone and tile abutments mark the park entrance at Avenue B at the southeast corner of Lions Field.”³²

³¹ Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 274.

³² Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 20.



FIGURE 13–56. Drone footage of Lions Field. The playground, community center, and softball field are visible at the right. The area fronts Broadway near Mulberry, and the Brackenridge Park Golf Course is visible behind Lions Field. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

Spatial Organization. Lions Field is currently the location of the Adult and Senior Center building. There is an adjacent playground to the north and a sports field to the south. Parking is located east of the senior center in a semicircle between the building and Broadway.

Land Use. Lions Field is used as the home for a senior center oriented toward education and social interaction. Classes offered include ceramics, sewing, dancing, musical instruction, painting, drawing, and other activities.

Circulation. The site parking lot is accessed from Broadway, where automobiles enter into a circular arc driveway with parking on either side and an additional small parking extension to the south. Pedestrian circulation exists between the parking lot and the building and along two trails: the Avenue B Connector Trail and the Lions Field Trail.

Vegetation. There is limited vegetative cover at the site. There are some canopy trees around the perimeter and a few shade trees close to the senior center building. The rest of the site is covered with lawn.

Views and Vistas. The site is open, with views toward the commercial corridor across Broadway and northeast and southwest of the site. The view west is across Catalpa-Pershing and on to the golf course greens.

Buildings and Structures. The primary building is the senior center, located in the upper portion of Lions Field.

Small-Scale Features. Play equipment associated with the children’s playground fills the upper area closest to East Mulberry Avenue. A small ball field with viewing stands is located in the lower half of the park.



FIGURE 13-57. View of Tunnel Inlet Park located at the southern bound of Brackenridge Park, between Highway 281 and Josephine Street, July 2018. Source: Suzanne Turner Associates

ZONE O: INLET TUNNEL PARK

Inlet Tunnel Park is located at the far southern edge of the Brackenridge Park property near East Josephine Street and Highway 281 (**figure 13-57**). The San Antonio River tunnel and the San Pedro Creek tunnel took ten years to complete. Combined, they are one of the largest engineering projects in the country. Designed to supplement the inlet on San Pedro Creek, the San Antonio River Inlet Tunnel is credited with preventing extensive urban flooding during the massive rainfall that occurred on October 17, 1998. Only the inlet itself is located within the boundaries of Brackenridge Park, with the rest of the tunnel continuing for three miles at a depth of 150 feet to its outlet south of downtown near Lone Star Boulevard.³³ This area is typically used by visitors who are there to learn about the hydrological engineering that serves to protect the city. The control structure dominates the lower portion of this small site. Many locals, however, are not aware of this site or that it is part of Brackenridge Park.

Spatial Organization. The tunnel inlet consists of a weir dam, a diversion structure that sends water into the large tunnel underneath the city, and the surrounding urban context on all sides of the zone.

Land Use. This zone contains one of the most sophisticated and expensive water diversion structures in the United States. The primary purpose of the zone is to control and minimize flooding in San Antonio during extreme weather events.

Circulation. Circulation in this zone is complicated by its physical and cultural separation from the rest of Brackenridge. Automobile access is from East Josephine Street under the McAllister Freeway. There is parking, but it is extremely limited. Pedestrian circulation connects the Inlet Tunnel Park to the larger Brackenridge Park by way of Brackenridge Park Trail, which circles the golf course before it branches south under the freeway and through Inlet Tunnel Park. It then continues south and connects with the sidewalk system along the Museum Reach.

³³ John W. Gonzalez, "Solution to Downtown Flooding Giant, Invisible," ExpressNews.com, July 10, 2015, accessed October 3, 2019, [expressnews.com/150years/major-stories/article/History-River-Tunnel-0711-6378378.php](https://www.expressnews.com/150years/major-stories/article/History-River-Tunnel-0711-6378378.php).

Vegetation. Due to the mechanical and engineering nature of the site, there is little vegetative cover. Minimal canopy trees exist on the east side of the inlet, with lawn on both sides covering much of the site.

Views and Vistas. The plaza area provides visual access to the tunnel inlet and a sweeping view of the San Antonio River, looking south toward the River Walk.

Buildings and Structures. The structure associated with the inlet tunnel is the focus of the site.

Small-Scale Features. The area contains some small-scale features that provide visitor amenities and interpretation of the tunnel.

ZONE P: SAN ANTONIO ZOO

Sited along the northwest edge of the park is the San Antonio Zoo (**figure 13-58**). The location of the zoo was determined by Ray Lambert along with the members of the zoological society in 1914, and the site was partially chosen due to the existence of extensive quarry walls that were used as the backdrop for the original zoo exhibits—locations that are still in use today.



Upper Labor Acequia, circa 1776-1778. Although the Acequia Madre de Valero was constructed years before the Upper Labor Dam and Upper Labor Acequia, their purposes were quite different. The Acequia Madre de Valero was originally used to supply water to the Mission San Antonio de Valero. The Upper Labor Acequia was used to provide water for farming operations on the west side of the river. Currently, the San Antonio Zoo has constructed features over the Upper Labor. The area between the river and the zoo is intact but is protected under a cover of soil. The existing condition is compromised by the dirt cover.

Upper Labor Diversion Channel, circa 1920. Running between the San Antonio Zoo and the river close to the Koehler Pavilion, this channel could have been constructed with multiple uses in mind. Since the Upper Labor Acequia was blocked by the zoo construction, there needed to be a way to divert zoo effluent away from the zoo. It also could have been used to direct effluent from the animal containment structures to the closest water body, which was the river. The channel has small bridges that allow visitors to cross it at various locations.

FIGURE 13-58. A walkway in the San Antonio Zoo illustrates the vernacular character created by a mix of live oak trees and native limestone, July 2018. Source: Suzanne Turner Associates



FIGURE 13–59. Brackenridge Park Golf Course, February 2019. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

Donkey Barn, circa 1920 and 1956. The Donkey Barn has served two primary purposes during its existence. Originally constructed in 1920, it was used for hay and feed storage for the donkey ride program and zoo animals. The building was extensively modified in 1956 to convert it into office space for the Parks and Recreation Department. This change in function resulted in the addition of a second story and the current Alamo-shaped end facades. As an office building, its existing interior condition is consistent with a functional office space, and the facade follows the architectural imprimatur of the Spanish Revival style so common in San Antonio and throughout Texas and the Southwest.

ZONE Q: BRACKENRIDGE PARK GOLF COURSE

The largest portion of the park is designated for the municipal golf course at Brackenridge Park, originally designed by A. W. Tillinghast of Philadelphia and Beverly Hills (**figure 13-59**). The spatial feeling of the course is emblematic of the typical golf course. Long fairways framed by tree edges in a picturesque layout. Steven Hennessey of the magazine *Golf Digest* stated that “Tillie’s other work in Texas includes the under-appreciated golf course for San Antonio residents.”³⁴ When a portion of the western edge of the golf course was converted to highway use during the construction of Highway 281, the reduction in golf course land required a fairly extensive redesign to holes twelve and thirteen, due to the loss of land. In 2008, another redesign attempted to return the course to a state that more closely resembled the original Tillinghast design.

Three stone bridges traverse either the waterworks channel or river and allow golfers to travel back and forth between the two sides of the golf course. This area includes the cultural features described in the following paragraphs.

³⁴ Steve Hennessey, “The Best A.W. Tillinghast Golf Courses,” *Golf Digest*, August 2, 2018, accessed September 9, 2019, golfdigest.com/story/the-best-aw-tillinghast-golf-courses

Lower Pump House; Water Works Pump Station #2, 1885. The station typifies the late nineteenth-century industrial architecture of the Southwest. Constructed in 1885 and powered by the one of the raceways that transected George Brackenridge's land, the Lower Pump House was the location of Gutzon Borglum's studio when he was designing and producing sculptures for clients throughout the United States. Various remnant pipes are still visible on the exterior of the building from when it was used as a pumping station.

Electric Pump House Station #2, 1939. Constructed in 1939, and similar to other electric stations throughout the waterworks infrastructure, this station housed electric production machinery that powered the pumps in the adjacent pump house. In the immediate vicinity of the electric station are a number of elements related to electrical transmission. Electric Station # 2 is in good shape and is a contributing element in the cultural landscape. There is also an above-ground water storage tank and an "open concrete trapezoidal drainage channel drains to the old river channel,"³⁵ which is called the Catalpa Pershing.

SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Brackenridge Park is an excellent example of an evolutionary landscape that spans prehistory and history, from the Spanish colonial era through the years following World War II. Resources within the park's boundaries document trends in water supply, landscape design, recreation, and culture. In the absence of a formal plan, the land comprising the park developed according to public needs and political will over the course of three centuries. The resulting collection of resources represents a unique and eclectic spectrum of history. Although renovations and alterations have impacted Brackenridge, it nonetheless retains a high degree of integrity of design, setting, feeling, materials, workmanship, and association.

³⁵ Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 21.

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CHAPTER 14. ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The National Park Service (NPS) publication *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, which details the preservation methodology for Cultural Landscape Reports (CLRs), states that analysis and evaluation “is a critical step for sorting and integrating natural and cultural resource data so it can be used to develop appropriate treatment strategies.”¹ Analysis and evaluation of the Brackenridge Park landscape is based on the history of the site, the existing cultural and ecological conditions throughout the park landscape, and NPS standards for assessing and categorizing cultural landscapes and their features. The analysis and evaluation chapter of a CLR does the following: it assesses the cultural *significance* of the landscape; it evaluates whether those landscape systems, features, and characteristics deemed significant possess historic *integrity*; it proposes a *statement of significance*; and it provides a formal *determination of integrity*.

Robert Page, former director of the NPS Cultural Landscapes Program, defines significance as “the meaning or value ascribed to a structure, landscape, object, or site.”² According to *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, “Every CLR has a written statement of significance that explains the relationship between the cultural landscape and specific historic contexts, National Register criteria, and period(s) of significance.”³ It follows then that the purpose of a statement of significance is simple—to explain what a landscape means and why it is valuable.

“The historic integrity of a cultural landscape relates to the ability of the landscape to convey its significance.”⁴ Determining a cultural landscape’s level of integrity includes assessing

[the] cohesiveness, setting, and character of a landscape, as well as the material, composition, and workmanship of associated features....

1 Robert Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports* (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Washington, DC, 1998), 68.

2 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 68.

3 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 71.

4 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 71.

Historic integrity is determined by the extent to which the general character of the historic period is evident.⁵

The Brackenridge Park analysis and evaluation consists of seven components:

1. **Periods of Significance:** A brief explanation of Brackenridge Park's multiple periods of significance is provided in order to help CLR users understand this landscape's cultural complexity and how the periods impact the analysis of significance and integrity.
2. **Landscape Systems Analysis:** Due to Brackenridge Park's size and complexity, the analysis and evaluation focuses first on eight critical landscape systems that comprise a defining framework for the park. The systems are Archaeology; San Antonio River and Riparian Corridor; River Structures; Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology; Entry and Arrival Areas; Circulation through the Park; Edges between Cultural Institutions; the Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art. In relationship to this system, the site's overall spatial organization and programming is also discussed briefly and thoroughly diagrammed.
3. **Features Analysis by Character Zone:** To drill down to a finer level of detail, fifteen character zone areas within the park have been delineated. Each zone contains important cultural landscape features that are in proximity to one another and, in some instances, share common elements. These features are also analyzed and evaluated.
4. **2011 National Register Documentation Review:** A National Register Nomination Form for Brackenridge Park was completed in 2011. As part of this CLR's analysis and evaluation, the form is included to contribute to the historic record and to allow for comparison with the updated statement included near the end of this chapter. In addition to reviewing the 2011 statement of significance, this CLR analysis and evaluation includes specific recommendations for amendments to the 2011 National Register Nomination.
5. **Statement of Significance:** Based on the site's significance and recommended National Register updates, this chapter proposes an updated statement of significance.
6. **Determination of Integrity:** Finally, a determination of integrity is made. This determination addresses whether characteristics and features that are culturally meaningful (significant) are physically intact enough for their meaning (significance) to be visible and/or easily understood by people who experience the park.
7. **Summary of Significance and Integrity:** A color-coded table is included at the end of this chapter; the table summarizes the level of significance, level of integrity, and potential to treat the site, which would elevate its level of integrity in the future. This table is intended as a quick reference to illustrate the site's significance and potential, and it can also be used to better understand the Treatment recommended in the next chapter.

⁵ Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 71.

PERIODS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Landscape historians are tasked with identifying a landscape's *period of significance*—that is the range of time that can be considered most important in terms of its development and presence in the American landscape. It is common for complex landscapes to contain more than one period of significance. Brackenridge Park contains multiple periods of significance. Its prehistoric and early historic periods are significant due to the extremely sensitive and important archeological material that exists on the site and because of the landscape's connections to early agriculture, commerce, and industry in San Antonio. Its historic periods, from 1899 to 1949, are significant due to the extent and level of development that occurred in the park during those years.

As a general rule, historically contributing features date to the period(s) of significance. Typically, they contribute to a landscape's significance and integrity through their design and character. Noncontributing features generally date after the period of significance or have changed to such an extent that they no longer contribute to the historic character of the site. Even features that have been demolished, destroyed by flood or fire, or are not visible on a site may be included in the analysis due to their prominence during the period of significance or their proximity to other extant features. The Confederate tannery works is an example of a feature that falls into this category.

In the case of Brackenridge Park, an understanding of the contributing features that predate the park period is most easily conveyed through consideration of its landscape systems. Understanding of the contributing features that date to the park's periods of significance is more easily conveyed through consideration of the site's character zones and the individual features within those zones. There is also crossover between periods in examining the site this way.

LANDSCAPE SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

Eight critical landscape systems comprise a defining framework for Brackenridge Park (**figure 14-1**). The significance and integrity of these systems is analyzed below.

ARCHAEOLOGY

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The entire park site has the potential to yield significant prehistoric and historic materials. These materials have the potential to be visible and understood by the public. Special care should be taken when any work is undertaken, whether that work consists of building infrastructure, maintaining existing elements, or beginning new projects.

INTEGRITY

The archeological record maintains a high degree of integrity. Repeated flooding and the layers of silt that have been deposited have acted to provide a physical buffer between the oldest archeological layers and the existing landscape we see today. The visibility and comprehension associated with this high level of integrity is low. There are very few elements of the underlying archaeology that are visible or interpreted at the park.

SAN ANTONIO RIVER/RIPARIAN CORRIDOR

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The cultural and historic significance of the San Antonio River as a system is very high. The San Antonio River serves as the unifying thread in Brackenridge Park. Its physical form drove the orientation and shape that the regional vernacular park would take. Before 1899, the river was the reason that both prehistoric and historic animal and human occupation and settlement occurred in the area, and, in a sense, the city of San Antonio grew up around the upper course of the San Antonio River. The resource is highly significant from ecological and cultural perspectives.

The river and the complex of artesian springs that created the river are the reason for the extensive network of contributing landscapes in the city. The missions and the River Walk underscore the high significance of the river to the region. The river served as the earliest source of potable water in the city. The river was the reason that George Brackenridge chose to donate this particular land to the city for his namesake park.

INTEGRITY

From a cultural and historic perspective, this system has medium integrity. Many of the connections that would have allowed the visitor and the San Antonio resident to experience the river in an interactive way have been eliminated. Access to the river is limited or nonexistent.

The ecological integrity of the river is low. The riparian corridor has been neglected or has been damaged by high concentrations of invasive plant materials.



Archaeology



San Antonio River System



River Structures System



Vegetation / Soils / Hydrology



Entry / Arrival Areas



Circulation Through The Park



Edges Between Cultural Institutions



Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, Art

SYSTEMS

FIGURE 14-1. Brackenridge Park's Landscape Systems. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

Neither the culture and history nor the ecology of the river is easily understood by today's visitors, making the overall integrity generally low. This system does, however, have high potential for Eco-restoration and interpretation that will improve its integrity and serve educational purposes related to its culture, history, and ecology.

RIVER STRUCTURES

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The various built works associated with the infrastructure of the river provide a holistic and broad overview of the history of human influence on the control of water in the city of San Antonio. From the earliest acequias and dams, raceways and ditches, and stone river walls to reduce erosion to the monolithic tunnel at the base of the park, the full repertoire of interventions has been used on the river within Brackenridge Park to manage and control the river as a resource and a danger and to improve the river as a recreational feature.

INTEGRITY

Currently, river structures exhibit a range of integrity based on the age of the feature and the level of maintenance. All of these features have the potential, through treatment and interpretation, to portray the broad continuum of ways that people have managed the river during the historic period.

VEGETATION/SOILS/HYDROLOGY

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The vegetation, soils, and hydrology of the park, in association with the river, are highly significant culturally and historically. The riparian elements of the landscape on either side of the river are what made it attractive to Indigenous Americans and the settlers that followed. Rich bottomland soils encourage the practice of horticulture and agriculture. The hydrology of the surrounding landscape had a direct effect on the flow of the river, serving as a sponge during rainfall events and then slowly releasing water into the river during dry periods.

INTEGRITY

The ability of this landscape to portray its significance has been highly degraded and needs immediate intervention. Currently, this system operates separately, in a reduced capacity, or in a negative way in relation to the park landscape and the river. Conversely, this system has a high potential to inform and educate the public about the ability of the landscape to restore and rehabilitate itself through sensitive interventions.

ENTRY AND ARRIVAL AREAS

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The entry and arrival areas of Brackenridge are the significant connections to the rest of the city, whether those connections are through roadways, trolley stops and drop-offs, or pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Originally, there were more roads that crossed through the park and access was more open. Over the years, however, due to unfortunate sales of adjacent lands by the city and to the design and construction of the golf course, some entries were closed or became more limited. Other connections were closed in the interest of safety.

INTEGRITY

The park entries and peripheral connections to the surrounding community retain a medium level of integrity. Higher traffic counts reduce the ability of the visitor to enter and maintain a connection to the site. The commercial corridor between Avenue B and Broadway serves as a barrier to more efficient and effective communication between the visitor and the elements of the park.

CIRCULATION THROUGH THE PARK

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The park's earliest improvements were associated with circulation within it and within the majestic grove of oaks, elms, and pecans that created its original tree canopy. The significance of this earliest circulation system must be considered in relation to other parks across the country that adopted the picturesque/pastoral form of movement within their landscapes. As Brackenridge expanded, some improvements were made to circulate visitors through the park more easily, but many of the improvements fail to authentically capture how visitors primarily experienced the park in its earliest manifestation.

INTEGRITY

The circulation systems within the park exhibit a medium degree of integrity. As mentioned earlier, increasing traffic counts have diminished the usability of the circulation within the park. Materials used in different circulation features reduce the legibility of the park's circulation. The potential is high to make these circulation systems cohesive and to make them apparent to the visitor.

EDGES BETWEEN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Although the Brackenridge Park Golf Course and the San Antonio Zoo are not part of the CLR scope, they are discussed in this section because they are cultural institutions within Brackenridge Park that occupy a significant part of the park's lands and are a part of the park's history. As such, these two elements have edges that are more difficult to navigate than the edges in other areas of the park. Over the years, the desire for increased pedestrian safety has forced ever-higher levels of separation between elements in the park. At the zoo, increasingly higher levels of security between the exhibits, the overall landscape

development, and the larger park landscape are difficult to comprehend and overcome. To a lesser extent, the golf course suffers from the same issue. In addition to these physical barriers, the desire to control the visitor and to collect additional revenues only exacerbates the current level of separation between the collective institutions.

INTEGRITY

There is little integrity between the cultural institutions and recreational venues in Brackenridge. They read as separate smaller institutions, located in proximity to one another within the park, without a clear or overarching connection that supports the park's larger vision.

COLLECTION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, AND ART

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the overall collection of buildings, structures, and art at Brackenridge Park cannot be understated. These elements were constructed over a short period of time, using an architectural vocabulary shared by a select group of local architects and a common palette of materials—primarily native stone and some wood; the architectural vocabulary and materials are a glue that today holds the park together from a visual perspective and helps it retain its regional vernacular character. Extensive use of limestone and its relationship to the repurposed quarries on the west side of the park provide an illustrative and compelling look that even the untrained eye of the visitor can relate to.

INTEGRITY

The level of integrity exhibited by the structures, features, and art within Brackenridge is medium. Many structures have been rehabilitated, restored, and carefully maintained. Others are abandoned and in various states of neglect. Only one, not open to the public, is in ruins. All architectural features require maintenance, and buildings constructed of stone are no exception. With careful recordation of the existing conditions of the buildings through a systematic process of structure assessment, this collection can continue to serve as one of the central ways that visitors understand the park.

FEATURES ANALYSIS BY CHARACTER ZONE

In order to organize and analyze this complex site's numerous landscape features through a manageable process, the park has been categorized into character zones (**figure 14-2**). Each zone contains resources that are in close proximity to one another, and in some cases they share similarities. The character zones begin at the northern end of the park at Miraflores Gardens and extend south to Inlet Tunnel Park.

It is important to note up front that every single cultural feature located in the fifteen character zones has the potential to become more visible and to portray the history of the park and its cultural resources more clearly to the public. For this reason, these resources—regardless of and perhaps even because of their integrity, when it is deemed compromised—are worthy of investment.

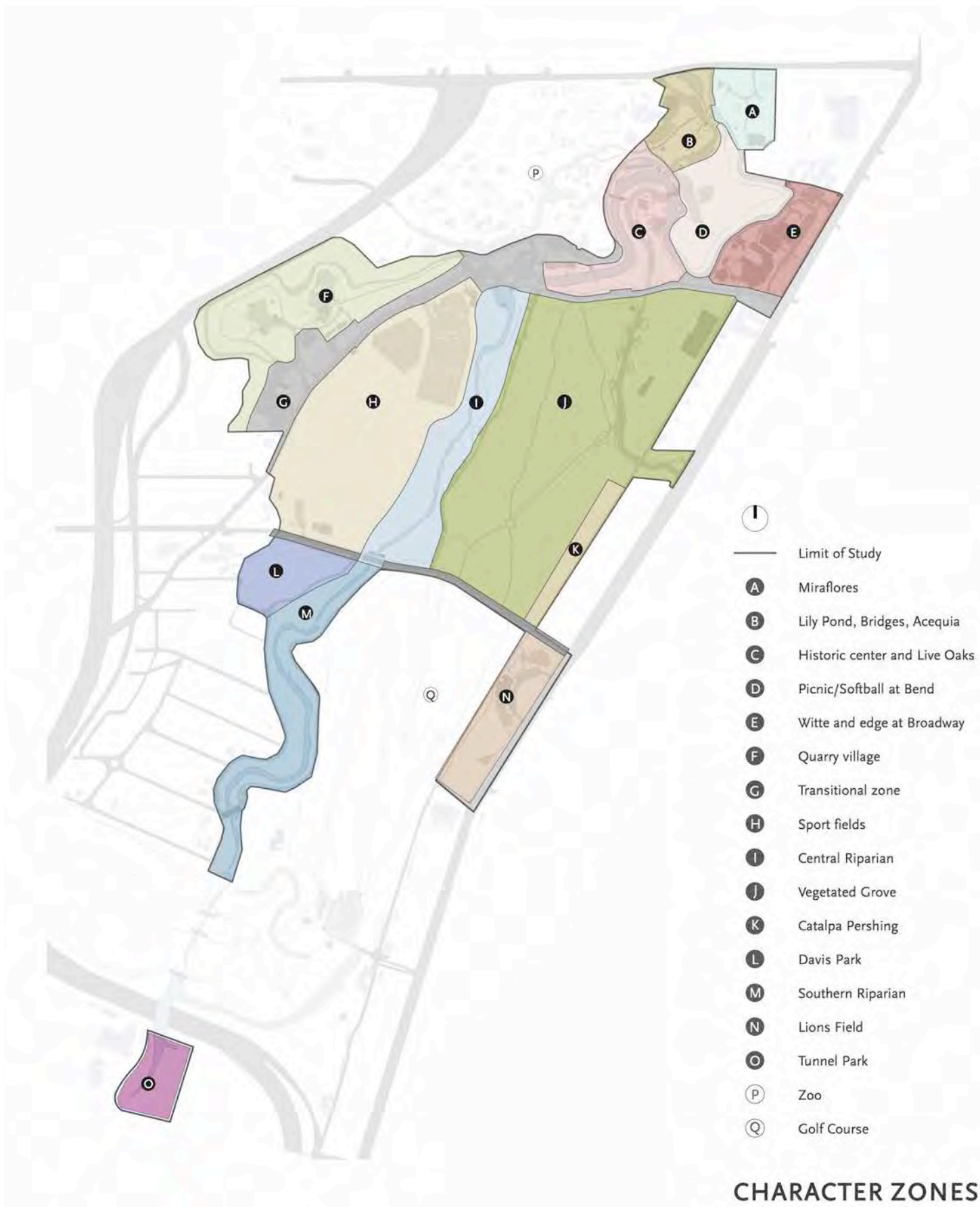


FIGURE 14-2. Character Zones Map. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

ZONE A: MIRAFLORES GARDENS, CIRCA 1923

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Dr. Aureliano Urrutia created Miraflores over several years between 1923 and 1926. Urrutia was a noted surgeon who had been Mexico's interior minister until he fled in 1914 during the Mexican Revolution. Located on the northern edge of the park along Hildebrand Avenue, Miraflores Gardens is an outdoor sculpture garden based on Urrutia's birthplace of Xochimilco, Mexico, a city noted for its network of lakes and canals. In San Antonio, Dr. Urrutia created meandering walkways, waterways, fountains, and statuary influenced by Xochimilco.

"This property, now owned by the City of San Antonio, was individually listed on the National Register in 2006 and declared a State Archaeological Landmark in 2009."⁶ The 2006 National Register nomination provides a complete list of the sculptures in the park, many of them created by Dionicio Rodriguez.⁷ Archeological testing at the site in 2008 resulted in the discovery of prehistoric artifacts in the northeast corner of the property.⁸

INTEGRITY

Fifteen acres survive, with some of the gardens and statuary in various states of ruin. In the recent past, the site was severely compromised by an adjacent property owner in an attempt to use the site for an outdoor employee gathering spot and for additional parking for their adjacent business. A deep layer of fill was placed on the site, partially burying many of the sculptures, and other sculptural elements were removed as they deteriorated. The site has been compromised, but it still retains a significant portion of its integrity. It can be restored with a careful restoration plan and a management program.

Enough of the gardens and sculptures are intact to convey the feeling of the romantic, intricate, and ethereal gardens Urrutia created. Remains of most of the sculptures, arches, and gates are extant. The gates and entry features are particularly important due to their prominent location on East Hildebrand Avenue and the degree to which they are intact. Decades of neglect and inappropriate additions to the site to prepare it for a non-conforming use have damaged its integrity. The integrity associated with the remaining sculptural elements and their location is higher, however.

ZONE B: LILY POND, BRIDGES, ACEQUIA

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The area where Brackenridge Drive enters the park at Hildebrand Avenue contains three areas that are defined by water. The San Antonio River as it enters Brackenridge Park, the Lily Pond is located just to the west of the river, and the Upper Labor Acequia dam and the beginning of its irrigation channel are located in this portion of the park.

6 Maria Watson Pfeiffer and Steven A. Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," National Register of Historic Places, Texas Historical Commission, San Antonio, TX, June 15, 2011, 8.

7 Patsy Pittman Light, *Capturing Nature: The Cement Sculpture of Dionicio Rodriguez* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008).

8 Kristi Miller Ulrich, *Archaeological Services Associated with Improvements to Miraflores at Brackenridge Park, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas*. (San Antonio: Center for Archeological Research, University of Texas at San Antonio, 2008), 4.

A variety of land uses occur in this character zone. The constructed water features of the Lily Pond and the acequia are connected to the river. An important roadway bisects this zone and serves as the northern entrance to the park. Maintenance areas associated with the park and with the zoo are in the western portion of this zone. Overall, the collection of elements in this zone is culturally and ecologically significant at a high level.

INTEGRITY

The integrity of Zone B is low to medium. Water quality in the Lily Pond is low, and the surrounding infrastructure of the river banks need repair. The Upper Labor Acequia dam is degraded and needs stabilization. Much of the vernacular character in this area is intact, though the layers present from various periods, which are evident, are difficult to understand.

ZONE C: HISTORIC CENTER AND LIVE OAKS

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The zone labeled “Historic Center and Live Oaks” contains a range of elements that date from the earliest commercial activity before the park was formally established up through the period of major development that began in 1915.

The area of the park considered the historic center is where the earliest remnant infrastructure of the San Antonio Water Works is located. Pump Station #1 anchors this area and was constructed by George Brackenridge to provide clean, potable water to San Antonio residents. According to local historians, this is the earliest extant commercial structure in the city. Other than the carriageways and the wildlife that appeared very early in the park’s history, Lambert Beach is one of the first active recreational areas in the park, with remnants located in direct proximity to Pump House #1. The development of a picnic area amid the live oaks in this central location during the Great Depression adds a further layer to the historic center of the park.

Spatially, the area that contains the first Water Works pump house also contains the two major pavilions in the park, the headquarters of the Brackenridge Park Conservancy, the Eleanor Brackenridge Playground, and the WPA picnic area and live oak canopy. Lambert Beach is also located within this stretch of the river and is centered on the original pump house. Each feature relates to the river and its large oxbow curve within the zone. The elements relate to the river whether through direct proximity or through vistas that lead the visitor’s eye toward the river course.

INTEGRITY

The major elements within Zone C exhibit a range of integrity. Stone materials present in this area and their maintenance and rehabilitation have resulted in a collection of buildings and landscape features that exhibit a concentration of materials palette and construction techniques present throughout the entire park, with the exception of the Lambert Beach bath houses. Because of the complicated nature of this zone, reference to the corresponding chart at the end of this chapter serves to clarify the varying levels of integrity of each feature.

ZONE D: PICNIC/SOFTBALL AT BEND

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The picnic and softball field at the bend of the river was installed circa 1950. This field is one of three softball and baseball fields located in the park. They are contemporary features that provide an active form of recreation. The three individual fields are single sites; there is no grouping of fields in proximity.

This area is surrounded on three sides by a large bend in the river that serves as a connecting open area between the Witte zone (E) and the historic center (C) to the west. Spatially, the area is generally flat, and a ring of culturally and ecologically significant historic trees provides shade along the river's edge.

This sports field is not historically or culturally significant, however. The river is considered separately within the systems section of this chapter.

INTEGRITY

Because this sports field is not culturally or historically significant, it was not assessed for its integrity. The historic tree canopy, based on its ecological health, has a low to moderate level of integrity.

ZONE E: WITTE COMPLEX AND EDGE AT BROADWAY

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Located facing east toward Broadway, the Witte complex and edge serve as an important marker of the northern portion of the park. In the middle of the Witte complex of buildings is Pioneer Hall, an important museum that honors “Texas pioneers, trail drivers and rangers” and their contribution to Texas history. The complex runs north to south along Broadway, with the river serving as the western edge of the complex. Transformed repeatedly since its initial construction in 1926, the Witte, the adjacent Founders Hall, and the newly constructed Witte annex serve as a hard edge that hides the river and the picturesque scene immediately to the west of the complex. This complex is important for its early cultural elevation of Brackenridge as a center for education, arts, and ecology.

INTEGRITY

Only Pioneer Hall within this zone retains a high degree of integrity. The public face of this building retains its initial architectural presence and reinforces the historic edge of the park.

The Navarro, Twohig, and Ruiz Houses were all compromised when they were moved to Brackenridge Park. They are no longer located in their original settings with their associated surrounding landscape, and for this reason, they retain medium integrity.

The 1960s addition to the front of the original Witte reduced its historic integrity. Because of the addition, its integrity is of a medium level. Repeated damage to the Acequia Madre de Valero has reduced its integrity to low. The determination of low integrity does not mean that this feature is not important. In fact, it underscores the need and desire to intervene

⁹ Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 67.

in a sensitive way to protect the remaining artifacts associated with the acequia and to interpret them in a more aggressive way so as to underscore their importance to the city of San Antonio.

ZONE F: QUARRY VILLAGE

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Quarry Village is comprised of three distinct character areas: the San Antonio Zoo, the Japanese Tea Garden complex, and the Sunken Garden Theater. Each of these three major features of Brackenridge Park were sited in this area due to the extant quarry walls that currently serve as a backdrop and edge delineator. All three were begun during Ray Lambert's tenure as parks superintendent, and the quarry mines are the reason for their placement at the edge of the uplift of the Balcones Escarpment.

INTEGRITY

The quarry walls exhibit a very high degree of integrity. Location, scale, material, and views all reinforce the integrity of this park edge that serves as the backdrop for multiple developments in the park.

ZONE G: TRANSITIONAL ZONE

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

This area consists of multiple features and developments that were constructed during the highest period of park development. Using the same common stone vocabulary as the overall park, they serve as a significant reminder of this period in the park's history. The transitional zone that connects the driving range/First Tee to Quarry Village to the north and west provides automobile connections between these areas, primarily along North St. Mary's Street. The San Antonio Eagle also runs along North St. Mary's on the eastern side. This zone connects with Tuleta Drive at a roundabout and continues east between the grove, the historic center, and the Witte Museum complex. From a material, architectural, and circulatory perspective, this zone is significant.

INTEGRITY

This zone retains a high degree of integrity. Many of these elements have been rehabilitated or restored over the history of the park and retain their material and architectural designs. The St. Mary's Street restrooms, constructed in 1922, exhibit some deterioration and therefore have medium integrity.

ZONE H: SPORTS FIELDS

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The recreation areas in Zone H consist of the Brackenridge Golf Course Driving Range (original polo field), the First Tee complex, the miniature railroad, and the Tony “Skipper” Martinez Softball Field. An additional feature that is not recreationally oriented is the large parking lot associated with the San Antonio Zoo. Only the railroad and the polo field/driving range are significant. The other features fall outside the historic period and do not contribute to the significance of the park.

INTEGRITY

This zone exhibits medium integrity in relation to its significant origins. Modern interventions have reduced its historical significance. The areas in this zone still retain the ability to portray the park during its periods of significance but would require investment to return them to a higher level of integrity, if that is the desired treatment for this zone.

ZONE I: CENTRAL RIPARIAN

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The heart of the park is the central riparian corridor that serves as its central unifying thread. This corridor runs from the north end of the park to the southernmost part where it enters the Inlet Tunnel. Nothing defines the park as clearly as the hydrologic system associated with the San Antonio River here. The significance of this zone and its elements is high.

INTEGRITY

This park zone retains a mixed degree of integrity. The picnic area in this zone needs rehabilitation. Only the Waterworks Loop retains a high degree of integrity.

ZONE J: WILDERNESS GROVE/EAST GROVE

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

One of the iconic landscape features of Brackenridge Park is the large grove in which the earliest network of picturesque carriage lanes and drives was located. The early designers chose this area for the very first work to begin on the development of the park we see today. The grove is centered in the park on a north-south axis and serves as the largest wooded and shaded portion of the park. It is bisected by historic carriageways that today function as walking and jogging paths.

The vegetated grove serves as the largest contiguous block of mature canopy vegetation in the park. This grove serves as the eastern edge of the park along Avenue B, one block west of Broadway. The collection of trees that serve as the center of the park are also part of the earliest land donation from George Brackenridge. Brackenridge purchased the land from the Mary Maverick family, and the area is referred to in this CLR as Wilderness Grove.

INTEGRITY

The primary determinant in the assessment of medium integrity for this area was the level of intervention that is needed in order to protect the grove due to its age and to the need to remove the many invasive plants that now constrict the ground plane. Assessments from the WFC were central to this determination.

ZONE K: CATALPA-PERSHING

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The Catalpa-Pershing is a concrete drainage channel that was originally constructed in 1977 and modified in 2011.¹⁰ The channel is located to the west of Avenue B behind the commercial strip along Broadway and fronts the vegetated grove and the Brackenridge Park Golf Course. The ditch collects runoff on the eastern edge of the park. Catalpa-Pershing's constructed profile is similar to other concrete-lined channels of the period. This style of channelization remains popular to this day. There is currently a project in development to transform the Catalpa-Pershing back into a more natural wildlife- and pedestrian-friendly watercourse. Although it is a noncontributing feature in the park, it contains the potential to convey continuity in the story of the site's hydrology and water management as well as the potential for Eco-restoration through treatment.

INTEGRITY

Catalpa-Pershing is not significant in the cultural and historical history of the park; therefore, it was not assessed for its integrity.

ZONE L: DAVIS PARK

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

The ten acres that comprise Davis Park were donated for park purposes in 1917 and were named in honor of County Judge James R. Davis.¹¹ The edge of Davis Park consists of groupings of trees and some individual shrubs and is open in the center, providing an area that is adaptable to many forms of recreation or leisure activities. The landscape originally connected to a now-demolished stable to the west of the park, outside the park boundaries. An asphalt walking path was installed in 1910.¹² The significance of this area as an open park in Brackenridge is high, especially because the Upper Labor Acequia runs through it. There is a limited amount of open space in the park, and Davis Park contributes to the overall available land within Brackenridge.

INTEGRITY

The integrity of the Davis Park zone is medium. Lack of maintenance and a general appearance of neglect reduce the integrity of this area.

10 Nesta J. Anderson, Maria Pfeiffer, and Brandy Harris, "Archeological Monitoring of the Catalpa-Pershing Channel Improvements Bexar County, Texas, Texas Antiquities Permit No. 5739," (San Antonio: Atkins. 2012), 17.

11 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 59.

12 Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 21.

ZONE M: SOUTHERN RIPARIAN

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Zone M consists of a linear stretch of land that borders the river on both sides and runs south between the golf course on the east and the River Road neighborhood on the west. This stretch of the river has more curves than the central riparian section of the river but does not have large bends like those that exist in the historic core of the park.

The portion of the San Antonio River that flows through the Brackenridge Park Golf Course alternates between a narrow riparian corridor and open banks that blend into the surrounding golf course links. The golf course topography drains into the river and into Catalpa-Pershing.

Constructed by the NYA in 1939, the low-water crossing at a terminus on Avenue A between the golf course and the river is closed to vehicular traffic but is still used by pedestrians and fishermen. The crossing is stamped with the notation “NYA 1939.”

INTEGRITY

The integrity of this zone is driven primarily by the riparian zones on either side of the river. They have been degraded as ecological features by the developments on both sides of this area. Their integrity is medium.

ZONE N: LIONS FIELD

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Located between Broadway Street and the Catalpa-Pershing drainageway, Lions Field is home to the Lions Field Adult and Senior Center and its associated parking, a playground, a small baseball or softball field, and various trails and sidewalks that encircle the field. It is the most prominent area of Brackenridge Park visible to a large number of commuters on a daily basis. It and the Witte complex are the only two areas of the park that physically front Broadway. Whereas the Witte site is fully developed, Lions Field has only one central building and very little tree canopy. Because of its proximity to Broadway Street, this zone carries special significance. It becomes the “front door” to the park due to its size and proximity. As one of the earliest locations for pasturing the animal collection at the park, this was what visitors first saw when they came up Broadway to visit the park. Even if they did not visit the park, they saw the animals in the foreground along the road. This area has high potential for rehabilitation and Eco-restoration.

INTEGRITY

While the significance of Zone N carries a high designation, the integrity of the zone as a park feature is low to medium. The multiple competing uses of the zone reduce its ability to convey the overall identity of the park. Often, areas of low integrity merit high levels of intervention and present opportunities for interpretation. This is the case with Zone N.

ZONE O: INLET TUNNEL PARK

CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

At the southern end of the park is the Flood Control Tunnel Inlet Park. Tunnel Inlet Park is located at the far southern edge of the Brackenridge Park property near East Josephine Street and Highway 281. The San Antonio River Tunnel and the San Pedro Creek Tunnel took ten years to complete. Combined, they are one of the largest engineering projects in the country. Designed to supplement the inlet on San Pedro Creek, the San Antonio River Inlet Tunnel is credited with preventing extensive urban flooding during the massive rainfall that occurred on October 17, 1998. Only the inlet itself is located within the boundaries of Brackenridge Park, with the rest of the tunnel continuing for three miles at a depth of 150 feet to its outlet south of downtown near Lone Star Boulevard.¹³

INTEGRITY

Due to its young age, the integrity of this zone is high. There have been few alterations to the original design other than those required to improve the efficiency of the filtering mechanisms at the mouth of the inlet.

¹³ John W. Gonzalez, "Solution to Downtown Flooding Giant, Invisible," ExpressNews.com, July 10, 2015, accessed October 3, 2019, [expressnews.com/150years/major-stories/article/History-River-Tunnel-0711-6378378.php](https://www.expressnews.com/150years/major-stories/article/History-River-Tunnel-0711-6378378.php).

2011 NATIONAL REGISTER DOCUMENTATION REVIEW

The NPS first approved nominations for various sites and buildings within Brackenridge Park in 1976, when the Alamo Portland Cement site was nominated to the National Register. The park property, including the Witte Museum, San Antonio Zoo, and Brackenridge Park Golf Course, is owned and administered by the city of San Antonio, either directly or through cooperative management agreements, and these relationships are acknowledged in the National Register. One of the steps in conducting a CLR is to review the original and any subsequent nominations to the National Register, assess the current significance and integrity of the property, and recommend addendums if it is determined that they could contribute and support the existing nomination. The 2011 Statement of Significance and analysis are given in the following section.

2011 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 2011 Statement of Significance is as follows (with key identification of its various layers of significance underscored).

