

SAN ANTONIO FIELD TRIP

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Topics to be covered

1. Importance of water for life in the Southwest
Acequia system (irrigation):
dam, canal, aqueduct, fields
2. Spanish Institutions:
 - (a) missions (spread of Christianity)
 - (b) presidios (military and government)
 - (c) towns (civilian settlement)
3. Historic precedents and the contemporary cityscape.



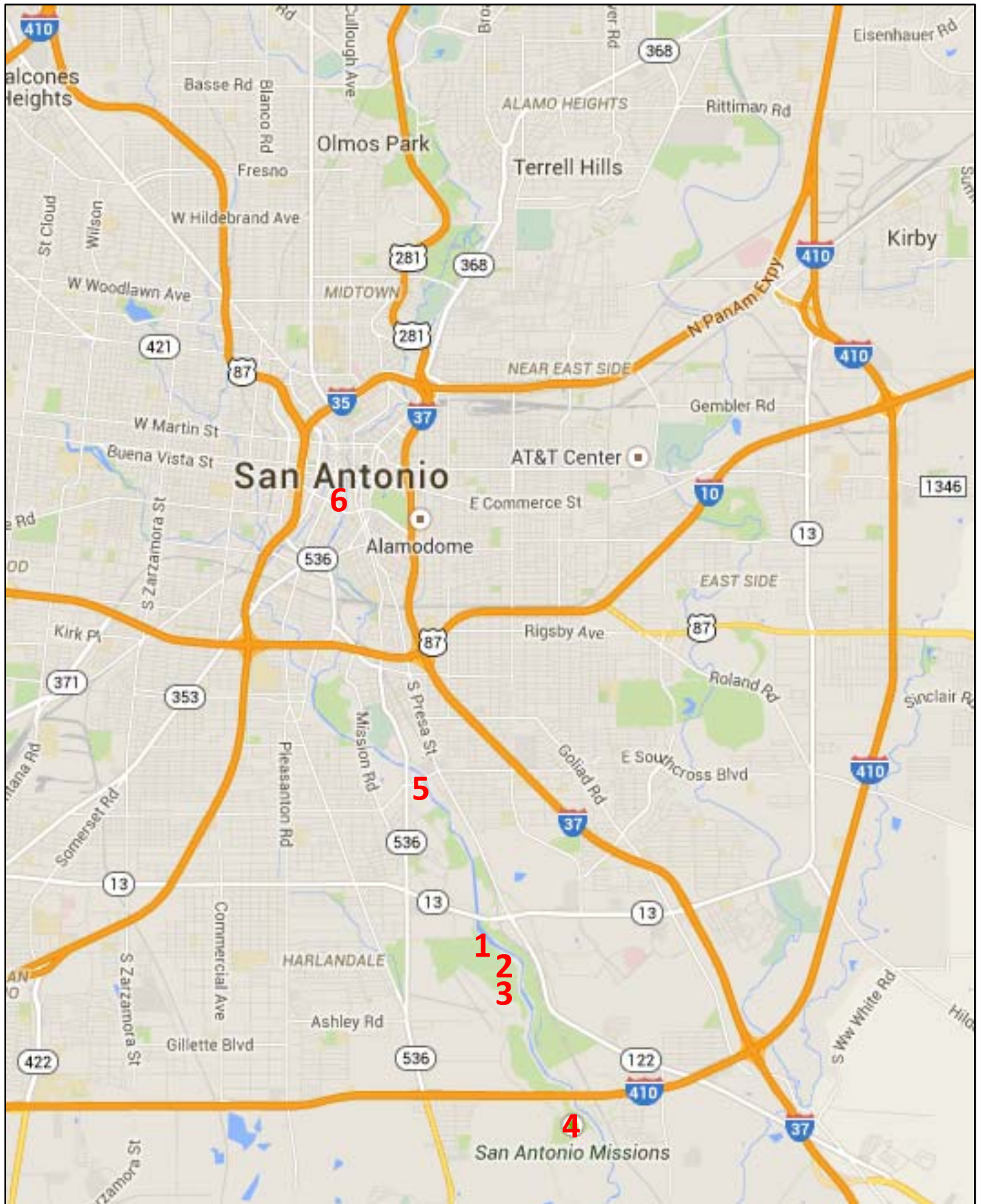
Painting of San Antonio in 1836 by George Nelson