Brackenridge Park in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas, is one of the preeminent public parks in the state of Texas. Formally established in 1899, when George Brackenridge's Water Works Company donated 199 acres of property to the City of San Antonio for public use, the park includes a wide array of prehistoric and historic sites, including two Spanish-built irrigation ditches, and a former rock quarry. Beginning in 1915, recreational areas were introduced into the park, adding pavilions, playgrounds, bathhouses, and picnic areas. The park is nominated to the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the areas of Conservation and Entertainment/Recreation for its association with the development and design of San Antonio's parks system, and in the area of Industry for its association with the production of limestone and cement from about 1850 until 1908. The park is also nominated at the state level of significance under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture, Art, and Landscape Architecture for its rich collection of objects, structures, and buildings that span from the pre-park era through the Great Depression, and in the area of Engineering for its association with water delivery from 1719 through 1899. Noteworthy buildings and structures of statewide significance within the park include Pioneer Hall and the Sunken Garden Theater, two of the largest products of the Texas Centennial program, a federal- and state-funded commemoration of Texas Independence from Mexico that sponsored the construction of monuments, museums, and markers statewide in the 1930s. The Japanese Sunken Garden, a major component of the park, is also significant at the state level, as a one-of-a-kind redevelopment of a former industrial site for public use as [a] recreation facility, exhibiting a high degree of craftsmanship and design. Finally, Brackenridge Park is nominated under Criterion D at the state level in the area of Archeology-Prehistoric-Aboriginal because of its documented archaeological deposits and potential sites related to the Paleoindian (12,500-8,800 BC), Archaic (including Early Archaic [8,800

to 6,000 BP]; Middle Archaic [6,000 to 4,000 BP]; and Late Archaic [4,000 to 1,200 BP]), and Late Prehistoric (1,200 to 350 BP) periods; and in the area of Archeology–Historic–Non-Aboriginal, for its documented and potential archeological deposits from the Spanish colonial period through the turn of the twentieth century. The historic period begins with the arrival of Europeans in Texas, and its earliest evidence in the park is the Alamo acequia and dam system, which dates to 1719-1724. The historic period continues through the park era to 1961, the current fifty-year mark.

NPS CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS

The NPS criteria to determine which properties are significant enough to warrant listing on the National Register of Historic Places were originally conceived during the building-centric preservation era. These are still useful, however, as a standard system of looking at the meaning of places beyond architecture, and they are utilized when evaluating cultural landscapes. According to the National Register, historic significance may be present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects based on their location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. A property can be found to have significance at one or more levels, ranging from highest to lowest at the national, state, and local levels.

The NPS document “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation” provides two sets of specific measures for analyzing a cultural landscape’s significance. Section II of this document outlines the “National Register Criteria for Evaluation” (here called “Criteria for Evaluation”)—this is the overarching and standard set of four criteria (labeled A through D).¹⁴ Because “certain kinds of properties are not usually considered for listing”¹⁵ and because some properties fall outside of the box, so to speak, Section VII of the document outlines a set of seven alternative criteria (labeled Criteria Consideration A through G, called “Criteria Considerations”).

According to the Criteria for Evaluation, the property must meet significance in one or more of the following criteria to be considered eligible for the National Register:

- A. Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- B. Association with the lives of persons significant in our past
- C. Embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic value, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose component may lack individual distinction
- D. The yield or potential yield of information important in precontact history, protohistory, or history

¹⁴ “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, National Register of Historic Places Bulletin (NRB 15),” Section II, National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, accessed September 25, 2019, nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/.

¹⁵ “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” Section VII.

Most properties listed on the National Register are significant under the Criteria for Evaluation. But as the number of cultural landscapes being documented has increased, and the complexity of these landscapes is being evaluated through more contemporary critical lenses, the Criteria Considerations help in acknowledging these complexities. These criteria are as follows.

Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties—a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance

Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties—a building or structure removed from its original location but that is significant primarily for its architectural value or that is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event

Criteria Consideration C: Birthplaces or Graves—a birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life

Criteria Consideration D: Cemeteries—a cemetery that derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events

Criteria Consideration E: Reconstructed Properties—a reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived

Criteria Consideration F: Commemorative Properties—a property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance

Criteria Consideration G: Properties that Have Achieved Significance within the Past Fifty Years—a property achieving significance within the past fifty years if it is of exceptional importance

NATIONAL REGISTER UPDATE RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the complex nature of Brackenridge Park, it is important to look through a broader lens and reiterate the larger themes and possibilities that the park encompasses. The Brackenridge Park landscape contains the possibility to demonstrate the natural pattern of human settlement along the water, making legible the concept of water as a life source. The landscape's meaning is contained in its elaborate network of natural and engineered hydrology, abundant archaeological resources, regional vernacular character, and dense layering of artistic craftsmanship and ethnographic imprints. To varying degrees, these factors demonstrate world, national, regional, state, and local significance.

The following evaluation contains a list of recommendations for those items that should be added to the National Register, updating it to reflect the landscape's significant components. In some cases, these items are on the National Register, but a recommendation is being made to add another level of significance to the feature. The recommendations are organized according to the following hierarchy: first, specific feature or characteristic category; second, specific Criteria for Evaluation criterion being met (A-D); and third, whether the significance can be considered national, state, or local. In some cases, features or characteristics are discussed that are noncontributing and thus do not belong on the National Register.

In cases in which a Criteria Consideration is met instead of one of the four Criteria for Evaluation, this is noted, but the feature or characteristic is also grouped with its closest possible Criteria for Evaluation.

FEATURE/CHARACTERISTIC: HYDROLOGIC

CRITERION A: ASSOCIATION WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE—NATIONAL

The presence of the San Antonio River is the core reason that the Brackenridge Park landscape was the locus of prehistoric paleo activity, Native American activity, and colonial settlement. The river combined with the elaborate irrigation system of Spanish acequias dating between 1719 and 1800 drove the secular (non-missionary) suburban development of San Antonio. The eastern edge of today's Brackenridge Park roughly follows what was once the Acequia Madre de Valero—the first of the Spanish missionary acequias, initially dug in 1719 in the earliest phase of what became an extensive network of acequias to provide water to five Spanish missions spread across the area. The original western edge of Brackenridge Park roughly followed the Upper Labor Acequia, built between 1776 to 1778 expressly to provide water for colonial developments (rather than for the missions). The natural and engineered hydrology at Brackenridge Park is the very reason for the development of San Antonio beyond its missions.

The following hydrological resources within the boundaries of Brackenridge Park demonstrate a broad pattern of hydrological engineering of natural resources for purposes related to irrigation, recreation, and flood control; these controls have contributed distinctly to the cultural evolution of the site and the city.

The San Antonio River—National under Criterion A

The San Antonio River is the primary hydrological resource in Brackenridge. It was the motive for prehistoric activity, and it provided drinking and irrigation water during the historic period, first supplying the five San Antonio missions and later supplying suburban development. It also represents patterns of flood control utilized during the past and present. The San Antonio Missions are listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to their international significance, but the portion of the river that flows through Brackenridge Park should also be designated for its significance.

Acequia Madre de Valero (Alamo Acequia), 1719—National under Criterion A

The Acequia Madre de Valero is nationally significant due to its association with the Alamo mission complex, which became the scene of one of the most famous military exercises in national history. It was the first acequia constructed to supply water to the missions. It started in Brackenridge Park at an eastern bend in the river below the headwaters, and there are remnants visible on park property at the Witte Museum site. The 2011 National Register lists this feature as significant at the state level.

Historic Condition: The original channel of the Acequia Madre de Valero consists of stone set in a type of concrete. The channel height was adjusted several times with less porous stone and better concrete materials. During the historic period, the acequia was gradually abandoned and portions were filled in.

Post historic and Existing Condition: Following the historic period, portions of the acequia have remained filled, portions have been destroyed, and there are remnant portions that still exist in a degraded state.

Evaluation: Contributing. The Acequia Madre de Valero is highly significant due to its age and status as one of the earliest manmade features in the park and in San Antonio. The integrity of the feature is low due to its unchecked deterioration and damage that resulted from a nearby construction site.

Upper Labor Acequia and Dam, 1776—National under Criterion A

The Upper Labor Acequia is nationally significant in its association with suburban agriculture and development on the western side of the San Antonio River down to San Pedro Park and its environs and as an example of early Spanish colonial development in the United States. Remnants of this acequia are visible within the park and in the area occupied by the San Antonio Zoo. The 2011 National Register lists this feature as significant at the state level.

Historic Condition: The original channel of the Upper Labor Acequia and its dam formed the northernmost western acequia that branched off from the San Antonio River. This feature was modified periodically as industries located on the western side of the river needed additional water for manufacturing purposes and as agriculture and nursery businesses expanded. During the historic period, the acequia became an early source of water for the zoo.

Post historic and Existing Condition: Since the end of the historic period, portions of the acequia have been filled in, relocated, and sometimes destroyed.

Evaluation: Contributing. The Upper Labor has high significance in Brackenridge Park. Its integrity has been damaged and diminished due to insensitive treatment. The level of significance along with diminished integrity elevate the importance of interventional treatment to stabilize, restore, and interpret the feature.

Tunnel Inlet, 1997—National under Criterion A and Criteria Consideration G

The Tunnel Inlet Park entrance at the southernmost boundary of Brackenridge Park is closely associated with Criterion A, of the four standard criteria, but because its age is less than fifty years, it achieves significance under Criteria Consideration G. The entire history of San Antonio is marked by damaging and severe flood events on a frequent basis. This tunnel—150 feet deep, 24 feet in diameter, and 3 miles long—was constructed (along with its twin tunnel at San Pedro Park)¹⁶ in 1997 to provide protection from the most serious floods that strike the city. The following year, a historic flood event occurred. Although it still caused significant damage, the implications to the infrastructure of the city had the tunnel not been in place are well documented. A second significant flood occurred in 2002. Again, the tunnels served to divert water underground to an outlet south of the city. The tunnel represents a \$111 million investment, and it serves a dual purpose in that during a drought, water stored in the tunnel keeps the San Antonio River flowing.

Historic Condition: The Inlet Tunnel and surrounding park postdate the historic period.

Post historic and Existing Condition: The existing condition of the Inlet Tunnel and park is excellent.

Evaluation: Contributing. The feature falls under Criteria Consideration G due to its superior engineering and construction techniques. Criteria Consideration G states, “Properties that have achieved significance within the past fifty years if they are of exceptional importance.”

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE—LOCAL

Low-Water Crossing, 1917—Local under Criterion A

One of the iconic water features of Brackenridge Park is the original low-water crossing, constructed as a pedestrian and automobile crossing of the San Antonio River. This feature demonstrates the distinct regional character of Brackenridge Park.

Historic Condition: Constructed in the early years of the park’s history, the low-water crossing appears more organic, with the stone edges placed in a more random arrangement.

Post-historic and Existing Condition: The crossing was concreted and the edge “stepping-stones” were formed from elevated blocks of concrete, allowing safer footing for pedestrians.

Evaluation: Contributing. The crossing is one of the earliest constructed features in the park. It is in excellent condition and retains a high level of integrity.

¹⁶ “San Antonio River Milestones: 1997, San Antonio River Tunnel Constructed,” San Antonio River Authority, accessed June 20, 2019, sara-tx.org/about/history/san-antonio-river-milestones.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE—NONCONTRIBUTING

Ultraviolet Light Treatment Plant, 2012

This hydrology feature is an essential component of the health of the river within the park. Because of its recent age, its larger place in the spectrum of cultural significance remains to be seen, so it is a noncontributing element under Criterion A, and it is noncontributing under Criteria Consideration G. It is worth noting, however, that it was during the construction of this feature that “a 20-foot long covered stone sluiceway”¹⁷ was unearthed in Brackenridge, which was later determined to be a portion of the Upper Labor Acequia.

Historic Condition: Does not exist.

Post historic and Existing Condition: This feature postdates the historic period.

Evaluation: Noncontributing.

FEATURE/CHARACTER—HISTORIC PEOPLE

CRITERION B: ASSOCIATION WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE—NATIONAL

One of the more important areas in which there is significance is under Criterion B, the association of persons significant in Brackenridge Park/San Antonio, in the state of Texas, and in the nation. The absence of a single professional designer for a park as rich in cultural heritage as Brackenridge merits a more careful consideration of the people responsible for its evolutionary and vernacular design and development. Initial research has concluded that numerous individuals should be added to the National Register Nomination.

A. W. Tillinghast—National under Criterion B

One of the most famous golf course designers of his time, A. W. Tillinghast was brought in by George Brackenridge to create a public course that would be accessible to everyone for a small fee. Brackenridge donated additional land for construction of the golf course. The land had formerly been used for hunting and for entertaining visitors to San Antonio in his lodge. Brackenridge “felt his city, now at a population of 200,000, needed a place for recreation.”¹⁸ John Erwin, former golf pro at Brackenridge, states that “this is the most historic course in the state. Anybody who is anybody has played here.”¹⁹ Construction began on the course in 1915, with the first nine holes open to the public in the spring of 1916. The remaining nine holes were opened on September 23, 1916. Tillinghast worked from his East Coast headquarters, with frequent visits to ensure that his design was followed. He worked around the San Antonio River and the native Texas hardwoods on the site.²⁰ In the early 1920s, local sports editor Jack O’Brien came up with the idea of establishing a professional golf tour, later named the Professional Golf Association (PGA). As the first public golf course in the state of Texas, “Old

17 Colin McDonald, “Piece of History Is Found Near Zoo,” My San Antonio, November 22, 2012, accessed October 2, 2019, mysanantonio.com/news/environment/article/Piece-of-history-is-found-near-zoo-4060630.php.

18 Art Stricklin, *Links, Lore, and Legends: The Story of Texas Golf* (Lanham, MD: Taylor, 2005), 18.

19 Stricklin, *Links, Lore, and Legends*, 19.

20 Stricklin, *Links, Lore, and Legends*, 19.

Brack” became the home of the Texas leg of the PGA tour. Working with the acting golf pro John Bredemus, O’Brien put together the first PGA tournament in Texas, which occurred in the winter of 1922. The time of year was chosen to showcase the fact that San Antonio had better weather in the winter than most places had in the summertime.²¹

Gutzon Borglum—National under Criterion B

Borglum was the designer of Mt. Rushmore and came to San Antonio in the hopes of receiving a commission for the Range Driver’s monument in celebration of the Texas Centennial. He did not receive the commission, but he remained in San Antonio and set up a studio at Pump House #2 in Brackenridge Park. He worked there at his studio before eventually moving to California.

Borglum was interested in all things San Antonio and often pushed local civic leaders and public officials to beautify and invest in the city and the river. He was made an honorary member of the San Antonio Conservation Society due to his interest in the city and its history. As important as his work at Mt. Rushmore was, he was willing to work with local leaders at all levels to improve his adopted city. When San Antonio was set to host the biennial national convention of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, Amanda Taylor, head of the conservation society’s river-lighting committee, asked Borglum to make recommendations and help with appropriate ornamental lighting for the river and walkways.²²

Borglum received many commissions throughout the state of Texas. The cumulative body of his work elevates his importance within Brackenridge to the national level.

Pompeo Coppini—National under Criterion B

Coppini was a famous regional sculptor who was commissioned to create several important works that were used in Brackenridge Park, San Antonio, other areas of Texas, and other states around the country. Probably his most famous commission and work sits next to the Alamo. The Cenotaph was commissioned at the time of the Texas Centennial celebration in 1937. Entitled “The Spirit of Sacrifice,” the forty-foot-tall monument “incorporates images of the Alamo garrison leaders and 187 names of known Alamo defenders.” Continuing research has identified additional members of the defending party and removed some names from the list of soldiers.

At the park, George Brackenridge commissioned Coppini to create a bust of his close friend Ludwig Mahncke, and the bust was placed in the park in 1909. It was later relocated to Mahncke Park in 1968, where it now resides. Other works by Coppini in Texas include the cowboy Charles Noyes and his horse on the courthouse square in Ballinger, the statue of a mounted Terry’s Texas Ranger on the Capitol grounds in Austin, the Littlefield Memorial Fountain on the campus of the University of Texas, and “Victims of the Galveston Flood,” which was commissioned and donated to the city of Galveston after the great hurricane of 1900.²³

21 Stricklin, *Links, Lore, and Legends*, 23-24.

22 Lewis F. Fisher, *Saving San Antonio: The Preservation of a Heritage*, 2nd ed. (San Antonio: Maverick Books, 2016), 187.

23 Henry Wolff, “Coppini Statues Add Class to Community,” *Victoria Advocate*, December 31, 1969, accessed November 22, 2019, newspapers.com/image/434836740/.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE—STATE

George Brackenridge—State under Criterion B

The most important personage in the history of Brackenridge Park is the person who made the initial bequest and who followed that by further donating multiple parcels of contiguous property to create the park the public experiences today. At the time of his initial donation, Brackenridge was at one of the high periods of wealth in his life. Although he was not an old man yet, he was looking for ways to give back to the community in which he had built his life, reputation, and fortune. A much broader description of the life of George Brackenridge is included in the narrative history portion of this report.

Dionicio Rodriguez—State under Criterion B

Arriving from Mexico, Dionicio Rodriguez came to San Antonio with knowledge of the specialized art of faux bois. The work that is considered one of his masterpieces—a faux bois bridge—is located in the park and crosses the San Antonio River just to the west of the Eleanor Brackenridge Playground. Other works are located in the Japanese Tea Garden.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE—LOCAL

Ludwig Mahncke—Local under Criterion B

Ludwig Mahncke was a friend of George Brackenridge's and was instrumental in the early history of Brackenridge Park. He was also the first formal park commissioner of San Antonio. His appointment in 1901 set the stage for the early work at the park. Under his leadership, carriageways were laid out and paved with macadam, and the first collection of elk, deer, and bison were brought to the park. The implementation of park roads demonstrates the likely influence of the design of other suburban parks constructed during the second half of the nineteenth century. The roads, which meander through woodlands, along with the introduction of meadow wildlife also reflect an awareness of overarching national trends in picturesque design and tourism.

Ray Lambert—Local under Criterion B

Ray Lambert became the park commissioner in 1915 after serving on the city council. He already knew the restraints on available funds from the city and the needs of the growing San Antonio population. Lambert is responsible for implementing the swimming area at Lambert Beach, creating the Japanese Tea Garden and Texas Star Garden within old quarry sites, creating the Lily Pond, overseeing the design and implementation of the Brackridge Golf Course, and locating the early origins of the zoo at several of the quarry sites, and implementing other spaces and programming in the park. His implementations all demonstrated influences from the picturesque, the City Beautiful movement, and the evolving trends in parks as active recreation grew in influence.

Otto Koehler—Local under Criterion B

The beer-producing Koehler family founded Pearl Brewing. They were a prominent German family in a multicultural city with a German newspaper and many families of German heritage. Their donation of land to the city in order to provide a place in Brackenridge where alcohol could be served added an important component to the park.

Dr. Aureliano Urrutia—Local under Criterion B

Aureliano Urrutia was born in 1872 in Xochimilco, Mexico, which is now a suburb of Mexico City. Xochimilco was “once a unique agricultural area build upon a network of lake and canal systems.”²⁴ Today it is a UNESCO World Heritage site, because “with its network of canals and artificial islands, it testifies to the efforts of the Aztec people to build a habitat in the midst of an unfavorable environment.”²⁵ Urrutia was a noted surgeon who had been Mexico’s interior minister until he fled in 1914 during the Mexican Revolution. He wanted to create gardens similar to those he had experienced in Xochimilco. He created Miraflores between 1921 and 1930 in an area behind his home. The site is now under the care of Brackenridge Park and is located at the northern edge of the park.

John Kampmann—Local under Criterion B

Although the only evidence of builder John Kampmann’s association with Brackenridge Park is a small limestone building currently in ruins, his legacy in San Antonio is substantial, especially in the early years of the city’s history. In the nineteenth century, Kampmann’s list of notable buildings included the Menger Hotel, St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, and the German-English School.²⁶ Notable private homes include the Steves, Eagar, Halff, Groos, and Oppenheimer Houses. In addition, he ran businesses, from a bank to a brewery, and served as city alderman and fire captain.²⁷

A stronger connection between Kampmann and George Brackenridge exists due to Kampmann’s construction of the Sweet House for James and Charlotte Sweet. The building became Brackenridge’s home shortly after the end of the Civil War. Together, the Sweet House and the Victorian addition he built just to the west of the original house would remain Brackenridge’s primary residence until after his mother’s death and the sale of the home and the headwaters of the San Antonio River to the Sisters of the Incarnate Word in 1897.

In 1860, several leading citizens of the city joined forces to organize the San Antonio Gas Company. Kampmann was a founding member, along with John French, James Vance, George Howard, Francis Guilbeau, William Menger, and August Nette. Kampmann served on the board of directors and as president of the gas company from 1860 until 1885, the year of his death.

24 Elise Urrutia, “Miraflores: Dr. Urrutia’s Lost Garden,” *Rivard Report*, Institute for Nonprofit News, October 2, 2016, therivardreport.com/miraflores-dr-urrutias-lost-garden/.

25 “Historic Centre of Mexico City and Xochimilco,” UNESCO World Heritage List, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, accessed September 6, 2019, whc.unesco.org/en/list/412.

26 Maggie Valentine, *John H. Kampmann, Master Builder: San Antonio’s German Influence in the 19th Century*, (New York: Beaufort Books, 2014).

27 Valentine, *John H. Kampmann, Master Builder*.

Kampmann was also instrumental in promoting, securing the rights of, and building the railway and streetcar system in the city. “In 1874, Kamp and his partners received a state charter for the Bexar Street Railway Company, and the trolleys began rolling on July 4, 1878.”²⁸ The streetcar line was later instrumental in the growth north of the city and in the increasing patronage of Brackenridge Park by San Antonio residents.

Harvey P. Smith, George Willis, and Charles Boelhouwe—Local under Criterion B

Originally designed by Harvey P. Smith and then expanded and rehabilitated just a few years later, the Sunken Garden Theater has served as the backdrop for various performances. The earliest known Easter celebrations also occurred there, dating to the 1930s.²⁹

Collectively, the architectural team of Smith, Willis, and Boelhouwe has been very important in San Antonio history. Harvey P. Smith was hired by the WPA to document the existing condition of and supervise the repairs to four of the missions in San Antonio. He first recorded sets of Historic American Building Survey drawings for the missions. When federal funds became available to repair the missions, he worked to ensure that construction methods and materials were authentic and consistent with prior construction. Lewis F. Fisher notes that Smith was one of only a few male professionals involved in the preservation movement in San Antonio. The movement was largely driven by women preservationists. Fisher notes that “it was a woman’s world with a pleasant admixture of Latin culture.”³⁰

George Willis arrived in San Antonio from Chicago in 1911 to begin work with Atlee Ayres. Educated at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Armour Institute (now Illinois Institute of Technology), Willis worked for four years as a draftsman in the studio of Frank Lloyd Wright before moving to California, Dallas, and then San Antonio.³¹ His buildings in San Antonio include the Milam Building (1928) downtown, which “at the time of its construction, [was] among the tallest reinforced-concrete buildings in the world and the first to be air-conditioned.”³²

Atlee B. Ayres and Atlee B. Ayres Jr., founders of Ayres & Ayres Architects—Local under Criterion B

One of architect Atlee B. Ayres’s first residential commissions was the Spanish Colonial Revival home at 202 Bushnell Avenue for Thomas E. Hogg, the son of Texas governor James Hogg and the brother of Will, Ima, and Mike Hogg of Houston. The Houston Hoggs developed the River Oaks neighborhood and were instrumental in the establishment of Memorial Park in Houston. Fisher states, “Finished in 1924, it was the first major Spanish Colonial Revival local work of architect Atlee B. Ayres, one of San Antonio’s great practitioners of that style.”³³

28 Marilyn MacAdams Sibley, *George W. Brackenridge, Maverick Philanthropist* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973), 159.

29 “Park and Zoo Draw Huge Crowd,” *San Antonio Express*, April 21, 1935, Newspaperarchives.com.

30 Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 207.

31 Stephanie Hetos Cocke, “Willis, George Rodney,” *Handbook of Texas*, Texas State Historical Association, June 15, 2010, accessed November 22, 2019, tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fwi93.

32 Cocke, “Willis, George Rodney.”

33 Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 123.

Ayres, along with his son, would go on to design Brackenridge Park's Witte Museum in 1926 and Tuesday Musical Club in 1950. In San Antonio, they also designed the Municipal Auditorium, the Atkinson Residence, the Smith Young Tower, and the Administration Building at Randolph Air Field.³⁴ Along with Phelps and Dewees, Ayres and Ayres codesigned Pioneer Hall, which is situated adjacent to the original Witte Museum building.

FEATURE/CHARACTERISTIC—REGIONAL VERNACULAR CHARACTER

CRITERION C: EMBODIMENT OF THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION, OR THAT REPRESENT THE WORK OF A MASTER, OR THAT POSSESS HIGH ARTISTIC VALUE, OR THAT REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENT MAY LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE—NATIONAL

Brackenridge Park became a tourist destination within a few years of its inception in 1899. By 1907, and likely earlier, the park attracted travelers from across the nation who traversed its drives by carriage and motorcar. The 343-acre park, first envisioned and laid out by local boosters George Brackenridge and Ludwig Mahncke in 1899 and further developed by park commissioner Ray Lambert beginning in 1914, was likely influenced by international and national trends, including the Chicago World's Exhibition of 1893 and the City Beautiful movement of the 1890s to 1920s, as well as by designer Frederick Law Olmsted. Yet Brackenridge Park's essential character sharply contrasts with that expressed in Olmsted's design for Central Park.

Brackenridge Park's vernacular design expresses a defining regional vernacular character, one in which form follows water. That is, the park and its historic network of carriageways and bridle paths are situated at an angle that responds to the San Antonio River, which is a central and sinuous connective thread through the park, and to the Upper Labor Acequia and Acequia Madre de Valero (of which remnants remain), which roughly form the park's eastern and western edges. Further contributing to the park's regional character, the Balcones Escarpment slices through the western side of the park. This fault creates a distinguishing ecotone at which arid desert vegetation abuts a lush subtropical landscape.

CRITERION D: THE YIELD OR POTENTIAL YIELD OF INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PRECONTACT HISTORY, PROTOHISTORY, OR HISTORY

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE—NATIONAL

The 2011 National Register listing recognizes Brackenridge Park's archaeological significance at the state level but not at the national level.

Brackenridge Park has yielded archaeological deposits that span a continuum of eleven thousand years, and it is likely to yield more deposits. The 2011 National Register states that deposits have been found related to the Paleoindian (12,500 BCE–8000 BCE), Early Archaic

³⁴ Pfeiffer and Tomka, "Brackenridge Park," 64.

(8800 BCE–6000 BCE), Middle Archaic (6000 BCE–4000 BCE), Late Archaic (4000 BCE–1200 BCE), and Late Prehistoric (1200 BCE–350 BCE) periods as well as dating to historic periods, including the Spanish colonial era and up through the turn of the twentieth century.

The 2011 National Register includes notation of evidence of the Alamo acequia and dam system, referred to throughout this report as the Acequia Madre de Valero. But in 2013, Brackenridge Park yielded more archaeological discoveries, with additional evidence of the Acequia Madre de Valero discovered on the property of the Witte Museum; and evidence of a “later 1800s German restoration of the original dam was unearthed”³⁵ on the property of the San Antonio Zoo. With these more recent discoveries, the Brackenridge landscape, as it existed before the development of the park, is further unified.

One park feature does not fit neatly into the four Criteria for Evaluation or the seven Criteria Considerations. Brackenridge Park has become the home to a cultural celebration each Easter that includes families camping at the park along the San Antonio River, returning to the same campsites each year over generations. This event is an important component of the park’s history, and although it may overlap with the park’s regional vernacular character, it embodies an ethnographic landscape. According to the National Park Service’s Applied Ethnography Program, an ethnographic landscape is

a relatively contiguous area of interrelated places that contemporary cultural groups define as meaningful because it is inextricably and traditionally linked to their own local or regional histories, cultural identities, beliefs and behaviors. Present-day social factors such as people’s class, ethnicity, and gender may result in the assignment of diverse meanings to a landscape and its component places.³⁶

A 2019 *San Antonio Express* article states that one family has celebrated Easter at Brackenridge Park for sixty-six years,³⁷ beginning in 1953, although the family does not know why the tradition began that year. The tradition is widely associated with San Antonio’s Mexican American community, and it is perceived to be part of the working-class segment of that community, although that perception may not be accurate. The tradition, which actually began as early as the 1930s with a one-day event in the park, has evolved to span the weekend and has spread to other parks in the city.

Explorations to document the campground as a seasonal ethnographic landscape in the National Register listing might be considered under Criterion A (Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history), given that it is indicative of a broad pattern of immigration and ethnic migration resulting in the development of cultural traditions and rituals that imprint landscapes. In addition, Criteria Consideration F (Commemorative Properties—a property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance) may also capture the ethnographic landscape layer at Brackenridge Park. This

35 Eileen Pace, “UTSA Archaeologists Announce Two Major Acequia Finds On San Antonio River,” Texas Public Radio, May 4, 2013, accessed November 22, 2019, tpr.org/post/utsa-archaeologists-announce-two-major-acequia-finds-san-antonio-river.

36 Michael J. Evans, Alexa Roberts, and Peggy Nelson, “Ethnographic Landscapes,” *CRM* 24, no. 5 (2001): 53–56, webpages.uidaho.edu/css501/images/Readings/ethnographic%20landscapes.pdf.

37 Emilie Eaton, “San Antonio Family Has Celebrated Easter at Brackenridge for 66 Years,” *San Antonio Express-News*, April 21, 2019, accessed November 22, 2019, expressnews.com/news/local/article/San-Antonio-family-has-celebrated-Easter-at-13784182.php.

event is distinctly South Texan and supports a national understanding of Brackenridge Park as America's premier cultural park. The National Park Service has a Park Ethnography Program that employs research specific to assessing and documenting ethnographic landscapes.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Brackenridge Park landscape is highly significant due to multiple periods of its development, at the national, state, and local levels. At the national level, it is significant on five fronts. First, the site's complicated evolution of water diversion for the provision of public water, agriculture, and flood control represents one of the first municipal water systems in the country and is part of a broad pattern of the country's history of managing water as a resource. The initial system of acequias, built by Indigenous laborers, successfully provided public access to water beginning in 1719, and a more recent tunnel inlet system located at the base of the park continues to manage river flow and flood control today. (NPS Criterion A)

A second aspect of national significance is that Brackenridge Park is likely to yield archaeological information from prehistory, protohistory, and history—this single landscape possesses the ability to tell a contiguous story of occupancy and development from the prehistoric to historic periods. Although much of the park has not been examined, some archaeological surveys have been conducted at Brackenridge Park. Each survey has yielded artifacts and information related to multiple periods of occupation and development. It is extremely likely that future research will yield additional prehistoric, protohistoric, and historic information, including evidence of Indigenous people, the enslaved, and the early Mexican population. Properties both north and south of Brackenridge along the San Antonio River have yielded paleontological artifacts; it is highly probable that site exploration at Brackenridge would yield similar artifacts. (NPS Criterion D)

A third aspect of national significance, as well as state and local significance, is the park's regional vernacular development and character as an early urban municipal park. This character is exemplified by an extensive collection of vernacular regional features in the park, including a historic system of roads dating to the early 1900s, a network of pedestrian bridges, rock house architecture, rock house retaining walls, and other vernacular objects, structures, buildings, and built landscape works, such as low-water crossings that enabled carriages and vehicles to cross directly through the San Antonio River in an immersive manner. As a regional vernacular park that emerged in the latter half of the nineteenth century and on the heels of the highly designed Central Park, Brackenridge Park represents the other end of the municipal park spectrum. (NPS Criterion C)

The landscape is also nationally significant as a result of numerous sculptures located in the park. These were designed by Mexican-born artist Dionicio Rodriguez and by Italian-born artist Pompeo Coppini. (NPS Criterion C)

Finally, the twentieth-century Easter tradition that is known to have emerged after World War II, and possibly as early as the 1930s, had evolved to an annual picnic and tent tradition and was widely associated with San Antonio's Mexican American community by the 1950s.³⁸

38 "Park and Zoo Draw Huge Crowd."

The tradition has spread to parks throughout the city as it has taken root. This recurring ethnographic event is significant at the national, state, and local levels because it conveys a broad pattern of ethnic migration and settlement. It is a newer cultural tradition and ritual that has symbolically imbued Brackenridge Park. (NPS Criterion A)

Brackenridge Park is significant at the state and local levels for its association with George W. Brackenridge, who was a cotton broker and banker before he traveled the state of Texas to conduct business and philanthropic work. He made major contributions in Austin, through his work as a University of Texas board member, and in Seguin, Texas, where he helped establish Guadalupe College for African Americans. Brackenridge was especially active in San Antonio, where, to give two examples, he donated the initial 199 acres for Brackenridge Park and established the San Antonio Water Works Company. His vision for Brackenridge Park was its first vernacular imprint. (NPS Criterion B)

Considered holistically for its archaeological, hydrologic, regional vernacular, artistic, and ethnographic evolution and development, the Brackenridge Park landscape possesses national, state, and local significance—and likely even international significance.

DETERMINATION OF INTEGRITY

A significant span of Brackenridge Park's history precedes its development as a park. Its archaeological heritage contains clear evidence of the prehistoric and historic continuum of the site. Although the archaeological resources are not visible throughout, they are largely undisturbed, and the entire park can be considered an archaeological site. Disturbance has been associated with construction of the Confederate tannery and, later, the Alamo Portland Cement site, the development of the San Antonio Zoo and the Brackenridge Park Golf Course, and foundations for buildings throughout the site. Disturbance has primarily not been at depths that would destroy the prehistoric archaeological fabric and record, however. Because the archaeological resources are largely intact but not visible or easily understood, the archaeological integrity ranges from high to medium.

Brackenridge Park was first designated as a municipal park after George Brackenridge's original 1899 donation of 199 acres, and additional bequests and purchases over the next two decades completed the 343-acre park that now exists. The various regional vernacular components that were constructed during the park's first five decades (1899–1949) are clearly visible and remain largely intact, however, they are not completely understood as significant.

The only major change in park boundaries occurred between the late 1960s and late 1970s, when federal dollars were widely distributed throughout the country to improve and expand infrastructure investments that involved the automobile and trucking industries. One of these investments was the expansion of the interstate highway system. The expansion of the McAllister Freeway, which opened in 1978, carved off a slice of the park on the north side adjacent to the Sunken Garden Theater and the Japanese Tea Garden.

Taken as a whole, the significant components of the Brackenridge Park cultural landscape retain a high level of integrity in terms of physical intactness but a medium-to-low level of integrity in terms of the way their significance is visible and understood by the public.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE AND INTEGRITY

Understanding the significance of the landscape systems and landscape features is a first step toward treatment. Recognizing those significant systems and features that have reduced or damaged integrity versus those that maintain high levels of integrity is the next step. Lower integrity does not mean that a landscape resource is not important, and it does not suggest that a landscape resource should not be invested in. In many cases, low integrity means that the resource needs investment for immediate protection and intervention through a preservation process.

The following table illustrates that at a systems level, considering Brackenridge Park across the span of its time as a documented landscape, and at a cultural features level, the site contains a high level of cultural significance. The integrity of its cultural resources ranges from low to medium. High levels of significance and integrity, or potential integrity, are coded green. Medium levels of significance and integrity are coded blue. Low levels of significance and integrity are coded yellow.

The potential to improve the overall integrity of these resources—how intact they are and how visibly they represent their cultural and historic significance to the public—is very high. The high level of cultural and historic significance demonstrates the merit of and need for targeted investments in appropriate preservation treatment (using NPS guidelines) for the site. With this kind of investment, Brackenridge Park’s national, regional, state, and local importance will become more identifiable and understood. This can be achieved through dedicated funding for a systems-based Treatment approach that is implemented in phases and through dedicated stewardship and maintenance.

LANDSCAPE SYSTEMS	CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE	CURRENT INTEGRITY		FUTURE INTEGRITY	
		Today, is the cultural significance: and/or historic period of significance:		Can the significant resource be rehabilitated, restored, or reconstructed?	
	IMPORTANT? Is it historically important? To what level: High, Medium, Low	INTACT? <i>Consideration of physical intactness: historic setting, materials, composition, workmanship, etc.</i> To what level: High, Medium, Low	VISIBLE AND UNDERSTOOD? <i>Can the public see the cultural/historic resource AND understand its significance to the past?</i> To what level: High, Medium, Low	POTENTIAL TO RETURN TO AN INTACT AND/OR FUNCTIONAL STATE: To what level: High, Medium, Low	POTENTIAL TO MAKE VISIBLE AND UNDERSTOOD To what level: High, Medium, Low
ARCHAEOLOGY	High	High/TBD based on research	Low	TBD further research needed	High
Prehistoric Archaeology	High	High/TBD based on research	Low	TBD further research needed	High
Historic Archaeology	High	High/TBD based on research	Low	TBD further research needed	High
RIVER/RIPARIAN CORRIDOR	High	Low to Medium	Low	Medium to High	High
Ecological	High	Low	Low	Medium	High
Cultural/ Historical	High	Medium	Low	High	High
RIVER STRUCTURES (river walls, acequias, dams, tunnels, ditches, raceway, low-water crossings)	High	Medium The most recent are intact (Inlet Tunnel Park; Catalpa-Pershing). Others are not intact, or they are not visible. River walls, acequias,	Low Existing remnants are covered over or not interpreted in a manner that the public can understand the cultural and historic significance.	High	High

LANDSCAPE SYSTEMS	CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGN.	CURRENT INTEGRITY		FUTURE INTEGRITY	
		dams, bridges, and raceway are in varying stages of disrepair and visible. Upper Labor Dam is buried. The Alamo Acequia is a representation			
Ecological function	High	Medium	Low	High	High
Cultural/Historical	High	Medium	Low	High	High
VEGETATION/SOILS/HYDROLOGY	High	Low	Low	Medium to High	High
Ecological	High	Low	Low	Medium	High
Cultural/Historical	High	Medium	Low	Medium	High
PARK ENTRIES/PERIPHERAL CONNECTIONS TO COMMUNITY	High	Medium	Low	High	High
CIRCULATION	High	Medium Historic systems are intact but need maintenance/material continuity	Low Hierarchy is unclear; connectivity is compromised	High	High
Vehicular	High	Medium	Low	Medium	High
Bicycle	High	Medium	Low	High	High
Pedestrian	High	Medium	Low	High	High
INTERIOR EDGES/TRANSITIONS B/T CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS THAT ARE PART OF OR W/IN CARE OF THE PARK	High Historic relationship b/t cultural institutions is important. Each of these sites except	Low	Low Public does not understand relationship b/t these or that they are part of a single landscape.	High	High

LANDSCAPE SYSTEMS	CULTURAL/HISTORIC SIGN.	CURRENT INTEGRITY		FUTURE INTEGRITY	
(Lions Field, Witte Museum, San Antonio Zoo, Brackenridge Park Golf Course, Miniature Train, Japanese Tea Garden, Sunken Garden Theater, Miraflores Gardens, Davis Park)	Davis Park is included in Texas Antiquities Landmark Designation of Brackenridge Park.				
COLLECTION OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES, FEATURES AND ART (bridges, pavilions, restrooms, benches)	High	Medium The condition of these range from low to high, and average to a medium condition.	High They still contribute a great deal to the vernacular regional character of the landscape.	High	High

INDIVIDUAL RESOURCES BY CHARACTER ZONE		SIGNIFICANCE	CURRENT INTEGRITY		FUTURE INTEGRITY	
Character Zone		IMPORTANT? Is it historically important, primarily during the park periods? To what level: High, Medium, Low	INTACT? <i>Consideration of physical intactness: historic setting, materials, composition, workmanship, etc.</i> To what level: High, Medium, Low	VISIBLE AND UNDERSTOOD? <i>Can the public clearly see the cultural and/or historic resource AND understand its significance or connection to the past?</i> To what level: High, Medium, Low	POTENTIAL TO RETURN TO A HISTORICALLY INTACT AND/OR FUNCTIONAL STATE: To what level: High, Medium, Low	POTENTIAL TO MAKE VISIBLE AND UNDERSTOOD: To what level: High, Medium, Low
		A-1	Miraflores, c. 1923	High	Low	Low
B-1	Upper Labor Dam + Acequia, 1776-1778	High	High	Low-dam Medium-acequia	High	High
B-2	Water Works Raceway, 1877	High	Low	Low	High	High
B-3	Stone Foot Bridge, c. 1900	High	High	Medium	High	High
B-4	Lily Pond, c. 1915-17	High	Low	Low	Medium	High
B-5	Donkey Barn, c. 1920 + 1956 (at Zoo edge)	High	High	Medium	High	High
B-6	Lambert Beach Bathroom Building (men's), 1925	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
B-7	Dionicio Rodriguez Bridge, c. 1926	High	High	High	High	High
B-8	Electric Pump House #3, 1940	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
C-1	First Water Works Pump House, 1877-1878	High	Medium	Low	High	High

INDIVIDUAL RESOURCES BY CHARACTER ZONE		SIGNIFICANCE	CURRENT INTEGRITY		FUTURE INTEGRITY	
C-2	Berlin Iron Truss Bridge, 1890; relocated 1925	High	High	Medium	High	High
C-3	Arched Iron Truss Pedestrian Bridge, 1890; relocated 1925	High	High	Medium	High	High
C-4	Lambert Beach, 1915	High	Medium	Low	High	High
C-5	Eleanor Brackenridge Playground, c. 1915; 2003	High	Low	Medium	High	High
C-6	Koehler Pavilion, 1925; remodeled 1982	High	Low	High	High	High
C-7	Lambert Beach Bathhouse (women's), 1925	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
C-8	Joske Pavilion, 1926	High	Medium	High	High	High
C-9	Koehler Pavilion Restrooms, c. 1930	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
C-11	WPA San Antonio River Walls, 1937-38	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
C-12	Historic Picnic Area (Tuleta Dr.), 1938-1940	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
C-13	Miniature Train Bridge, 1957	High	High	Medium	High	High
C-14	Joske Pavilion Bathrooms, c. 1966; Brackenridge Park Conservancy Office, 1979	High	Medium	High	High	High
D-1	Lambert Beach Softball Field, c. 1950	Low	Medium	High	High	High
E-1	Acequia Madre de Valero, c. 1719/Alamo Dam, c. 1917	High	Low	Low	Medium	High

INDIVIDUAL RESOURCES BY CHARACTER ZONE		SIGNIFICANCE	CURRENT INTEGRITY		FUTURE INTEGRITY	
E-2	Witte Museum, 1926	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
E-3	Pioneer Hall, 1937	High	High	High	High	High
E-4	Ruiz House, c. 1760; relocated to zone E, 1943	High pre-park	Medium	Low	Medium	High
E-5	Navarro House, 1835; relocated to zone E, 1947	High pre-park	Medium	Low	Medium	High
E-6	Twohig House, 1841; relocated to zone E, 1947	High pre-park	Medium	Low	Medium	High
F-1	Quarry Walls, 1860-1880	High pre-park	Medium	Medium	High	High
F-2	Kampmann House ruins, c. 1870	High pre-park	Low	Low	High	High
F-3	Alamo Portland and Roman Cement Works, 1880	High (pre-park)	High	Low	High	High
F-4	Alpine Drive, c.1880	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
F-5	Japanese Tea Garden, 1917	High	High	High	High	High
F-6	Mexican Village, 1920	High	Medium	Low	High	High
F-7	Sunken Garden Theater, 1930	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
G-1	Koehler Park Entrance Columns, c. 1915	High	High	High	High	High
G-2	St. Mary Street Restrooms, c. 1922	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
G-3	Tuleta Dr. Entrance c. 1935	High	High	Low	High	High
G-4	WPA Perimeter Walls + Entry Gates, 1936-1937	High	High	Low	High	High
G-5	Cypress Pavilion, post-1950	N/A not historic	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

INDIVIDUAL RESOURCES BY CHARACTER ZONE		SIGNIFICANCE	CURRENT INTEGRITY		FUTURE INTEGRITY	
G-6	Tuesday Musical Club, 1950	High	High	Medium	High	High
G-7	N. St. Mary's St. Parking, post-1950	N/A not historic	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
G-8	Japanese Tea Garden Parking	N/A not historic	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
H-1	Polo Fields/Driving Range, c. 1920/1952	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
H-2	Sherriff's Mounted Posse Building, c. 1951	Medium	Medium	Low	High	High
H-3	Recreational Railroad, 1957	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
H-4	Tony Martinez Softball Field 1980	N/A not historic	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
H-5	Eagle Train Depot and Gift Shop, 1980	N/A not historic	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
H-6	Public Parking Lot	N/A not historic	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
H-7	Sunken Garden Depot 1980	N/A not historic	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
I-1	Tuleta St. Low Water Crossing, 1917	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
I-2	Mulberry Street Bridge, 2011	N/A not historic	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
J-1	Wilderness Area/East Grove (predates park)	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
J-2	Wilderness Loop c.1899	High	Medium	Low	High	High
J-3	Red Oak Road c.1899	High	High	Medium	High	High
J-4	Avenue B/Witte Museum Parking Garage, 2009					
	Ecological	High	High	Medium	N/A	High
	Cultural/ Historic	N/A not historic	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

INDIVIDUAL RESOURCES BY CHARACTER ZONE		SIGNIFICANCE	CURRENT INTEGRITY		FUTURE INTEGRITY	
K	Catalpa-Pershing, 1977					
	Ecological	High	High	Medium	High	High
	Cultural/Historic	N/A not historic	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
L	*Davis Park, c. 1917	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
M-1	Avenue A Low-Water Crossing, 1939	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
N	Lions Field, 1925	High	Low	Medium	Medium	High
O	Flood Control Tunnel Inlet, 1997	High	High			
P-1 (Zoo)	Quarry Walls, c. 1860-1880	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
P-2 (Zoo)	Upper Labor Diversion Channel, 1920	High	Low	Low	Medium	High
Q1 (Golf Course)	Lower Pump House, 1885	High	TBD outside of CLR study area	TBD outside of CLR study area	TBD outside of CLR study area	High
Q2 (Golf Course)	Brackenridge Park Golf Course Stone Bridges, 1915-1916	High	TBD outside of CLR study area	TBD outside of CLR study area	TBD outside of CLR study area	High
Q3 (Golf Course)	Electric Pump House Station #2, 1939	High	TBD outside of CLR study area	TBD outside of CLR study area	TBD outside of CLR study area	High
Q4 (Golf Course)	Brackenridge Golf Course Clubhouse, 1980	High	TBD outside of CLR study area	TBD outside of CLR study area	TBD outside of CLR study area	High
Location TBD	*County Poor House (portions likely located in Davis Park and beyond)	High (pre-park)	TBD further research needed	Low	TBD further research needed	High
Location TBD	*County Cemetery (portions likely located near Davis Park and beyond)	High (pre-park)	TBD further research needed	Low	TBD further research needed	High

PART FOUR: FUTURE

Introduction to Treatment

Chapter 15: Treatment

When significance and integrity are at the fulcrum, with preservation on one end of the balance and an exciting new design on the other, there is plenty of room for design excellence in historic preservation projects.