ITINERARY

- 8:30 a.m. Depart UT, corner of 23rd Street and San Jacinto Street
- 10:00 Arrive at Espada Dam—Stop 1
- 10:40 Depart Espada Dam
- 10:45 Arrive at Ashley Street canal crossing—Stop 2
- 10:55 Depart Ashley Street stop
- 11:00 Arrive at Espada Aqueduct—Stop 3
- 11:20 Depart Espada Aqueduct
- 11:25 Arrive at Mission Espada—Stop 4
- Noon Depart Mission Espada
- 12:15 Arrive at Mission San José—Stop 5
- 1:30 Depart Mission San José
- 1:45 Arrive at the San Antonio city hall parking lot—Stop 6
- 1:50 Visit the Spanish Governor's Palace (We will enter as a group, but once inside will take individual self-guided tours.)
- 2:10 Walk around the *Plaza de las Armas*, San Fernando Cathedral, and the *Plaza de las Islas*
- 2:30 Depart city hall parking lot
- 4:00 p.m. Arrive back at UT, corner of 23rd and San Jacinto

Table of Contents

- 4 Map of the City of San Antonio with stops numbered (stops 1-6)
- 5 The San Antonio Missions (a brief history) by Adán Benavides
- 6 Population of Texas missions by Tina Meacham
- 7 National Park Service Mission Trail Map
- 8 Google Earth image of irrigated mission lands (stops 1-4)
- 9 USGS topographic map (stops 1-5)
- 10 Engineering map of Espada dam, canal, aqueduct (stops 1-3)
- 11 Engineering drawing of Espada Dam (stop 1)
- 12 Engineering drawing of Espada Aqueduct (stop 3)
- 13 Menchaca map from 1764—from the John Carter Brown Library
- 14 Aqueduct? What Aqueduct?
- 15 Engineering map of Espada fields (stop 4)
- 16 Map of Espada long lots
- 17 Incorrectly rebuilt door frame of Espada mission
- 18 Schematic layout of Mission San José (stop 5)
- 19 Engineering drawing of Mission San José grist mill
- 20 Spanish Governor's Palace brochure (stop 6)
- 21 Presidio Captain's House brochure
- 22 Presidio map drawn by Urrutia in 1767—from the British Library, and an enlarged portion of Menchaca's map
- 23 *¿Acequia o Arroyo?*
- 24 An enlargement and translation of a portion of Urrutia's map
- 25 Early photographs of military and civilian plazas
- 26 Civilian population of San Antonio in 1700s
- 27 20th century maps of downtown San Antonio by Dan Arreola
- 28 Map of current city streets affected by 18th century canal
- 29 Suggested additional readings



The San Antonio Missions

Adán Benavides

The basic premises of the missionary enterprise on the northern reaches of Nueva España are well-known to even the casual observer of what is now the U.S. Southwest: the Spanish government and the Hispanic church sought to convert the native peoples. At its simplest level, conversion was in the view of the latter a religious experience; but to the former, it meant the acculturation of the New World natives to the Spanish way of life. In practice, however, the goals of the two Hispanic institutions were inseparable. On the frontier, the *gobierno de indios* was administered through church clerics. In contemporary times, the positive and negative effects of the conversion process have been brought into sharp relief as we approach 12 October 1992.

Between 1718 and 1731, five missions were established along the upper San Antonio River: San Antonio de Valero ("The Alamo"), San José y San Miguel de Aguayo, Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción, San Francisco de la Espada, and San Juan Capistrano. In the latter year, the three last-named missions were removed from east Texas and, with their property and supplies, reestablished along the San Antonio River. These changes followed the recommendations of the Rivera inspection which streamlined the presidios along the frontier of New Spain. Franciscan friars from the Apostolic Colleges of Querétaro and Zacatecas administered the Texas missions. Following the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767 from New Spain, the Querétaran Franciscans assumed responsibility for the Jesuit missions in the northwestern interior provinces and thereby abandoned the Texas field. Thus in 1773, the Zacatecan Franciscans assumed the jurisdiction of the five San Antonio missions—four were added to the one of San José which they had had since 1721.