Sharon C. Park, FAIA
“Design Excellence and Historic Preservation,” (2006)

INTRODUCTION TO TREATMENT

The National Park Service (NPS) uses the term *treatment* to describe the management plan that results from a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) analysis of a landscape’s historical context, site history, existing conditions, significance, and integrity. Treatment is the work carried out to achieve a cultural landscape’s long-term preservation and future development goals—in effect, it is an action plan.

STANDARD TREATMENT APPROACHES

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties and the Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes prescribes four treatment approaches.

Preservation requires “retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric, including historic form, features, and details as they have evolved over time.”

Rehabilitation “acknowledges the need to alter or add to a cultural landscape to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the landscape’s historic character.”

Restoration allows for “the depiction of a landscape at a particular time in its history by preserving materials from the period of significance and removing materials from other periods.”

Reconstruction establishes a framework for “recreating a vanished or non-surviving landscape with new materials, primarily for interpretive purposes.¹

¹ US Department of the Interior, *The Secretary of Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1993).

Alongside recommendations that correspond to the Secretary of the Interior’s standard approaches for treating cultural landscapes, the Brackenridge Park Treatment Plan includes recommendations developed in collaboration with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (WFC) for improving, protecting, and celebrating the site’s ecology through *ecological restoration (eco-restoration)*.

Eco-restoration is the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed.² Eco-restoration is typically focused on the goal of repairing the function, or health, of damaged ecosystems but not necessarily on re-creating a historic ecological community.

Often, eco-restoration is achieved through Low Impact Development. While there is no one-to-one correlation between *Eco-restoration* and the four NPS-prescribed cultural landscape treatment approaches, *Eco-restoration* most closely matches the approaches of *reconstruction* and *rehabilitation*.

DETERMINING APPROPRIATE TREATMENT APPROACHES

Although the complete contents of a CLR are all factors in determining a landscape’s Treatment, the site’s significance and its integrity are especially critical in making this decision. Of these, the level of integrity a cultural landscape possesses—“the ability of a property to convey its significance”—is “a primary consideration in determining treatment... of the landscape.... The level of integrity influences treatment decisions regarding what features to preserve, where to accommodate change for contemporary use, and where to reestablish missing features.”³

The NPS notes that “because of the complexity of many cultural landscapes, a primary treatment often serves as a general treatment for the entire landscape. The primary treatment is defined by the overall level of intervention and change proposed for the landscape.”⁴ In addition to the primary treatment, other treatment approaches, or elements of other approaches, may also be employed to varying degrees.

Brackenridge Park contains multiple periods of significance. The broad range of its cultural significance is a result of the presence of the upper course of the San Antonio River, the riparian landscape’s associated ecology and development, the park’s intact prehistoric and historic archaeology representing 12,000 years of occupation, and its 120-year history as a park.

Cultural and historical landscape features and related structures are extant throughout the park, especially those that relate to its history as a park. Rare features that predate the park are also present. Some, such as acequias and dams, are hidden beneath the ground. Others, such as remnants of the Alamo Portland Cement Company, appears today as a monumental intriguing brick chimney. The park setting conveys a landscape that is beautiful, but it does not generally demonstrate the site’s early industrial past, including the conditions

2 “What Is Ecological Restoration?” Society for Ecological Restoration, accessed November 22, 2019, ser-rrc.org/what-is-ecological-restoration/.

3 Robert Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports* (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Washington, DC, 1998), 101.

4 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 86.

of Indigenous labor and brutality of African enslavement, or the legacy of this past. The physical and visible integrity of culturally and ecologically significant resources varies. Taken as a whole, the significant components of the Brackenridge Park cultural landscape retain a medium to high level of integrity in terms of physical intactness but medium to low levels of integrity in terms of how their significance is visible and understood by the public.

It is important to note the role that interpretation plays in Treatment decision-making and execution. Interpretation involves determining which narratives will communicate the multilayered story of the landscape to the visitor. In many cases, “Landscapes with little integrity require more interpretation to depict their historic character”; moreover, “the interpretation of a site can influence treatment recommendations, such as when nonextant features must be reestablished in order to accurately interpret a site.”⁵ Ultimately, interpretation—how stories or themes inform treatment approaches and how they are presented on a cultural landscape—is about conveying meaning. “Interpretation and education are the essential aspects of landscape management, providing visitors the opportunity to experience and understand a landscape as it existed historically and as it has evolved to the present.”⁶

A TREATMENT PLAN FOR BRACKENRIDGE PARK

Chapter 15 begins with a recommendation for the appropriate NPS- and WFC-prescribed treatment approaches for Brackenridge Park. The chapter then lays out six Guiding Principles that underlie numerous recommendations contained in the Treatment Plan. Eight desired Treatment Outcomes are also described in chapter 15. The link between the Guiding Principles that underlie the Treatment Plan and the Treatment Outcomes is effective implementation of the recommendations themselves—contained within the complete Treatment Plan.

The bulk of chapter 15 is made up of the Treatment Plan. Because the plan is comprised of an extensive set of recommendations, critical priorities and related projects are included after the Treatment Plan. The chapter concludes with a set of next steps to enable park leadership to shift into implementation of the priorities.

⁵ Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 114-16.

⁶ Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 114.



CHAPTER 15. TREATMENT PLAN

RECOMMENDED TREATMENT APPROACH FOR BRACKENRIDGE PARK

Brackenridge Park should be loved and experienced as an *immersive landscape of learning*—a cultural park that is equal parts ecological laboratory, outdoor museum, leisure and recreational park, and revered setting. It should be elevated in the eyes and minds of the local community and widely known outside of San Antonio.

At present, Brackenridge Park is in decline. Its historic and public value have become less and less comprehensible. And a piecemeal approach to improving its current conditions will not serve its long-term viability. Yet the ultimate purpose of preserving this landscape cannot be to freeze it in time, toiling to create a static and outmoded representation of one single period of its existence. This would be wholly impossible. The very act of landscape preservation at Brackenridge Park must utilize a nuanced understanding of its past to chart a new way forward.

Given Brackenridge Park's broad-ranging significance, multiple levels of integrity, ecological importance, and current and future uses, the recommended treatment approach for the park is to employ a balanced mix of ***rehabilitation, preservation, and eco-restoration***.

Rehabilitation accepts that Brackenridge Park has been layered over time and that it is not necessary or desirable to favor one period over another. *Preservation* acknowledges that Brackenridge Park retains many aspects of its historic significance and aims to preserve those features. As they are defined by the Secretary of the Interior's standards, *reconstruction* is recommended minimally, and *restoration* is not recommended for any area of Brackenridge Park.

Brackenridge Park possesses multiple periods of significance rather than one particular time or style that should be revealed or preserved for the public to experience. Therefore, park leadership must look to the essential character or feeling that has resulted from its many periods of significance and attempt to celebrate and preserve that character. One can describe Brackenridge Park's essential character as containing the feeling of being handcrafted, charming, quirky, surprising, patinated, and layered. These qualities, which have arisen from its long history, are the qualities to retain and maintain. In addition, the site contains some difficult histories as part of its layering. The very layering that contributes to the park's unique character also presents challenges. Brackenridge Park's character today is disjointed, but this was not always the case. This means that the Treatment must return a sense of cohesion to the park, while it thoughtfully acknowledges cherished and difficult histories and retains elements of surprise and charm.

TOMORROW'S BRACKENRIDGE PARK

During a one-day Treatment charrette in August 2019, fourteen stakeholders articulated goals and dreams for Brackenridge Park. What rose to the top during this discussion was the desire for the park to “wow” people, “for every inch of it to be a good experience,” and for the park “to feel big again,” to feel “whole.” People also expressed the desire for the park to look healthy, for its ecosystem to be highly functioning, and for it to be well maintained. “People use the park but don't love the park,” one person stated, adding, “We need to get people to love the park.”

Beyond goals and dreams, the consultant team asked the stakeholders to share what they consider to be sacred at Brackenridge Park and what they consider to be character-defining. Not surprisingly, those items that were named as sacred represent the park's history and ecology—the San Antonio River, the acequias, the quarries, the low-water crossings, and the woodland area. Those items that were named as character-defining represent the park's striking vernacular components—faux bois, the Japanese Tea Garden, the “neat old buildings,” the presence of water, and the park's existence as a “shaded refuge in the middle of downtown.” People also commented on its historic layering, which was perceived as both essential and problematic—people see the park as “a tapestry of different historic elements,” but these layers, both the cherished and the more complicated, are currently difficult for visitors to interpret or understand.

When asked what in the park needs protecting, people identified equitable access, noting, “The people who use this park don't have ranches and beach houses. It is providing an opportunity.” People also desired to protect open space from encroachment, the health of the riverbanks, the calming auditory experience, the health of vegetation and canopies, and historical buildings and structures.

TREATMENT GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND OUTCOMES

Based on the Treatment charrette, the consultant team developed a set of guiding principles. These principles serve to ensure preservation and elevation of the park's cultural significance, integrity, ecological health as it develops in the future. The principles state that Brackenridge Park's Treatment will be grounded in the following actions.

1. Acknowledge and express favorable and difficult histories.
2. Connect people to the river's upper course—San Antonio's origin.
3. Honor and protect its defining vernacular character and spaces.
4. Heal and cultivate an ecology with which humans interact.
5. Foster collaboration and cohesion among the park's cultural institutions.
6. Unite the park with its surrounding community.

The guiding principles—expressed through effective implementation of Treatment recommendations—will further support the park's ability to achieve eight targeted outcomes, listed below.

1. Impactful Interpretation
2. Seamless Inclusivity
3. Effective Circulation
4. Healthy Ecology
5. Multiple Landscape Experiences
6. Local and National Visibility
7. Exceptional Care and Maintenance
8. Dedicated Funding

Together, the Treatment Guiding Principles and Outcomes, along with consideration of the significance and integrity of landscape systems, character zones, and related features (detailed in chapter 14), may be adapted as a basic rubric for assessing the appropriateness and value of proposed future projects over the long term.

ORGANIZATION OF TREATMENT PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

This Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) calls for an interdisciplinary systems-based approach to the park's preservation and future growth and sets four intentions: (1) to heal Brackenridge Park's ecology, (2) to protect and celebrate its layers of historic significance and cultural diversity, (3) to elevate its identity locally and nationally, and (4) to usher the park into the twenty-first century.

Treatment is intended to enable Brackenridge Park to embody the Guiding Principles, to achieve the set intentions and goals articulated during the charrette, and to achieve the desired Treatment outcomes. The Treatment Plan is comprised of five parts, detailed in the next paragraphs.

Part 1—Landscape Systems. Recommendations in this table focus on improving the larger physical systems present throughout Brackenridge Park to provide visitors with a cohesive experience of the park. These systems include Archaeology, San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor, River Structures, Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology, Entry and Arrival Areas, Circulation, Edges between Cultural Institutions, and the Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art. Diagrams are included to illustrate these critical systems across the park (**figure 15-1**).

Part 2—Interpretation System. Interpretation is an overarching system that is not currently present in the park. Recommendations in this table focus on ways to begin telling the story of the park's many layers. Interpretation must be developed in conjunction with and as an integral component of recommendations related to the landscape systems. Effective storytelling of the site's history, including its ecology, regional vernacular development, and historic ties to Indigenous people, the enslaved, and the Mexican American community, will ensure that its culturally diverse historical context, including difficult histories, will not be further erased or forgotten. Precedent photographs are included at the end of the Treatment Plan to illustrate examples of effective integration between interpretation and landscape systems (**figures 15-2 and 15-3**).

Part 3—Character Zones. This set of recommendations is organized according to individual character zones in the park. Each zone includes associated landscape features and the structures or elements that impact or define the specific zone’s unique landscape “feeling” and layering. A character zone map, which has also been included in earlier chapters of the CLR, indicates the location of zones (**figure 15-4**).

Part 4—Management. These recommendations highlight specific areas of management that will serve the park’s overall longevity in terms of its funding, care, and maintenance.

Part 5—Treatment Approaches and Project Recommendations. A diagram is included as a reference tool to help park leadership quickly understand and assess where and how the four levels of NPS-prescribed treatment, along with Eco-restoration, should be applied to the site (**figure 15-5**). Paired with this diagram is an illustrative Treatment Plan that shows the general location of projects related to Treatment priorities (**figure 15-6**). The Treatment priorities are summarized in this graphic and discussed in detail at the end of the Treatment Plan and in the CLR introduction, part I.

TREATMENT PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

PART ONE. LANDSCAPE SYSTEMS

Every park contains systems that define and impact the landscape in a holistic manner. Some systems are constructed, and some are natural. Brackenridge Park’s landscape systems form the park’s foundational framework. Eight systems imbue and define Brackenridge Park’s continuum through time and collectively contribute to its defining spirit—whimsical, romantic, and uniquely San Antonian. Yet, these systems are currently either in jeopardy or invisible. Because the existing framework is suffering, the culture and ecology of the park are endangered. This CLR calls for these systems be addressed *ahead* of individual projects in Brackenridge Park.

For each recommendation, the appropriate multidisciplinary expertise must be consulted and/or part of a team employed to implement the recommendation. Any and all future plans, projects, initiatives, or opportunities that have the potential to impact these systems must be evaluated against the Treatment Plan, the cultural and historic significance and integrity detailed in Chapter 14, the guiding principles, and the treatment outcomes.

1. ARCHAEOLOGY		
<p>Archaeological resources permeate every area of Brackenridge Park. They are critical to its cultural and historic significance. Due diligence must be performed to preserve and interpret these below-ground resources. Alongside the philosophy, “first do no harm,” the park must embrace the philosophy that the best way for a community to feel protective of archaeological sites is to help them become knowledgeable of the presence and significance of those resources, and the best protection against disturbance of these sensitive resources is the local community’s eyes. When it is at all possible, preserving, revealing, and interpreting archaeological resources in place should be the goal.</p>		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<p>Treatment Approach: Preservation</p> <p>Past archaeological investigations in Brackenridge Park, including the Zoo, Witte Museum, and Golf Course, have been the result of development and infrastructure projects that were paused after resources were discovered.</p> <p>Future archaeological investigations should be planned for the purpose of research and interpretation, and any planned and future projects should require preliminary archaeological digging. When possible, other forms of archaeological investigation should also be employed, such as LIDAR.</p>	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p>	<p>High</p>



Archaeology



San Antonio River System



River Structures System



Vegetation / Soils / Hydrology



Entry / Arrival Areas



Circulation Through The Park



Edges Between Cultural Institutions



Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, Art

SYSTEMS

FIGURE 15-1. Brackenridge Park Landscape Systems. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<p>Resources related to hydrology and those areas used by Indigenous people, the enslaved, Mexican Americans, and other ethnic or cultural groups should be prioritized. Areas to be researched first should correspond to Treatment priorities discussed at the end of this Treatment Plan.</p>		
<p>Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Rehabilitation</p> <p>Archaeologists and technical experts knowledgeable of local stone and mortar materials should consult with archaeologists outside of Texas who have worked with preserving and revealing sensitive archaeological resources.</p> <p>In conjunction with this, park leadership should examine precedents in public parks and museums in the US that have revealed and interpreted these resources.</p>	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Rehabilitation</p> <p>Currently exposed and protected areas of historic acequias and dams should be interpreted to the public to convey the story of water management and a public water system.</p> <p>Known intact portions of historic acequias and dams should be preserved, revealed, and protected in place to the degree possible.</p> <p>Visible remnants of the acequias and dams that contain various layers, including precolonial, Colonial, and Civil War, should be interpreted to convey the changes over time.</p>	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Local and National Visibility</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Rehabilitation</p> <p>Areas of the acequias and dams that have collapsed should be examined by archaeologists and preservation technologists who understand local stone and mortar materials and ways to preserve and possibly rehabilitate these resources.</p>	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Rehabilitation</p> <p>Seasonal programming in conjunction with Witte Museum and Zoo programs should be considered, such as tours and activities led by archaeologists for the purpose of educating and informing the public about the landscape’s archaeological resources and related best practices.</p>	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Local and National Visibility</p>	<p>Medium</p>

2. SAN ANTONIO RIVER SYSTEM		
<p>The San Antonio River, with its associated Riparian Corridor, has functioned as the heart of the Brackenridge landscape for millennia. But it is no longer healthy, nor is it safely accessible. Improving the river's health is imperative.</p> <p>Visitors should be able to access the river directly, but not uniformly. There should be a gradient of access. Areas along the northern-most portion of the river should be designed and managed for varied pedestrian access. Southern portions of the river should be designed and managed for limited pedestrian access and to improve the riparian plant community, water quality, and aquatic animal habitats.</p>		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation, Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Address erosion and compaction issues resulting from stormwater runoff, per Wildflower Center (WFC) Ecological Site Assessment (ESA) recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish riparian buffer with integrated access and viewing points. ▪ Establish minimum and average width for the buffer. ▪ Introduction of new plant materials should be weighed in terms of ecological benefits and alignment with historic character. ▪ Coordinate with circulation planning. 	<p>Ecological Health</p> <p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Identify optimal locations for human access to and/or interaction with the river:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine a hierarchy of access types (views to river, direct access, adjacency to river, etc). ▪ Determine and design access points. ▪ Access to river should be planned in coordination with circulation planning. ▪ ESA recommendations should be consulted. 	<p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Ecological Health</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Consider management strategies that are fee-based and seasonal or event-based (with periods when access at certain points is permitted and not permitted). These should create excitement and new traditions around accessing the water and provide revenue to care for the resource.</p>	<p>Exceptional Care/Maintenance</p> <p>Local/National Visibility</p> <p>Dedicated Funding</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Increase in-stream habitat complexity, per ESA recommendations.</p>	<p>Ecological Health</p>	<p>Medium</p>

3. RIVER STRUCTURES SYSTEM

Historic structures associated with the portion of the San Antonio River that flows through Brackenridge Park span different periods and contribute to the site’s cultural significance and its ecological wellbeing. The earliest river structures include the dams and acequias, dating as far back as 1719–1924. Pump houses and the raceway were added between the 1780s and 1880s. In the past 199 years, the single-most important character-defining river structure to occur in Brackenridge Park was the WPA-era construction of rock retaining walls. In more recent years, the Catalpa-Pershing drainage canal and Tunnel Inlet have been added. Each of these structures contributes to the distinctive regional vernacular character of this landscape. Collectively, they contain the capacity to convey the story of how humans have attempted to live in harmony with and manage the river, as well as flood and drought events. Therefore, they must be exposed, preserved, and interpreted to increase the public’s understanding of the site and to contribute to how these issues will be understood and designed for in the present and future.

Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Evaluate river retaining walls along the entire corridor, where they exist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ESA recommendations should be consulted. ▪ Develop a unified approach to repairing, where necessary ▪ New materials should complement the historic character of the original rock wall work ▪ Future projects should be evaluated against the significance and integrity of the system and related character zone features 	<p>Exceptional Care/Maintenance</p> <p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Local/National Visibility</p>	<p>High</p>

4. VEGETATION/SOILS/HYDROLOGY

The ecology of Brackenridge Park is at risk. Native plant communities are poorly cared for and in decline, and invasive plant species continue to take over.

Healthy vegetation is a tool that serves two vital purposes: (1) healing the damaged ecology of both the land and the river, and (2) strengthening the visitor experience by providing cooling shade and restoring views within the park and along its edges. Additions, subtractions, and on-going management are all required as part of a site recalibration to serve these dual purposes.

Key efforts should include establishing protective buffers of vegetation along the length of the river, repairing damaged plant communities by managing invasive species, establishing a young generation to replace aging canopy and to protect and establish canopy trees to shade park drives, and enhancing overall species diversity. These two efforts will re-anchor the park’s dissolving edges.

Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Establish an aggressive park-wide average annual runoff capture goal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish park-wide system of LID features and ecological restoration areas to achieve runoff capture goal. Integrate these projects with the circulation strategy ▪ Set an upper limit on impervious cover within the park and capture runoff generated from existing and new impervious cover ▪ Establish soil protection zones to reduce the extent and severity of compaction. Integrate with circulation system. Use plantings to strategically direct traffic away from critical root zones and ensure sufficient healthy soil to achieve runoff capture goals 	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Exceptional Care/Maintenance</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Protect culturally significant vegetation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manage the tree canopy in Wilderness area ▪ Manage the tree canopy in the Historic Center and surrounding Softball Fields in north end of park ▪ Create signage and/or interpretation related to the historic canopy and its protection ▪ ESA recommendations should be consulted. 	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Exceptional Care/Maintenance</p> <p>Impactful Interpretation</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Reconstruct ecosystem integrity and overall plant and animal diversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create an invasive plant and animal species management plan ▪ Increase plant community diversity with an emphasis on species that build soil or provide habitat value ▪ Increase plant community structural diversity, i.e. add midstory and herbaceous layers where appropriate ▪ ESA recommendations should be consulted. 	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Exceptional Care/Maintenance</p>	<p>Medium</p>

5. ENTRY / ARRIVAL AREAS		
<p>Currently, entries areas to the park are confusing and inconsistent, indicating that the park’s important identity has not been established, has been lost, or is not being communicated to visitors.</p> <p>A hierarchy of primary and secondary entries must be established. A sequence of arrival needs to be designed and applied in order to make park boundaries clear and consistent. Transitions into the park should signal a clear shift in experience and environment—moving from urban street into an inviting and healthy parkland.</p>		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Use entrances and external edges to make the park more visible and connected to its surrounding community and to connect disparate parts of the park (areas intersected by major roads or barriers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Locate a possible “front door” that announces the park to the public ▪ Identify and design secondary entries into the park ▪ Identify opportunities to stitch disjointed edges of the park (areas where major roads intersect the park) ▪ Entries, both primary and secondary, should feel related, through materials and planting palettes 	<p>Visibility</p> <p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Exceptional Care + Maintenance</p> <p>Impactful Interpretation</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Identify a transect through Brackenridge Park and design the full range of possibilities for stormwater management and riparian improvement. The project should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate that vegetative, soil, and hydrology across the site are interdependent and work together ▪ Be interpreted to the public on site and/or through an education program that traces the changes on the site ▪ Should include an access point to the river ▪ Can be digitally modeled and phased on site for marketing purposes 	<p>Visibility</p> <p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Exceptional Care + Maintenance</p> <p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Dedicated Funding</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Make all external edges of Brackenridge as park-like as possible, in order to enhance the overall image of the park as a holistic design with elements that connect all areas of the park.</p>	<p>Visibility</p> <p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Exceptional Care + Maintenance</p>	<p>Medium</p>

6. CIRCULATION THROUGH THE PARK		
<p>Circulation should unify the park. A common language of materials and layouts should be established for pedestrian and bicycle paths, roads, and parking. Circulation should be tied to how people experience the stories and period layers of the park.</p> <p>Design of the vehicular and parking system must be inextricably linked to a design for managing and filtering run-off and reducing erosion and compaction. Pedestrian experience should be privileged over the vehicular experience.</p> <p>In order to alleviate the conflicts between vehicles and vulnerable zones, paved areas—both drives and parking—should be minimized and use efficient designs. A strategy should be established that implements the most efficient/minimal number of parking garages at the edges, preferencing small-scale parking within the park boundaries (for example, less than 10 automobile spaces per area, combined with bicycle parking).</p>		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Preserve and interpret the original intent of the historic drives as a unifying thread that loops through the park, but meet contemporary needs for vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation.</p>	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Effective Circulation</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Identify additional opportunities to connect disconnected parts of park through a circulation strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify locations for future bridges to create greater connectivity. 	<p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Evaluate and develop a comprehensive circulation plan that maintains accessibility, respects and enhances the site’s ecology, and provides different experiences of the park.</p> <p>The plan should coordinate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With ESA recommendations ▪ Vehicular circulation ▪ Pedestrian circuit (or series of circuits that intersect) ▪ Bicycle circulation ▪ Historic miniature train ▪ Vehicular and bicycle parking ▪ Incorporate stormwater management and riparian health ▪ Provide access to multiple landscape experiences throughout 	<p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Exceptional Care + Maintenance</p> <p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Impactful Interpretation</p>	<p>High</p>

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respond to existing plans (ex: Broadway Corridor Redevelopment Plans) 		
<p>Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Rehabilitation</p> <p>Develop a consistent language of material and layout that defines pedestrian pathways and bicycle pathways.</p>	<p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Local and National Visibility</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Integrate interpretation of the core stories with park circulation.</p>	<p>Interpretation</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Healthy Ecology</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Rehabilitation</p> <p>Develop a consistent language of material and layout that defines pedestrian pathways and bicycle pathways.</p>	<p>Effective Circulation</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Identify additional opportunities to connect disconnected parts of park through a circulation strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify locations for future bridges to create greater connectivity ▪ Consider vernacular character within zones and as part of the system of buildings and structures to determine materials and aesthetic, and whether new styles should be introduced 	<p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Partner with the Zoo, Witte, and Incarnate Word to evaluate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vehicular pressures on the park ▪ Perform an updated traffic study 	<p>Seamless Inclusivity</p>	<p>Medium</p>

7. EDGES BETWEEN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Just as circulation should unify the park, internal edges should also unify, rather than divide components of the park. A common language of materials, gateways, and layouts for liminal spaces between cultural institutions within the park must be developed and implemented.

A historic relationship exists between the Brackenridge Park Golf Course, Witte Museum, San Antonio Zoo, Japanese Tea Garden, and Sunken Garden Theater. A pedestrian bridge once connected the Witte Museum to open areas of the park, and a related path continued through to the Zoo. A pathway and bridge also once connected the Japanese Tea Garden to the Zoo.

Today, visitors experience these components each as separate entities with adjacency, rather than as components of one municipal park. In some cases, cultural institutions seem to turn their back to the park, when the feel should be that of a handshake.

Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Initiate partnerships with the Zoo, Witte Museum, and Golf Course to develop an approach for these institutions to better connect with the park’s interior.</p> <p>Work with San Antonio Parks & Recreation to evaluate the relationships between Davis Park, Brackenridge Park, Inlet Tunnel Park, and Miraflores Garden. Davis Park shares adjacency with Brackenridge Park. Inlet Tunnel Park is formally part of Brackenridge Park, and Miraflores “shake hands” in a clearer way, though they may attract different volumes of users and have different programming.</p>	<p>Effective Circulation Strategy</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Evaluate internal edges between character zones and restore visual connection with a unified approach through vegetation, materials, landscape management, etc. Transitions in the park should feel related to one another in order to make the park more legible as a unified setting. ESA recommendations should be consulted.</p>	<p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Healthy Ecology</p>	<p>Medium</p>

8. COLLECTION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES, AND ART		
<p>A varied collection of historic buildings, structures, sculptures, and other built features is located throughout Brackenridge Park. Examples include the cement works smokestack, small houses of the Mexican Village, the Japanese Tea Garden pagoda, which mimics a Japanese pagoda’s general shape, but is constructed of native limestone stacked in a distinctly regional vernacular manner, faux bois entry gates at the Japanese Tea Garden, the Joske Pavilion, WPA-era projects, and much more are a dense presence in the park. This collection contributes to the landscape’s significance and provides unexpected texture, a hand-crafted feeling, and an overall sense of playfulness and whimsy.</p>		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<p>Treatment Approach: Preservation</p> <p>The existing structures maintain a relatively high level of integrity at this time. They should continue to be cared for in a way that preserves their historic character.</p>	<p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p> <p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Local and National Visibility</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Preservation</p> <p>An architectural historian with knowledge of local building materials and methods should be engaged to perform a thorough Historic Structures Report (HSR) on all built components on the site:</p> <p>The HSR be completed according to National Park Service guidelines and with the expertise of an architectural historian as well as local experts knowledgeable of vernacular building methods and local plant materials.</p> <p>This report should not only document the buildings and structures but should also document their materials, analyze integrity according to NPS standards, and their relationship to the landscape and surrounding plant materials.</p>	<p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p> <p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Local and National Visibility</p>	<p>Medium</p>

PART TWO. INTERPRETATION SYSTEM

Interpretation involves determining which narratives will communicate the multi-layered story of the landscape to the visitor. In many cases, “Landscapes with little integrity require more interpretation to depict their historic character.”¹ In Brackenridge Park, the level of cultural significance is extremely high, but the level of integrity—the “ability of the landscape to convey its significance...”² in terms of its level of intactness and visibility and ability to be understood by the public, hovers at a medium level. Some areas of the park have high cultural integrity, but most have a medium level of integrity, and some have a low level of integrity. Therefore, interpretation is an important need for Brackenridge Park.

Ultimately, interpretation—how stories or themes inform treatment approaches and how they are presented on a cultural landscape—is about conveying meaning. “Interpretation and education are the essential aspects of landscape management, providing visitors the opportunity to experience and understand a landscape as it existed historically and as it has evolved to the present.”³ Effectively designed interpretation can be difficult to grasp or envision. Images of sites that demonstrate interpretation that has been developed in conjunction with the physical design of spaces are included at the end of the Treatment Plan recommendations.

INTERPRETATION		
<p>Park interpretation must be inextricable from the park’s landscape systems. As the systems are improved and/or developed, interpretation must also be developed. Interpretation should intentionally and cohesively convey to the public the park’s core narratives, helping to define its identity to the public: Links to the Past, Humans and Hydrology/Ecology, Regional Vernacular Character, and Diverse Cultural Imprints.</p>		
Recommendations	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Working with interpretation specialists, develop a comprehensive interpretation strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The strategy should work in conjunction with the design and implementation of an overall circulation strategy and with an overall vegetation and hydrology strategy. 	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Inclusivity Effective Circulation</p>	<p>High</p>

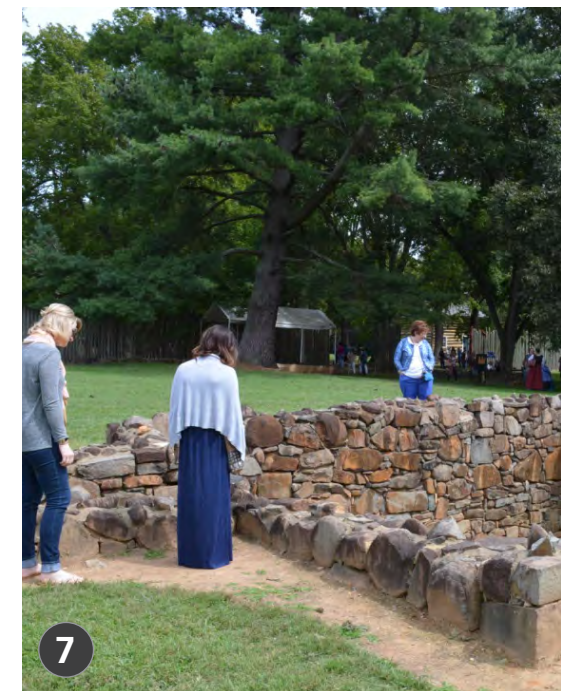
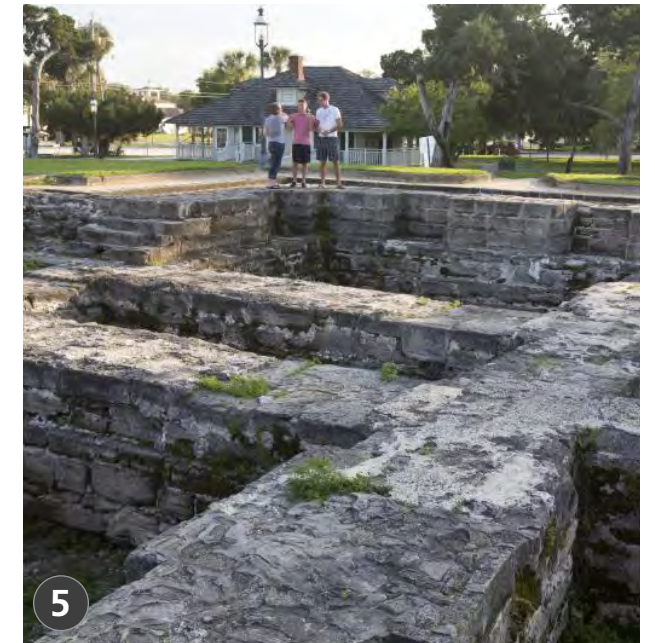
¹ Page, Robert, Cathy A. Gilbert, Susan A. Dolan. *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*. U.S. Department of the Interior. National Park Service. Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships. Washington D.C. 1998. p. 114-16.

² Page, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*. 71.

³ Page, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*. 114.

Recommendations (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
The strategy should employ: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designed features ▪ Wayfinding and signage Educational exhibits ▪ Hands-on/interactive experiences ▪ Specialized tours Programming in conjunction with the Witte and Zoo	Healthy Ecology Multiple Landscape Experiences	
Treatment Approach: Preservation As interpretation is planned for, archival documents should be collected.	Impactful Interpretation	Medium
Treatment Approach: Preservation An accessible digital repository of historic maps, photographs, postcards, news articles, reports, and plans associated with the park should be created.	Impactful Interpretation	Medium
Treatment Approach: Preservation The Visitors Center should house park archives, and an archivist should be part of the BPC staff.	Impactful Interpretation	Low

1. LINKS TO THE PAST: ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES, HISTORIC ECOLOGY		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
Treatment Approach: Preservation Working with archaeologists and an interpretation specialist, identify strategies for conveying known historic and prehistoric archaeological results and their meaning to the public. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If specific sites cannot be identified for legal and preservation purposes, educational exhibits and site tours focused on the site’s archaeological history may be considered. ▪ Interpretation at existing US archaeological park sites should be examined to consider precedents for interpreting archaeological information to the public. ▪ Evidence of Indigenous rituals or connections should be included in the interpretation. Archaeological discoveries of historic hydrological structures (acequias, dams, retention ponds, etc.) should be celebrated and interpreted, including photographic exhibits or signage, and where possible, site-specific interpretation.	Impactful Interpretation Seamless Inclusivity Multiple Landscape Experiences Local and National Visibility	High
Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation Seasonal programming in conjunction with relevant Witte Museum and Zoo programs can be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Activities for educating and informing the public on archaeology and best practices should be explored at other US sites and considered for Brackenridge. 	Impactful Interpretation Multiple Landscape Experiences	Low



Immersing Visitors in Ecological Experiences

The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center's Luci and Ian Family Garden, in Austin, Texas, is a 4.5-acre interactive learning environment and unstructured play area. Through the design of various landscape experiences, the garden tells the complex story of the region's native plants, hydrology, geography, and local materials, and it employs and teaches principles of sustainability.

1 Dinosaur Creek illustrates the region's deep history and offers an exploratory exhibit. Dinosaur footprints were found 13 miles from the Wildflower Center and these were cast into the creek bed. Source: Photo by Commander Ben, commanderben.com/

2 The Giant Birds Nest is made of native grape vines and provides a hands-on opportunity to observe the structure of a birds nest at a human scale. Source: Photo by Jessica Pages, sustainablesites.org

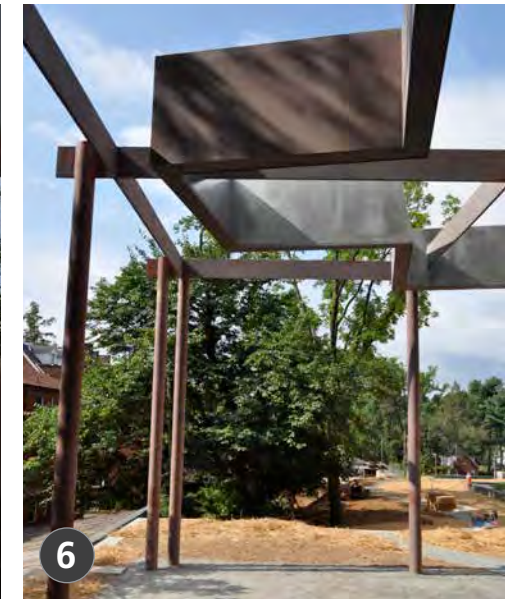
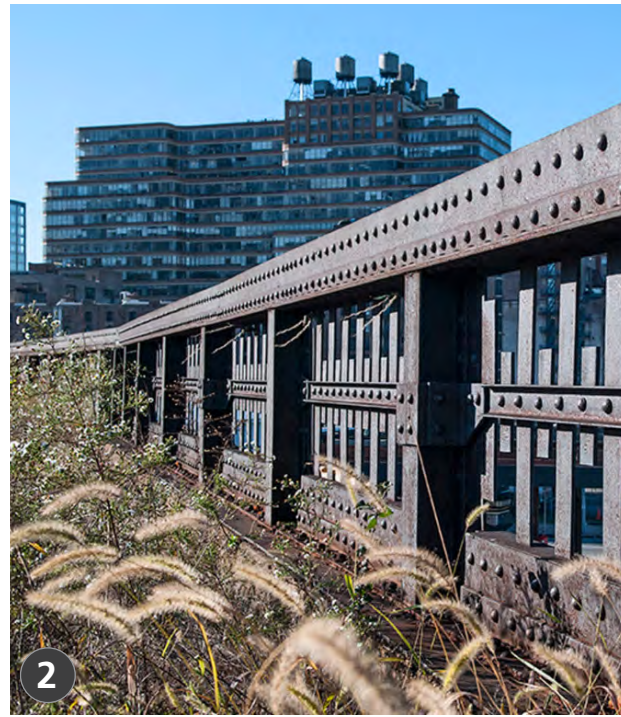
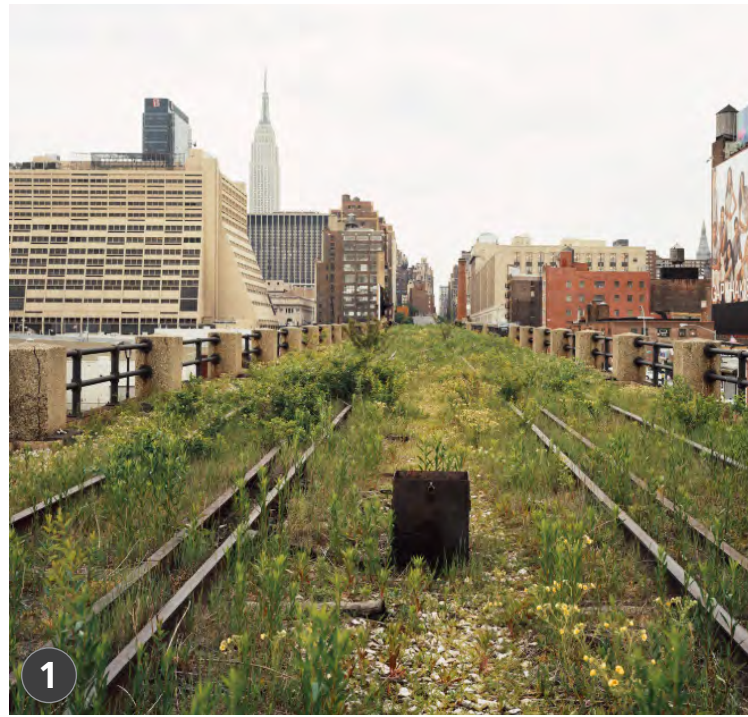
3 Giant tree stumps offer a place for kids to climb and balance on repurposed native materials. Source: Photo by Jessica Pages, sustainablesites.org

Preserving In Place and Revealing Archaeological Ruins

4 Smyrna Beach Archaeological ruins are preserved in place, revealed, and made accessible at Old Fort Park in New Smyrna Beach, Florida, where ruins of a British colony are located. Pictured are a c. 1770 foundation of limestone shell and the arched ruins of a c. 1830 sugar mill on property that is part of a prehistoric Indian midden dating from 500 AD to 1565 AD. The mill was destroyed by the end of 1835 and was not rebuilt. Source: myfloridahistory.org/frontiers/article/134

6 Bethabara Park Archaeological investigations in Historic Bethabara Park, outside of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, began in the 1960s, under then North Carolina State Archaeologist Stanley South. Excavations continued through the 1980s and picked up again in the early 2000s. In the park, the public can view findings dating to the 1780s. The map shows archaeological sites found in the park, dating to the 1750s. Some sites are preserved ruins, while some sites have been reconstructed. Sources historicbethabara.org/archaeology/; findingfrasersridge.com.

FIGURE 15-2. Interpretation Precedents. Source: Suzanne Turner Associates



Immersing Pedestrians in Industrial and Ecological Histories

- 1 New York City's High Line interprets a decommissioned 1930s elevated railroad as a pedestrian parkway grounded in the site's urban and ecological history. Photo of the decommissioned High Line railway, May 2001, prior to the park's design and development. Source: Photo by Joel Sternfeld, thehighline.org
- 2 Art deco railing along the High Line, with a pattern that would be interpreted in the future design by Diller Scofidio + Renfro and James Corner Field Operations. Source: Photo by Timothy Schenck, highline.org

- 3 Early rendering of a section of the High Line. Ecological restoration contributes to the pedestrian experience, while a portion of the site reveals the historic framework of the rail line. Garden designer Piet Oudolf designed the gardens, which are inspired by the landscape that existed on the site before it was developed. Source: highline.org
- 4 Aerial view of a section of the High Line. Portions of the decommissioned railroad can be seen mixed with plantings. Pedestrian pathways intersect the historic rail line and ecologically restorative plantings. Source: highline.org

Revealing Difficult and Hidden Histories

- 5 Shadowcatcher memorializes the remains of the Foster family homestead and cemetery. The property, sited on what is now the University of Virginia's South Lawn, belonged to an African American family. The steel and mesh structure replicates the Foster Homestead site and casts the shadow that projects the house boundary onto the ground.
- 6 Walls and depressions in the lawn suggest graves and mark the remains of the cemetery site. This powerful and moving site is functions as a teaching facility, a public park, and a commemorative landscape.

Designed by Walter Hood, the memorial is a recent example an interpreted landscape that is rooted in a more hidden and difficult history. It is an experiential and reflective setting. In 2016, UVA commissioned a second interpretive design (not pictured) honoring the lives of enslaved laborers who built the campus.

- 7 Walls and depressions in the lawn suggest graves and mark the remains of the cemetery site. This powerful and moving site is functions as a teaching facility, a public park, and a commemorative landscape.
- 8 Archaeological research was completed and these resources were left exposed to reveal the stone pathways and a portion of the porch. Source: Photos by Benjamin Ford, hooddesignstudio.com/shadowcatcher

FIGURE 15-3. Interpretation Precedents. Source: Suzanne Turner Associates

2. HUMANS AND HYDROLOGY/ECOLOGY		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Interpretation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prehistoric presence of the SA River, Indigenous peoples’ interactions with the river and the site—conveying various uses from practical survival to spiritual. ▪ Evolution of water management in the park, beginning with the story of the first acequias, and conveying the story of continued evolving water management practices related to agriculture, access to potable water, stormwater management and flood control. Part of the interpretation should focus on the people who built the river rock walls and the vernacular expression of those river walls. <p>Educating and informing the public about natural systems in the park and the relationship between the various landscape experiences to stormwater management.</p>	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Local and National Visibility</p>	<p>High</p>

3. VERNACULAR CHARACTER AND DEVELOPMENT		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<p>Treatment Approaches: Preservation</p> <p>The character of the park is derived largely from its vernacular components.</p> <p>Working with architectural historians and an interpretation specialist, a cohesive interpretation of the site’s buildings, structures, and features, such as faux bois, bridges, and sculptures should be interpreted. Interpretation should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incorporate consultation with individuals knowledgeable in Texas vernacular architecture, architectural preservation, sources and uses of native limestone in San Antonio architecture ▪ Trace the relationship between non-native architectural styles and their adaptation in San Antonio ▪ Focus on the origins of faux bois and its use in San Antonio ▪ Focus on other artwork in the park and its creators 	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Local and National Visibility</p>	<p>Medium</p>

4. DIVERSE CULTURAL IMPRINTS		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Develop clear management guidelines that balance protection of the park’s natural resources with protection of the culturally and ethnographically significant Easter celebration.</p>	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Healthy Ecology</p>	High
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Embrace the Easter celebration as a defining component of the park’s ethnography and vernacular.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formally document its origin and evolution and provide seasonal interpretation. ▪ Develop volunteer and education opportunities for Easter Park patrons. One example is a program similar to the NPS Junior Park Ranger program. 	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	High
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Additional research should be conducted to document and interpret cultural activities at the park such as African American churches holding baptisms in the park, Indigenous American rituals, and Mexican American rituals. For example, Church of Our Lady of Sorrows has associations with the park.</p>	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	High
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Interpretation should acknowledge and address difficult histories in a meaningful way that elevates public knowledge of Indigenous, Mexican, and African American contributions to the site’s physical creation, both prior to it being a park and after.</p> <p>For example, it can acknowledge that there is always “contested” space that every community must determine has highest and best use. This story can be conveyed by interpreting the squatter community that existed in the quarry area until the city evicted its residents.</p>	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	Medium

PART THREE. CHARACTER ZONES

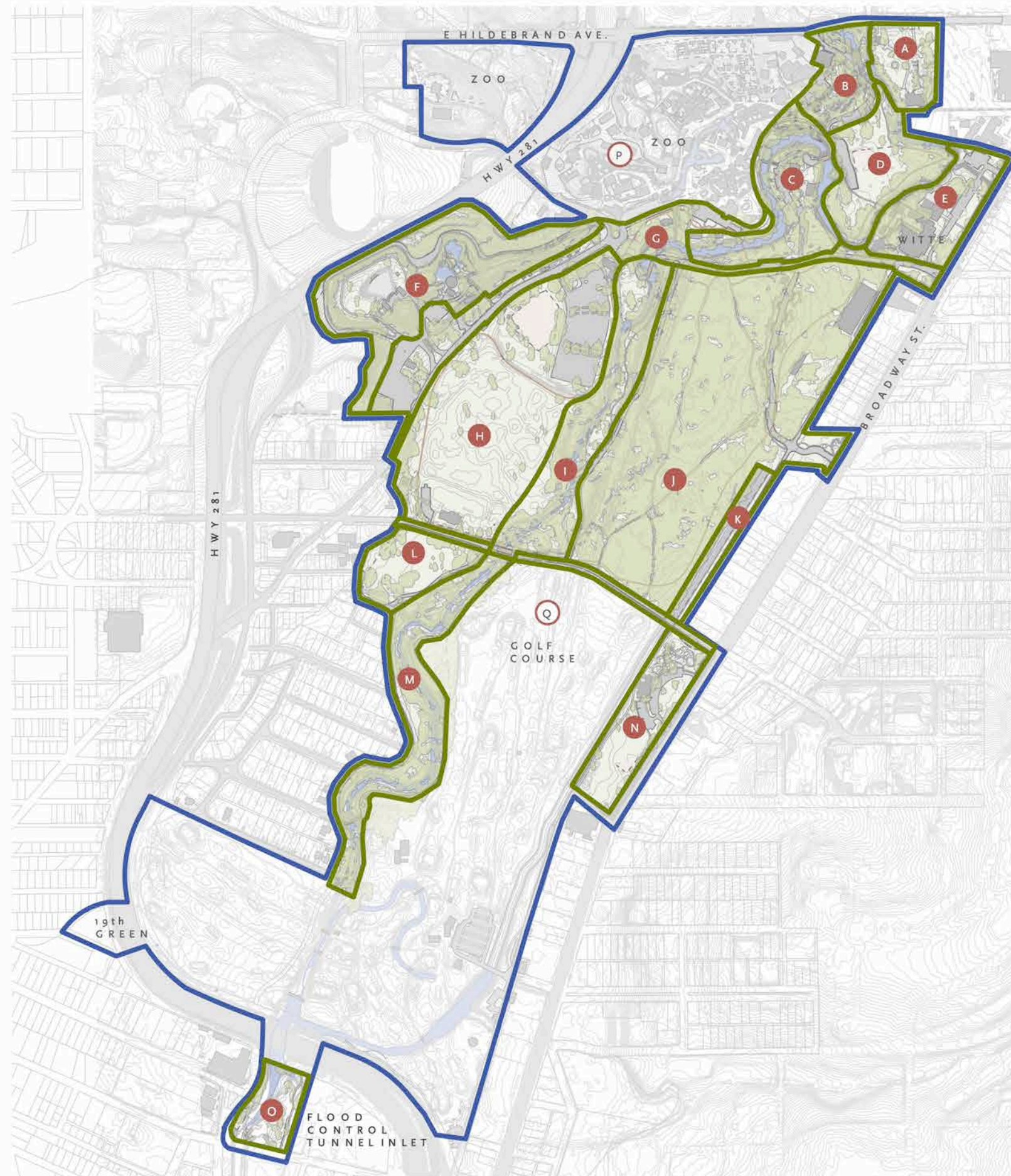
In addition to addressing the landscape systems that create the framework for Brackenridge park, the landscape has been divided into character zones. These fifteen zones each share a geography but contain many dissimilar features. Considering the park according to these zones helps to better understand the time-layered effect that exists across Brackenridge Park.

In the past, projects have occurred in the park in isolated areas and related to isolated funding. This CLR makes recommendations that are zone-specific, but it does not advocate for continuing the trend of piecemeal project investments that impact individual areas of the park. The following recommendations are to be considered *after* the systems-based recommendations, or at a minimum, in conjunction to the systems-based recommendations.

For each recommendation, the appropriate multidisciplinary expertise must be consulted and/or part of a team employed to implement the recommendation. Any and all future plans, projects, initiatives, or opportunities that have the potential to impact these systems must be evaluated against the Treatment Plan, the cultural and historic significance and integrity detailed in Chapter 14, the guiding principles, and the treatment outcomes.

A. MIRAFLORES		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approaches: Reconstruction; Preservation; Rehabilitation</p> <p>Miraflores has the quality of an ethereal ruin, unlike any other area in Brackenridge Park. It is defined by perimeter trees that enclose the area, connections to water, sculpture remnants, and tiled garden ornamentation ruins that are influenced by a Mexican precedent and its Mexican American creator.</p> <p>In order to honor its distinctive character, existing sculpture and structural remnants should be preserved under the guidance of an architectural historian.</p> <p>The historic layout of the gardens should be researched under an archaeologist and landscape architecture historian.</p>	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art</p> <p>Interpretation</p>

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Miraflores is currently inaccessible. As part of the circulation plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The edge of Miraflores that is adjacent to Hildebrand Avenue should be evaluated, with attention to how or if views to the site from the community edge should be provided. ▪ The connection between Miraflores and the area of the park it is adjacent to should be evaluated and a plan developed to make Miraflores accessible from Brackenridge Park. ▪ Historic foot bridges and pathways should be evaluated and, if possible, made accessible. 	<p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Exceptional Care/Maintenance</p>	<p>Entry/Arrival Areas</p> <p>Edges Between Cultural Institutions</p> <p>Circulation</p> <p>River Structures</p> <p>Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art</p> <p>Interpretation</p>
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Preservation</p> <p>Develop and implement an interpretation strategy that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Celebrates the vision of Miraflores's creator, Dr. Urrutia ▪ Draws a connection to the site's precedent in Xochimilco, Mexico and to the site as an ethnographic imprint on Brackenridge Park and the melding of cultures in San Antonio ▪ Clearly communicates the layers of hydrology and water management during the history of this site, including the springs 	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p> <p>River Structures</p> <p>Interpretation</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration; Rehabilitation</p> <p>Historic plant materials should be researched and weighed in conjunction with the preservation of the unusual ethereal character of the site and the need to expand the riparian buffer to 40' by establishing a mowing set-back. ESA recommendations should be consulted.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology</p> <p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Manage invasive species within the buffer and Miraflores, including Japanese privet, Chinaberry, Chinese tallow, Johnsongrass, guineagrass, Brittons wild petunia, umbrella sedge, giant cane, catclaw vine, raintree, white mulberry, loquat. ESA recommendations should be consulted.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p>	<p>Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology</p> <p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p>
<p>Treatment Approaches: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Incorporate native plantings into Miraflores design, with consideration for preserving the desired character of the site.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology</p>



- Limit of Brackenridge Park
- Character Zones within Area of Study

Character Zone

- A Miraflores
- B Lily Pond, Bridges, Acequia
- C Historic center and Live Oaks
- D Picnic/Softball at Bend
- E Witte and edge at Broadway
- F Quarry village
- G Transitional zone
- H Sport fields
- I Central Riparian
- J Vegetated Grove
- K Catalpa Pershing
- L Davis Park
- M Southern Riparian
- N Lions Field
- O Tunnel Park
- P Zoo
- Q Golf Course

OVERALL SITE PLAN

BRACKENRIDGE PARK
 CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
 By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 15-4. Brackenridge Overall Site Plan. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

B. LILY POND, BRIDGES, ACEQUIA		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration; Preservation</p> <p>Zone B includes the remains of 250 years of hydrological modifications consisting of remnant modified landforms, historic stone structures, and associated archaeological deposits. The area is critical for telling the story of humans and hydrology over time on the site. It includes multigenerational layers of materials, remnant landforms, and remnant stone structures. An overall plan is necessary to address the coming together of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Circulation ▪ Parking ▪ Location of dumpsters <p>Ecological health, with the goal of expanding the riparian buffer as far as feasible and establishing a mowing set-back.</p>	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Healthy Ecology</p>	<p>Archaeology</p> <p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p> <p>River Structures Circulation</p> <p>Edges Between Cultural Institutions</p> <p>Interpretation</p> <p>Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art</p>
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration</p> <p>An interpretation plan should address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Humans and hydrology ▪ The people behind the structures and features, the labor that contributed to making the historic structures and features. 	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p>	<p>Interpretation</p> <p>River Structures</p> <p>Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manage invasive species, including Japanese privet, Chinaberry, Chinese tallow, Johnsongrass, guineagrass, Brittons wild petunia, umbrella sedge, giant cane, Catclaw vine, raintree, white mulberry, loquat. 	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology</p> <p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p>

C. HISTORIC CENTER AND LIVE OAKS		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>The Historic Center currently conveys visual chaos; some areas, such as the picnic area under the tree canopy, feel relaxing; other areas feel cluttered, and the circulation is not clearly delineated.</p> <p>A site plan should be developed that addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Circulation ▪ Parking ▪ Materials ▪ Interface between the zoo service area/"back of house" and numerous adjacent historical features ▪ Ecological health, with the goal of expanding the riparian buffer as far as feasible and establishing a mowing set-back ▪ Reconsideration of the playground area, which is historically significant but lacks integrity. Interactive, nature-based playgrounds should be considered 	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Healthy Ecology</p>	<p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p> <p>River Structures</p> <p>Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology</p> <p>Edges Between Cultural Institutions</p> <p>Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art</p> <p>Interpretation</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>An interpretation plan should highlight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ George Brackenridge’s vision for the park, along with other visionaries ▪ The 1920s “boom” of the park’s development ▪ Humans and hydrology <p>The people behind the structures and features, the labor that contributed to making historic structures and features</p>	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p>	<p>Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art</p> <p>Edges Between Cultural Institutions</p> <p>Interpretation</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Per ESA, ecological and wildlife interventions should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishing riparian buffer a minimum of 20’ wide with reinforced access points. Park-type maintenance ▪ Increasing woody diversity and install young individuals ▪ In order to return a more ecologically balanced mix, reduce the rookery habitat value: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disrupt nests prior to egg production <p>Adjust woody canopy to make it less attractive for colony</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p> <p>Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology</p>

D. PICNIC/SOFTBALL AT BEND		
▪ Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Explore opportunities to create clearer connections between the Park and the Witte Museum in this area.</p>	<p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>Circulation</p> <p>Edges Between Cultural Institutions</p>
Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation; Preservation; Eco-Restoration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To protect the cultural resources: Manage the expansive live oak canopy at the river's edge <p>Maintain the restored WPA picnic area (tables and benches).</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Local and National Visibility</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology</p> <p>Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Ecological interventions in this area should be implemented in accordance with the ESA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish riparian buffer/pollinator habitat a minimum of 20' wide with reinforced access points. Park-type maintenance. Establish filter strip adjacent to parking lot Riverbank adjacent to AT&T parking lot is eroding significantly. Open conversation with AT&T regarding runoff management. <p>Increase woody diversity, install young individuals, add flowering and berry-producing shrubs</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p>	<p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p> <p>Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology</p>
E. WITTE MUSEUM AND EDGE AT BROADWAY		
▪ Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>The Witte Museum provides educational programming both at the museum and in areas of the park, but the relationship at the back edge of the museum its adjacency to the park read as a boundary rather than as a connection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BPC and the Witte should engage in a collaborative exercise to envision a stronger connection between the back of the Witte and the park The circulation strategy should evaluate the location of the nonextant bridge that once connected this area and determine whether replacing a bridge in the same location or elsewhere at this edge is appropriate 	<p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Impactful Interpretation</p>	<p>Edges Between Cultural Institutions</p> <p>Circulation</p>

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Preservation</p> <p>The WPA low walls and sidewalk entrances should be maintained as is.</p>	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p>	<p>Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>The presence of a portion of the Acequia Madre de Valero and proximity to the river provide an opportunity to interpret the evolution of water management on the site.</p>	<p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Local and National Visibility</p>	<p>Archaeology River Structures</p> <p>Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art</p>
F. QUARRY VILLAGE		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Reconstructed</p> <p>In the early years of the park, all of the quarry zones would have exhibited a similar appearance. The zoo and the Japanese Tea Garden have probably been altered more than the quarry wall at the back of the Sunken Garden Theater.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quarry areas that have been less altered should be preserved ▪ Quarry areas that have been altered more significantly should be reconstructed ▪ Coordination between the preservation of quarries in the park and zoo areas should be addressed 	<p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Local and National Visibility</p>	<p>Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art</p> <p>Edges Between Cultural Institutions</p>
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation</p> <p>As part of the systemic approach to making internal transitions between park components stronger and clearer, overall transitions between the Mexican Village, Sunken Garden Theater, Japanese Tea Garden, and the remaining structures of the Cement Works should be addressed.</p> <p>The circulation strategy, along with clear interpretation, may also address the disjointed experience between these components that currently exists.</p>	<p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Effective Circulation</p>	<p>Edges Between Cultural Institutions</p> <p>Circulation</p>
<p>Treatment Approaches: Preservation; Rehabilitation</p> <p>Archaeology should be conducted to reveal difficult histories and cultural components related to the quarries, Confederate tannery, Mexican Village, and squatter community.</p>	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>Archaeology</p> <p>Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art</p> <p>Interpretation</p>

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Discoveries should be preserved and revealed in place, if possible.</p> <p>Interpretation of this areas should include focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vernacular craftsmanship and adaptation: turning limestone into garden settings <p>Acknowledging and revealing difficult histories and cultural complexities (Civil War era uses and the enslaved population; Japanese American presence and impacts of WWII; Mexican American labor and the commodification of Mexican heritage)</p>	<p>Local and National Visibility</p>	
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Manage invasive buffelgrass population along Alpine drive.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p> <p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p>
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration</p> <p>The overall circulation strategy should evaluate the parking in this area and the feasibility of reducing parking and using planting strategies to capture run-off.</p>	<p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>Circulation</p> <p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p> <p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p>
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Alpine Drive, located in this zone, is one of the only areas in the park that contains a desert-like arid landscape, and it is one of the few places where the historic ecology is somewhat intact. In addition, it is one of the only areas that provides a significant change in elevation and a vista—an opportunity for people to observe some of the park’s most important elements from a different vantage point (quarries, Japanese Tea Garden, Mexican village, etc.). It is also an important edge condition in the park, visibly abutting Highway 281. Historically, a tram ride enabled people to experience these areas from above.</p> <p>As the circulation and edge systems are planned for cohesion, Alpine Drive and its edge should be addressed in a way that calls greater attention to its entry, improves its accessibility, and interprets its ecology and the cultural features it looks out on.</p>	<p>Multiple Landscape Experience</p> <p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Effective Circulation</p>	<p>Entry/Arrival Areas</p> <p>Circulation</p> <p>Edges Between Cultural Institutions</p>

G. TRANSITION ZONES		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Within the park, this transitional zone has become a utilitarian passageway through the site. The area should be evaluated as part of the larger circulation and edge condition strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attention should be given to creating intentional views and focal points from this area to other areas of the park, and generally to making it feel, in character, like an inherent part of the park experience, rather than a direct path through or in and out of the park. 	<p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Edges Between Cultural Institutions</p>	<p>Entry/Arrival Areas</p> <p>Circulation</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>This zone includes the “front door” to the Zoo, but it is not experienced as a part of Brackenridge Park.</p>	<p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Edges Between Cultural Institutions</p>	<p>Entry/Arrival Areas</p> <p>Circulation</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Preservation; Rehabilitation</p> <p>Numerous historic buildings, structures, and artworks are part of this zone. They should be preserved, interpreted, and rehabilitated, as needed.</p>	<p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p> <p>Impactful Interpretation</p>	<p>Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art</p> <p>Interpretation</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration; REhabilitation</p> <p>Create mid-grass/flowering shrub filter strip along St Mary’s St. to help capture roadway contaminants and signal entrance into the park. Consult ESA.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p> <p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p>
H. SPORTS FIELDS		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This area is limited exclusively to recreational usage. Its highest and best use should be evaluated, especially in conjunction with significance and integrity, potential archaeological resources, ecological impacts, and consideration of contemporary uses and their value to the public. 	<p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>Archaeology</p> <p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>As part of the circulation strategy and river interventions, opportunities to provide park users with access to this large space and to engage with the river in this area. Parking should be reconsidered in this area as part of the circulation strategy.</p>	<p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>Archaeology</p> <p>Circulation</p> <p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p>

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
Due diligence related to archaeology should be performed first.		
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Ecological interventions, further detailed in the ESA, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Redesign parking lot to incorporate internal bioretention and supplement with downslope retention areas and filter strips. ▪ Create a system of raingardens. ▪ Incorporate diversity plantings into the driving range in out-of-play areas. <p>Connect the raingarden system to a system of transition zone planting.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Greater understanding of the current maintenance of First Tee and the Ball field should be acquired in order to develop a filtration strategy to reduce the impact of fertilizers to the river ecology. This understanding should also be gained related to the Golf Course.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p>	<p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p> <p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p>
I. CENTRAL RIPARIAN		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Maintain and potentially increase access to the river in this area. Consult ESA for Low Impact Development recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine where plant barriers are necessary and where access points, potential views, and focal points through river plantings may be provided. The circulation strategy should consider pathway and river accessibility in this area. 	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p> <p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Create riparian buffer, averaging 45', with incorporated viewing and access points. Buffer will be narrower in high use areas and wider in lower use areas. Create mowing setbacks to encourage natural regeneration. Incorporate herbaceous stabilizer species and increase woody diversity. In some areas with severe downcutting, bank re-grading may be needed. ESA should be consulted.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p> <p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Manage invasive species, particularly Japanese privet. ESA should be consulted.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p>

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Incorporate greater diversity of bottomland hardwood species into picnic areas. ESA should be consulted.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>The bottomland ecological site extends across Red Oak Rd. partially into zone 10 (See ESA). Managing this area as a more open gallery forest will allow the herbaceous layer to develop more fully, enhancing water capture capacity. This modification will also allow better visibility into the vegetated grove from Red Oak Road. ESA should be consulted.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Determine interpretation opportunities related to humans and hydrology.</p>	<p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Healthy Ecology</p>	<p>Interpretation</p>
J. VEGETATED GROVE		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Wilderness area retains a wooded character that was documented during the park's origins. It should be protected and interpreted to the public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ecological strategies in conjunction with circulation considerations are essential to improving this area. Consult ESA. 	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p> <p>Circulation</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Create a woodland management plan focused on creating healthy age structure, managing invasive species, reducing the risk of a stand-replacing fire, enhancing overall woodland, and enhancing visibility for safety and experiential reasons. Consult ESA.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Manage invasive species according to ESA recommendations. Japanese privet, Chinaberry, bamboo and catclaw are priorities.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p>

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Restore oak savanna at the eastern edge of this unit along Avenue B to enhance water capture capacity, increase visibility into the park, reintroduce a lost historic plant community, and enhance the sense of entering the park. Consult ESA.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p>
K. CATALPA-PERSHING		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration</p> <p>The Catalpa Pershing channel is a unique feature, in that it provides a glimpse of more recent water management strategies in the long arc of the park's history, but it also creates a barrier between the neighboring community and the park.</p> <p>Connection can be achieved with a minimal and well interpreted solution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a bridge access across the current barrier. ▪ The existing concrete channel (or portions of it) can be retained and interpreted within the larger interpretation of humans and hydrology and the evolution of water management on the site. 	<p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Effective Circulation</p>	<p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p> <p>River Structures</p> <p>Interpretation</p> <p>Circulation</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Incorporate natural channel design, allowing the channel to expand and meander to the west, where possible and based on consultation with archaeologists. Engineered slopes on the east side of the channel can be maintained. ESA recommendations should be used in conjunction with this approach.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p>	<p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p> <p>River Structures</p> <p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Manage invasive species along the west bank. ESA should be consulted.</p>	<p>Healthy Ecology</p>	<p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p> <p>River Structures</p> <p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p>

L. DAVIS PARK		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Currently, Davis Park does not read as transition to Brackenridge Park. Davis Park needs to become legible as a transition to Brackenridge Park.</p> <p>When evaluating the circulation, overall exterior edges, and the internal connections between park components, Davis Park should be evaluated for several possibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making it a more prominent secondary point of entry into lower Brackenridge Park. ▪ Creating a safe and prominent pedestrian connection across Mulberry to the First Tee area ▪ Rerouting River Road to the western edge, where a social trail currently exists ▪ Converting the current River Road route adjacent to Davis Park to a trail 	<p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p>	<p>Entry/Arrival Areas</p> <p>Circulation</p> <p>Edges Between Cultural Institutions</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Ecological improvements should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhancing the herbaceous community with densely rooted perennial grasses and pollinator supporting species to enhance infiltration capacity. ▪ Reducing mowing frequency of the interior. ▪ Repairing gully erosion forming at the southeastern portion of the park. 	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p> <p>Vegetation/Soils/ Hydrology</p>
M. SOUTHERN RIPARIAN		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Currently, this zone is shaded and quiet, but very eroded. Golf fencing creates a barrier, and its connection to park is unclear. The larger strategy to address connections within the park should consider this area and how to integrate it with the park.</p>	<p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p>	<p>Edges Between Cultural Institutions</p> <p>Circulation</p>
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>The area presents the opportunity to address erosion through riparian planting. Several interventions should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand riparian buffer to 45-60' with landings for fishing and river viewing. Repair riparian community with invasive 	<p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	<p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p> <p>River Structures</p>

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ removal, installing herbaceous and woody stabilizer plantings. ▪ Narrow golf-course side road to allow for expansion of riparian area. <p>Reduce mowed area on west side of river to allow for riparian buffer expansion.</p>		
<p>Treatment Approaches: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration</p> <p>The low-water crossing is no longer in use and has medium integrity but high significance as a National Youth Administration project. The feature should be evaluated more carefully to determine if it should be replaced with a structure that allows through-flow, while allowing people to walk and cycle across the river. This would enable the park to increase complexity of in-stream habitat.</p>	<p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p> <p>River Structures</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>	<p>Effective Circulation</p> <p>Healthy Ecology</p> <p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p>
N. LIONS FIELD		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Because of its location on Broadway and at the center of the entire park, Lions Field is an important edge condition. Its historic integrity is relatively low, so it also poses opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider the site’s current utilization and history as a pasture for animals and as a property of the San Antonio Water Supply Company ▪ Evaluate its highest and best use ▪ Consider this location as the potential Front Door to Brackenridge Park 	<p>Local and National Visibility</p> <p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Effective Circulation</p>	<p>Entry/Arrival Areas</p> <p>Edges Between Cultural Institutions</p> <p>Interpretation</p>
O. INLET TUNNEL PARK		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Related System (s)
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>This zone contains a vast lawn, ramps, and an impressive but intimidating hydrology management structure. Its connection with the rest of Brackenridge Park is unclear, and its purpose as a structure is unclear. To make this site more legible as part of the park and as part of the city’s larger stormwater management infrastructure update the interpretation of this area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater focus should be included on the importance of the two major tunnels to a decrease in flooding and increase in safety for downtown San Antonio ▪ The site’s design should be reconsidered—its importance is related to water, but its appearance emphasizes lawn ▪ BPC should consider including this site on a humans and hydrology tour 	<p>Multiple Landscape Experiences</p> <p>Impactful Interpretation</p> <p>Local and National Visibility</p>	<p>Edges Between Cultural Institutions</p> <p>Entry/Arrival Areas</p> <p>San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor</p> <p>River Structures</p> <p>Interpretation</p>

PART FOUR. MANAGEMENT

Formal stewardship of municipal parks arose in 1985 with the creation of the Central Park Conservancy and its document “Rebuilding Central Park: A Management and Restoration Plan.” This set the bar for preservation work in American parks over the next decades, and it resulted in a highly successful capital campaign. Each cultural landscape is different and requires an approach that responds to the special qualities and situations of the particular landscape. Brackenridge Park is no exception, but the Central Park Conservancy provides one model for financial sustainability, viable management practices, and long-term stewardship. There is a strong need and opportunity for Brackenridge Park Conservancy to examine management models that will strengthen its ability to be a steward of the park.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS		
Recommendation	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Hire a historian to draft updates to the National Register Nomination according to recommendations found in Ch. 14 of this CLR. The historian should consult a landscape architectural historian in order to put the appropriate emphasis on the landscape components vs. built.</p>	<p>Local and National Visibility</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p>	High
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Working with the appropriate local partners, begin the process of working toward National Heritage Area designation (see CLR Ch. 2).</p> <p>This process should include working with the appropriate local cultural institutions, and it should include working with SA Parks & Recreation on a designed connected Emerald Necklace-inspired component.</p>	<p>Local and National Visibility</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p> <p>Dedicated Funding</p>	High
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Consult with Central Park Conservancy leadership and/or other park conservancies that have improved cohesion and collaboration between park institutions. Financial structures, capital campaigns, and other subjects should also be discussed to gain greater knowledge of precedent activities and approaches.</p> <p>Other conservancies to consider include, but are not limited to, Balboa Park Conservancy (San Diego), Dorothea Dix Park Conservancy (Raleigh, NC), Memorial Park Conservancy (Houston, TX), Hermann Park Conservancy (Houston, TX),</p>	<p>Seamless Inclusivity</p> <p>Exceptional Care and Maintenance</p> <p>Dedicated Funding</p> <p>Local and National Visibility</p>	High
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Park leadership should work with an outside economic analyst experienced with historic parks to identify funding opportunities and/or to plan for a capital campaign.</p>	<p>Dedicated Funding</p>	High

Recommendation (Continued)	Corresponding Outcomes(s)	Implementation Priority
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Identify revenue streams and funding opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A revenue sharing program with park institutions (Witte, Zoo, Golf course, First Tee) ▪ Revenue-generating programming to create dedicated funds to the ecological maintenance and ongoing preservation of historic features ▪ Revenue generating plans and programming should be implemented in careful consideration of equity and accessibility to the park and avoiding disruption to the character of the park 	Dedicated Funding	High
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation</p> <p>Develop and implement a Site Maintenance Plan that addresses the landscape and buildings and structures</p>	Exceptional Care and Maintenance	High
<p>Treatment Approaches: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Develop and implement a Stormwater Management Plan</p>	Exceptional Care and Maintenance Healthy Ecology	High
<p>Treatment Approaches: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Develop and implement an Invasive Species Management Plan</p>	Exceptional Care and Maintenance Healthy Ecology	High
<p>Treatment Approach: Rehabilitation; Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Develop and implement an Events Management Plan that protects the landscape during recurring high impact events/heavy usage of the park</p>	Exceptional Care and Maintenance Healthy Ecology	High
<p>Treatment Approaches: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Develop and implement a Forestry Management Plan</p>	Exceptional Care and Maintenance Healthy Ecology	Medium
<p>Treatment Approach: Eco-Restoration</p> <p>Develop and implement a Fire Risk Plan</p>	Exceptional Care and Maintenance Healthy Ecology	Medium

SUMMARY OF TREATMENT PRIORITIES

A NEW FRAMEWORK

Every park contains a foundational framework of systems that define and impact the landscape in a holistic manner. Some systems are constructed, and some are natural. Brackenridge Park’s eight defining landscape systems include the Archaeology (hidden bones), San Antonio River/Riparian Corridor (heart), River Structures, Vegetation/Soils/Hydrology, Entry and Arrival Areas (face), Circulation through the Park (connective tissue), Edges between Cultural Institutions, and the Collection of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Art. These landscape systems form the park’s foundational framework. Because the existing framework is currently suffering, the culture and ecology of the park are endangered.

This CLR’s findings conclude that Brackenridge Park’s leadership must create a new framework by which each system is addressed comprehensively. Interpretation is a strategy that is critical to the health and longevity of any cultural park, and it is integral to the success of a new framework. Development of a new interpreted framework will holistically examine and design solutions for the park’s systems. The framework will respect preservation treatment guidelines outlined in this CLR and the planning goals defined in the Master Plan.

A SYSTEMS APPROACH: SUMMARY OF TREATMENT PRIORITIES

Brackenridge Park’s leadership must invest first and foremost in a new framework, focusing initially on five of its eight systems—its river and riparian corridor, its entry and arrival areas, its circulation, its archaeology, and its interpretation, which can be thought of as the park’s soul. A new framework would set a future vision for the whole park while guiding key projects and growth over time and seeing site-wide goals realized.

This systems-based approach is not only vital but also possible. Designs and plans to restore the health of each system should be approached with the mind-set that implementation will occur in phases. Likewise, a piecemeal approach to funding and isolated development within Brackenridge Park must be rejected. The needs of site systems cannot be addressed one corner or parcel at a time. That approach has only added to the site’s fragmentation over time; larger site needs and more complicated fixes have been passed over as this beloved park struggles to keep up with the needs of its diverse community. This piecemeal approach has served neither the park’s cultural and historic significance nor its level of integrity thus far.

The following section summarizes Treatment Plan recommendation projects that rise to the highest level of action. These projects can be embarked on with the goal of healing the five priority systems. It is essential that these projects must be thought of as part of larger systems-related design efforts. The projects concern restoring a greater level of health to the park’s ecology, preserving and maintaining its distinctive “homegrown” regional vernacular character, making ecological systems and prehistory and history—the difficult *and* the endearing histories—more evident and understandable, and creating a unified and exceptional municipal park and cultural landscape—an *immersive landscape of learning* that lives up to Brackenridge Park’s astonishing heritage.

PRIORITY SYSTEM: THE RIVER AND RIPARIAN CORRIDOR (THE HEART)

The San Antonio River, with its associated riparian corridor, has functioned as the heart of the Brackenridge landscape for millennia. But it is no longer healthy or safely accessible. Improving the river's health is imperative. Related projects align with the key recommendations found in the Ecological Site Assessment for Brackenridge Park.

1. **Riparian Buffer Design:** Establish a riparian buffer¹ along the San Antonio River to reduce and eliminate erosion and to address compaction issues resulting from stormwater runoff. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, this design should
 - a. Set minimum and preferred buffer widths along the entire river.
 - b. Integrate viewing and access points to the river.
 - c. Set goals for and achieve measurable ecological improvements.
 - d. Interpret the buffer to the public to promote riparian education and stewardship.

2. **Park-Wide Ecological Restoration:** Design a park-wide system of ecological management areas and Low Impact Development features.² With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, this system design should
 - a. Establish a park-wide goal for average annual runoff capture.
 - b. Be tightly integrated with the circulation system.
 - c. Include strategies to manage runoff from existing and new impervious cover and set an upper limit on impervious cover within the park.
 - d. Establish soil protection zones to reduce extent and severity of compaction.
 - e. Utilize plantings and mowing strategies to direct traffic away from critical root zones.
 - f. Include an invasive plant species management plan.

This project should be phased with an initial fundraising component that includes an Ecological Transect Design.

- a. Design a transect through the park that demonstrates the full range of possibilities for stormwater management and riparian improvement.
- b. Model the impacts through an initial computer-generated model created by ecologists with an interpretive specialist.
- c. The demonstration transect can show that the health of vegetation, soils, and hydrology across the site are interdependent.
- d. Interpret the transect to the public on-site and through an education program that traces the gradual ecological impacts on the site.

1 Michelle Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment* (San Antonio: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas at Austin, 2019), 25.

2 Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment*, 25.

PRIORITY SYSTEM: ENTRY AND ARRIVAL AREAS (THE PUBLIC FACE)

The park currently has no public face or physically defined presence in the community. The need exists to define the park's edge in connection with the community that surrounds it and to establish a hierarchy of park entrances. Newly defined park entry points and community-facing edges should appear to be related and should honor the park's regional vernacular character.

3. **Park Entrances Plan and Design:** Entry points should be assessed around the entire site. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, develop a design that identifies optimal entry points.
 - a. A “front door,” “side doors,” and “back door” should be located, and poorly situated entries should be decommissioned and eliminated.
 - b. Entries should be designed and improved to relate to each other, to be visible to the public, and to honor the park's regional vernacular character. Materials and aesthetics should be guided by historic and regional vernacular precedents.
 - c. The main entry to the park should respond to that area's historical significance and integrity.
 - d. External or public edges between the entries should be designed to clearly define the park's entire boundaries. The design should imply and function as a connection—drawing one's eye to the park and inviting people in—rather than as a border.

4. **The Front Door Project, Phase A:** Convert Lions Field into Brackenridge Park's “front door” and main entry, capitalizing on its highly visible location on Broadway, high historic significance, and relatively low historic integrity, which justifies a major investment. Lions Field falls between Hildebrand Avenue and Inlet Tunnel Park and is the geographic center point of the entire park. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, the design for this area contains many possibilities.
 - a. Design a first-rate visitors center that conveys the entire history of the site, orienting people to its core narratives.
 - b. Park leadership should work with the existing tenants of this space toward an acceptable relocation plan.
 - c. Interpretation within the visitors center might include interactive computer displays, a graphic timeline, and a display of archaeological discoveries. An interactive map might orient users to the park's history, trail systems, and cultural institutions, including the zoo and the Witte Museum.
 - d. The visitors center should house the Brackenridge Park Conservancy (BPC), which is currently housed in a former park storage room and functioning restroom facility.

- e. The site design may call for a sustainable and interpreted meadow or pastureland, drawing on early park history as pasture for animals (the pasture did not get developed until 1923).
 - f. Lions Field was originally a property of George Brackenridge’s San Antonio Water Works Company, so the story of San Antonio’s public water system may be interpreted in this area.
 - g. Phases A and Phase B must be strategically conceived of together before determining which to phase in first.
5. **The Front Door Project, Phase B:** Expand the Lions Field front door across East Mulberry Avenue to create a magnificent central “double door” entry experience for the public. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, park leadership should
- a. Work with existing business owners on a relocation and/or land integration strategy.
 - b. Acquire land between Broadway and Avenue B and adjacent to Lions Field.
 - c. Design Catalpa-Pershing as a phase of this comprehensive Front Door Project. Design considerations for Catalpa-Pershing include the following:
 - i. Building on the park’s original vocabulary of bridges
 - ii. Leaving portions of the concrete ditch revealed to interpret a more recent component of the park’s lengthy history with water management and flood control
 - iii. Naturalizing portions of the ditch, interpreting this site as part of the physical evolution of water management on the site and in connection to Eco-restoration.

Phases A and B must be strategically conceived of together before determining which to phase in first.

PRIORITY SYSTEM: CIRCULATION THROUGH THE PARK (CONNECTIVE TISSUE)

Circulation is a critical landscape system, and the park's ability to be experienced and conceived of as a cohesive park is heavily dependent on a comprehensive circulation plan. Today, circulation in Brackenridge Park is disjointed. It does not adequately provide for multiple modes of transportation. Historically, the park developed as a driving park, enabling people to use what was then the newest form of transportation in order to have multiple landscape experiences. This history is not understood on the site today.

- 6. Comprehensive Circulation Plan and Design:** With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners, design a comprehensive pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation plan to move people through the interior of the park.
 - a. The plan should draw on the park's history as a driving park and on its historical circuits.
 - b. The plan should also be integrated with care for the park's natural plant communities and with the need to repair damaged hydrology, including subtractive measures, such as eliminating invasive plant species.
 - c. Circulation should ensure that visitors can be immersed in a variety of landscape experiences as they move through the park.
 - d. Incorporate wayfinding and interpretation that is minimally intrusive, respectful of the regional vernacular, and effective in guiding people through the park, regardless of which landscape experiences they would like to encounter (arid desert vegetation, riparian landscape, woodlands, and so on) and regardless of the stories they seek to experience (Eco-restoration, archaeological layers, cultural identity in the park, and so on).