The proximity of the five San Antonio missions occurred because rivalry among the various Coahuiltecan Indian bands prevented their congregation in fewer missions. In 1745, they were described as being more than 200 tribes, speaking twenty different languages or dialects. A Franciscan friar produced a confessional manual in Coahuiltecan for use in the missions (Mexico, 1760). The mission populations were never very extensive (see table 1). At their population maximums, the Indians at a single San Antonio mission have been estimated at 200 to 350 individuals. In the early years, European diseases took their toll among the mission Indians in epidemics (of smallpox and measles, for example) that also affected the Spanish village and presidio. Following the 1770s, the mission populations were not significantly increased by neophytes.

In the early 1790s, however, descendants of older Indian converts (as well as other *agregados*) acquired a share in the mission buildings and fields following the "secularization" of the missions. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, secularization was an empire-wide attempt to lessen the financial burden of the Spanish Crown, which significantly supported the missionary enterprise. In this process, the diocesan or "secular" clergy assumed the administration of the former mission congregations from the "regular" clergy—clergy like the Franciscan friars who followed specific rules (*regula*) of a spiritual order. In Texas, secularization involved property and land grants which were further legalized under the Mexican regime in 1824.

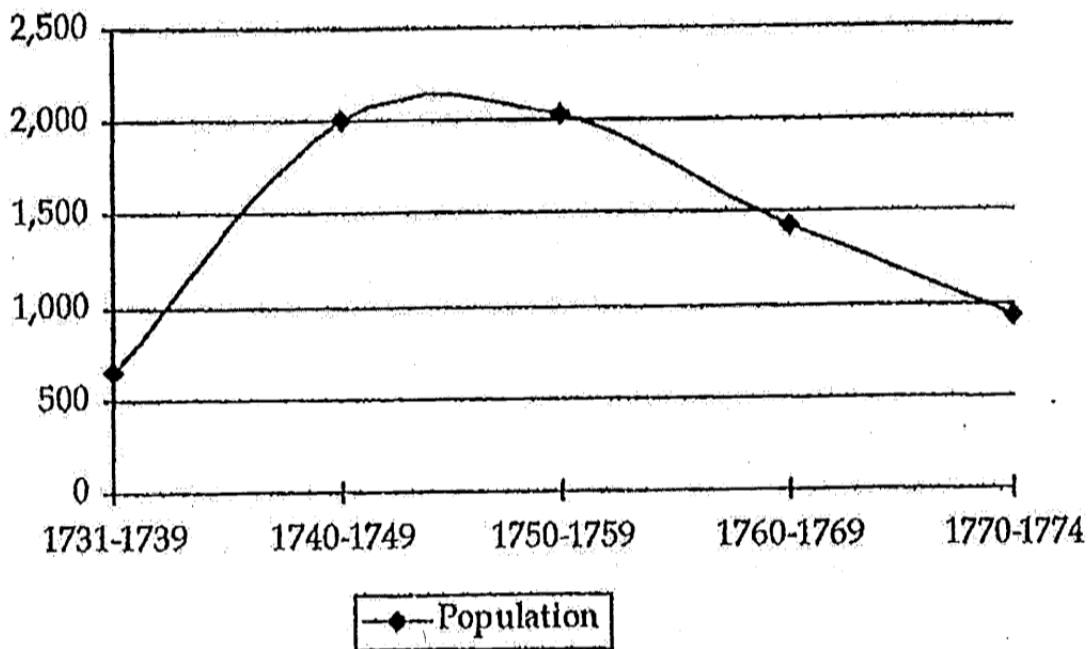
The missions were independent *pueblos* that included the mission compound (chapel, *convento*, plaza, perimeter dwellings, workshops, and storerooms), fields irrigated by a dam and acequia system, and a ranch of sizable proportions for loose livestock. During the nineteenth century, the mission compounds deteriorated: stones from the walls were sold and used in newer constructions, the chapels were sometimes used as livestock pens, and domes, roofs, and towers fell (except Mission Concepción's chapel, which has remained intact). In the twentieth century, the mission compounds received extensive reconstruction by the WPA (especially Mission San José), maintenance by both the Catholic Church and the State of Texas, and, more recently, support from the National Park Service. The latter has linked the four lower missions into a National Historical Park. The chapels at all four of the missions, moreover, are now active churches and those of San José and Espada are again administered by the Franciscan Order.

Table 3.7, Population of Texas Missions, 1731-1774.