PRIORITY SYSTEM: ARCHAEOLOGY (HIDDEN BONES)

Prehistoric and historic archaeological remnants exist throughout Brackenridge Park. The extent of potentially sensitive ground is therefore pervasive. It is increasingly common for cultural landscapes to take the approach of uncovering archaeological resources, preserving them in place, and interpreting them to the public. Advocating for a more public approach to archaeological resources, Dr. Matthew Reeves, the director of Archaeology and Landscape Restoration at James Madison's Montpelier, states that "one of the best ways to have a community feel protective of sites is to know about them and become knowledgeable regarding their significance. And the best protection for sites against looting/disturbance is a local community's eyes!"³

1. **Acequia Investigation:** Due to the high significance of the Acequia Madre de Valero and the Upper Labor Acequia, it is recommended that archaeology be conducted to locate as much of the original two acequias as possible. With guidance from the appropriate professional experts and practitioners:
 - a. Remaining intact portions should be preserved and protected in place, under the guiding philosophy "first do no harm."
 - b. Areas that have collapsed should be examined by archeologists and preservation technologists who understand local stone and mortar materials and ways to preserve and possibly rehabilitate these resources.
 - c. The exposed and protected areas should be interpreted to the public to convey the story of water management and a public water system.
 - d. If there are areas that contain various layers, including precolonial, colonial, and Civil War, these remnants should be interpreted to convey the changes over time.

³ Matthew Reeves, director of Archaeology and Landscape Restoration at James Madison's Montpelier, "Archaeology and Site Interpretation," email correspondence, October 1, 2019.

INTERPRETATION STRATEGY (THE SOUL)

The four critical narratives noted throughout this CLR must be integrated into the pilot projects and any future projects. This requires specialized research. These narratives should be fully developed into interpretive plans that permeate the park. The narratives are

1. Stories of humans and hydrology, including the park's ecological transformation over time and interpretation of future projects that aim to restore the river's health
2. Prehistoric and historic life, including hidden and difficult cultural histories
3. Regional vernacular character, including the river as the park's form-defining element, early vehicular circulation in the park, cultural access to the river, and regional art and craftsmanship
4. Cultural layering that has contributed to the park's physical and ritual development, with intentional focus on historic ties to San Antonio's Indigenous people, the enslaved and their descendants, and the Mexican American community

Interpretation can and should be interdisciplinary and should span time. It should reveal the site's history and ecology, but the public must also understand how the past is relevant in the present and how it impacts the future. To this end, interpretation will need to convey the role that Brackenridge Park is actively playing in improving the present conditions and experience, whether the interpretation is related to Eco-restoration, circulation, or archaeological discovery.

Whether park leadership moves forward with a project related to one priority system or combines more than one system into a single project, interdisciplinary interpretation must drive the design approaches. Interpretation cannot be an afterthought. It will need to go beyond wayfinding and visitor center exhibits. By design, it must incorporate ways for park users to be immersed in the stories of the landscape's past and future; it should permeate the site.

NEXT STEPS

The CLR is a technical document that contains a vast amount of information. It will be used by park leadership as the primary management tool for Brackenridge Park. Therefore, the document must be read and digested by leadership from the BPC, San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department, and San Antonio River Authority. Next steps toward implementation of the CLR Treatment follow.

1. Representation from these leadership groups must develop a shared understanding of the document and how to best use it to evaluate proposed projects and to guide new projects in Brackenridge Park.
2. When park leadership has developed a shared understanding of the CLR, fund-raising will be crucial to management and to adopting a systems approach. For more sustainable management practices, park leadership should look to other large municipal park conservancy models for guidance. This should facilitate conversation both about funding models and about greater interface between Brackenridge Park and its cultural institutions.
3. Updates to the National Register Nomination can be made based on the content included in the analysis chapter of this CLR. This will begin the process of formally elevating Brackenridge Park to the national level of significance. It will also begin the process of laying further groundwork for a National Heritage Area designation.
4. One or more of the five priority systems should also be identified as a starting point for investment. Funds will be necessary to hire interdisciplinary teams to design for each system. It is critical that projects, such as those suggested in the Treatment Summary, should be conceived of as part of a holistic design—Boston’s Emerald Necklace, discussed in the CLR introduction, is an example of systems-based planning and design. Once a system has been planned and/or designed, implementation can and should occur in phases.
5. Using the systems framework as a guide, all existing and future projects, smaller projects, and isolated efforts should be evaluated against the Treatment Plan Guiding Principles, Treatment Outcomes, and Treatment Recommendations and especially against the prioritized systems. Such projects should be implemented only if they act as phases or segments of an established large-vision strategy. Again, to the degree possible, the three leadership entities should evaluate these projects together in order to assess projects with a shared understanding of the CLR and its Treatment Plan.

If implemented successfully, this action plan will create cohesion for the park, providing clear direction to visitors and a consistency against which the layered, handcrafted elements of the site can be viewed and registered; it will remedy the currently deteriorating river banks and shade canopy, ensuring that these significant spatial experiences are protected for future visitors; and it will develop a strategy for telling the site’s stories, ensuring that awareness of the site’s history is integrated seamlessly.

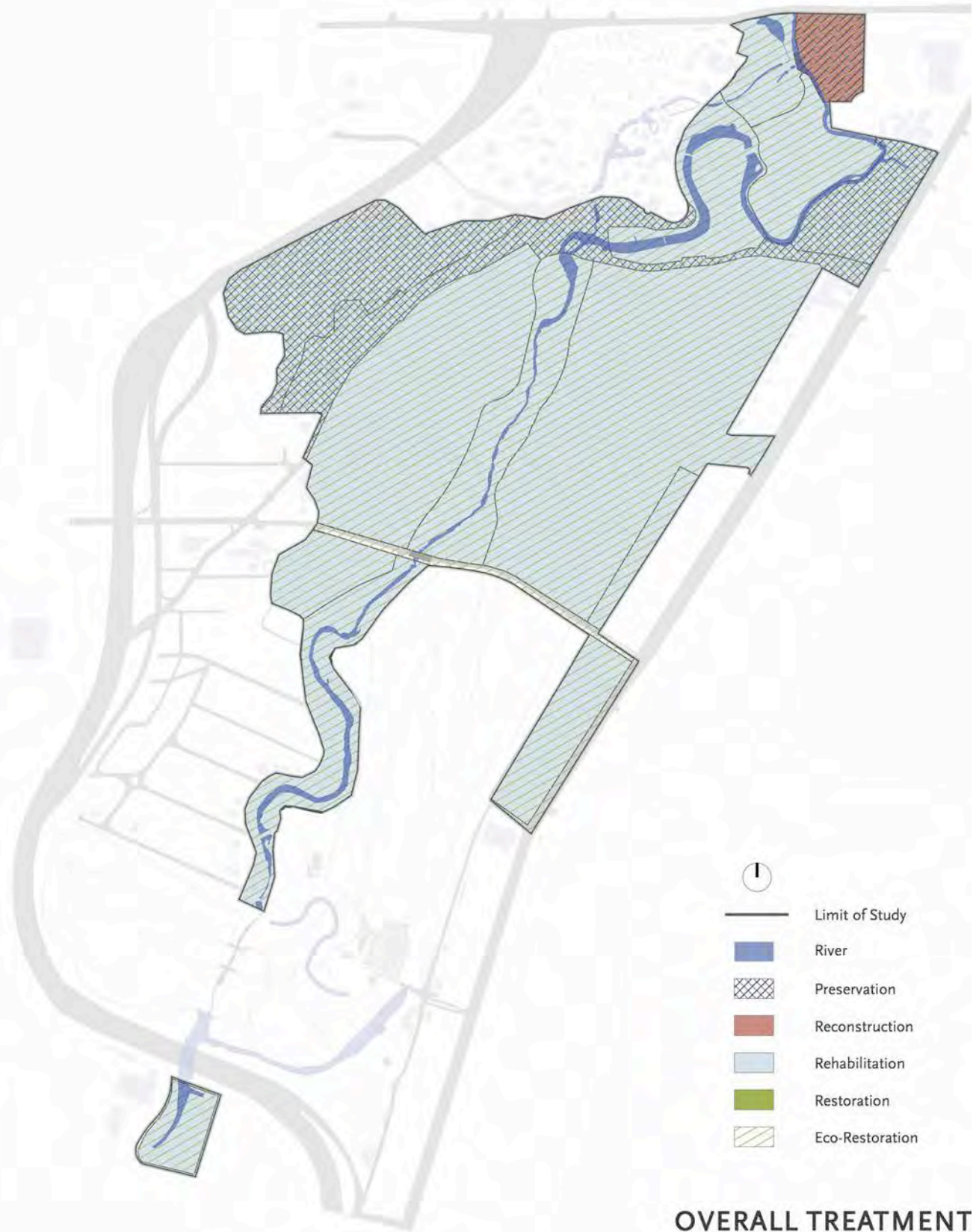


FIGURE 15-5. Brackenridge Treatment Approaches. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

OVERALL TREATMENT APPROACHES

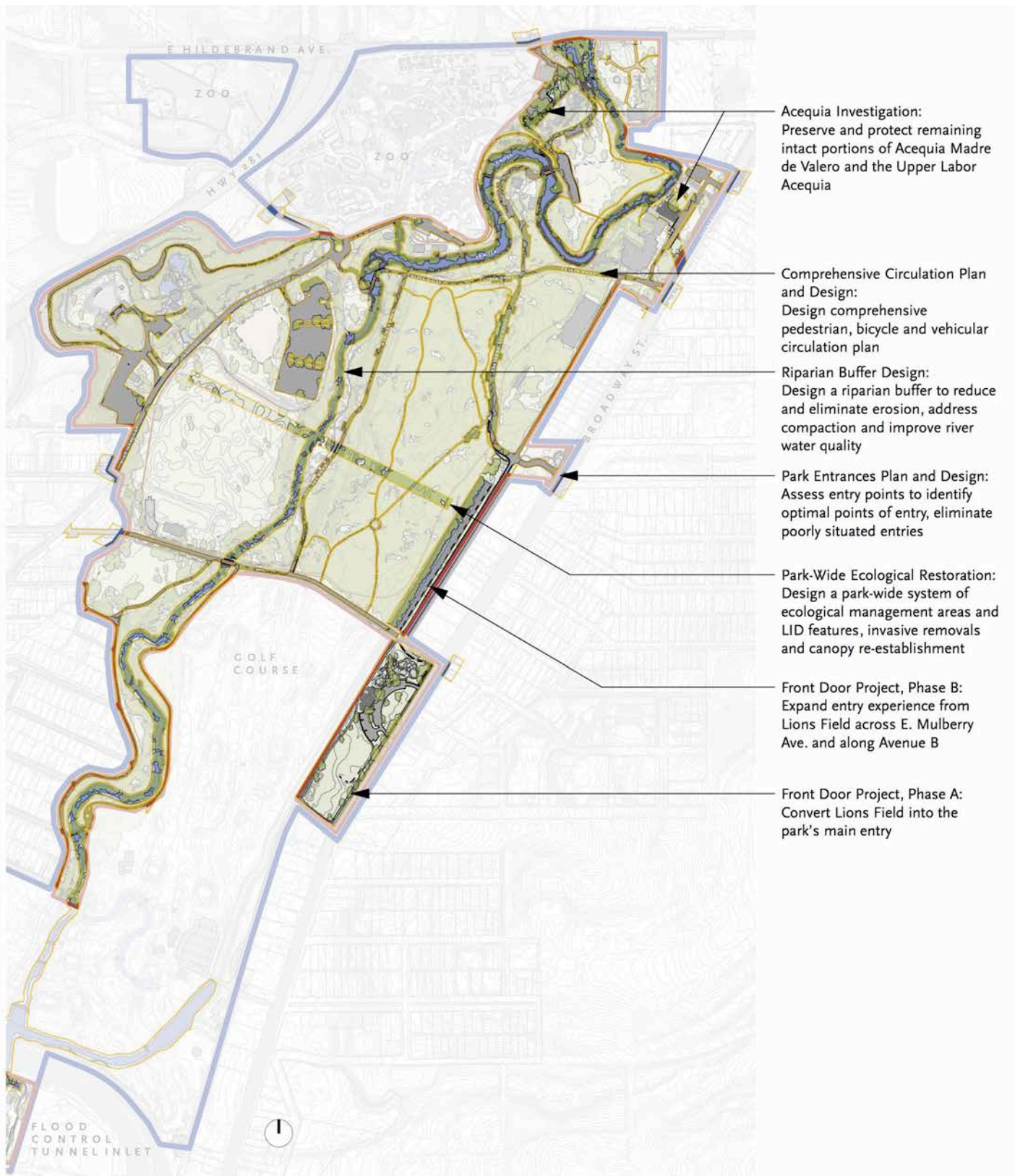


FIGURE 15-6. Brackenridge Project Recommendations. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS



GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

BRACKENRIDGE PARK TERMS

acequia: An irrigation ditch or canal with Middle Eastern origins. “One of the most significant accomplishments of the Spanish Colonial residents of San Antonio was their construction of a complex and expansive system comprising dams, gates, and irrigation canals. Together these systems, known as acequias, enabled the missions to thrive and determined settlement patterns.”¹ The original acequia network in San Antonio provided water to five Spanish missions spread along the San Antonio River. Later additions to the network provided water to settlers who were not associated with the

Acequia Madre de Valero: Construction of this canal began in 1718 or 1719. When the mission it sourced moved, the Mission San Antonio Valero (the Alamo), new construction was carried out beginning around 1723 or 1724 to supply water to the Mission San Antonio Valero.² The acequia originated from a diversion dam in the San Antonio River at a location in Brackenridge park and “ran southeasterly toward Broadway and south to [the] mission before returning to the San Antonio River below today’s downtown area.”³ Remnants have been located near the Witte Museum. It is the first acequia in the city’s original acequia system, and it is likely remnant along many portions of the eastern edge of Brackenridge Park.

Upper Labor Acequia: Between 1776 to 1778, the Upper Labor acequia was constructed and “twenty-six long, narrow parcels (suertas) running from the acequia to the river were awarded to those who financed the ditch.”⁴ The Upper Labor Acequia was constructed to provide irrigation to settlers; it was not part of the original system of acequias constructed to serve the missions. Remnants have been located in the northwestern area of Brackenridge Park, in the San Antonio Zoo, and in the southwestern area, in Davis Park.

1 “Mission Trails Historic Sites, Acequias,” Sanantonio.gov, accessed January 8, 2020, sanantonio.gov/Mission-Trails/Mission-Trails-Historic-Sites/Detail-Page/ArtMID/16185/ArticleID/4230/Acequias.

2 “Mission Trails Historic Sites, Acequias.”

3 Maria Watson Pfeiffer and Steven A. Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” National Register of Historic Places, Texas Historical Commission, San Antonio, TX, June 15, 2011, 8.

4 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 36.

Balcones Escarpment: A rugged limestone terrain that forms a fault line which delimits the boundary between sub-arid conditions of the Great Plains to the west and subtropical conditions of the Coastal Plains in the east. This line separates Texas Hill Country from the flat and fertile Blackland Prairie. Fissures along the escarpment allow water to trickle down to the Edwards Aquifer below, creating the rechargeable source of water from which numerous springs, and the San Antonio River, flow.⁵

diversion Dam: A structure “designed to divert water from a watercourse such as a waterway or stream into another watercourse, irrigation canal, stream, water-spreading system, or another waterway.”⁶ In Brackenridge Park, diversion dams were constructed to divert water from the San Antonio River into acequias.

Alamo Dam: The Alamo Dam dates to c. 1719-1724, and was constructed “on the east bank of the river to divert water into the ditch [acequia] that served Mission San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo).”⁷

Upper Labor Dam: “The Upper Labor dam diverted water from the river’s west bank into an acequia that ran southwesterly through today’s San Antonio Zoo and near the alignment of Rock Quarry Road (now North St. Mary Street). It worked in conjunction with the Upper Labor Acequia and dates to c. 1776-1778. During park renovation in the 1990s, the dam was partially excavated and documented and then covered for protection. The stone-lined channel remains intact and is visible in both the park and within the boundary of the San Antonio Zoo.”⁸

Edwards Aquifer: “an underground layer of porous, honeycombed, water-bearing rock that is between 300-700 feet thick...The San Antonio segment of the Aquifer extends in a 160 mile arch-shaped curve from Brackettville in the west to near Kyle in the northeast, and is between five and 40 miles wide at the surface... The San Antonio segment is where most of the major natural springs occur, where much of the use by humans takes place, and where the issues are most hotly debated.”⁹

faux bois: French term meaning false wood, “refers to the artistic imitation of wood or wood grains in various media, but typically cement. The craft has roots in the Renaissance... In Mexico and Texas, this style is sometimes known as ‘el trabajo rústico’ (the rustic work). It is often characterized by a realistic look in both composition and coloring, as well as a more finely detailed finish than comparable European work.

Dionicio Rodríguez: Mexican artist Dionicio Rodríguez was an internationally known sculptor and “a skilled practitioner of the technique;” his faux bois exists throughout Brackenridge park, including in Miraflores Gardens and in the San Antonio Zoo. The work includes footbridges, benches, tables, entry gates; this work dates between the 1920s – 1940s.

5 David Malda, “Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River,” in *River Cities: City Rivers*, ed. Thaïsa Way (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University, 2018), 252.

6 “Dam, Diversion,” USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, accessed January 8, 2020, nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcs143_026012.pdf

7 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 8.

8 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 10.

9 Gregg Eckhardt, “Hydrology of the Edwards Aquifer,” The Edwards Aquifer Website, accessed June 3, 2019, edwardsaquifer.net/geology.html.

low-water Crossing: A structure designed provide a bridge across a water body. It is designed to be submerged during high water flows, and to provide a safe vehicular passage during low water flows.¹⁰ There are two historic low-water crossings in Brackenridge Park.

Avenue A Low-Water Crossing: Constructed as a WPA project in 1939 and located in the southern portion of the park. This crossing is no longer functional as a connection, because the road it would have connected people to (on the eastern side of the San Antonio River), is no longer operational.

Tuleta Drive Low-Water Crossing: Constructed in 1917 and located near the San Antonio Zoo entry area, provides access across the San Antonio River, uniting the eastern and western sides of the park.

San Antonio Missions: “a group of five frontier mission complexes situated along a 12.4-kilometer (7.7-mile) stretch of the San Antonio River basin... The complexes were built in the early eighteenth century and as a group they illustrate the Spanish Crown’s efforts to colonize, evangelize and defend the northern frontier of New Spain. In addition to evangelizing the areas [I]ndigenous population into converts loyal to the Catholic Church, the missions also included all the components required to establish self-sustaining, socio-economic communities loyal to the Spanish Crown.”¹¹

Critical to the missions were the system of acequias, with the earliest acequia, the Acequia Madre Valero, beginning in present-day Brackenridge Park.

Water Works Raceway: “a straight, earthen ditch with sloping sides constructed to deliver water from the west bank of the river to the Water Works pump house. As originally constructed, the ditch measured approximately 40 feet wide and 650 feet long. The raceway was designed with a nine-foot fall that provided power to drive turbines and pumps. Water re-entered the river at the pump house. Today the raceway is abandoned and dry.”¹²

PARK PLANNING/PARK HISTORY TERMS

City Beautiful: Movement that grew from the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The City Beautiful Movement shifted the role of the city as a symbol of economic development and industrialization to one of beauty and aesthetics.¹³

Chicago World Fair 1893: Also known as the World’s Columbian Exposition, the exposition was intended to introduce Americans “to the products of men’s handiwork and mechanical skill” from around the world.¹⁴

municipal park (large municipal park): “Land usually encompassing 500 or more acres owned and managed by municipalities and designed to relieve the stress of urban living by bringing the perceived benefits of the countryside into the city. Often picturesque in character, many of these parks include orchestrated experiences of spatial sequences characterized by

10 “Low-Water Crossings,” US Forest Service, accessed November 1, 2019, www.fs.fed.us/td/pubs/pdf/LowWaterCrossings/Hi_pdf/2_Chapter1.pdf

11 “San Antonio Missions: Nomination for Inscription on the World Heritage List PDF,” 159-61, San Antonio, TX, January 2014, whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/1466.pdf.

12 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 10.

13 “City Beautiful Movement,” The New York Preservation Archive Project, New York Preservation Archive Project, accessed June 3, 2019, nypap.org/preservation-history/city-beautiful-movement/.

14 Norman T. Newton, *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1978), 365.

winding roads and paths, woodlands, artificial lakes, large expanses of lawn, and groves of trees planted to guide movement and control sight lines, as well as architecture planned to harmonize with the landscape. These parks often promoted passive recreation and many included such diverse amenities as zoos, outdoor theatres, golf courses, and public gardens. They were created as democratic manifestations of the benefits of a free society, with the goal of reforming public health crises and contributing to economic vitality and the growth of modern cities.”¹⁵

sustainable park: Sustainable park development arose in the mid-1990s. The model of sustainable park development generally includes three attributes: “(1) self-sufficiency in regard to material resources and maintenance, (2) solving larger urban problems outside of park boundaries, and (3) creating new standards for aesthetics and landscape management in parks and other urban landscapes.”¹⁶ Sustainable park development usually involves citizen participation, ecological education, and related policies to support the effectiveness and stewardship of these parks. Brackenridge Park is not currently a sustainable park, but it is engaging in work towards sustainability, and its preservation should include embracing a new chapter as a sustainable park.

Works Progress Administration (WPA): A New Deal agency established in 1935 under Franklin D. Roosevelt to employ people during the Great Depression. Headed first by the Reconstruction Finance Administration and by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), depression-era projects updated the infrastructure, installed new recreational areas and buildings, and virtually remade the landscape of some parks. The agency was renamed “Works Projects Administration” in 1939.

During this period, approximately \$90,000.00 was earmarked for projects to improve the infrastructure of Brackenridge Park and its zoo, and Koehler Park. Investments included the construction of rock retaining walls along the San Antonio River to control erosion. The city forester, Stewart King, who became a noted landscape architect, supervised a project to build a drive—Tuleta Drive—from Broadway to the recreation area at Brackenridge.¹⁷

World’s Columbian Exposition 1893: Also known as the Chicago World’s Fair, the exposition was intended to introduce American “to the products of men’s handiwork and mechanical skill” from around the world.¹⁸

15 “Large Municipal Park,” The Cultural Landscape Foundation, TCLF, accessed November 1, 2019. tclf.org/category/landscapes-designed-landscape-types/public-park/large-municipal-park.

16 Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982).

17 Pfeiffer and Tomka, “Brackenridge Park,” 65.

18 Newton, *Design on the Land*, 365.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE TERMS

Cultural Landscape: In 1984, the National Park Service (NPS) defined cultural landscape as “a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.”¹⁹ There are four NPS-designated types of cultural landscapes.

Designed Landscape: A landscape “consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, or horticulturist according to design principles, or an amateur gardener working in a recognized style or tradition. The landscape may be associated with a significant person(s), trend, or event in landscape architecture; or illustrate an important development in the theory and practice of landscape architecture.”²⁰

Ethnographic Landscape: A landscape that contains “a variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources. Examples are contemporary settlements, religious sacred sites and massive geological structures. Small plant communities, animals, subsistence and ceremonial grounds are often components.”²¹

Historic Site: A landscape that is “significant for its association with a historic event, activity, or person. Examples include battlefields and president’s house properties.”²²

Vernacular Landscape: A landscape “that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped that landscape. Through social or cultural attitudes of an individual, family or a community, the landscape reflects the physical, biological, and cultural character of those everyday lives. Function plays a significant role in vernacular landscapes.”²³

integrity: “The historic integrity of a cultural landscape relates to the ability of the landscape to convey its significance...”²⁴ Aspects included in determining a cultural landscape’s level on integrity include assessing “cohesiveness, setting, and character of a landscape, as well as the material, composition, and workmanship of associated features... Historic integrity is determined by the extent to which the general character of the historic period is evident.”²⁵

National Heritage Area (NHA): A Congressional designation for a ‘lived-in’ landscape that may occur in urban, rural, or wilderness areas. NHAs are “places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form cohesive, nationally important landscapes. Through their resources, NHAs tell nationally important stories that celebrate our nations diverse heritage. NHAs are lived-in landscapes. Consequently, NHA entities collaborate with

19 “Understand Cultural Landscapes,” National Park Service, [nps.gov/subjects/culturallandscapes/understand-cl.htm](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/culturallandscapes/understand-cl.htm).

20 Charles Birnbaum, “Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes,” Technical Preservation Services, National Park Service, accessed November 2, 2019, [nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/36-cultural-landscapes.htm](https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/36-cultural-landscapes.htm).

21 Birnbaum, “Protecting Cultural Landscapes.”

22 Birnbaum, “Protecting Cultural Landscapes.”

23 Birnbaum, “Protecting Cultural Landscapes.”

24 Robert Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports* (US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Washington, DC, 1998), 71.

25 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan. *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 71.

communities to determine how to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.”²⁶ There are currently 55 NHAs in the United States.

National Park Service (NPS): “A bureau within the United States Department of Interior. The NPS preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.”²⁷

In 1981, the National Park Service “first recognized cultural landscapes as a specific resource type,” and “more than any other organization or agency...[the NPS] provided the most significant direction to the nascent cultural landscape preservation movement.”²⁸ In 1984, the NPS published *Cultural Landscapes: Rural Historic Districts in the National Park System*, a document that “spelled out criteria for identifying and defining cultural landscapes.”²⁹

National Register of Historic Places (NR or NRHP): The comprehensive list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of national, regional, state, and local significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture kept by the NPS under authority of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

National Register Nomination: The technical document used by any individual or agency completing the process to nominate a property for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places list.

Landscape Preservation Treatment (Treatment Plan): The National Park Service (NPS) uses the term “Treatment” to describe the management plan that results from CLR analysis of a landscape’s historical context, site history, existing conditions, significance, and integrity. *The Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties and the Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* prescribes four treatment approaches:

Preservation: requires “retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric, including historic form, features, and details as they have evolved over time.”

Reconstruction: establishes a framework for “recreating a vanished or non-surviving landscape with new materials, primarily for interpretive purposes.”³⁰

Rehabilitation: “acknowledges the need to alter or add to a cultural landscape to meet continuing or new uses while retaining the landscape’s historic character.”

Restoration: allows for “the depiction of a landscape at a particular time in its history by preserving materials from the period of significance and removing materials from other periods.”

regional vernacular landscape: A vernacular landscape that is composed of regional or local materials and/or a character or quality that is distinctive to the place in which the landscape occurs.

26 “What Is a National Heritage Area?,” National Park Service, nps.gov/articles/what-is-a-national-heritage-area.htm.

27 National Park Service Definitions, nps.gov/dscw/definitionsdc_n.htm.

28 Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick, “Why Cultural Landscape Preservation?,” *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America*.

29 Alanen and Melnick. “Why Cultural Landscape Preservation?”

30 *The Secretary of Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Washington, DC, 1993.

significance: the historic “meaning or value ascribed to a structure, landscape, object, or site” that is a cultural landscape.³¹

statement of significance: “Every CLR has a written statement of significance that explains the relationship between the cultural landscape and specific historic contexts, National Register criteria, and period(s) of significance.”³²

urban cultural park system: A “designated historical area in a community which has been revitalized to interpret the community’s role in the cultural development of the region and state.”³³ An urban cultural park system may achieve Congressional designation as an NHA.

World Heritage Site: The formal and international “designation for places on Earth that are of outstanding universal value to humanity.”³⁴ This designation is made by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The San Antonio Missions Park is included on the list of World Heritage Sites.

LANDSCAPE ECOLOGY TERMS

ecological restoration (eco-restoration): The process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed (Society for Ecological Restoration). Ecological Restoration seeks to restore function, not necessarily a historic community.

restoration ecology is the scientific study supporting the practice of ecological restoration.

ecosystem function: The foundational processes of natural systems which are nutrient cycling, energy capture and hydrologic processes.³⁵

ecological health measures ecosystem function by evaluating the integrity of primary processes. Healthy ecosystems can self-repair, retain resources (soil, water, nutrients), and the living part of the system exerts control over primary processes (nutrient cycling, energy capture, hydrologic processes). Unhealthy ecosystems cannot self-repair, tend to hemorrhage resources and primary processes are inoperable or mediated only by abiotic factors like topography.³⁶

31 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan. *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 68.

32 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan. *Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 71.

33 Jeanne S. Fagan, “New York State Urban Cultural Park System” (master’s thesis, Rochester Institute of Technology, 1992), accessed October 7, 2019, scholarworks.rit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=5977&context=theses.

34 “What Is World Heritage?,” [unesco.org](https://unesco.org/en/faq/19), accessed November 1, 2019, whc.unesco.org/en/faq/19.

35 Michelle Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment* (San Antonio: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas at Austin, 2019).

36 Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment*.

low impact development (LID): “a set of interventions designed to repair hydrologic processes. The goal of LID is to reduce runoff and improve water quality by capturing and treating it in a series of dispersed, but interconnected, systems such as rain gardens, bioswales and filters strips.”³⁷

bioswales: “linear bioretention features that convey water and are constructed and vegetated to provide filtration and infiltration.”³⁸

filter strips: “function as pass-through devices that do not hold water for a significant amount of time, rather cleansing the water as it moves through the element... Frequently installed along roadways, parking lots and trails, filter strips provide the first level of filtration.”³⁹

rain gardens: “soil and plant-based filtration devices that remove pollutants through a variety of physical, biological and chemical treatment processes. Rain gardens allow water to be retained in a basin shaped landscape area with plants and soil where the water is allowed to pass through the plant roots and soil column.”⁴⁰ These spaces are designed spaces that include many components; they can appear highly naturalized, or highly structured and designed, but their design is intentional to support their function.

invasive species: “non-native (or alien) species to a local ecosystem whose introduction causes economic loss, environmental damage or harm to human health. Invasive species grow and reproduce rapidly and establish over large areas, largely because they lack natural predators, competition and exposure to disease-causing agents from their home range.” Their spread takes over ecosystems, decreases biodiversity, and threatens survival of native plants and animals.⁴¹

riparian corridor: “protective bands of vegetation lining a river. The width of the buffer partially determines the ecosystem services it can provide.”⁴² A wider buffer (100-300’) provides full ecosystem services, and a narrower buffer provides fewer ecosystem services. The riparian corridor in Brackenridge Park is in poor ecological health.

37 Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment*.

38 Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment*.

39 Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment*.

40 Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment*.

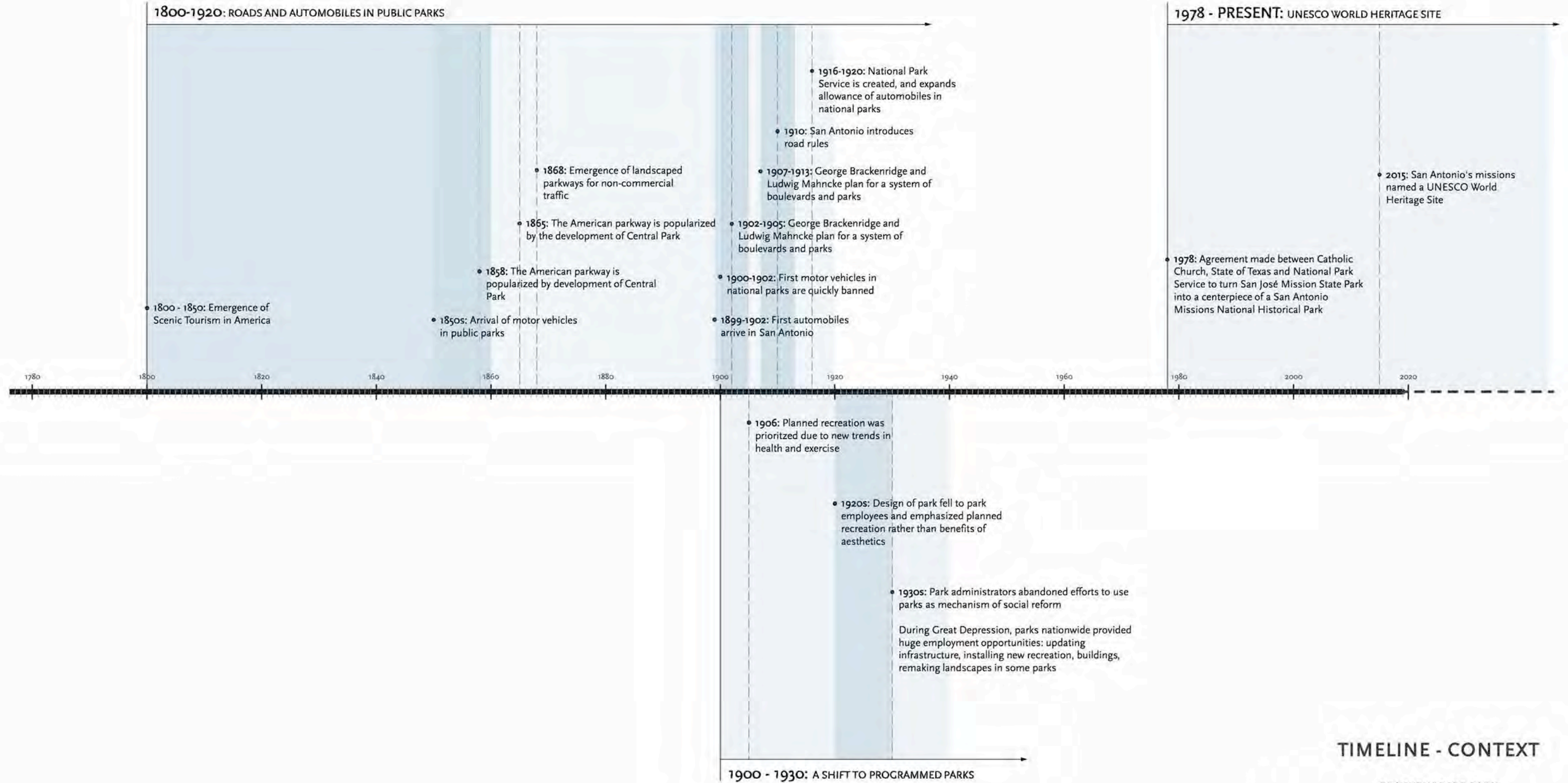
41 “Combating Invasive Species,” accessed January 8, 2020, wildflower.org/project/combating-invasive-species.

42 Bertelsen, *Brackenridge Park Ecological Site Assessment*.

ACRONYMS USED IN REPORT

BPC	Brackenridge Park Conservancy
CLR	Cultural Landscape Report
LID	Low Impact Design
NHA	National Heritage Area
NPS	National Park Service
SARA	San Antonio River Authority
STA	Suzanne Turner Associates
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
WFC	Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
WPA	Works Progress Administration

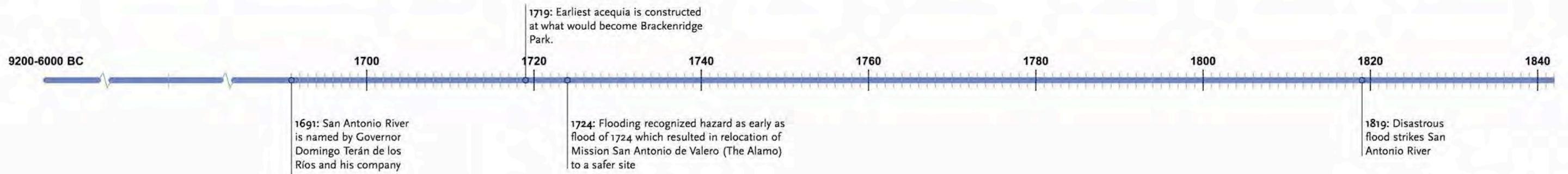
BRACKENRIDGE PARK GRAPHIC TIMELINE



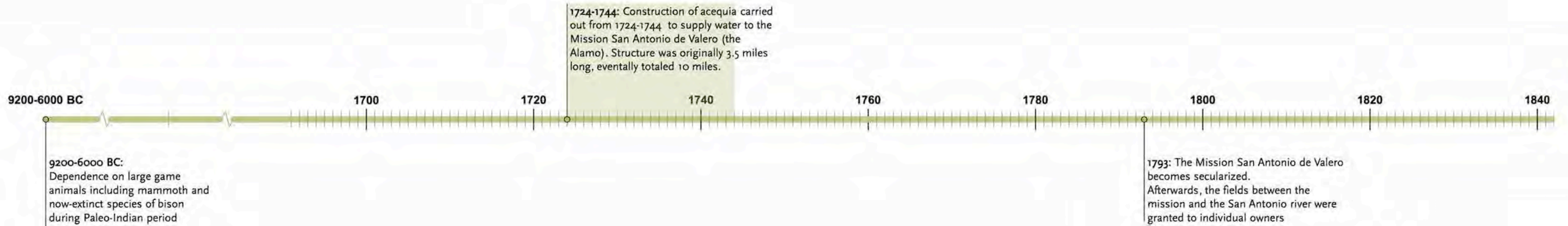
TIMELINE - CONTEXT

BRACKENRIDGE PARK
 CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT
 By Reed Hilderbrand and Suzanne Turner Associates

FIGURE 17-1. Timeline: Context. Source: Reed Hilderbrand



HYDROLOGY



PRESERVATION & ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 17-2. Timeline: Preservation & Archaeology - page 1 of 2. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

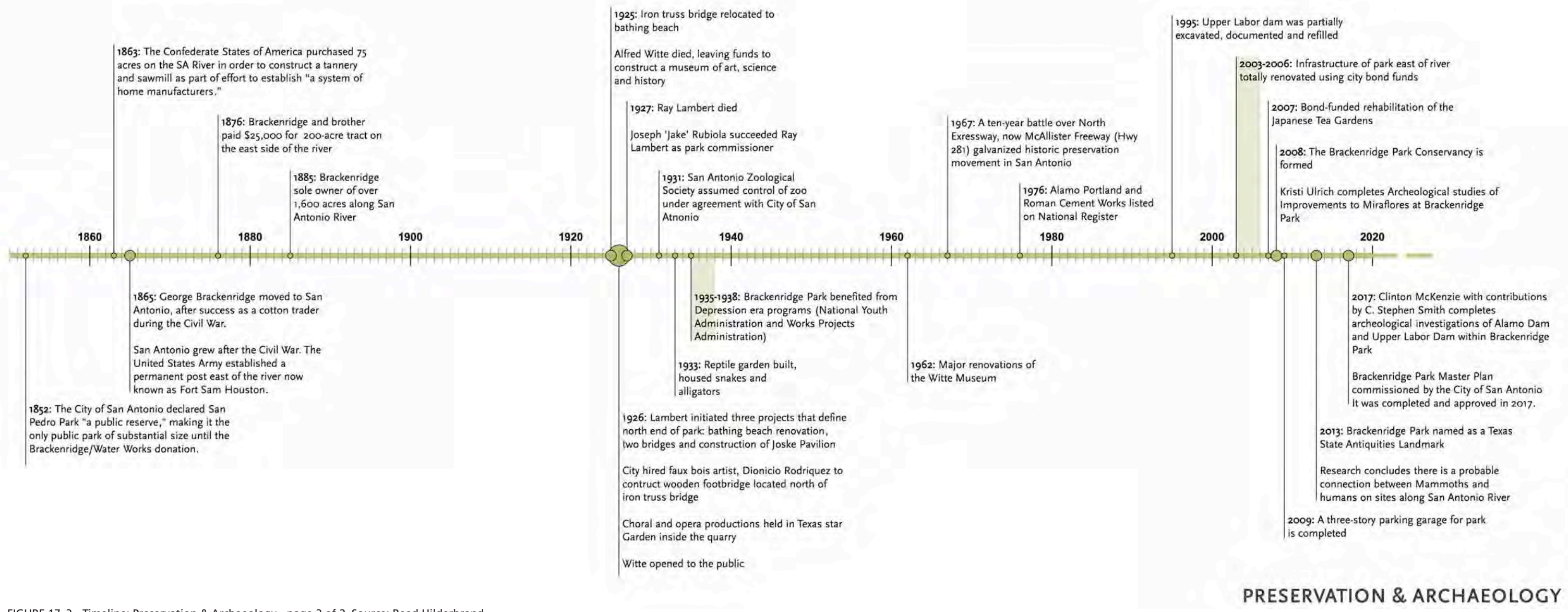
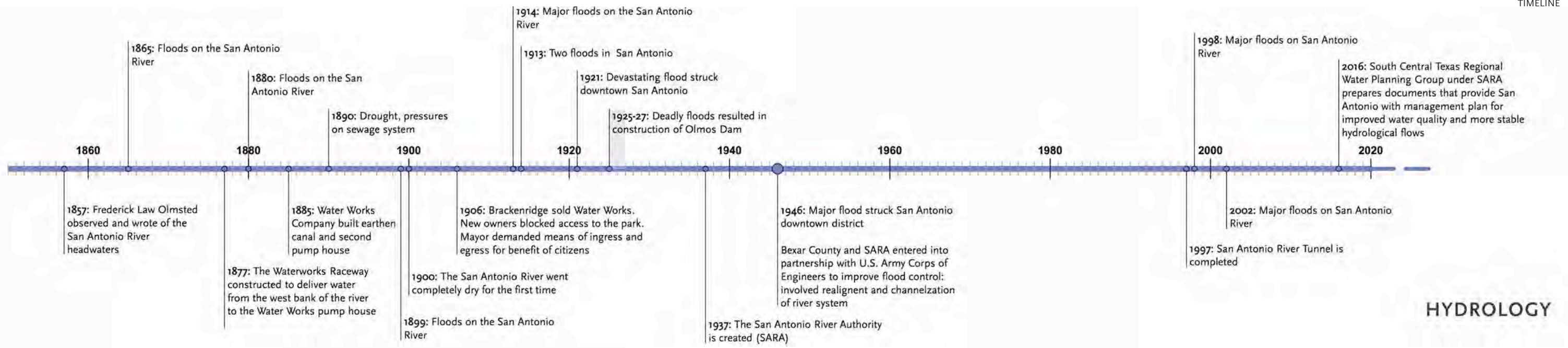
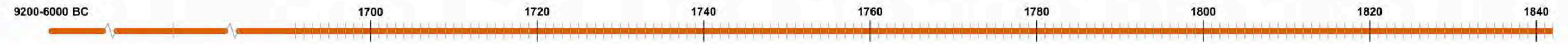
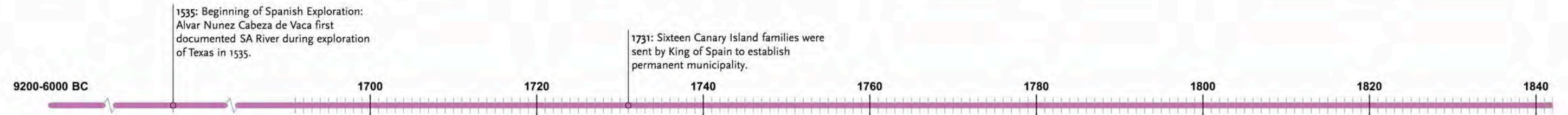