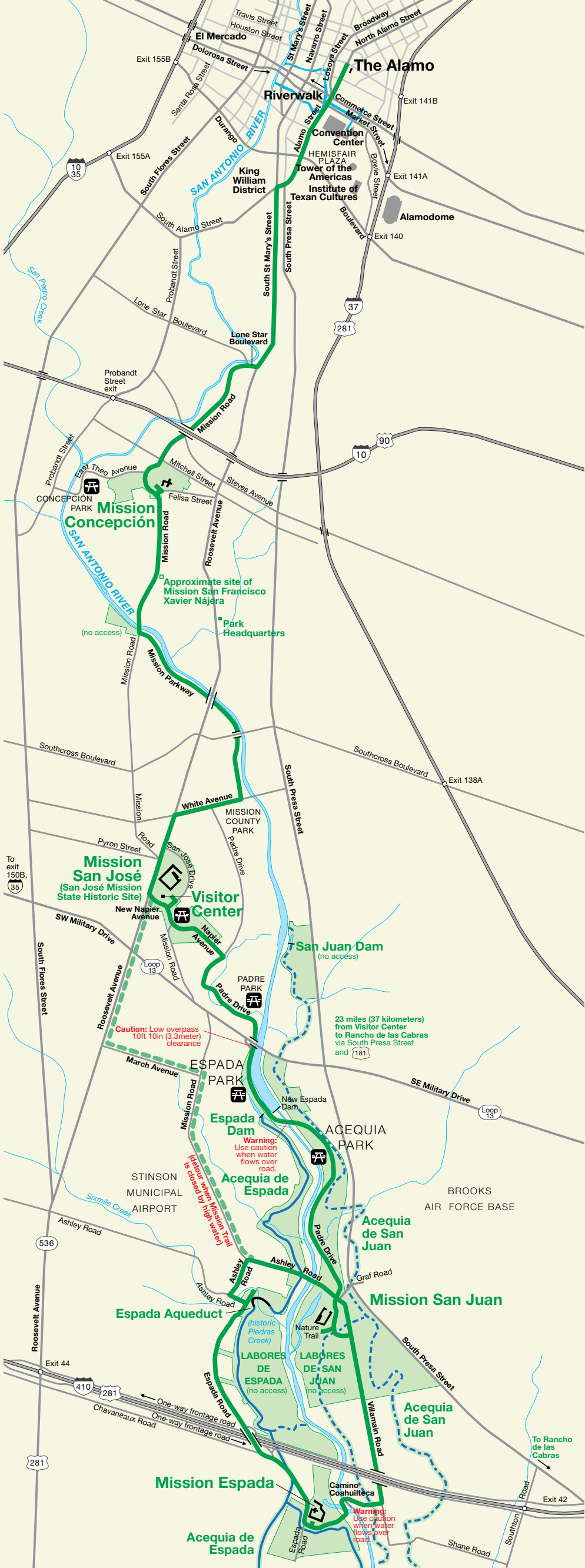
Places and Dates of Existence or Establishment	1731 1739	1740 1749	1750 1759	1760 1769	1770 1774
M. S. A. de Valero 1718	184	311	328	275	126
M. Purísima Concepción 1731	120	207	247	207	178
M. San José 1720	49	220	281	350	*150
M. San Juan Capistrano 1731	66	163	265	203	198
M. S. F. de la Espada 1731	50	204	200	207	174
M. Espiritu Santo 1722	180	375	178	93	*50
M. Rosario 1754	X	X	400	101	*50
M. S. F. Xavier 1746-55	X	213	109	X	X
M. San Ildefonso 1748-52	X	239	0	X	X
M. Candelaria 1749-56	X	71	25	X	X
Totals	649	2,003	2,033	1,436	926

X = Mission was not established at that time. * = Estimates. Sources: See Tables 3.2-3.5.

Graph 3.2, Population of Texas Missions, 1731-1774.



Source: Tina Laural Meacham, *The Population of Spanish and Mexican Texas, 1716-1836* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of History, University of Texas at Austin, 2000, pp. 126.