FIGURE 17-3. Timeline: Preservation & Archaeology - page 2 of 2. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

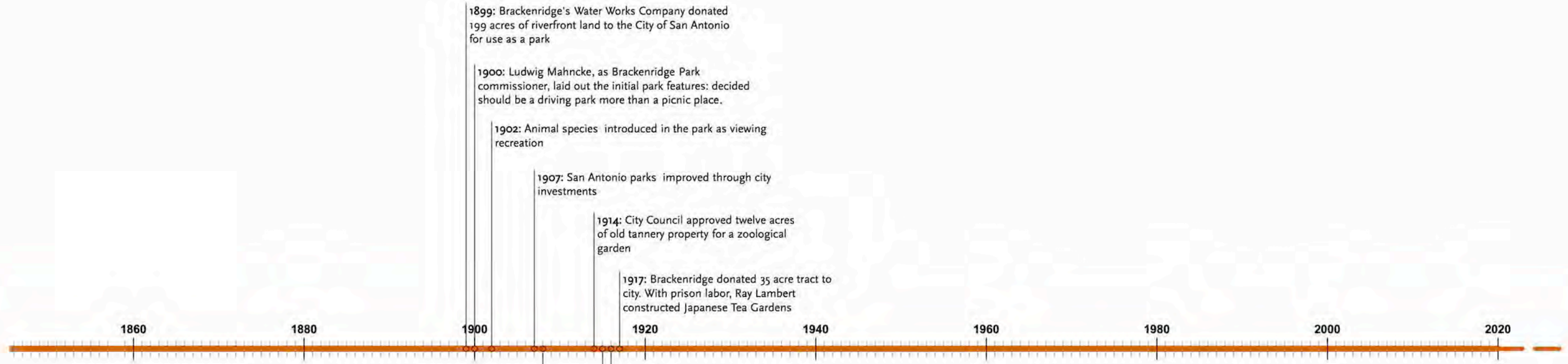


REGIONAL PARK DESIGN & MANAGEMENT

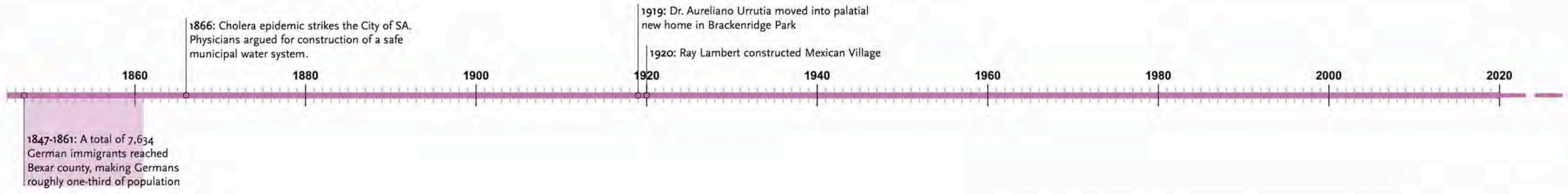


SAN ANTONIO
CULTURAL & ETHNIC IMPRINTS + POPULATION SHIFTS

FIGURE 17-4. Timeline: Cultural and Ethnic Imprints and Population Shifts - page 1 of 2.
Source: Reed Hilderbrand



REGIONAL PARK DESIGN & MANAGEMENT



SAN ANTONIO CULTURAL & ETHNIC IMPRINTS + POPULATION SHIFTS

FIGURE 17-5. Timeline: Cultural and Ethnic Imprints and Population Shifts - page 2 of 2. Source: Reed Hilderbrand

BRACKENRIDGE PARK TIMELINE

PREHISTORY AND NATIVE AMERICAN HABITATION (9200 BCE – 1690 CE)

YEAR EVENT/USE/FEATURE ANNOTATION

9200 – 6000 BCE	Prehistory Archaeology	Paleo-Indian period (late Pleistocene) ... was a time in which there was at least some degree of dependence on large game animals, including mammoth and a now-extinct species of bison. (Hester, 2)
6000 BC – 500/1000 AD	Prehistory Archaeology	“People of the Archaic Period ... hunted modern species of game including deer and rabbit, and gathered edible roots, nuts, and fruits. A multitude of types of projectile points and tools of bone, stone and shell are characteristic of this period. By far, the largest number of sites reported in the study area fall into the Archaic.” (Hester, 3)
500/1000 – 1500 AD	Prehistory Archaeology	“By the time of the Neo-American period ... a number of innovations were appearing, such as the bow and arrow, pottery, and in some parts of Texas, the beginnings of agriculture. There has been little indication that the prehistoric peoples of the San Antonio and Guadalupe River basins practiced agriculture.” (Hester, 3)
1535	Spanish Exploration + Settlement Colonial Spanish Imprints Population Shifts	Beginning of Spanish Exploration: Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca first documents the San Antonio River during his early explorations of Texas in 1535. (Simons and Hoyt, 230-31)

SPANISH EXPLORATION, MISSIONARY CONVERSION, AND ACEQUIA CONSTRUCTION
(1691 CE – 1775 CE)

YEAR	EVENT/USE/FEATURE	ANNOTATION
1691.06.13	Spanish Exploration + Settlement	San Antonio River is named: Governor Domingo Terán de los Ríos and his company camped at a rancharia on a stream called Yanaguana. They rename the stream “San Antonio” because it is Saint Anthony’s Day. Father Damian Massanet accompanied Governor Teran on this trip. (Porter, Jr., 25)
1691	Spanish Exploration + Settlement Archaeology	“On June 13, 1691, a group led by Governor Domingo Terán de los Ríos and Father Damian Massanet arrived at a Payaya Indian village named Yanaguana. Because the explorers arrived on the feast day of St. Anthony, they called the place San Antonio de Padua. The location of Yanaguana is unknown.” (NRHP, 35)
1691	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management Spanish Exploration + Settlement	Damián Massanet expedition visits the springs. (Brune, “San Antonio Springs”)
1716	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management Spanish Exploration + Settlement	Isidro Félix de Espinosa describes the springs in his diary. (Brune, “San Antonio Springs”)
1716	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	Domingo Ramon Diary notes that he accompanied Espinosa on the expedition. Diary translation in digital project archives. (Porter, Jr., 26)
1718	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management Spanish Exploration + Settlement Spanish Missions	“A permanent settlement comprised of Mission San Antonio de Valero [Alamo] and the Villa de Bexar was established in the spring of 1718 by the governor of Texas, Martín de Alarcón, and a small group of priests, soldiers, and families.” (NRHP, 35)
1719	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	Earliest acequia is constructed at San Pedro Springs. Due to flooding a few short years later, it would be moved a few years later to present-day Brackenridge Park. (Pace, Eileen, Texas Public Radio, 2013)

1719 – 1724	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management Spanish Missions	<p>“The entire month of January, 1719, was spent in the construction [of] the acequias for the presidio and mission. The first site of Valero was on the west side of the San Antonio River, but it was moved to the east to its permanent location in 1724. The Alamo Madre Acequia was started to water the fields of Valero in 1724 and took four years to complete.” (Porter, Jr., 27)</p> <p>“The first mission, Valero, named for the viceroy, was followed by four other missions: San José in 1720 and in 1731 San Juan, Concepción, and Espada.” (Porter, Jr., 27)</p>
circa 1720	Spanish Exploration + Settlement	“San Antonio was a major stop on El Camino Real, and about 1720 the King’s Highway from San Antonio to Goliad was established as ‘El Camino Real a la Bahía del Espíritu Santo.’” (Simons and Hoyt, 3)
1722	Spanish Exploration + Settlement	“The Spanish presidio, Presidio de Bejar begun in 1722 and located in what is now downtown San Antonio.” (“OHP Overview”)
1724	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management Spanish Missions	“Engineering the river to protect the community from flooding became inevitable. Flooding was a recognized hazard as early as the flood of 1724, which resulted in relocation of Mission San Antonio de Valero (The Alamo) to a safer site.” (“The People’s Waterway”)
1724	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management Spanish Missions	<p>The relocated “Alamo acequia originated on the river’s east bank just above today’s Witte Museum, ran south to water the lands of Mission San Antonio de Valero, and returned to the river below the mission. The land between the river and the ditch was controlled by the mission.” (NRHP, 35).</p> <p>“The acequia system of San Antonio was more than just an irrigation system for agricultural use. The system distributed water for all uses by all the settlers, including personal consumption and other household use. It can therefore be said to have been the first municipal water system in the United States.” (Porter, 48-49)</p>
1724 – 1744	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management Spanish Missions	“Construction of this canal was carried out from 1724 to 1744 to supply water to the Mission San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo) ... The acequia ‘originated at the...ford of the Paso de Tejas’ from a diversion dam in the San Antonio River. The ditch then followed a ‘sinuous path as it moved between the river and the low hills to the east to the south-southwest, passing through the mission grounds before returning to the San Antonio River at its largest bend.’ The structure was originally three and one-half miles long; however, later additions ‘branching near the mission and irrigating additional farmlands to the east and south, extended its total to approximately 10 miles.’ (“Mission Trails Historic Sites”)

1729	Park Precedents	“San Antonio’s oldest designated park—is located on land reserved for public use by the Spanish government in the 18th century. Only one public park in America is older—Boston Common, which dates to 1630.” (“San Pedro Springs Park,” sanantonio.gov)
1730s	Spanish Exploration + Settlement SA Park Development	“San Pedro Park, set aside by the Spanish as public land in the 1730s.” (NRHP, 47)
1731	Spanish Exploration + Settlement Canary Island Imprints Population Shifts	“Sixteen Canary Island families sent by the King of Spain to establish a permanent municipality.” (NRHP, 35) “As early as 1731, Salado Creek was recorded as the northern boundary of the surveyed pasturelands of San Antonio (then called San Fernando). It drains an area of 223 square miles – drawing from a long-relatively narrow watershed thirty-five miles long and six miles wide, beginning in the Edwards Recharge Zone of the Edwards Plateau.” (Jennings, 47)
1745	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	San Antonio de Valero Mission (The Alamo) digs ditch from springs (acequia) to the mission. (Brune, “San Antonio Springs”)
1773	Spanish Exploration + Settlement Spanish Missions Population Shifts	“The Adaesanos ... relocated to San Antonio when the Presidio de Adaes in east Texas was abandoned.” (NRHP, 35)
1773	Spanish Exploration + Settlement Spanish Missions Population Shifts	The Regulations of 1772 require soldiers, missionaries, and 500 settlers to leave Los Adaes and relocate to San Antonio. They petition to return to Los Adaes but are only allowed to go as far east as the Trinity River, where they establish Nagodoches. (Weber, 222).
1775 – 1783	American Revolutionary War	

POST-MISSIONARY PERIOD SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT (1776 CE – 1844 CE)

YEAR	EVENT/USE/FEATURE	ANNOTATION
1776 – 1778	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“By the 1760s, serious consideration was given to building an acequia to irrigate land west of the river to San Pedro Creek. The area became known as the ‘upper farm’ – formally named Nuestra Senora de los Dolores (Our Lady of Sorrows). The Upper Labor acequia branched from the river’s west bank within the park just below Hildebrand Avenue. In the late 1770s, twenty-six long, narrow parcels (suertes) running from the acequia to the river were awarded to those who financed the ditch. The northernmost parcels were retained by the city and not sold until the nineteenth century. Other land within today’s park boundaries and west of the Upper Labor acequia was retained by the city. Much of this property has remained publicly owned since the Spanish era.” (NRHP, 36)
1793	Spanish Missions	The Mission San Antonio de Valero becomes secularized. After the mission’s secularization, the fields between the mission and the San Antonio river are granted to individual owners, notably the Adaesanos. (NRHP, 35)
1800 – 1850	National Park Precedents/ Influences	“By the early nineteenth century, the United States was being traversed by tourists both foreign and American... ‘Picturesque travelers’—that is, tourists in pursuit of picturesque scenery—were so common and their accounts so varied that they were often satirized.” “The object of picturesque travel...was the discovery of the particular beauty in ‘the scenery of nature’ which could be achieved by following two basic principles. First, ‘the ingredients of landscape – trees – rocks – broken-grounds – woods – rivers – lakes – plains – vallies – mountains – and distances’ should be contrasted: light and dark, high and low, rocky and wooded, cultivated and wild... Second, these scenes should be viewed as if in a frame. The eye must be led from the foreground in an orderly fashion into the distance...” (Robertson, 189)
1810 – 1821	Mexican War of Independence	
1812 – 1815	War of 1812	

1812-1813	Mexican War of Independence Spanish occupation of the Alamo	<p>“On August 18, 1813, the royalist and republicans clashed twenty miles southwest of San Antonio at the Battle of Medina,” where the army “crushed republicans, executing and pursuing rebels even to the Louisiana border.”¹ For a year after, the royal army’s leader occupied San Antonio.” There,</p> <p>He continued to execute rebels, confiscate property, imprison the women of San Antonio, who were forced to cook for his soldiers. During this time, some prisoners were held at the Alamo. Other expeditions were attempted but none were as serious as what occurred in 1812-1813. Their cumulative effects depopulated Texas and left in in economic disarray. Moreover, the drastic decline in population set the state for the opening of Texas to foreign immigrants as a way to repopulate the region...(Winders, “San Antonio and the Alamo...”)</p>
1819.07.05	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	<p>Disastrous flood strikes “San Antonio river and ditches which destroyed much property ... with a list of drowning casualties.” (Corner, 125)</p> <p>“The flood of July 5, 1819, had been even worse than the 1921 inundation – a solid, overflowing stream roaring south, spread east and west from the walls of the former mission San Antonio de Valero all the way to San Pedro Creek. The La Villita area suddenly became popular with town folk as its elevation overlooked the flood.” (Jennings, 38)</p> <p>A period of resident frustration is capped by the flood of 1819, when the city is all but destroyed. (Porter, 83)</p>
1833/1834	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	Cholera epidemics in 1833 and 1834: the outbreak is so severe and long-lasting that the town is depopulated to such an extent that the city cannot conduct the annual census. (Porter, 83)
1833/1834	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“The epidemics in 1833 and 1834 indicate that the acequias were under stress not from population demands but from lack of maintenance and managerial control to police their cleanliness.” (Porter, 83)
1835.09.15		<p>“At midnight on the night of September 15, 1835, church bells began to ring all through the town of Bexar. They signaled the beginning of festivities marking Mexico’s independence from Spain... The commemoration temporarily lowered barriers between military and civilian, elite and poor.</p> <p>...September 16, 1835, would be the last time Independence Day was celebrated in Mexican Texas.” (Ramos, 1)</p>
1835.10.28	Spanish Missions	Battle of Concepción occurs on the grounds of Mission Concepción. It is the first major campaign of the Texas Revolution. (Barr, “Concepción, Battle of”)

¹ Winders, Bruce. “San Antonio and the Alamo in the Mexican War of Independence.” September 18, 2018. medium.com/the-alamo-messenger/san-antonio-and-the-alamo-in-the-mexican-war-of-independence-2db481c718db. Accessed November 16, 2019.

1839	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“William F. Wilson and his men camped here in 1839 [at the headwaters]. (Pierce, 1969, Quoted in “San Antonio Springs and Brackenridge Park”)
1843	City + Business Development	“The 200-acre tract [later acquired by George Brackenridge] had been acquired in Mary Maverick’s name in June 1843, shortly after her husband, Samuel A. Maverick – a signatory of the Texas Declaration of Independence – returned to Texas after being held for seven months in Mexico’s Perote prison. Mary Maverick wrote in her diary, “In June, and again in September, Mr. Maverick visited San Antonio – to attend to court and land business.” Apparently, it was during his June trip that Maverick purchased the property at auction for the high bid of \$267 and placed it in his wife’s name.” (NRHP, 40)

TEXAS STATEHOOD, GERMAN IMMIGRATION, CIVIL WAR, AND CITY DEVELOPMENT (1845 CE – 1898 CE)

YEAR EVENT/USE/FEATURE ANNOTATION

1845	Population Shifts	Texas Statehood
1845	Population Shifts	“As San Antonio grew during the nineteenth century under Spanish, Mexican, Texan, and eventually United States sovereignty, the acequias became unable to supply the water needs for the community safely and eventually became a source of pestilence and disease.” (Porter, Jr., 96)
1846 – 1848	Mexican - American War	
1846	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“The Texas Democrat described the effects of the 1849 cholera epidemic: “We are pained to hear m as we do by every arrival the most unfavorable accounts of the progress of the cholera at San Antonio. Our information is that there had been as many as thirty-five deaths in the space of twenty-four hours...It is said that at least two thousand persons have quit the city and scattered in the country in all directions. The cathedral bells are no longer permitted to toll for the departed.” (Porter Jr., 96-97)
1847 – 1861	City + Business Development German Imprints Population Shifts	“From 1847 to 1861, a total of 7,634 German immigrants reached Bexar, and after this initial period of settlement, Germans made up roughly one-third of the population of the county.” (Benjamin)

1848	City + Business Development	Jean Baptiste (J.B.) Lacoste immigrates to Texas, in 1848, and subsequently settles in Mexico, where his various enterprises include the production of ice. He returns to San Antonio after the fall of Emperor Maximilian and becomes a well-respected businessman. (NRHP, 40)
1849	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	William Jennings Worth camps around the springs in San Antonio. The encampment occurs during a cholera epidemic in which Worth and 600 other people die. “The campsite came to be known as ‘Worth’s Spring’, possibly referring to what many believe is the large spring at the northeast end of Olmos Dam.” (“San Antonio Spring and Brackenridge Park”)
1850s	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“The portion of the ‘Adasanos farm’ lying within today’s Brackenridge Park was granted to Vicente Flores and Jose Antonio de la Garza. The Flores family’s property at the north end of the park included the dam and head gate of the Alamo acequia where the ditch was diverted from the San Antonio River. To the south, the de la Garza property included a return or waste channel of the Alamo acequia that join the river below the park. Much of the Flores and de la Garza land remained family-owned until the middle of the nineteenth century.” (NHRP, 35. See also footnote 21 and 22 of same page)
1850s	National Park Precedents/ Influences Roads/Paths	“American landscape architects such as Frederick Law Olmsted planned the development of parks that would preserve, reveal, and often enhance the existing scenic characteristics of a place by regrading, planting, and otherwise ‘improving’ as necessary to create calculated visual compositions. The construction of a refined system of roads and paths, as well as places to congregate and promenade, all were combined in a single work of landscape art: the public park.” (Carr, 5)
1852	City + Business Development	The City of San Antonio first resurveys the city lands, and then begins selling land to meet city fiscal needs. (NRHP, 36)
1852	SA Park Development	The City of San Antonio declares the springs in San Pedro Park “a public reserve.” (NRHP, 47). San Pedro remains the only public park of any substantial size until the Brackenridge/Water Works donation.
1852	City + Business Development	A tract south of the quarry consisting of nineteen acres is sold to R.E. Clements in 1852. (NRHP, 37)
1852	City + Business Development Agriculture	Laszlo Ujhazi flees Hungary in the Revolution of 1848-1849. He purchases land during the 1852 land sale, and his “Sirmezo farm occupied much of today’s Olmos Basin north of the river’s headwaters.” (NRHP, 44)

1852	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“Old Sweet Homestead” [Sweet being the name of the owner, city alderman James Sweet] is constructed at Head of the Rivers. (Bennett)
1852/1859	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“The 1852 land sale included property immediately to the north and east, where springs forming the San Antonio River were located. The ‘head of the river,’ as it came to be called, was purchased by city alderman James Sweet in three transactions that took place in 1852 and 1859.” (NRHP, 36)
1852	SA Park Development	“In 1852 he City Council officially established a reserve around the springs and then leased the area to John Jacob Duerler who built pavilions where visitors enjoyed food, drink and entertainment.” (“San Pedro Springs Park”)
1856	City + Business Development Agriculture	“The de la Garza family sold two suertes of their property to noted horticulturalist Francois Guilbeau in 1856. Guilbeau’s many enterprises included wine production and he was credited with shipping mustang grape vine cuttings to Europe when phylloxera devastated the wine industry there in the 1870s. It is possible that Guilbeau used this riverfront property for agriculture.” (NRHP, 37)
1857	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	<p>“The whole river gushes up in one sparkling burst from the earth...The effect is overpowering. It is beyond your possible conceptions of a spring.” (Olmsted, “A Journey Through Texas”)</p> <p>From the article: “This great spring was once a fountain spring rising up to twenty feet in the air. It joins Comal Springs, San Marcos Springs, and Barton Springs as one of the four fountain springs of Texas. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest these same four fountain springs may be depicted in a rock wall painting, known as the White Shaman Panel in the Lower Pecos, dating back some 4,000 years ago.” (University of the Incarnate Word Website, “History”)</p>
1858	National Park Precedents/ Influences Roads/Paths	<p>“The term parkway... originated in Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1699 and was initially applied to roads with wide, grassy central medians. The concept was popularized by the development of Central Park, New York, in 1858 by the pioneer landscape architects Frederick Olmsted and Calvert Vaux.” (Lay, 314)</p> <p>“At Central Park, therefore, the lion’s share of the construction budget was spent on elaborate systems of carriage drives, pedestrian paths, and bridle trails, not new buildings.” (Carr, 22)</p>
1859	City + Business Development	“Sweet built a house on the property [at Head of the River] and then sold this land to George W. Barnes in August 1859.” (NRHP, 36)

1859	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	<p>Traveler Richard Everett provides the following account of the headwaters of the San Antonio Springs and the San Pedro Springs:</p> <p>“Two rivers wind through the city [San Antonio], flowing from the living springs only a short distance beyond the suburbs. One, the San Antonio, boils in a vast volume from a rocky basin, which, environed by mossy stones and overhanging foliage, seems devised for the especial dwelling-place of nymphs and naiads. The other, the San Pedro, runs from a little pond, formed by the outgushing of five sparkling springs, which bear the same name. This miniature lake, embowered in a grove of stately elm and pecan trees, is one of the most beautiful natural sheets of pure water in the Union – so clear, that even the delicate roots of the water-lilies and the smallest pebbles may be distinctly seen.” (Eckhardt, The Edwards Aquifer Website, “San Antonio Springs)</p>
1861 – 1865	American Civil War	
1863	City + Business Development	<p>John H. Kampmann purchases the R.E. Clements tract of nineteen acres in 1863. He constructs a small stone building there, still extant, but in ruins. Because of the structure’s size and the maintenance of a large mansion in the city proper, it is not believed that Kampmann ever lived in the house, but instead used it for workers or rented it to a family. (NRHP, 36)</p>
1863	<p>City + Business Development</p> <p>Tannery</p> <p>Civil War and Enslaved Labor</p>	<p>The Confederate States of America successfully settles a lawsuit between Pedro Flores and the city of San Antonio and purchases 75 acres on the SA River in order to construct a tannery and sawmill – part of their effort to establish “a system of home manufacturers.” Construction is underway in 1863 using rock quarried from “No. 24 and 25 quarries at no charge for constructing their works at the head of the San Antonio River.” (NRHP, 37-38)</p>
1863	City + Business Development	<p>Jacob Duerler, local landscape gardener who had leased San Pedro Springs Park, “created five fish ponds west of the lake, planted a flower garden, and constructed a speakers’ stand and exhibition building with ballroom and bar. Duerler also...opened a small zoo” at the site. (“San Pedro Springs Park”)</p>
1865	SA Property + Business Development	<p>George Brackenridge moves to San Antonio in late 1865, after experiencing success as a cotton trader during the Civil War. His acquaintances include both statewide and national political and business leaders. (NHRP, 39)</p>

1865	National Park Precedents/ Influences Roads/Paths	“The circuit drive would be complemented by a system of pedestrian paths leading to ‘points of view accessible only by foot.’... This formula for the careful, minimal development of Yosemite Valley was based on the formal and theoretical precedents of the landscape park, a genre Olmsted had already exploited with great success to accommodate large numbers of tourists seeking picturesque scenery in a public setting.” (Carr, 29)
1865	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	Floods on the San Antonio River. (“The People’s Waterway”)
1865 post	City + Business Development Population Shifts	“San Antonio continued to grow and prosper in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Many new residents moved to the city after the Civil War and the United States Army established a permanent post east of the river on a rise known locally as Rattlesnake Hill; this post is now known as Fort Sam Houston.” (NRHP, 39)
1860s late	City + Business Development	Helen Ujhazi Madarasz moved to San Antonio and “was hired as bookkeeper at George Brackenridge’s First National Bank, and the mother and son [Ladislaus] became close friends with Brackenridge and his sister, Elanor.” (NRHP, 44)
1866	City + Business Development	“In early 1866, Brackenridge established the San Antonio National Bank, which became the foundation of his extensive business holdings.” (NRHP, 39)
1866	City + Business Development	“Lacoste established the San Antonio Ice Company in 1866.” (NRHP 40-41) Lacoste designed water works for Kansas City, KS and Austin, TX. (NRHP, 41)
1866	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management Population Shifts	Cholera epidemic strikes the City of SA. “Local physicians argued for construction of a safe municipal water system. Progress on this issue was slowed by Reconstruction politics (NRHP, 8) The need for a better system of water than the acequias was obvious to the San Antonio Board of Health, which on September 30, 1866, issued recommendations to the city about control of the disease’s source, no doubt standing water and floating filth in the irrigation ditches.” (Porter, Jr., 97)
1866	African American Imprints Juneteenth	Juneteenth is particularly unique to Texas, marking the formal emancipation declaration in the state. African Americans began annual celebrations in 1866 in public parks, plazas and thoroughfares on, and around, June 19. (Everett L. Fly, Landscape Architect, 2019)

1867	City + Business Development Tannery	The city of San Antonio begins negotiations for purchase the 75-acre tannery tract from the Freedman's Bureau. (NRHP, 8)
1868	National Park Precedents/ Influences Roads/Paths	"Brooklyn park proposal by Olmsted and Vaux led to the construction of the Ocean and Eastern parkways (Patton 1986). Consequently, a number of fine landscaped parkways were built in New York and Washington in the period between the world wars. They were effectively linear parks containing a road built for noncommercial traffic. In many ways the parkways were similar to current-day freeways, but were usually designed for lower speeds and thus had less generous alignments and permitted side access to the roadway." (Lay, 314)
1868.05	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management Tannery	Storm devastates the City of SA, badly damaging the tannery works, now owned by the federal government. (NRHP, 38)
1869	City + Business Development	"[George] Barnes then sold it [the land] to Isabella Brackenridge, mother of George W. Brackenridge, in September 1869." (NRHP, 36)
1869	City + Business Development	"Three years later [from 1866], he purchased property with an antebellum home ["Old Sweet Homestead" mentioned in 1852 entry] at the head of the San Antonio River. Because the word "bracken" was the Scottish word for "fern," Brackenridge named his new home "Fernridge." (NRHP, 39)
1869	City + Business Development	The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word come to San Antonio directly from France to provide support in that years' cholera epidemic. They establish what would become Santa Rosa Hospital (today Christus Santa Rosa). (Bennett)
1850 – 1870	City + Business Development	"San Antonio grew from 3,488 to 12,256 residents between 1850 and 1870. The demands of this growing population ultimately led to the introduction of industrial and commercial uses into the rural landscape below the river's headwaters. This process began in the early 1850s and accelerated during and after the Civil War." (NRHP, 36).
1870.07	Archaeology Tannery	City finally completes negotiations on the purchase of the tannery works land and purchased the land for \$4,500. "There have been no archaeological excavations to document the tannery." (NRHP, 38)
1872	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	The City tries but fails to acquire the springs that feed the river and makes no progress in establishing a public water system. "It was in this context that George Brackenridge began to purchase additional riverfront land." (NRHP, 40)

1874	City + Business Development Tannery	City council votes to sell 47 acres of the tannery tract, retaining 28 acres under city ownership. (NRHP, 38)
1875.01	City + Business Development Tannery	City holds auction to sell the tannery tract lands. “The City retained the property at the junction of the Upper Labor Ditch and river that included the greatest amount of river frontage as well as some springs. Six of the tannery tract lots were acquired by prominent local individuals and firms: J.H. Kampmann (Lots 1,3, and4, totaling 16.65 acres); F. Groos and Company (Lots 2 and 5, totaling 9.3 acres; and Lockwood and Manning (Lot 8, totaling 3.33 acres). Most significantly, prominent banker George W. Brackenridge purchased four of the five uppermost lots – Lots 6,7,9, and 10, totaling seventeen acres.” (NRHP, 38-39)
1875	City + Business Development Tannery	“George Brackenridge acquired four of the upper five lots in the tannery track adjoining and west of the river in 1875.” (NRHP, 40)
1876.01	City + Business Development Agriculture	Mary Maverick signs a lease for the 200-acre tract that Brackenridge buys six months later. “The lessee, M.M. Morales, was to maintain the irrigation ditches and protect the pecan, walnut, oak, and elm trees. Mr. Morales was allowed to cultivate and harvest crops in addition to the sugar cane that was already growing on the property.” (NRHP, 40)
1876	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management City + Business Development	“Brackenridge made his most significant purchase in June 1876, when he and his brother paid \$25,000 to Mary A. Maverick for a wooded 200-acre tract on the east side of the river that ran from the head gate of the Alamo acequia south to the property of Francois Guilbeau. The land was bounded on both the west and north by the river and on the east by the Alamo acequia.” (NRHP, 40) (Cross-reference this purchase with Maverick 1843)
1877	City + Business Development	“After years of planning, a rail connection was finally completed in 1877. (NRHP, 39)
1877	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“The Waterworks Raceway is a straight, earthen ditch with sloping sides constructed to deliver water from the west bank of the river to the Water Works pump house...The raceway was designed with a nine foot fall that provided power to drive turbines and pumps” (NRHP, 10)

1877.04.03	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	<p>“The council approved a contract to construct the municipal water system. (NRHP, 41)</p> <p>“Ferdinand Herff pressed for a sanitary system of water and discontinuance of use of shallow water wells and the acequias for domestic water supply. The stage was now set for a municipal water system that would guarantee pure water for the people to avoid disease. Yet according to local historian Lewis F. Fisher, “it was not sanitation but he need for more water for fighting fires that in 1877 finally prompted the city to change directions and sign up with the new San Antonio Water Works Company, formed by immigrant Frenchman Jean Baptiste LaCoste.” (Porter, Jr., 98)</p>
1878.07.05	City + Business Development Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	<p>“The water works was in operation by July 5, 1878, when it was accepted by the City Council. Five months before the water works was completed, the City Council voted to extend Avenue C from Grand Avenue north to the head of the river, a distance of approximately three miles, and to name the new street River Avenue. This straight, direct route to downtown on the east side of the river was an improvement over the many twists and curves of Jones Avenue and Rock Quarry Road, both to the west of the river.” (NRHP, 41)</p>
1878	City + Business Development	<p>“In 1878, he [Brackenridge] sold Lots 6 and 7 to local gardener Frank Gutzeit.” (NRHP, 44) Brackenridge reserved “all water power and right of riparian proprietor.”</p>
1878	City + Business Development	<p>“Brackenridge acquired Francois Guilbeau’s thirty-acre parcel in 1878.” (NRHP, 42)</p>
1879	Geology	<p>William Loyd, an Englishman, visits San Antonio on a hunting trip, and identifies a blue argillaceous limestone which he believes to be cement rock. He works with George H. Kalteyer, the city’s leading druggist, and W.R. Freeman, the engineer who designed J.B. Lacoste’s water system, to analyze the material. Kalteyer had trained in chemistry in his native Germany and assisted his mentor, German scientist Carl Remigius Fresenius, in studying cements for the German government. Further testing determined the material to be “natural cement rock” containing the proportion of lime and clay needed to manufacture Portland cement. (NRHP, 43)</p>
1878	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	<p>“Beginning in 1878, the San Antonio Water Works Company, was granted exclusive responsibility for the sharing and management of the municipal water resource under the skittish and inconsistent direction of various city councils.” (Porter, Jr. 109)</p>

1879 – 1880	City + Business Development Horticulture	<p>“The Madarasz Place is located opposite Maverick’s Grove on the west side of the river near the rock quarries.” [This must have been a previous home, as the later acreage purchased from Brackenridge was on the east side of the river.] (NRHP, 44)</p> <p>“Ladislaus Madarasz was interested in horticulture, and in 1879-1880, established Ilka Nursery.” (NRHP, 44)</p>
1880	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	Floods on the San Antonio River. (“The People’s Waterway”)
1880.01.15	City + Business Development	“George Kalteyer, William Loyd, and other organized the Alamo Portland and Roman Cement Company (later called Alamo Cement Company.” (NRHP, 43)
1880	City + Business Development Tannery Quarry	“The City did not sell the rocky area west of the river and Upper Labor ditch, which was a source of high-quality, hard limestone. Stone was needed to sustain the city’s building boom, and the City Council chose to lease the quarry to private interests. The quarry operated on a small scale until 1880, when the Alamo Roman and Portland Cement Company lease the area for a major plant.” (NRHP, 36-37)
1881	City + Business Development Tannery	Brackenridge purchases the fifth of the tannery lots in 1881. (NRHP, 40)
1882/1883	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	Brackenridge sells property: “Lots 8, 9, and 10 were sold to Helen Madarasz.” Brackenridge reserved “all water power and right of riparian proprietor.” (NRHP, 44)
1883	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“George Brackenridge did not become a supporter of the water works concept until construction was underway. He observed the project as it progressed and decided to negotiate with Lacoste to lay waterlines to Fernridge for household and irrigation use. Lacoste was given permission to use Brackenridge’s telegraph poles to extend a line from the pump house to the water works’ office in the city. Brackenridge also accepted stock in the San Antonio Water Works in exchange for loans to Lacoste. He soon held controlling interest, and by 1883, he had acquired full ownership of the water works.” (NRHP, 42)
1883	Historic Preservation	“In 1883, the Alamo had become the first landmark west of the Mississippi River purchased by a public body and saved in the nation’s growing historic preservation movement.” (Fisher, 2016, 1)

1885	City + Business Development	“The Brackenridge family’s acquisition of the Mavericks’ property gave them control of approximately one-and-one-half mile of frontage on the river’s east bank. When John Brackenridge conveyed his interest in this land and 1,400 acres north of Fernridge to his brother in 1885, George Brackenridge became the sole owner of over 1,600 acres of land along the San Antonio River and its tributary, Olmos Creek.” (NRHP, 40)
1885	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	<p>George Brackenridge takes ownership of the San Antonio Water Works, originally capitalized at \$90,000, which proved inadequate to keep up with needed expansion. He reorganizes the firm as the Water Works Company and increases the capitalization to \$500,000. (NRHP, 42)</p> <p>The new Water Works Company begins a rapid expansion of the system’s infrastructure. Key to this expansion is Brackenridge’s acquisition of the remaining forty-five acres between the river and River Avenue, north of today’s Josephine Street. (NRHP, 42)</p>
1885	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	Brackenridge purchases the “fifteen-acre de la Garza family tract in late 1885.” With this purchase he controls the land and water rights of 250 acres between the San Antonio River and the Alamo acequia.” (NRHP, 42)
1885	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	Brackenridge constructs an earthen canal and a second pump house. “The earthen canal left the river at a bend below the original pump house and culminated at the new pump house to the south. In addition, the old river channel that once ran east of the building was rerouted to the west. The dry channel remains.” (NHRP, 42)
1886	Park Management	The City of San Antonio hires a “park keeper.” (NRHP, 47)
1886	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“Mill Race or Second Waterworks Canal, which is associated with the expansion of the city’s water system in 1886.” (NRHP, 34)
1886	City + Business Development	George W. Brackenridge constructs three-story Victorian mansion next to ‘Old Sweet Homestead,’ and renames the villa complex ‘Fernridge.’ (Bennett)
1890	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“San Antonio’s population in 1890 numbered 37,673 – an increase of 83% since 1880. While there had been extremely wet years during the 1880s, there had also been years of low rainfall. The San Antonio River springs ceased flowing in times of drought, drying up the river, creeks and shallow wells, and placing the city’s water supply in jeopardy. ...Additional water was needed to operate a much-needed sewage system. “(NRHP, 45)
1890	Park Management	San Antonio “funded the jobs of park inspector and park commission, but staffing fluctuated with the unstable economy of the 1890s.” (See 1893) (NRHP, 47)

1890	City + Business Development	Massive iron truss bridge is constructed across the San Antonio River at St. Mary Street. (NRHP, 63). This bridge is later moved to Brackenridge Park in 1925.
1891	City + Business Development	Helen Madarasz constructs a house on her acreage where she and her son run the Ilka Nursery. (NRHP, 44)
1891.03.26	Park Precedents/ Influences	Jochi Talimimis of Japan “wishes to exhibit a Japanese tea garden at the [Columbia World’s Fair in Chicago] exposition and comes backed by \$60,000 to carry out the project. His application for space is being considered.” (Austin American-Statesman)
1892.05.11	African American Imprints Juneteenth	May 11, 1892, San Antonio Daily Light (newspaper) notes that “...colored people will probably hold Emancipation celebration in Brackenridge Park”. It is not clear whether the event took place at the park, but the location was considered. (Everett L. Fly, Landscape Architect, 2019)
1893	Park Management	“The depression that occurred in the United States in 1893 was the worst in the nation’s history... In April 1893 the U.S. Treasury’s gold reserves fell below \$100 million, setting off a financial panic as investors, fearing that the country would be forced to abandon the gold standard scrambled to sell off assets and convert them to gold... The economy spent the next four years mired in the worst depression anyone had ever known.” (“Panic of 1893”)
1893.06.30	Park Precedents/ Influences	“The Japanese exhibits are attracting a great deal of attention and are among the finest in the whole [Columbia World’s Fair] exposition. The Japanese tea garden is a most pleasant place to rest, and the tea they give is delightful. There are three departments to the garden. ... The Japanese temple of Hooden is a wonderful structure, situated on the Wooded Island, surrounded by the Japanese rose garden...” (Argonia Clipper, Argonia, KS)
1894	Historic Preservation	National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty (Great Britain)
1897	City + Business Development	Brackenridge sells the houses and land at Head-of-the-River in 1897 to the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. It had always been a political flashpoint within the City of San Antonio. (Bennett) Brackenridge’s ownership did not create this “political flashpoint.” Rather, it was the purchase from the city by former alderman James Sweet from the city in the 1850s that, probably rightfully, riled up so many people. (Lewis Fisher, Historian, 2019)
1897	Park Management	The parks commissioner job is abolished, probably due to funding issues. (NRHP, 47)

1897	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	Headwaters springs first go dry during drought of 1897 – 1899 (Lewis Fisher, Historian, 2019)
1898	Spanish – American War	

THE BRACKENRIDGE VISION: A DRIVING WOODLAND PARK (1899 CE – 1914 CE)

YEAR EVENT/USE/FEATURE ANNOTATION

1899.12.04	City + Business Development Park Development	“George Brackenridge’s Water Works Company donated 199 acres of riverfront land to the City of San Antonio for use as park; the City Council accepted the first on December 4, 1899.” (NRHP 46). Several restrictions were involved in the donation, with the most notable restriction related “the bequest was restricted by its prohibition of the sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages in the park.” (NRHP 47). Footnote 73 on page 47 states that: “The park deed contained a clause stating that violation of the provision against alcohol or use of the property for non-park purposes would result in reversion to the State of Texas for the benefit of the University of Texas.” (NRHP, 47).
1899 – 1900	Park Development Regional Vernacular	Ludwig Mahncke, as Brackenridge Park commissioner, laid out the initial park features. (NRHP, 7)
1900	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	“At the end of the first full year of operation, it was reported that ‘the woods and winding walks and driveways were full of people, some afoot, some [on] horseback, and lots of them in vehicles of different kinds.’” (NRHP, 49)
1900	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	The San Antonio River goes completely dry for the first time. (Eckhardt, Edwards Aquifer Website, “San Antonio Springs”) <p>Note: The headwaters went dry during the drought of 1897– 99, came back with heavy rain in January 1900, then again went dry that summer. But the river downstream received some water throughout those years by post-use runoff from artesian wells pumped by the two breweries upstream. (Fisher, American Venice, 23; from Lewis Fisher, Historian, 2019)</p>

1900	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	“Brackenridge Park was quite modest in comparison with other rural parks in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. Improvements were limited to winding roads, and there were no imposing entryways, grand fountains, towering sculptures, or manicured gardens. Visitors had only limited access to the park across land still owned by the Water Works Company.” (NRHP, 48)
1900	African American Imprints Cyclists	A local bicycle club, the Alamo Wheelmen, races in Brackenridge Park and hosted guest cyclists. It is believed that the club hosted the famous African American racer Major Taylor and Otto Zeizler the “California Demon.” It is not clear when the Jockey Club closed, but it was likely soon after the George Brackenridge’s company donated 199 acres of land that included the site to the city in 1899. (NRHP, 8) Note: The “Alamo Wheelmen” bicycle club held races in the park before 1900. At least once the events included the world champion, Major Taylor. Taylor was African American and received the “world champion” title by consistently defeating riders from Europe and the United States. (Everett L. Fly, Landscape Architect, 2019)
1901.02.25	Park Opening	“Brackenridge Park, just inside the north edge of the city limits... is also one of the most beautiful natural parks to be found anywhere. It is traversed by a winding river [a]nd numerous ditches and with nice macadam driveways under the majestic oak, stately elm or everlasting pecan, it is a recreation spot fit for the Gods. Its beauty is beyond description and the greatest effort of the writer would but feebly portray its wonders. It has just been opened to the public.” (“San Antonio’s Lovely Breathing Spots,” El Paso Herald, p. 1)
1901	Park Management	The parks commissioner job is reinstated, and Ludwig Mahncke was appointed to that position. (NRHP, 47)
1901.04.01	Park Events	“Col. E. H. Jenkins, president of the San Antonio Traction company, will not have the people hunger for recreation and entertainment this summer. He has leased Prof. Carl Beck’s military band...and will give concerts at Muth’s garden every Thursday night... Brackenridge Park will come next... Brackenridge contains ninety-nine acres on the head of the San Antonio river and is acknowledged the most beautiful natural park in the state.” (“The San Antonio Street Railway Will Provide Free Recreation For The People,” El Paso Herald, 2)

1901.04.13	Park Precedents/ Influences	“The California State Floral Society held its regular monthly meeting yesterday at the Japanese tea garden in Golden Gate Park. With one of the thatch-roofed tea houses for a meeting place, white and red azaleas and blue rhododendrons blooming about them, quaint Japanese houses nestling amid rare and beautiful shrubs and trees and ferns, and goldfish flashing in the pools to surfeit the eye...” (The San Francisco Call)
1901	Park Development City + Business Development Tourism Regional Vernacular Madarasz Park	“The old Ilka Nursery property, immediately across the river from the water works, was still owned by Helen Madarasz’s estate when the City accepted the Brackenridge bequest in 1899. George Brackenridge’s prohibition of alcohol consumption might have encouraged local brewery owner, Otto Koehler, to purchase the Madarasz property for his own private park. In 1901, Koehler’s San Antonio Brewing Company, producer of Pearl beer, acquired the property and named it Madarasz Family Park, which was open to the public for ‘picnics and jollifications.’ Park custodian L. Dethleffesen invited visitors: ‘Come, bring; your family and friends to spend a pleasant day. Everything in a first-class style. Sandwiches, ice cream, cream cheese, milk of all descriptions and the famous Triple XXX Pearl Beer and soda water and cigars always on hand.’ The stone bridge that spanned the river linking the two parks became known as the Madarasz-Brackenridge Park Bridge.” (NRHP, 50)
1901.04.01	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	“THE SAN ANTONIO STREET RAILWAY WILL PROVIDE FREE RECREATION FOR THE PEOPLE. Special to The Herald. SAN ANTONIO, Tex., April 1. – Col. E. H. Jenkins, president of the San Antonio Traction company, will not have the people hunger for recreation and entertainment this summer. He has leased Prof. Carl Beck’s military band, the leading organization of the kind in the city, and will give concerts at Muth’s garden every Thursday night beginning April 11 and at one of the various parks every Sunday afternoon. The first was given yesterday in San Pedro Springs park. Brackenridge park will come next, and the Hot Sulphur wells will not be forgotten. Brackenridge park contains ninety-nine acres on the head of the San Antonio river and is acknowledged the most beautiful natural park in the state.” (El Paso Herald 01 Apr 1901, Mon, 2)
1902	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“The basic question of public or private ownership of the water system was decided in 1902; the water system would become owned and operated by the city exclusively. There would be no more threats of the city competing with the water company by building their own system or taking the system via their condemnation of rights under eminent domain.” (Porter, Jr.)