Acequia (historic irrigation ditch within park boundary)

- Used today for irrigation
- Unwatered, no longer used for irrigation

Mission Trail driving tour (see map for detour when Mission Trail is closed by high water in river)

Picnic area

North

0 0.5 1 Kilometer

0 0.5 1 Mile

Caution: Low overpass 10ft 10in (3.3meter) clearance

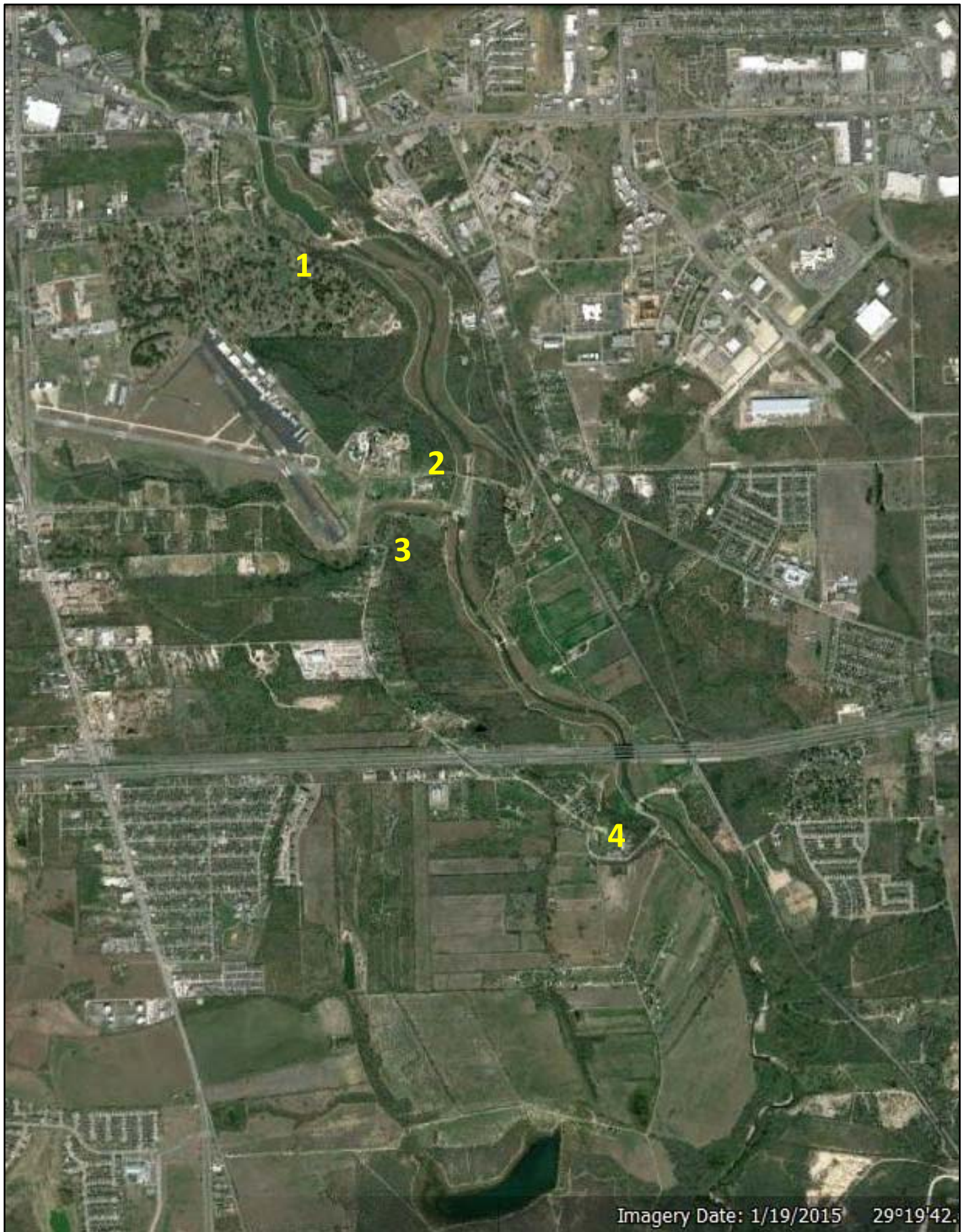
Warning: Use caution when water flows over road. (Occurs when Mission Trail is closed by high water)

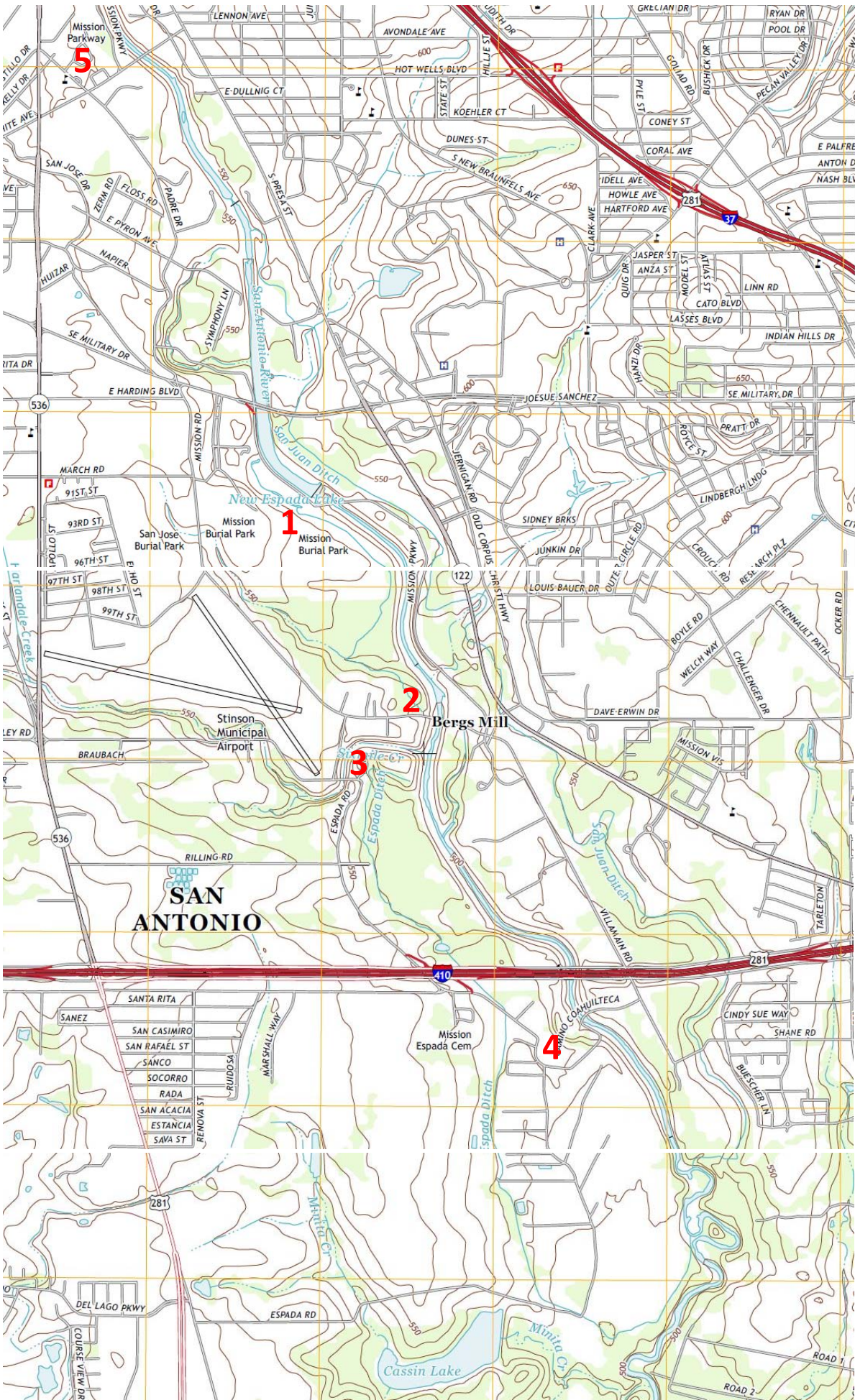
23 miles (37 kilometers) from Visitor Center to Rancho de las Cabras via South Presa Street and 181