1902	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	“It was decided that the park ‘should be a driving park more than a picnic place.’ To this end, Mahncke designed and opened several miles of driveways that all converged on the river at the north end of the park where he hoped to build an area for bank performances. The newspaper noted: ‘These roads have been opened through the dense forest upon a plan to give the most pleasure and variety of scenery.’ Roads were constructed with ‘care being taken not to disturb the throne of a single monarch of the forest.’” (NRHP, 48)
1902	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	“Mahncke had established a fenced deer preserve in the park and was building enclosures for buffalo and elk. These animals, pastured along River Avenue near today’s Lions Field Clubhouse, were fed with hay raised in the park.” (NRHP, 49) Animal species are introduced in the park as a form of viewing recreation.
1902.10.23	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	“Texas Notes. A number of buffaloes and Elks from the Goodnight ranch in the Panhandle have been received at San Antonio for the Brackenridge park.” (The Brownsville Herald (Brownsville, Texas), 23 Oct 1902, Thu, 2)
1903	Tannery African American Imprints	A 1903 newspaper article indicates that “...cut stones taken from the walls of the Confederate tannery...” were used to build the Freedmen’s colored school located at the corner of Convent and San Antonio River.” (Everett L. Fly, Landscape Architect, 2019) Note: Documentation exists on this Freedmen’s school which became known as “Rincon,” and eventually “Riverside.” National Archive documentation exists indicating that black slave labor was used as labor in the tannery by military impressment (forced labor) during the Civil War. (Everett L. Fly, Landscape Architect, 2019)
1903.05.21	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	“BLACK BASS ARE RECEIVED. Twelve Thousand Have Been Provided for San Antonio. Special to The Statesman. San Antonio, Tex., May 20. Twelve thousand young black bass were received here today from the vernment hatchery at San Marcos. Eleven thousand will be placed in the San Antonio river at Brackenridge park and 1000 will be placed in the West End lake, an immense body of water in the western suburbs of the city.” (Austin American-Stateman, 21 May 1903, Thurs, 5)

1903.05.21	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	“AN ELK BORN IN SAN ANTONIO. It Came to One of the Herd in the Park of the Alamo City. Special to The Statesman. San Antonio, Tex., May 20. – The first elk ever born in San Antonio came into the world at Brackenridge park last night among the herd of elks placed there by Park Commissioner Ludwig Mahncke, who is as proud of the newcomer as a boy is of his first pair of boots. The young elk appears to be a healthy youngster and bids fair to thrive.” (Austin American-Stateman, 21 May 1903, Thurs, 5)
1905	Park Development	With the death of Kampmann and his wife, their heirs sell the Kampmann property back to the city in two transactions. “The 1905 deed included land west of the house extending to Shook Avenue, together with a 25-foot wide strip leading to the house as a ‘public thoroughfare.’ (NRHP 37)
1905.06.30	Park Development Regional Vernacular	A June 30, 1905 San Antonio Express article reports on a grand park and boulevard system that would “contain 800 acres and provide fifty miles of drives,” as well as containing a new park: “If the plans of George W. Brackenridge and some of his associates succeed, San Antonio before many months will have one of the finest park and boulevard systems in the United States...” (San Antonio Express, 1905)
1905.08.12	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	“The River avenue line reaches a magnificent rural hotel and passes alongside Brackenridge park, which contains two hundred acres of nature and her most beautiful products trained in systematic order by the hand of man. The national parks exceed it only in extent and the monarchs of the plain and forest are preserved in a heard (sic) each of buffalo, elk and deer.” (SAN ANTONIO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY AND SAN ANTONIO TRACTION COMPANY. San Antonio Gazette, 12 Aug 1905, Sat., 7). This article is very lengthy and discusses other connections throughout the city.
1905.08.12	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	“POINT OF INTEREST. [Included in the article are most of the attractions of the city]. “Maverick park, Brackenridge park, Convent of the Incarnate Word, Alamo Heights, Davy Crockett’s home, head of river and palisades – Take River avenue.” (San Antonio Gazette, 12 Aug 1905, Sat., 11)
1905.06	Politics/Civic Affairs	Mayor Callaghan won re-election. (NRHP, 51)

1906	National Park Precedents/ Influences	The Reform Park movement grows out of trends that developed in the late-nineteenth century in social ideas about the health of the average citizen... While early park programming involved passive and unstructured activities, the dawn of a new century brings new ideas about how parks should be used and organized. Central to this change in perspective is the idea that organized activities, planned by a recreational specialist, are the most effective means to bring exercise and fresh air to the masses... In 1906, the Playground Association of American is formed, and it becomes the leading force in programming theory for urban parks. (Cranz, 66)
1906	City + Business Development	Between 1883 and 1906, George Brackenridge serves “as president of the Water Works and [was] closely involved with its day-to-day operation until he sold the company in 1906.” (NRHP, 42)
1906.03	City + Business Development	Brackenridge sells the Water Works to George J. Kobusch, a capitalist from St. Louis, Missouri and investors for over \$500,000. The new owners rename the company the San Antonio Water Supply Company and block access to the park. “Mayor Callaghan informed the City Council that ‘it was necessary for the City to own for the benefit and pleasure of its citizens a means of ingress and egress.’” (NRHP, 50)
1906	Park Development Tourism	“By early 1906, there were six buffalo, nineteen elk, forty-three deer, four goats, one sheep, four swans, three geese, forty-nine peafowls, thirteen white turkeys, twelve bronze turkeys, two silver pheasants, two Mexican pheasants, and three guineas.” (NRHP, 49)
1906.01	Park Management	Ludwig Mahncke resigns as parks commissioner after a disagreement with the Mayor Callaghan, who took office in 1905. (NRHP, 47)
1906.03	Park Management	Two months after Mahncke resigned as parks commissioner, he died from pneumonia. (NRHP, 49)
1906.10.20	Park Development Tourism	“Halliday=Sweet Co. PARK GROVE. Everything is lovely and looking better from day to day in our beautiful addition covered with grand and stately trees, fronting magnificent Brackenridge park and only two blocks from Mahncke park on River avenue... (San Antonio Gazette, 20 Oct 1906, Sat., 11)
1906.10.22	Park Management	It appears with the death of Mahncke, that the city has a new park commissioner, Henry Steingruber. (Austin American-Statesman (Austin, Texas) – 22 Oct 1906, Mon – Page 7) 1907

1906.10.22	Tourism	“Elk and Deer Numerous. San Antonio, Oct. 21. – The report of the park commissioner, Henry Steingruber, made to Mayor Callaghan shows that this city is possessed of a very large herd of elk and deer and that they can be raised successfully in captivity. The elk number twenty-one, fourteen bulls and seven cows. The deer number thirty-eight, sixteen bucks, thirteen does and nine fawns. The park commissioner reports that both the elk and deer enclosures are too crowded and that some of the animals should be sold.” (Austin American-Statesman, 22 Oct 1906, Mon, 7)
1907 – 1913	National Park Precedents/ Influences Roads/Paths	“Mount Rainier National Park was the first to officially allow them [automobiles] in 1907. Glacier allowed automobiles in 1912, followed by Yosemite and Sequoia in 1913. Motorists to the parks still faced long lists of regulations: written authorization to enter, time restrictions on the use of their vehicles, strict attention to speed limits, and rules about pulling over for oncoming horses and honking at sharp turns.” (Braden)
1907	Tourism	“In 1907, George Wharton James of Boston, editor of the magazine Arena, wrote, “Brackenridge Park is the most magnificent piece of parking in the United States that has come under my observation. ...You have now a woodland that is unsurpassed, traversed by excellent driveways, into which it is a boon to plunge for an hour or two to relieve the fatiguing monotony of city life.” (NRHP, 49)
1907.02.09	Tourism	“The city of San Antonio has made a great success of raising deer at Brackenridge Park. In fact there is no more profitable industry.” (Brownsville Daily Herald, Vol. XV. No. 188)
1907.04.20	Park Development	San Antonio's parks are improved through city investments: “MORECITY FINANCE.... Satisfactory as was the work done under the old park commissioner, the late lamented Ludwig Mahncke, the present administration loses nothing in comparison with the work previously done, which the figures show that the cost of park maintenance has been from 15 to 25 per cent less during the present administration than for the four years preceding. Within three months of the fiscal year ended May 31, 1906 (covering the service of the present park commissioner), the roadways and paths in San Pedro park were regravled, the lake cleaned, fences repaired, new turning gates and floating roosts constructed, ditches dug for drainage and this in addition to the routine work of park maintenance. Cleaning underbrush and maintaining the several miles of driveway in Brackenridge park has been the principal work there, in addition to the caring for the herds of animals and the flocks of fowls. A considerable portion of Travis park was resodded and in this and other parks over 200 trees and shrubs and flowering plants were planted and needed work done in the fertilization of all the flower beds in all the parks and squares. This department employs four gardeners and fifteen laborers and a team and driver...” (San Antonio Gazette, 20 Apr 1907. Sat, 9)

1907.05.15	Proximate Principle	Advertisement for property in Laurel Heights Terrace refers to its location on Brackenridge Park. “Beautiful Brackenridge park adjoins Terrace on the east.”
1908	Quarry City + Business Development	<p>“By 1908 ... the company [Alamo Cement Company] needed a larger site with rail access and moved its plant to a 300-acre site north of the city limits. The old plant was used intermittently for several years before closing permanently.</p> <p>After the cement company moved most of its operations in 1908, the city began to evaluate the quarry site. A survey revealed that as many as fifty-two ‘squatters’ were living in houses in the quarry area. Most were likely former quarry employees.” [See entries for 1920 and 1926 below related to squatters.] (NRHP, 59)</p>
1908.01.16	Unusual Events	CITY GARDENER A SUICIDE. Employee (sic) of San Antonio Kills himself in Brackenridge Park. San Antonio, Jan. 15. – The body of Fritz Gaehnel, a city gardener employed in Brackenridge park, was found today in the park. He had evidently killed himself. Pinned to his coat was the following note: “Please do me the favor to telephone to Zizzik’s and bury me there. Please excuse me from working tomorrow. I owe Mr. Wernette 40 cents. You will find it in my pocket. Please pay him. It is strange how things will change in one day.” (Austin American-Stateman, 16 Jan 1908, Thu, 1)
1908.02.04	Park Development / Park Entrances Proximate Principle	“The City Council yesterday afternoon passed finally the ordinance introduced at the last session by Alderman Dietzmann, providing for the condemnation of the land necessary to open six passageways to Brackenridge Park, five from River Avenue and one from Avenue A or Josephine Street. At the last session of the Council the ordinance was put on its first reading and passed over. Yesterday afternoon, it was called up and passed finally under a suspension of the rules. The condemnation board will be appointed by the County Judge.” (San Antonio Express)
1908.02.29	Proximate Principle	<p>“The Country Club and Brackenridge Park are located adjacent to Alamo Heights, making this the choice residence park of San Antonio.” (San Antonio Express– 29 Feb 1908, Sat., 8.)</p> <p>Note: The Country Club was there because George Brackenridge sold the club 135 acres in 1907. (Lewis Fisher, Historian, 2019)</p>
1908.05	City + Business Development	Condemnation proceedings are underway when the case between the City and the San Antonio Water Supply Company is settled. (NRHP, 50)

<p>1908.04.04</p>	<p>City + Business Development</p> <p>Park Development / Park Entrances</p>	<p>“CITY MAKES AN OFFER TO PURCHASE ENTRANCE TO BRACKENRIDGE PARK. A proposition has been made to the San Antonio Water Supply company for the settlement of the dispute regarding the “Chinese wall” around Brackenridge park. If the proposition is not accepted the city will begin condemnation proceedings to secure title to the entrances to the park.</p> <p>The company has been offered \$1000 an acre for the land at the entrances to the park. This is believed to be a fair price and one that should be acceptable to the company.</p> <p>At present the city owns only the interior of Brackenridge park. A strip of land extending the length of the park on River avenue and on the Josephine street boundary was reserved by the company, although the city has the use of the property. This strip on River avenue has been improved by the city and made more valuable, but the company retains the title to the land and can dispose of it at any time. The company also retains the right to the water power in the park and to certain buildings on the property.</p> <p>For nearly a year, negotiations have been in progress between the company and the city. Mayor Callaghan has taken the stand that the city should own the entrances to the park as otherwise the park is in reality private property. One of the entrances, which the city proposes to purchase comprises a strip of land about eight hundred feet long and two hundred feet wide.” (San Antonio Gazette)</p>
<p>1908.05.22</p>	<p>Horticulture + Gardening</p>	<p>Advertisement for “Landscape Gardeners. Freimuth & Whail. Old phone 2310.” (San Antonio Express, 22 May 1908, Fri., 7)</p>
<p>1908.07.27</p>	<p>Park Development / Park Entrances</p>	<p>City Council approves \$6,700 to purchase 6.683 acres of access land to the park. “Entrances were opened along the park’s eastern edge on River Avenue (Broadway) and to the south on Avenue A and Schomann Street.” (NRHP, 50)</p>
<p>1908.08.02</p>	<p>Tourism</p> <p>Regional Vernacular</p>	<p>“If one is fortunate enough to possess a carriage or motor car, a journey may be taken to the more secluded recesses of Brackenridge Park, where the scenery is still unspoiled by the mechanical touch of the landscape gardener.” (San Antonio Express)</p>
<p>1909.01.17</p>	<p>Park Development</p> <p>Historic Preservation</p>	<p>Memorial bust of Ludwig Mahncke is installed in Brackenridge Park at a location “near the old Jockey Club headquarters ... today the site of the golf clubhouse. The monument was moved to nearby Mahncke Park in 1968.”</p>

1910	Park Development Roads/Paths	“The San Antonio City Council introduced its first ever set of written road rules in March 1910, at more or less the same time the police department acquired its first automobiles and motorbikes.” (Hemphill, Hugh, “Automobiles in San Antonio, 1899 – 1916”)
1910.10.30	City + Business Development	Major Brackenridge Gives States Institution 500 acres of Land. Special to The Times: San Antonio, Texas, Oct. 26. – George W. Brackenridge, millionaire banker and public-spirited citizen, believes the most practical philanthropy is done in the shape of donations of land for the use and enjoyment of the public and for the benefit of educational institutions. Col. Brackenridge began this work by giving the city of San Antonio over 200 acres at the headwaters of the San Antonio river, which are known now as Brackenridge Park, the most picturesque and magnificent natural park in the South. ... [It is clear that Brackenridge’s philanthropy revolved around land and cash transfers to public entities for recreation and education. This was a time in American history when many of the Gilded Age millionaires were giving away much of their fortunes for public causes] (Laredo Weekly Times, 30 Oct 1910, Sun., 9)
1910	Mexican Revolution Mexican American Imprints	The immigration to San Antonio of tens of thousands of Mexican refugees to San Antonio in the years around the Mexican Revolution of 1910. (Lewis Fisher, Historian, 2019)
1911	Park Development (SA)	The “small, private zoological garden in San Pedro Park closed.” (NRHP 51) [This must have been in response to the growth and expansion of the zoological garden at Brackenridge.]
1911.05.29	Park Development	“CHANGE OF PARK NAME.” In a dispute over access to the Brackenridge Park land, Mayor Callaghan changed the name of the park from Brackenridge Park to Waterworks Park. (Daily Advocate (Victoria, Texas), 1)
1912.07	Politics/Civic Affairs	Mayor Callaghan dies while serving as mayor. (NRHP, 51)

1913	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	<p>Floods on the San Antonio River. (“The People’s Waterway”)</p> <p>Two floods strike the San Antonio area. (Jennings, 38)</p> <p>Note: The two 1913 floods were in September and December. San Antonians downstream were warned of an oncoming flood in February 1903 only by a phone call when an engineer on duty at a waterworks pumphouse upstream (no doubt one of the two in the park) phoned the fire chief at 2 am to sound the alarm. (Fisher, American Venice, 23.) On the subject of floods, those in 1866, 1900, 1903, 1914 and 1946 equaled at least the smallest of those already listed. (Lewis Fisher, Historian, 2019)</p>
1913.07.07	Park Development	Renamed as “Water Works Park” by the mayor during disagreements between the Council and Brackenridge related to access to the park, the former name was restored a year after the mayor’s death. (NRHP, 51)
1914 – 1918	World War 1	
1914	Archaeology	“By the time of the Neo-American period ... a number of innovations were appearing, such as the bow and arrow, pottery, and in some parts of Texas, the beginnings of agriculture. There has been little indication that the prehistoric peoples of the San Antonio and Guadalupe River basins practiced agriculture.” (Hester, 3)
1914	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	Major floods on the San Antonio River.
1914	Tannery Tourism Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“The City Council approved setting aside twelve acres of the old tannery property for a museum of natural history and the zoological garden. The plan for the Brackenridge Park Zoological Garden was presented by the Scientific Society of San Antonio and was touted as ‘the most complete ever attempted for a small park.’ The area was described as ‘a high piece of ground near the upper entrance of the park. Water surrounds the location on all sides, making it an ideal spot for the housing of animals and birds.” (NRHP, 51)
1914 – 1933	African American Imprints Baptisms	San Antonio River Baptisms - River Cities/City Rivers (“Contexts”) - For at least nineteen (19) years, between 1914 - 1933, several local black churches conducted public baptism ceremonies (with city permits) in the shallow pools of the San Antonio River at the Josephine Street crossing. (Everett L. Fly, Landscape Architect, 2019)

THE LAMBERT PERIOD: CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING (1915 CE – 1929 CE)

YEAR	EVENT/USE/FEATURE	ANNOTATION
1915	Quarry Tourism Development	<p>Ray Lambert becomes parks commissioner. (NRHP 51)</p> <p>“Lambert saw the abandoned rock quarry west of the selected site as the opportunity to place the zoo in a unique natural setting and concluded, ‘...we can put a zoo here, which will be a world better and won’t cost too much. Nature has done most of the work.’” (NRHP, 51)</p> <p>“Lambert gained the support of zoo advocates and began transforming the old rock quarry into the city’s zoological garden. Deer, elk, and buffalo pastures were created, the old Upper Labor Ditch became the center of the bird exhibit, and quarry walls were terraced for animal displays.” (NRHP, 51)</p>
1915	Park Development Tourism	<p>“Texas’ first true municipal course didn’t appear until the mid-1910s, when San Antonio civic leader and banker George W. Brackenridge donated some of his personal land to furnish the acreage for Texas’ first city-owned golf course. Brackenridge had earlier sold some of his land to help give San Antonio Country Club the space it needed for their new club near Fort Sam Houston, but this was different. Brackenridge was donating part of the land he used for a hunting lodge because he felt his city, now at a population of 200,000, needed a place for recreation.</p> <p>The one restriction he put on the deed for the land was that no alcoholic beverages could ever be sold on his land. Former Brackenridge pro John Erwin, who did extensive research of the Brackenridge Park facility, says Brackenridge was a reformed alcoholic and didn’t want anyone to drink on his property and suffer the same problems he had experienced. Despite many legal challenges, his wishes still stand at Brackenridge, known as “Old Brack” to most San Antonio regulars.</p> <p>Construction began in 1915 at Brackenridge with one of the most famous of golf architects, A. W. Tillinghast, doing the routing and building of the course in one of his many golf building trips from his headquarters on the East Coast. Tilley, as he was known, did a masterful job working around the San Antonio River and the native Texas hardwoods.</p>
1915	Park Development Tourism	<p>The first Lambert Beach is constructed. (NRHP, 62)</p>

1916	National Park Precedents/ Influences Roads/Paths	“But the real turning point came with the creation of the National Park Service on August 25, 1916, and the vision of its first director, Stephen Mather. Mather wanted all Americans to experience the kind of healing power he himself had found in the national parks. So he aligned himself with the machine that was dramatically transforming people’s lives across the country—the automobile... Furthermore, he innately understood that the point-to-point travel of horse-drawn carriage tours would not work for motorists, who wanted to travel on their own schedule and stop where they wanted.” (Braden)
1916	Historic Preservation	National Park Service formed providing philosophical foundation for uniting preservation and conservation movements by targeting the preservation of non-renewable resources.
1916	Park Development Tourism	The first nine holes of the Brackenridge golf course opened in spring of 1916, “with the full 18 holes officially open for play on September 23, 1916.” (Stricklin, 18) “Brackenridge would later serve as the home of the Texas Open, the Texas State Junior Championship, and the home base for Bredemus, but just by opening on that fall morning in 1916, it provided true power to Texas golfers as a prime public facility. ‘This is the most historic course in the state,’ Erwin said. ‘Anybody who is anybody has played here.’” (Strickland, 19)
1916	Park Development City + Business Development	The remaining Kampmann property is sold by his heirs to the city in 1916. “The 1.33-acre tract containing the house was acquired by the city on September 14, 1916, to be used for ‘park purposes.’ The property was subsequently used for the municipal rifle range until about 1927.” (NRHP, 37)
1916	Park Development Tourism	“The trail, was introduced in 1916 when the San Antonio Rotary Club presented twelve burros to the children of San Antonio.” (NRHP, 57-58)
1916	Park Development	“Another 1.3 acres were acquired opposite Mahncke Park for another park entrance.” (NRHP 50).
1916	African American Imprints Juneteenth Park Development	In 1916 then Park Commissioner Ray Lambert proposed to prepare a plan for a Negro park at the south end of Brackenridge Park, “...beginning at Josephine Street, on the east side of the river, and extending several hundred feet north. He proposed, he said, to have this fixed up in time for the celebration of June 19 (1916). (From San Antonio City Commission/Council minutes; from Everett L. Fly, Landscape Architect, 2019)

1916.02.28	Park Development Tourism	“Items of Interest Transpiring At the Alamo City. ... A multitude of golf players thronged the municipal course in Brackenridge Park from 8 a.m. until night. Some went swimming in the river at Lambert’s Beach. The Municipal Zoo in Brackenridge Park was an attraction to thousands who were amused at the efforts of the monkey mother to hide her baby from the curious crowds.” (Corsicana Daily Sun (Corsicana, Texas), 6)
1916.05.07	Park Development Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	A new dam, with dam crossing, is installed in Brackenridge Park. (San Antonio Express)
1916.05.22	Civil Rights	The following petitions are read and referred to the Commissioner of Sanitation Parks and Public Property: Colored Citizens, for use of Brackenridge Park. (Council Meeting Minutes, p. 574 from Everett L. Fly, Landscape Architect, 2019)
1916.06.19	African American Imprints Juneteenth	Ray Lambert cooperates with local African Americans to create a space in Brackenridge Park for the celebration of Juneteenth.
1916.07	Park Development City + Business Development	“The parcels comprising today’s Lions Field were acquired,” [from the San Antonio Water Supply Company.] (NRHP, 56)
1916.12.06	Park Development	<p>“City Invites Visitors to Play Golf at Park. Ray Lambert, Commissioner of Sanitation, Parks and Public Property, has had printed and will frame and hang in hotels and other public places an invitation to visitors and citizens to play golf on the Brackenridge Park Golf Links, constructed by the city. ...</p> <p>‘We extend to you a most hearty invitation to play golf on the Brackenridge Parks links, a wooded river course of eighteen holes [sic]... It is a sporty links with seven water hazards, and the bunkers, greens and fairways are in good condition.</p> <p>...There are no charges for playing on this course, except, if you care to do so, you can get a locker for \$1 a month, \$4 for six months, or \$6 for one year.’” (San Antonio Express)</p>

<p>1916.12.13</p>	<p>Park Development</p> <p>City + Business Development</p>	<p>DAVIS PARK. “The second Brackenridge bequest was bounded on the north by Koehler Park and on the south by a ten-acre tract owned by Bexar County that had been part of the old county poor farm tract. The poor farm closed in the early 1900s. When Ray Lambert approached county commissioners to donate right-of-way for Memorial Drive, they chose instead to contribute the entire ten acres. On December 13,1916, commissioners voted to donate the land between the Upper Labor Ditch and San Antonio River for ‘park purposes only.’” (NRHP, 59)</p> <p>Note: Park named for County Judge James R. Davis.” (NRHP, 59)</p>
<p>1916 – 1926</p>	<p>Park Management</p>	<p>Ray Lambert served as park commissioner, and “used local laborers and prisoners to construct roads and building. (NRHP, 7)</p>
<p>1917.01.08</p>	<p>Park Development</p> <p>City + Business Development</p>	<p>[See 1916.12.13 above]. “The City Council accepted the County’s gift on January 8, 1917, and named the park in honor of County Judge James R. Davis.” (NRHP, 59)</p>
<p>1917.01.21</p>	<p>Tourism</p> <p>City + Business Development</p> <p>Roads/Paths</p>	<p>“Ask the Flaglers, Huntingtons, Big Fellows of America to Spend Winters in San Antonio. ...We have done much to capitalize our heritage; we have spread abroad the message that here are the most interesting missions, the best climate, the purest water, the warmest, most constant sunshine in all America... And, lately, when we began to lay the floor of the city, by well paved streets, inviting the Norther visitor to bring here his automobile we, realizing that good roads in the country offering long and enjoyable rides were not in themselves sufficient to pass entirely the time of these visitors, looked to our parks, laid out a magnificent municipal golf course, began making a thing of beauty of the old quarry by Brackenridge Park, started a zoological collection in this wonderful natural setting; laid out a Japanese garden, and offered another playground where when the blizzards blow and the sleet cuts and the cold numbs in the frozen North, summer days with green foliage, smiling red roses, and the musical tinkle of waterfalls, make as a bad dream to the sojourner from the North the cold weather of December and its succeeding months.” (San Antonio Express, Real Estate & Classified Section. 1917.01.21)</p> <p>The article goes on to discuss targeted investments in California and Florida to attract travelers from the North to make the case that San Antonio should “Go After the Wealthy Traveler” in order to generate further investments in the city from these travelers. It ends, “True, many will come and not invest, but of the thousands of the wealthy class we are now equipped and are equipping ourselves to amuse, to entertain and benefit, there will be here and there one who will invest, will see his opportunity.</p> <p>There are still Flaglers and Huntingtons and Spreckels in the United States.”</p>

1917.01.28	Park Development City + Business Development	“MUNICIPAL POLO FIELD. [Austin American San Antonio Bureau] ... A municipal polo field is now among the possibilities at Brackenridge park. This will give San Antonio a municipal baseball park, a municipal golf course, a municipal target range, a municipal bathing beach and a municipal tennis court.” (The Austin American, 3).
1917.05.22	Brackenridge Park Influence on other Parks	“There are other attractions about Barton Springs that should not be overlooked. These is a great gravel bed on the tract that may have a value in excess of the price fixed by the school board for the property. It would be possible, also, to construct a nine-hole public golf course similar to the municipal golf course in Brackenridge Park at San Antonio, which has drawn thousands of winter tourists to that city.” (The Austin American, 2).
1917	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“In 1917, the voters of Texas, recognizing the necessity of developing and conserving the State’s water resources and inspired by devastating floods of 1913 and 1914, passed a Constitutional amendment allowing the Legislature to create special purpose political subdivisions of the State to serve regional areas, generally coincidental with river basins and to be generally known as river authorities.” (San Antonio River Authority, “General Fact Sheet 2019-2020,” sara-tx.org)
1917	G. Brackenridge Tannery	“In late 1916, Brackenridge purchased the only parcels of the tannery property he had never owned – Lots 1 through 5 totaling 27.36 acres. He also reacquired Lots 6 and 7 totaling eight acres that he had sold in 1878 to Frank Gutzeit. The following month, Brackenridge donated the 35-acre tract to the city ‘in recognition of the work done by the City of San Antonio under the supervision of the Honorable Ray Lambert, its commissioner, in developing the scenic beauty and usefulness to the public of the tract of land formerly conveyed to the city and known as Brackenridge Park. Brackenridge made his second bequest subject to the same key provisions as the first gift. The city was to use the property as a park and not ‘convey, alienate or encumber’ it, and the sale of intoxicating beverages was prohibited.” (NRHP, 58)
1917	Tourism Quarry	“Ray Lambert viewed the abandoned quarry as an opportunity to construct an attraction he called the ‘lily pond.’ The pond, which later became known as the Japanese Tea Garden or Sunken Gardens, was the masterpiece of Lambert’s creativity. Beginning in early 1917, Lambert worked with prison labor to build an irregularly shaped garden that measured approximately four hundred by three hundred feet. Rock from the quarry was used to build an island, two pools, bridge, and paths. The city nursery provided tropical plants and the Public Service Company donated the lighting system for the driveway and pond. A Japanese-style pagoda, roofed with palm leaves from city parks, was built overlooking the polo field.” (NRHP, 59)

c. 1917	Quarry	<p>“After the Japanese Tea Garden was completed, the adjoining part of the quarry to the south remained undeveloped. In order to beautify this area, Ray Lambert had his workers construct an enormous designed landscape with patterns formed by rocks and flowers. The landscape feature became known as the Texas Star Garden, sometimes referred to as the ‘sunken garden.’ The Texas Star Garden was the location of outdoor choral and theatrical performances during the 1920s.” (NRHP, 60)</p>
1917.11.05	Park Features	<p>“Fully 100 people, including a number of women and small children were precipitated into the San Antonio river in the Brackenridge park at 6 o'clock Sunday afternoon when the historic foot bridge connection, some 30 feet in length, leading to the park bathing beach collapsed. ...</p> <p>The bridge is said to have been one of the oldest and most historic structures of its kind in the city of San Antonio, being one of the first improvements made in Brackenridge Park.” (The Houston Post. “100 People Ducked When Bridge Broke, 7.”)</p>
1918	Proximate Principle	<p>“Most of the land below Koehler Park and west of the river was not owned by the city. Ray Lambert ... took steps to acquire a 250-foot wide strip between Koehler Park and Josephine Avenue, the park’s southern boundary. Picturesque low water crossings would connect the east and west sides of the river. Lambert reasoned correctly that private property owners would enjoy the advantage of park frontage and therefore cooperate with his plan.” (NRHP, 57)</p>
1918.10.23	Tourism	<p>“Texas Municipalities” Interesting Magazine. The current number of Texas Municipalities, of which Albert A. Long, secretary of the bureau of municipal research of the University of Texas, is editor, contains a number of articles that are of special interest to the authorities of the cities and towns in this</p> <p>State. The bi-monthly magazine is published by the League of Texas Municipalities. Among the contents of the last number is</p> <p>an article on “A Municipal Lily Pond,” by W. L. Delery, park engineer of San Antonio, dealing specially with a description of the lily pond and Japanese garden in Brackenridge Park. Municipal notes on the different cities and towns in the State are also given.” (Austin American-Statesmen, 191)</p> <p>Tourist Camp. See NRHP nomination related to establishment, location move, and final closure of the camp in 1934. (NRHP, 60)</p>

1918.11.22	Proximate Principle	“Live in the Heart of the City. Our River Avenue and Brackenridge Park lots come about as near being in the heart of the civic activities as it is possible for private property to get to the public property. Besides the comforts which come to every one privileged to live adjoining the golf course, and in the neighborhood of the bathing beach, tennis courts, Japanese garden and lily pond, comes the richness and luxuriance afforded by a one hundred-foot boulevard, the finest park in the city and unusual natural surroundings. Today it is the show-place of the city—tomorrow the highest type of residential property values.” (Newspaper advertisement, Original publication, unknown)
1919.02.01	Park Development Tourism	“...but it means also the enlargement of existing bathing facilities in the community, as in San Antonio, where the park commission enlarged the public bathing beach in Brackenridge park, by dredging one half mile of the San Antonio river for the accommodation of thousands of soldiers.” (El Pas Held, 4)
1919.03	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	W.S. Delery, park engineer, drew up a plan for a botanical garden originally envisioned by Ray Lambert for the 35-acre 1917 bequest from George Brackenridge that would become the polo field. (NRHP, 61-62)
1919.04.12	Tourism	<p>“The History Club instituted what proved to be a delightful innovation yesterday when their weekly meeting was held in the Japanese Tea Garden at Brackenridge Park.</p> <p>The members and their invited guests motored out to the park about 12:30 o'clock and soon luncheon was spread consisting of salads, sandwiches, cake of several varieties, olives and tea.</p> <p>After the repast the regular program was carried out with Japan as the subject. All were seated out under the Japanese pagoda, and served by the Japanese family which is in charge.</p> <p>Mrs. G. P. Roberson opened the program...” (San Antonio Evening News, 5)</p>
1919.05.01	Tourism	“ANNOUNCE FALL FLOWER SHOW. SUCCESS OF SPRING EVENT JUST CLOSED LEADS TO FURTHER UNDERTAKING. ... One of our staunchest supporters in this work was Ray Lambert and Henry Steingruber, head gardener for the city, who fairly loaded us down with the magnificent red roses of uniform length stem, pansies by the bushel basket and phlox.” This event was hosted by the Woman’s Club. The chairman was Mrs. F. F. Stauffer and vice chairman Mrs. W. B. McMillan. (San Antonio Evening News, 7).

<p>1919.05.06</p>	<p>African American Imprints</p> <p>Civil Rights</p> <p>Segregated Playgrounds</p>	<p>“‘We have six playgrounds,’ retorted Mr. Lambert, saying something about the juvenile crime wave being ‘politics.’ ‘We have the negro, the Mexican, Buena Vista, San Pedro, Brackenridge and Koehler. Our supervisor received her training in Chicago and has been in our employ a year and a half.’”</p>
<p>1920s</p>	<p>National</p> <p>Park Precedents/ Influences</p>	<p>Baseball, football, art classes, gardening, and nighttime activities became the norm for urban parks. During the 1920s, “golf for everybody” became the goal of recreation departments, and parks with enough open space installed courses throughout the country...</p> <p>The design of reform park fell increasingly to park employees, and reflected the current ideas of planned recreation, with less emphasis on the healing power of picturesque aesthetics, and more emphasis on planned active uses planned for the park. As part of the reform park movement, “...water was not used for psychic effects but for practical ones,” such as swimming. (Cranz, 96)</p>
<p>1920</p>	<p>National</p> <p>Park Precedents/ Influences</p> <p>Roads/Paths</p>	<p>“In 1920, for the first time, the number of people visiting the national parks exceeded one million during a single year. Mather could happily declare that the American people ‘have turned to the national parks for health, happiness, and a saner view of life.’ And the automobile, he concluded, ‘has been the open sesame.’” (Braden)</p>
<p>1920</p>	<p>Park Development</p> <p>Tourism</p> <p>Regional Vernacular</p>	<p>“Ray Lambert advertised for proposals to construct a barn in Brackenridge Park near donkey corral in 1920. This structure, now modified, is thought to be the one still commonly referred to as the ‘donkey barn.’” (NRHP, 58)</p>

1920.01.30	Humans + Hydrology	<p>“Nowhere else in Texas, the South, or the United States can there be found within the heart of the city nearing 200,000 inhabitants a stream approaching the charm and beauty of the San Antonio River.</p> <p>Other cities and towns are built at the side of streams, perhaps, or two towns spring up, one on either side. In San Antonio, the river is an integral part of the business district and in its windings come within the view of thousands daily, giving a glimpse of rare attractiveness to anyone who will stop long enough to see it. At one time the river was lined with cypresses. Most of them are gone now, but willows, hackberries, cottonwoods, flowering retamas and pecan trees take their place. The river is at its best in winter when the foliage is gone from all except the Ligustrum trees, permitting a clear view of its course. The river itself is clearer also, the flow increasing in the winter months although last year, owing to heavy rainfall, it ran even with its stone curbing through the business district all year.” (Beauty Grows Beside San Antonio’s Own River.” San Antonio Evening News, 39)</p>
1920	Politics/Civic Affairs	<p>“Beginning in 1920, the city attorney filed suits against the ‘squatters.’ [At the Alamo Cement Company site.] (NRHP, 59)</p>
1920	<p>Park Development</p> <p>Tourism</p> <p>Regional Vernacular</p>	<p>“Ray Lambert’s vision for Brackenridge Park continued to evolve in 1920 when he constructed the Mexican Village just below the Japanese Tea garden along St. Mary’s Street. ‘Just a stone’s throw below the palm-covered pergola, clustered close to the base of the old cement kiln, has grown up with the last few weeks a tiny Mexican village as the result of another dream of the artist of the Lily Pool, Ray Lambert, Commissioner of parks.’” (NRHP, 61).</p>
1920.03.24	Park Development (Polo)	<p>“New Field Is Being Made At Brackenridge To Attract Visiting Players. San Antonio will be the mecca for the polo players of the United States if the plans of the recently organized San Antonio Polo Club materialize and the promised co-operation of the city and various club officials become a reality. Gus Mendows, one of the best known poloists in the Southwest, has agreed to furnish the polo ponies for the new club, which will have a field at Brackenridge Park, as a result of the co-operation of Commissioner Ray Lambert.” (Polo Club is Formed with 30 Members.” San Antonio Evening News, 9)</p>
1920.07.01	<p>African American Imprints</p> <p>Civil Rights</p>	<p>NAACP petitions San Antonio City Commission “...relating to the enjoyment of the pleasures of Brackenridge Park.” (San Antonio City Commission/Council minutes and Everett L. Fly, Landscape Architect, 2019)</p>

<p>1920.08</p>	<p>Park Development</p> <p>Tourism</p> <p>Regional Vernacular</p>	<p>“By August 1920, the compound of stone cottages on the north side of the old cement works chimney had ‘already begun to fulfill its destiny, in that it has begun the cooking and serving of the highly seasoned enchiladas, chile con carne, tamales and other dishes.’ Tables set under a palm-roofed dining area were constructed using mill stones from the old cement works. A goldfish pond was built near the outer edge of the arbor. Three houses on the other side of the chimney were to be used for the production and sale of Mexican handiwork including blankets, baskets, pottery and drawn works. Artisans would be located to live in these houses and produce their work for sale to visitors.”</p> <p>(NRHP, 61)</p>
<p>1921</p>	<p>Historic Preservation</p>	<p>Daughters of Republic of TX Alamo Chapter formed by Adina De Zavala.</p>
<p>1921</p>	<p>Park Development</p> <p>Tourism</p> <p>Regional Vernacular</p>	<p>“George Brackenridge’s 1917 bequest of thirty-five acres was the largest open space in the park. ...the Polo Club’s proposal prevailed. The club improved the field at no cost to the city, and over the next fifty years hosted some of the world’s best players.”</p> <p>(NRHP, 61-62)</p>
<p>1921</p>	<p>Humans, Hydrology + Water Management</p>	<p>Devastating flood struck downtown San Antonio. (NRHP, 63)</p>
<p>1921</p>	<p>Humans, Hydrology + Water Management</p>	<p>Floods on the San Antonio River. (“The People’s Waterway”)</p> <p>A onetime hurricane coming north from landfall at Tampico, Mexico began dumping water on San Antonio the night of September 8. By 9 pm the following night Olmos Creek was overflowing, and water through Brackenridge Park was rising one foot every five minutes. Five hours later, three-quarters of a square mile of downtown was submerged under two to twelve feet of water, and more than fifty San Antonians drowned. Up to fourteen inches fell over the Olmos Creek drainage area, half that much over the city farther south. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers put damage at \$32.7 million, today’s equivalent of \$48 million. (Fisher, American Venice, 55–58.)</p> <p>“The 1921 flood, loosed by a cloudburst in the Olmos basin north of the city, took forty-nine lives, left fourteen missing, and caused more than \$8 million in property damage. In the two catastrophic days, rainfall in the Olmos Creek watershed ranged from seventeen inches in the upper area to about eleven inches near San Pedro Avenue. It inundated parts of downtown San Antonio with eight to nine feet of water, even reaching the mezzanine of the Gunter Hotel on Houston Street at St. Mary’s.”</p> <p>(Jenning, 38-39)</p>

1921	Mexican American Imprints Park Development	The year one of the refugees from the Mexican Revolution, Dr. Aureliano Urrutia (who came in 1914), began his Miraflores gardens, part of which are now within Brackenridge Park. (Lewis Fisher, Historian, 2019)
1921 – 1922	Park Development	The “City Commission granted A.D. Politis the concession rights to Brackenridge and Koehler Parks. Politis was to operate the Japanese tea garden and Mexican Village, a ‘Swiss inn,’ two bathhouses and campground in Brackenridge Park, as well as to rent golf lockers at the Brackenridge golf course... In May 1922, the San Antonio Express published an illustration of an ‘attractive cold drink and band stand’ just completed by A.D. Politis in Brackenridge Park. This building, designed by local architect Will N. Noonan, was located near the old Water Works pump house; its overall design was similar to four restroom buildings that remain standing in the park, and it is likely that all were designed by Noonan.” (NRHP, 62)
1922.08.03	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	“Mayor O.B. Black ... devoted considerable time to a meeting in his office this morning with members of the Golf Association and John Bredemus, golf architect, on plans for the erection of a new clubhouse at Brackenridge Park and making definite arrangements for the improvement of the Municipal course.” (San Antonio Evening News). [Bredemus was the original designer of the golf course at Memorial Park in Houston and was famous in the region for his golf course designs].
1923	City + Business Development	“The publicly-owned land on River Avenue, renamed Broadway in 1917, remained undeveloped; until 1923 when the Lions Club of San Antonio approached the city for property to establish a supervised playground for children. (NRHP, 56)
1924	Historic Preservation	Two artists, Emily Edwards and Rena Maverick Green responded to the planned demolition of the Market House by founding the San Antonio Conservation Society. (Fisher2016 2) “The three-month-old society took City Commissioner for Parks Ray Lambert with them on a bus tour to inspect the city’s parks and landmarks and made him Honorary President.” (Fisher 2016 2) Conservation Society of San Antonio, one of the first community preservation groups in United States, founded by thirteen women to save 1859 Market House (razed for street widening year later) and city’s cultural heritage. Sought to preserve historic built and natural environment, “to keep the history of Texas legible and intact to educate the public....”

1924	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	Gutzon Borglum moved to San Antonio in preparation for the design of a “monumental memorial statue commemorating the Texas trails drivers. He needed a studio and was given permission by the City to use the pump house.” (NRHP, 42) Borglum is famous for his design of Mount Rushmore. The lower pump house was built in 1885. (NRHP, 20)
1925	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	The City of San Antonio purchased the water system. (NRHP, 42)
1925	City + Business Development	“Ray Lambert officially accepted the Lions Club’s gift to the City on October 31, 1925.” (NRHP, 57)
1925	Park Development	Dr. Aureliano Urrutia’s home, Quinta Urrutia, was built about 1925 not in Brackenridge Park but about 1925 on Broadway on adjoining land that has never been within Brackenridge Park. (Lewis Fisher, Historian, 2019 and Lynn Osborne Bobbitt, Executive Director, Brackenridge Park Conservancy, 2019)
1925	Park Development Regional Vernacular	“...the massive iron truss bridge that had spanned the river at St. Mary’s Street since 1890” was relocated at the bathing beach. (NRHP, 63)
1925.09.24	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	Alfred G. Witte died. He left \$75,000 “to construct a museum of art, science and natural history to be built in Brackenridge Park and named for his parents.” (NRHP, 64)
1925 – 1927	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	The deadly floods of 1921 “resulted in the construction of Olmos Dam.” (“The People’s Waterway” and San Antonio River Authority)
1926 – 1927	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	Lambert Beach: “Lambert “initiated three projects that still define the north end of the park – renovation of the bathing beach, addition of two bridges, and the construction of Joske Pavilion. ... Work was completed in March 1925 to transform the swimming beach into a more formal swimming pool. Concrete stair landings provided swimmers with easy access to the river, and rustic dressing rooms were replaced by a multi-roomed stone bathhouse designed by Emmett Jackson.

1926	Historic Preservation	Witte Museum opens with backing of Conservation Society which is one of three organizations to occupy exhibit in new museum.
1926	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	With the death of Alfred G. Witte and his bequest, the city found a site for the Witte Museum in Brackenridge Park. "The new museum site was located between the river and Broadway at the 'third entrance' to the park – today's Tuleta Drive. The vacant property, located just below where the Alamo acequia left the river, had been part of the 200-acre tract sold by Mary maverick to George Brackenridge in 1876. It was acquired by the city from the Water Works Company in 1908 as part of the settlement for access to Brackenridge Park. (NRHP 64). Atlee B. Ayres and his son Robert M. Ayres were the architect. (NRHP, 64)
1926	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	"Ray Lambert's final project at the bathing beach was construction of Joske Memorial Pavilion, built with a \$10,000 bequest to the city from deceased retailer, Alexander Joske. The site Lambert selected for the pavilion adjoined the Eleanor Brackenridge playground where the truss bridge crossed the river. Emmett Jackson, whose bathhouses stood just across the river, was hired by the city to design the massive stone pavilion which was erected in 1926. This area of the park is still known as 'Lambert Beach.'" (NRPH, 63)
1926	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	The SA springs have been partially protected by the Olmos dam from flooding and sedimentation. (Brune, "San Antonio Springs)
1926	Politics/Civic Affairs	SQUATTERS. "...in 1926, the city council directed the removal of those who remained." (NRHP, 59)
1926	Park Development Park Management Tourism	"In 1926, the Jingus [Kimi Elizo Jingu had been invited by Ray Lambert some time previously to oversee the Japanese garden] opened the 'Bamboo Room' in their home and sold green tea and green tea ice cream to visitors.
1926.06	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	A bridge "that spanned the river at Fourth Street on the northern edge of downtown," was relocated to the lower end of "the bathing beach to connect Koehler Park west of the river with Brackenridge Park to the east." (NRHP, 63)

1926	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular Art + Culture	“...the city hired faux bois artist, Dionicio Rodriguez to construct one of his finest works. The covered ‘wooden footbridge, located north of the large iron truss bridge, consists of thirty-three pairs of vertical tree trunks spanned by horizontal branches.” (NRHP, 63)
1926	Quarry	Choral and opera productions were held in the Tea/Texas Star Garden inside the quarry. “The curving quarry wall at the western edge of the Star Garden offered natural acoustic features.” (NRHP, 65)
1926.10.08	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	“Originally designed in the Spanish Colonial style, the Witte Museum opened to the public on October 8, 1926, and immediately became a popular local destination where local residents and visitors were able to view historic, artistic and scientific exhibits. (NRHP, 64)
1927.12.07	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	“DID YOU EVER STOP TO THINK. By Edson R. Waite, Shawnee, Okla. ... Then too, San Antonio has many other features that are not seen elsewhere and appeal forcibly to the interest of everyone. Here are still old buildings of Spanish architecture representing a period that existed before the arrival here of men with different ideas and more progressive methods, and within but little over a stone’s throw away stands the modern office building or hotel, the contrast illustrating the span of two centuries in the history of the city. No one comes here without visiting Brackenridge park, a large area of erstwhile forest where tress still stand as nature placed them, its Alpine drive over the hills, thru valleys, and across the San Antonio river, and beside it nestling the wonderful ‘sunken garden’ adorned by a Japanese tea room, which is a unique setting for this beautiful spot. Also, there is in the parka (sic) splendid zoo containing not only animals generally known to students of natural history, but many that are peculiar to this section of the country and which many visitors see for the first time. The swimming pools in the park afford exercise and play for many thousands of persons during the season and this is longer here than in most other parts of the country because of the shorter period of cold weather. Then, a feature that is almost universally attractive to visitors is the San Antonio river, winding about the city in a serpentine course so that it is crossed at nearly every turn one makes. It has its origin just above the city and flows into the Gulf of Mexico. The chili stands where Mexican women serve the simple foods peculiar to their race, are a novel feature to all except those who may be acquainted with ways and customs as they exist in Mexico, and they enlist a sentiment that has produced many a song and story by celebrated writers, some of which have immortalized the ‘chili queen.’” (Tallahassee Democrat, 2)
1927.12.23	Park Management	Ray Lambert dies of pneumonia. (NRHP, 64)

1927	Park Management	“Joseph ‘Jake’ Rubiola succeeds Ray Lambert as park commissioner in 1927.” (NRHP, 65)
1928.04.22	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	The editorial staff of The Austin American uses San Antonio and a photograph of the Japanese Tea Garden as an example of progressive thinking as they promote voter approval of a bond issue for parks and boulevards. The Sunken Gardens are also praised, in 1919, as “a remarkable example of intelligent adaptation of design to existing conditions” and as “a rare exception” to a park’s following “some preconceived scheme..thanks to Ray Lambert—a man of vision”—and his advisor, F.F. Collins. (Architectural Record, February 1919, XLV no. 2, 185–87, Lewis Fisher, Historian, 2019)
1928	Park Development Tourism	“The San Antonio Zoological Society was formed.” (NRHP, 51)
1928	Quarry	Choral and opera productions were held in the Japanese Tea/Texas Star quarry gardens. (NRHP, 65)
1929	Tourism	The River Walk is proposed by architect Robert Hugman. (Malda, 253)

THE WPA ERA AND A NEW DIRECTION IN FLOOD MANAGEMENT (1930 CE – 1949 CE)

YEAR EVENT/USE/FEATURE ANNOTATION

1930s	National Park Precedents/ Influences	“In the 1930s park administrators abandoned their idealistic efforts to use parks as a mechanism of social reform.” (Cranz, 101) “The term ‘recreation’... was the watchword of the era, since unlike ‘play’ it seemed to exclude no activity or age group.” (Cranz, 103) “During the Great Depression, parks nationwide provided huge opportunities to employ hundreds of workers doing basic tasks with rudimentary tools. Headed first by the Reconstruction Finance Administration and also by the Works Progress Administration, depression-era projects updated the infrastructure, installed new recreational areas and buildings, and virtually remade the landscape of some parks.” (Turner, 43)
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1930	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular Art + Culture	Architect Harvey P. Smith submitted a design for the Sunken Garden Theater. His plan was chosen over that of sculptor Gutzon Borglum. (NRHP, 43, 60)
1930	Art + Culture	Dr. Aureliano Urrutia completes Miraflores, first begun in 1921 (Urrutia)
1931	Park Development Tourism Park Management	The San Antonio Zoological Society “assumed control of the zoo...The society continues to operate the zoo today under agreement with the City of San Antonio.” (NPRH, 51)
1933	Historic Preservation	The Historic American Building Survey (HABS), a WPA program, records nation’s culture as joint venture of NPS, Library of Congress, American Institute of Architects.
1933, 1937	Park Development Tourism	Reptile garden built in 1933 and housed snakes and alligators, visitors paid 10 cents to view them, located near the Witte Museum before construction of Pioneer Hall. (NPRH,67)
1935 – 1938	Park Development Tourism	<p>“Brackenridge Park ... benefited from Depression era programs carried out by the National Youth Administration (NYA) and Works Projects Administration (WPA). San Antonio’s representative from the twentieth congressional district, Maury Maverick, assured substantial local funding for projects during his tenure from 1935 to 1938. Approximately \$90,000 was earmarked for projects to improve the infrastructure of Brackenridge and Koehler Parks and the zoo.</p> <p>Rock retaining walls were constructed along the river to control erosion that threatened trees along the riverbank. Park Commissioner Henry Hein and city forester Stewart King both sought to preserve the park’s natural beauty. King, who became</p> <p>a noted local landscape architect, designed screening for the rock walls that included rose bushes and flowering shrubs. Rock-curbed parking areas were constructed to protect tree roots and unsightly ball moss was removed. King also supervised a \$10,000 NYA project to build a drive from Broadway to the recreation area and beautify the Witte Museum grounds. This is the street known today as Tuleta Drive.” (NRHP, 65)</p>

1936	Historic Preservation	Conservation Society purchases Espada Mission acequia aqueduct, only Spanish structure of its type still in use in United States. Restored San Jose Mission compound dedicated.
1937	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	The San Antonio River Authority is created.
1937	Park Management Art + Culture	Gutzon Borglum left San Antonio for California. (NRHP, 43)
1937	City + Business Development	\$100,000 is awarded to the City of San Antonio by the federal government as part of the Texas Centennial Celebration for the construction of Pioneer Hall. "The local firms of Phelps and Dewees and Ayres and Ayres were hired to design the memorial building. Ground was broken in February 1937, and the building was dedicated on January 1, 1938." (NRHP, 67)
1937	Archaeology	"The Sunken Garden Theater was expanded and improved in 1937 as part of the Texas Centennial celebration and dedicated as a memorial to the heroes of the Texas Revolution. Architects for the Centennial project, completed by WPA, were Harvey P. Smith, George Willis and Charles T. Boelhauwe. Dressing rooms and stage support buildings, restrooms, and seating were constructed and a concrete floor was added to the theater seating area. A concession area was built by the NYA in 1937-38. It is designated a State Archaeological landmark." (NRHP, 66)
1938.01.01	Archaeology Tourism Park Management	Official opening date. "Still owned by the city, the building is now leased to the Witte Museum and will be used as the South Texas Heritage Center. It is designated a State Archaeological Landmark." (NRHP, 67)
1938	Tourism Park Management	Kimi Elizo Jingu dies in 1938, and his family continues to operate the garden and concessions in the Japanese garden. (NRHP, 60)
1938	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	"Downtown landowners passed a tax referendum to improve the river. Later, voters passed a bond issue and approved City funding to secure a grant award. Thus began a strong tradition of citizen involvement in development of the San Antonio River." ("The People's Waterway")
1939 – 1945	World War II	

1939	Tourism	The River Walk, first proposed in 1929 by architect Robert Hugman, was constructed beginning in 1939 as a Works Progress Administration project. ²
1941	Park Management	Henry Hein becomes park commissioner after Jake Rubiola. (NRHP, 65)
1941	National Park Development	Three entities—the Catholic Church, Bexar County and the San Antonio Conservation Society—surrender their titles to land at San Jose Mission to unify the property to become a state park, making possible the 1978 designation. (Fisher, Saving San Antonio, 168–69.)
1941	Civil Rights	A 1941 law is passed that “revoked the license of any place of public accommodation refusing service ‘to anyone because of his citizenship in any Latin American Republic of the Western Hemisphere or merely because of his racial origin from one of these Republics.’” (Goldberg 1983 370, quoting article from San Antonio Express)
1942	Park Management Tourism	The Jingu family is evicted due to wartime and anti-Japanese sentiment and the garden is renamed the “Chinese Sunken Garden.” “The Jingu are replaced by a Chinese-American couple who operates a snack bar there until the early 1960s.” (NRHP, 60)
1945	Historic Preservation	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) chartered.
1946	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	A major flood strikes “San Antonio’s downtown district.” (“The People’s Waterway”)
1946	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“As a result of the flood of 1946. Bexar County and the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) entered into a partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to improve flood control along 31 miles of the river and its tributaries. The San Antonio River Channel Improvements Project involved realignment and channelization of the river system and continues to provide an efficient, albeit unattractive, river channel that moves flood waters quickly away from urbanized areas.” (“The People’s Waterway”)
1946	African American Imprints Golf	Blacks are working as caddies at Brackenridge Golf Course, but not allowed to play on the course. (Everett L. Fly, Landscape Architect, 2019)
1949	African American Imprints Golf	Black Golfers have been petitioning San Antonio City Council for right to play on municipal golf courses for five years (SINCE 1944), and only received promises to consider the issue. (San Antonio City Commission/Council minutes and Everett L. Fly, Landscape Architect, 2019)
1949	Historic Preservation	National Trust for Historic Preservation (United States) chartered to address “preservation of sites, buildings, and objects of national significance or interest.”

² Malda, “Landscape Narratives and the San Antonio River,” 253.

EARLY PRESERVATION EFFORTS AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA (1950 CE – 1967 CE)

YEAR EVENT/USE/FEATURE ANNOTATION

1950	Art + Culture	“By the early 1950s, the colony had given rise to two important organizations, the River Art Group and the Texas Watercolor Society. Together with their counterparts at the Mill Race Studio (see Second Pump House), these artists represented the core of San Antonio’s artistic community in the 1940s and 1950s.” (NRHP, 61)
1950	Park Development Tourism Regional Vernacular	A San Antonio Light article estimated between “75,000 San Antonians and out-of-town visitors” to the park for “picnics spread from Hilderbrand ave. to Josephine st.” on Easter Sunday. According to the article, families “pitched tents at their picnic site” indicating that the tradition was an established annual event, and the day’s “First scheduled affair was at 6:30 a. m. It was a sunrise service at the Sunken garden theater. Around 2000 persons attended.” The event also drew visitors to the Witte Museum and the reptile garden. (“Park and Zoo Draw Huge Crowd”)
1950	Art + Culture	The Tuesday Musical Club is located west of the polo field/driving range across North St. Mary’s Street. “A small performance hall designed by Atlee B. and Robert M. Ayres was erected on the property, and the club has held events there since its completion.” (NRHP, 69)
1950	Civil Rights	“It [San Antonio] captured national attention only briefly as the first southern city to integrate its lunch counters in 1960.” (Goldberg 1983 350)
1950s	Civil Rights	“The city had never passed a segregation ordinance, but custom and the Police Department enforced a racial separation that proved binding.” (Goldberg, 351).
1950s	Civil Rights	“The five military bases located in and around San Antonio also lessened the noxiousness of segregation. During the 1950s the military integrated its units, on-base schools, stores, and recreational facilities, and provided working models of an interracial society.” (Goldberg 1983 352)
1950s	Civil Rights	“The Catholic church under the leadership of Archbishop Robert Emmet Lucey condemned color prejudice and acted to remove barriers between parishioners of the different races.” (Goldberg 1983 352).

1950s	African American Imprints Civil Rights	“Especially important in explaining the absence of racial tension and rigidity were the actions of the city government. In the 1950s and 1960s the Good Government League (GGL), a bipartisan coalition of business and financial leaders, dominated municipal political and governmental decision-making.” The GGL included Mexican Americans on its tickets and consulted churches, the media, and black leaders in the community about candidates and policy. (Goldberg 1983 353)
1951	Unusual Events	Stables of the Sheriff’s Mounted Posse burned and were rebuilt. “A rectangular clay structure is all that remains of this facility.” (NRHP Section, 68)
1952	Tourism	The polo organization and the golf course negotiated a joint use agreement “that enabled the area to also be used as a golf driving range. This continued until the late 1980s when polo was no longer played and the city assumed management of the driving range.” (NRHP, 62) The year the city took over was 1988. (NRHP, 69)
1953	Park Management	San Antonio “adopted a council/manager form of government in 1953.” (NRHP, 65)
1953-1957	Historic Preservation	Proposed city plans for underground garages beneath Travis Park, Main Plaza, Alamo Plaza and part of La Villita are finally killed when Texas Supreme Court rules it illegal, ending threat of garages beneath city parks.
1954	African American Imprints Civil Rights	“...prodded by a lawsuit by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the City Council passed an ordinance desegregating municipal parks, golf courses, and tennis courts, but maintaining the racial barrier in swimming pools.” (Goldberg 1983 353)
1956	African American Imprints Civil Rights	“...again with NAACP promoting, the city desegregated its swimming pools, buses, railroad stations, and all activities in municipal building.” (Goldberg 1983 353-354)
1957	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	The “Texas Water Development Board” is charged with “preparing a comprehensive and flexible long-term plan for the development, conservation, and management of the state’s water resources.” (SARA, 25)
1957	Historic Preservation	Conservation Society purchases 25 acres near Espada dam for Acequia Park.
1960	Civil Rights	“It [San Antonio] captured national attention only briefly as the first southern city to integrate its lunch counters in 1960.” (Goldberg, 1983, 350)

1960	Historic Preservation	City highway bond issue including North Expressway through Olmos Basin floodplain is defeated; passes next year. Lawsuit filed by Conservation Society and Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word.
1962	Park Development Tourism	The Witte Museum has been “remodeled and expanded several times, including a major remodeling in 1962.” (NRHP, 64) Note: The 1962 renovations to the Witte pale in comparison to those in 2012–2016. (Lewis Fisher, Historian, 2019)
1963	Civil Rights	“By the middle of 1963 San Antonio had virtually eliminated discrimination in public accommodations. Racial distinctions in theaters, restaurants, and hotels had ended. San Antonio had advanced far beyond communities in the Deep South and had anticipated by two years the Civil Rights Act of 1965.” (Goldberg 1983 373)
1965	Historic Preservation	International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) established.
1965	Civil Rights	“...the City Council passed an ordinance integrating all public accommodations.” (Goldberg, 365) (Goldbert 1983 350)
1966	Preservation	Passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, including National Register of Historic Places.
1967	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	A ten-year battle over the North Expressway, now McAllister Freeway, (Hwy 281) galvanized the historic preservation movement in San Antonio. The proposed route delineated that the highway would pass through Olmos Creek Flood Basin, the City of Olmos Park, between the Sunken Garden Theater, and the Alamo Stadium. Members of the San Antonio Conservation Society (SACS) led opposition efforts and filed a series of lawsuits challenging the proposed expressway route. Along with the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, SACS filed suit in 1967 to block the project. Note: The statement that the expressway battle “galvanized the historic preservation movement in San Antonio” is misleading. Several dates could be said to have galvanized the movement, starting with the Alamo in 1879. It’s closer to say the expressway “split the historic preservation movement in San Antonio,” since the movement was already strong and many preservationists opposed this particular foray, while conservationists were energized as there were a substantial number of environmentally oriented opponents little concerned with preservation. (Lewis Fisher, Historian, 2019)

1967	Historic Preservation	<p>City of San Antonio adopts first historic zoning ordinance and creates a preservation commission. Following year, King William, the first local historic district, was established and members of the Historic and Design Review Commission were appointed.</p> <p>San Antonio Missions National Historical Park legislation introduced in Congress.</p>
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AND NEW GENERATION OF FLOOD MANAGEMENT (1968 CE – PRESENT)

1968	<p>Park Development</p> <p>Historic Preservation</p>	<p>A portion of Brackenridge Park was conveyed to the State of Texas...for construction of US Highway 281. (Pfeiffer and Tomka, 4)</p>
1969	Historic Preservation	<p>Passage of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requiring 106 review for projects using federal funds, thereby conflating the concern for natural and cultural resources into a single program</p>
1970	Park Development	<p>The George W. Brackenridge statue was installed at the Parfun Way entrance to the park. (Pfeiffer and Tomka, 15)</p>
1971	Historic Preservation	<p>Conservation Society holds first preservation seminar.</p>
1974	Historic Preservation	<p>City hires first Historic Preservation Officer, revises historic districts and landmarks ordinances.</p>
1975	Park Development	<p>The reptile garden was permanently closed. (Pfeiffer and Tomka, 68)</p>
1976	Historic Preservation	<p>“The stacks of the old kiln remain today and one acre of the property was listed on the National Register as Alamo Portland and Roman and Cement Works. (NRHP, 44)</p>
1976	Historic Preservation	<p>“The 1976 National Register nomination of the Alamo Portland and Roman Cement Works included a one-acre site and five structures, with a period of significance that ended in 1899.” (NRHP, 60)</p>

1977	Historic Preservation	National Trust for Historic Preservation presents Crowninshield Award to San Antonio Conservation Society for national impact on historic preservation activities. North Expressway project opens as McAllister Freeway; litigation dropped in 1970.
1978	National Park Development Tourism	“In 1978 extended negotiations between the Catholic Church, the State of Texas and the National Park Service had culminated in an agreement to turn the hard-won San José Mission State Park into a centerpiece of a San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.” “By spring 1978 a \$1.4 billion parks bill included \$10.5 million for development, renovations and new property for a 450-acre San Antonio Missions National Historical Park... Nearly a year after the long-sought legislation passed, implementation began.” (Fisher, 541-545)
1978	City + Business Development	A portion of Brackenridge Park is carved out to complete the Expressway. The suit is ultimately decided by the United States Supreme Court. Even after the ruling by SCOTUS, Senators Lloyd Bentsen and John Tower strip federal funding in an attempt to force the city and State to foot the bill for the project. Finally, a compromise route that reduces the amount of damage to the park from the original route is adopted, and the freeway opens in 1978. (Pfeiffer and Tomka 70)
1978	Historic Preservation	San Antonio Missions National Historical Park passed by Congress; opens in 1983.
1979	Archaeology	Katz and Fox conduct the “Archaeological and Historical Assessment of Brackenridge Park.” (Katz and Fox)
1979	Park Development	The first master plan for the park is completed. (Pfeiffer and Tomka 7)
1979	Archaeology	Anne A. Fox authors: “A Survey of Archaeological, Architectural and Historical Sites on the San Antonio River from Olmos Dam to South Alamo Street and on San Pedro Creek from San Pedro Park to Guadalupe Street. Archaeological Survey Report, No. 80.” San Antonio, TX: Center for Archaeological Research/The University of Texas at San Antonio.
1979	Historic Preservation	First draft of Brackenridge Park Master Plan presented to community.
1980s	Park Development	Polo as an event ends at Brackenridge. (Pfeiffer and Tomka 19)
1981	Historic Preservation	The Lower Pump House, originally constructed in 1885, is added to the National Register. (Pfeiffer and Tomka 20)

1984	Historic Preservation	"In 1984, the Chinese Sunken Garden is "rededicated as the Japanese Tea Garden at a ceremony attended by the Jingu's children and representatives of the Japanese government." (NRHP, 60)
1984	Park Development	The Sunken Garden Theater is extensively renovated at a cost of \$320,000. (Pfeiffer and Tomka 17)
1989	Archaeology	Stohtert completes an archaeology and history report of the head of the San Antonio River. (Stohtert).
1991	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	"The San Pedro Creek Tunnel became operation." "The tunnels [San Pedro and SA River] carry 100-year floodwaters 150 feet beneath downtown San Antonio and release it downstream." (The People's Waterway)
1993	Historic Preservation	City master plan includes historic preservation requirements.
1995	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	"The Upper Labor dam was partially excavated, documented and refilled in 1995 during park renovation. The acequia channel is still visible within the park and zoological garden." (NRHP, 36)
1997	Archaeology	"SWCA conducted archaeological investigations of the Second Waterworks Canal in order to record the structure and assess its preservation." (NRHP, 34)
1997	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	Texas Legislature passes Senate Bill 1. The purpose is to: Provide for the orderly development, management, and conservation of water resources and preparation for and response to drought conditions in order that sufficient water will be available at a reasonable cost to ensure public health, safety, and welfare; further economic development; and protect the agricultural and natural resources of that particular region. (SARA, 25)
1997	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	The San Antonio River Tunnel is completed. ("The People's Waterway")
1998	Humans + Hydrology	There are major floods on the San Antonio River. ("The People's Waterway")
1998	Historic Preservation	Brackenridge Park Master Plan is updated.
1999	Historic Preservation	Restoration of San Juan Acequia to maintain rights to the water that historically irrigated Mission San Juan Capistrano and adjacent farmlands.

1999	Archaeology Humans + Hydrology	Report on “Excavations for the Upper Labor Dam Site, Brackenridge Park, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.” (Cox, Johnson, and Bousman).
2001	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	SWA receives an “Honor Award” for their San Antonio River Improvements Project – Concept Design San Antonio, TX. (www.asla.org/meetings/awards/awds01/sanantonio.html)
2002	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	South Central Texas Regional Water Plan integrated into the “Water for Texas” program. (SARA, 26)
2002	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	Major floods on the San Antonio River. (“The People’s Waterway”)
2002	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“A new generation of flood management emerged in this community in 2002 with creation of the Bexar Regional Watershed Management (BRWM) partnership. This partnership among Bexar County, the City of San Antonio, SARA and 20 suburban cities takes a holistic, regional approach to managing flood control, storm water and water quality. The program established uniform design, operation and maintenance standards; coordinates local, state and federal funding; and provides an opportunity to measure and evaluate the quality of services delivered to citizens of Bexar County.” (“The People’s Waterway”)
2003 – 2006	Park Development	“The infrastructure of the park east of the river is totally renovated between 2003 and 2006 using city bond funds totaling \$6.5 million. The first phase includes renovation of picnic units, the Joske Pavilion and adjacent playground, river walls and the Dionicio Rodriguez footbridge as well as trail construction, landscape and recycled water irrigation. The second phase includes conversion of interior roadways to pedestrian trails, installation of public art pieces, renovation of the Lions Field playground and reconfiguration of the park entrance at Funston Place.” (NRHP, 70)
2005	Historic Preservation	City makes successful legal claim to Miraflores Gardens with help from land survey paid for by Conservation Society.
2006	Historic Preservation	Initiation of World Heritage nomination process for the Missions National Historical Park.
2006		The George Brackenridge statue is reoriented as part of the redesign of the Parfun Way entrance to the park.
2006	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	The SCTRWPG (South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group) updates the South-Central Texas Regional Water Plan. (SARA 26)

2007	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	The South-Central Texas Regional Water Plan is integrated into the “Water for Texas” program. (SARA, 26)
2007	Historic Preservation	“Bond-funded rehabilitation of the Japanese Tea Gardens was completed in 2007 and further renovation is planned. The city nursery, located in the wooded area south of the Witte Museum, was relocated.” (NRHP, 7, 70)
2007	Archaeology	Archaeological testing is conducted at 41BX323. (Figueroa and Dowling).
2008	Historic Preservation Park Conservation	The Brackenridge Park Conservancy is formed to preserve and enhance the park’s natural, historic and recreational resources.
2008		The animal care facility south of the zoo is closed and demolished in 2008. (NRHP, 70)
2008	Archaeology	“Archaeological Investigation of the City of San Antonio Nursery and San Antonio Zoo Eagle Railroad Tract Realignment Project, Bexar County, Texas.” (Figueroa, 2008).
2008	Park Development	A masonry clubhouse is constructed at the south end of the driving range near Mulberry Avenue. It serves as the headquarters of the First Tee program. (Pfeiffer and Tomka 19)
2008	Archaeology	Kristi Ulrich completes ‘Archaeological Services Associated with Improvements to Miraflores at Brackenridge Park, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.’ (Ulrich, 2008)
2009	Park Development	A three-story parking garage for park was is completed.” (NRHP, 70)
2010	Park Development	The park maintenance facility and Donkey Barn north of the zoo are vacated in 2010. (NRHP, 70).
2010	Historic Preservation	Conservation Society, San Antonio Zoo, Parks Foundation, Brackenridge Park Conservancy and Friends of Parks halt proposed lease of land at northern edge of park. Would have not been in compliance with adopted 1979 Brackenridge Master Plan.

2011	Archaeology Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	Kristi Ulrich (with Maria Pfeiffer) completes the “Intensive Survey and Testing Associated with the Rediscovery of the Acequia Madre and Alamo Dam, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. Archaeological Report, No. 417.” San Antonio, TX: Center for Archaeological Research/The University of Texas at San Antonio. (Ulrich, 2011A)
2011	Archaeology	Krisi Ulrich completes “Archaeological Investigations at the Lily Pond in Brackenridge Park, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.” (Ulrich, 2011B)
2011	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	SCTRWPG (South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group) updates the South Central Texas Regional Water Plan. (SARA, 26)
2011/12		The Jingu House at the Japanese Tea Garden is renovated. (Pfeiffer and Tomka 7)
2012	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	The South Central Texas Regional Water Plan is integrated into the “Water for Texas” program. (SARA, 26)
2012	Park Development	Ulrich completes the “Pedestrian Survey of the Planned Brackenridge Pavilion Project, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.” (Ulrich, 2012).
2012	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management Archaeology Preservation	Ultra-Violet Water Filtration System constructed at the San Antonio Zoo. During construction, a “20-foot-long covered stone sluiceway unearthed” and is discovered to be part of the original 1700s acequia system: “Buried under 5 feet of fill with its ends hidden by a decorative wall, heavy brush and mud, the culvert looks like it was built for carrying excess water to the San Antonio River.” (McDonald, “Piece of history is found near zoo,” mysanantonio.com)
2012	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“Water for Texas,” is produced by the Texas Water Development Board. (SARA, 25)
2013	Historic Preservation	Brackenridge Park is named as a Texas State Antiquities Landmark. (Pace, 2013)
2013	Archaeology Prehistory	Research concludes there is a probable connection between Mammoths and humans on sites along the San Antonio River. This elevates these locations from paleontological to also include anthropological and archaeological relevance. (Carpenter, et al. i)
2014	Historic Preservation	San Antonio’s five Spanish Colonial Missions nomination for World Heritage Site submitted to UNESCO. Culmination of eight years of work by NPS, Conservation Society, Los Compadres, Archdiocese, and others.

2014.07.02	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	“On July 2, 2014, SAWS [San Antonio Water System] breaks ground on the brackish water desalination plant. The plant is slated to begin providing an initial 12 million gallons of drinkable water by October 2016, creating water for an additional 40,000 families. The plant will remove 97 percent of salt minerals.” “San Antonio/Bexar County, Texas, Urban Waters Project, 2017 Work Plan.”
2015	International Park Development Tourism	“After twenty-three minutes of presentations and comments, San Antonio’s missions were named a UNESCO World Heritage Site... The UNESCO designation had been nine years in the making. It had been thirty-two years since Congress approved San Antonio Missions National Historical Park; forty-eight years since national park legislation was first introduced; seventy-four years since the Catholic Church, Bexar county and the San Antonio Conservation Society created San José Mission State Park...” (Fisher, 555) “Ultimately they [San Antonio Conservation Society] successfully launched pursuit of the highest level of international recognition—United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designation as a World Heritage Site, bestowed in 2015.” (Fisher, 541)
2015	Historic Preservation	ICOMOS endorses the missions’ World Heritage nomination and the World Heritage Committee awards World Heritage Status, after nine years of work.
2016	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	San Antonio River Authority completes a comprehensive study of the SA River watershed and submits 2-volume report.
2016	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	Smith completes “Cultural Resources Monitoring for Brackenridge Park River Wall Replacement Project, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.” (Smith)
2016	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	The South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group, under the administration of the San Antonio River Authority prepares the “2016 South Central Texas Regional Water Plan: Volumes I and II.” These documents provide the San Antonio region with a comprehensive management plan for improved water quality, more stable hydrological flows, and future actions to provide for growth.
2016	Historic Preservation	Preservation advocates block the University of the Incarnate Word’s attempt to lease land to build a dormitory/parking garage near Alamo Stadium in Brackenridge Park. San Antonio landscape architect and 2014 National Humanities Medal recipient, Everett Fly commissioned to produce National Register nomination for historic African American communities in Bexar County.

2017	Archaeology Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	Clinton McKenzie with contributions by C. Stephen Smith completes "Archaeological Investigations of the Alamo Dam and Upper Labor Dam, Brackenridge Park, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas." (McKenzie)
2017	Historic Preservation Park Development	"The Brackenridge Park Master Plan was commissioned by the City of San Antonio to create a comprehensive plan to shape the future development of rehabilitation of Brackenridge Park..." The master planning process began in 2015, and the plan was completed and approved in 2017. (Brackenridge Park Master Plan, February 21, 2017)
2017	Humans, Hydrology + Water Management	The Regional Water Plan report is integrated into the State Water Plan. (SARA 26) These plans are updated on a five-year cycle as required by state law.
2018.01.22	Historic Preservation	The San Antonio Conservation Society pledges \$300,000 for the restoration of the original 1877 Pump House No. 1. (Huddleston)
2018.11	Historic Preservation	The Brackenridge Park Conservancy, in partnership with SARA and San Antonio Parks and Recreation, commission a Cultural Landscape Report for the park.

Suburban Development Surrounding Brackenridge Park

In October 1906, a few months after Mahncke's death, Henry Steingruber was named parks commissioner for the city of San Antonio. Steingruber was a horticulturist by training. The years of his tenure were characterized by grounds improvements and maintenance but did not include significant changes to the overall park, its layout, or its elements. The rural landscape surrounding Brackenridge Park changed dramatically during the early 1900s as developers purchased tracts of land and advertised new and expanding neighborhoods and their association with Brackenridge Park.

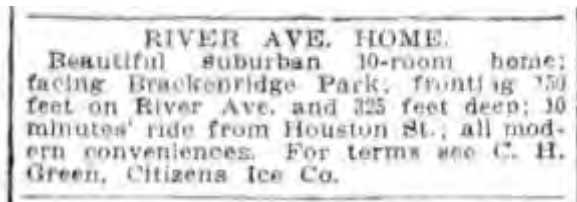


Figure 11-6. "River Ave. Home" facing Brackenridge Park for sale, October 9, 1906. Source: *The Daily Express at The Portal to Texas History*, University of North Texas Libraries

The residential lots close to the park were highlighted in sales promotions. The principle whereby property is more valuable because it is located close to a park, museum, or other amenities is called the proximate principle.

On October 9, 1906, Mr. C. H. Green of the Citizens Ice Company advertised a house for sale on River Avenue facing the park (**figure 11-6**). The ad read, "Beautiful suburban 10-room home; facing Brackenridge Park; fronting 150 feet on River Ave. and 325 feet deep."²⁴ The lot must have been the site of a substantial home, as 150 by 325 feet translates to 1.12 acres.

Also in October 1906, the Halliday Sweet Company advertised lots for sale in the neighborhood of Park Grove on River Avenue. "Everything is lovely and looking better from day to day in our beautiful addition covered with grand and stately trees, fronting magnificent Brackenridge park and only two blocks from Mahncke park on River avenue."²⁵

²² "River Ave. Home," *San Antonio Daily Express*, October 9, 1906, accessed July 26, 2014, texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph441064/m1/8/zoom?q=riveravehome&resolution=1.5&lat=4751&lon=1502.75.

²³ "Halliday = Sweet Co., a Mountain Home," *San Antonio Gazette*, October 20, 1906, accessed August 23, 2018, newspapers.com/image/38699654/.



Figure 11-7. The Adams-Kirkpatrick Company advertised lots for sale in Laurel Heights, May 15, 1907. Realtors noted: “Four parks in the Terrace. Beautiful Brackenridge park adjoins Terrace on the East.” Source: *San Antonio Gazette*, Newspapers.com

The Adams Kirkpatrick Company advertised lots for sale in Laurel Heights Terrace (figure 11-7). Realtors noted that there were “four parks in the Terrace. Beautiful Brackenridge park adjoins Terrace on the East.”²⁶

Though the Alamo Heights neighborhood was over a mile north of the park, R.H. Russell’s February 1908 advertisement for a house there noted that the property was located adjacent to the Country Club and Brackenridge Park, “making this the choice residence part of the city.”²⁷



Figure 11-8. Belmont Place was advertised as “By the River on the banks of the San Antonio River and adjoining Brackenridge Park.” Newspaperarchive.com.

Advertisements of this nature that specifically mention Brackenridge Park were found in local newspapers throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century. While subdivisions including Montclair, Army Terrace and Brackenridge Place developed east of River Avenue and were touted for their proximity to the park, the neighborhood bounded today by the river, Davis Park, Brackenridge golf course and North St. Mary’s Street (formerly Jones Avenue or Rock Quarry Road) best exemplified the proximate principle. Known generally now as “River Road,” the neighborhood of largely one-story bungalows is the synthesis of several subdivisions whose developers sought to capitalize on the adjacency of their properties to both the park and river.

Like other parts of Brackenridge Park, River Road’s fertile land adjoining the river and Upper Labor Acequia was used for farming and grazing from the 1700s until it was sold for real estate development shortly after 1900. The “founding subdivision” at the south end River Road, Belmont Place, was platted in 1913, as was E.O.Evans’ subdivision at the neighborhood’s north end, later the site of the River Road Country Day School which held outdoor classes in the park. In addition to these, the Brackenridge Parkway Addition (1922), Mistletoe Addition extending west to North St. Mary’s Street (1926), and Magnolia Place and Lindell Place additions (both 1929) formed a tight-knit community. These small, adjoining developments were linked by the winding road known variously as Memorial Way, River Drive, and finally, River Road, that was extended from Josephine Street on the south to Brackenridge Park on the north in 1921-1922.

The neighborhood’s strong affiliation with the river and park was emphasized from its inception. Belmont Place was “By the River,” and described as “a beautiful residence park adjoining our famous Brackenridge Park.” FN (San Antonio Express, June 26, 1921; San Antonio Light, May 29, 1921, newspaperarchive.com). Lindell Place was “in the shadow of Alpine Drive,” and H.J. Shearer advertised Brackenridge Parkway noting “big 300-year old pecan trees on the river high up.” (FN San Antonio Express September 15, 1929; San Antonio Express, February 11, 1923, Newspaperarchive.com.) A reporter writing in the San Antonio Express described “the low water bridge across the river at East Woodlawn Avenue where the crossing is made from the residential section into the park.” Referring to Memorial Drive, they stated, “The space between the winding drive and the river has been secured by the city and here a beautiful parkway will be developed with artistic landscaping affected with flowers and shrubbery.”FN (San Antonio Express, December 24, 1922, newspaperarchives.com)

Today River Road remains the neighborhood most closely affiliated with Brackenridge Park. Though U.S. 281 claimed a portion of the Mistletoe Addition along the neighborhood’s western edge in the 1970s, the area has retained a strong degree of integrity of both design and setting.

26 “Adams = Kirkpatrick Company,” *San Antonio Gazette*, May 15, 1907, accessed August 23, 2018, newspapers.com/image/38700180/?terms=san+antonio+gazette.

27 “Most Complete Home in San Antonio,” *San Antonio Daily Express*, February 29, 1908, accessed July 26, 2014, texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph442357/m1/8/?q=most%20complete%20home.