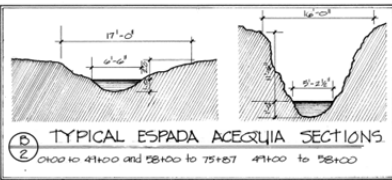
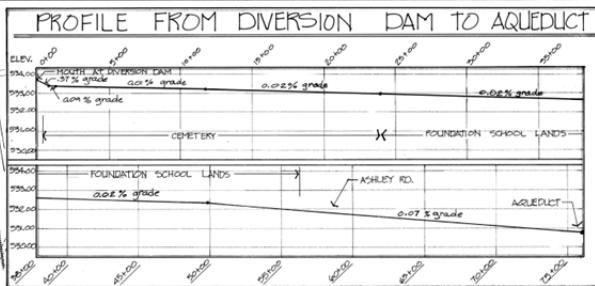
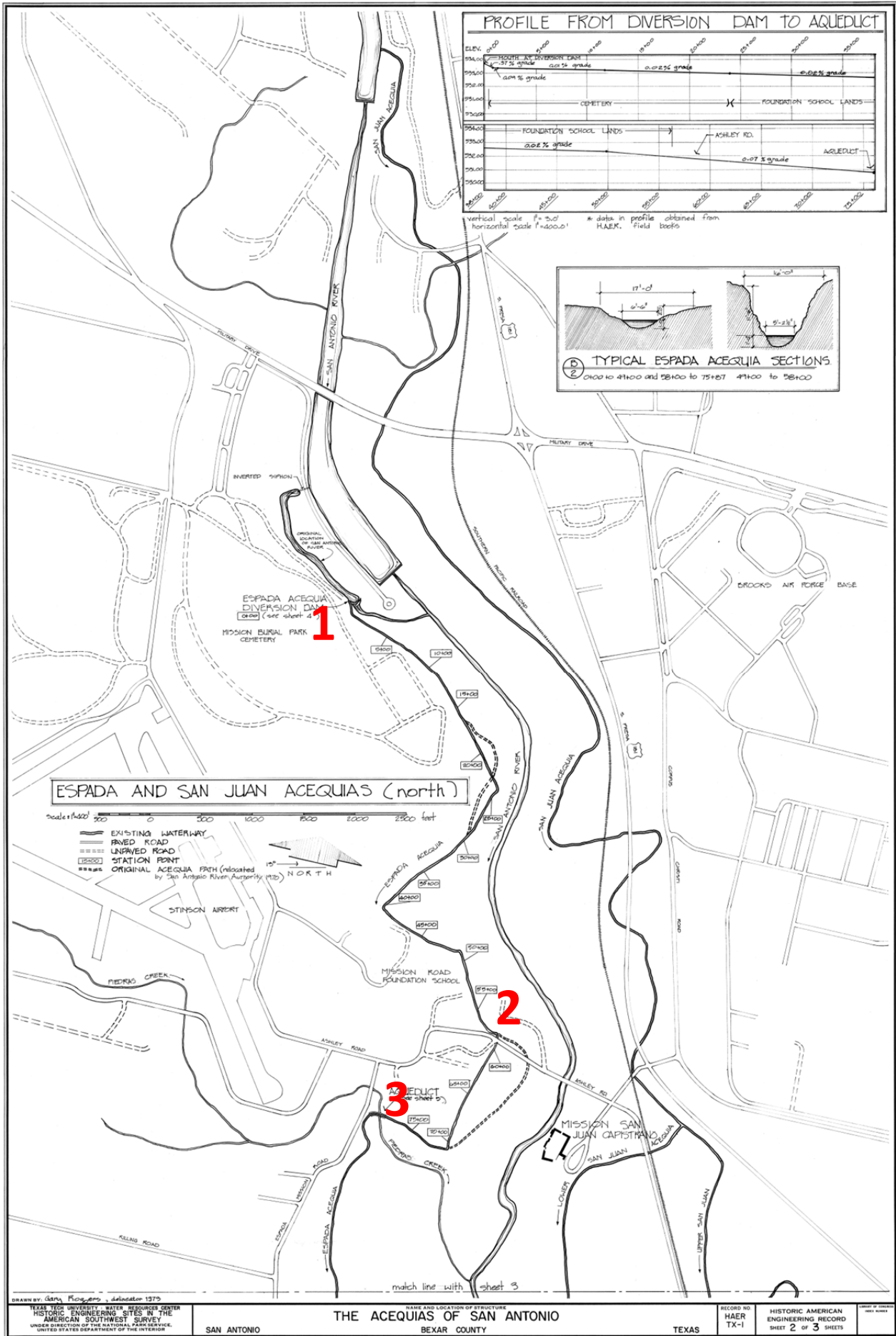
Warning: Use caution when water flows over road.

Warning: Use caution when water flows over road.

To Rancho de las Cabras





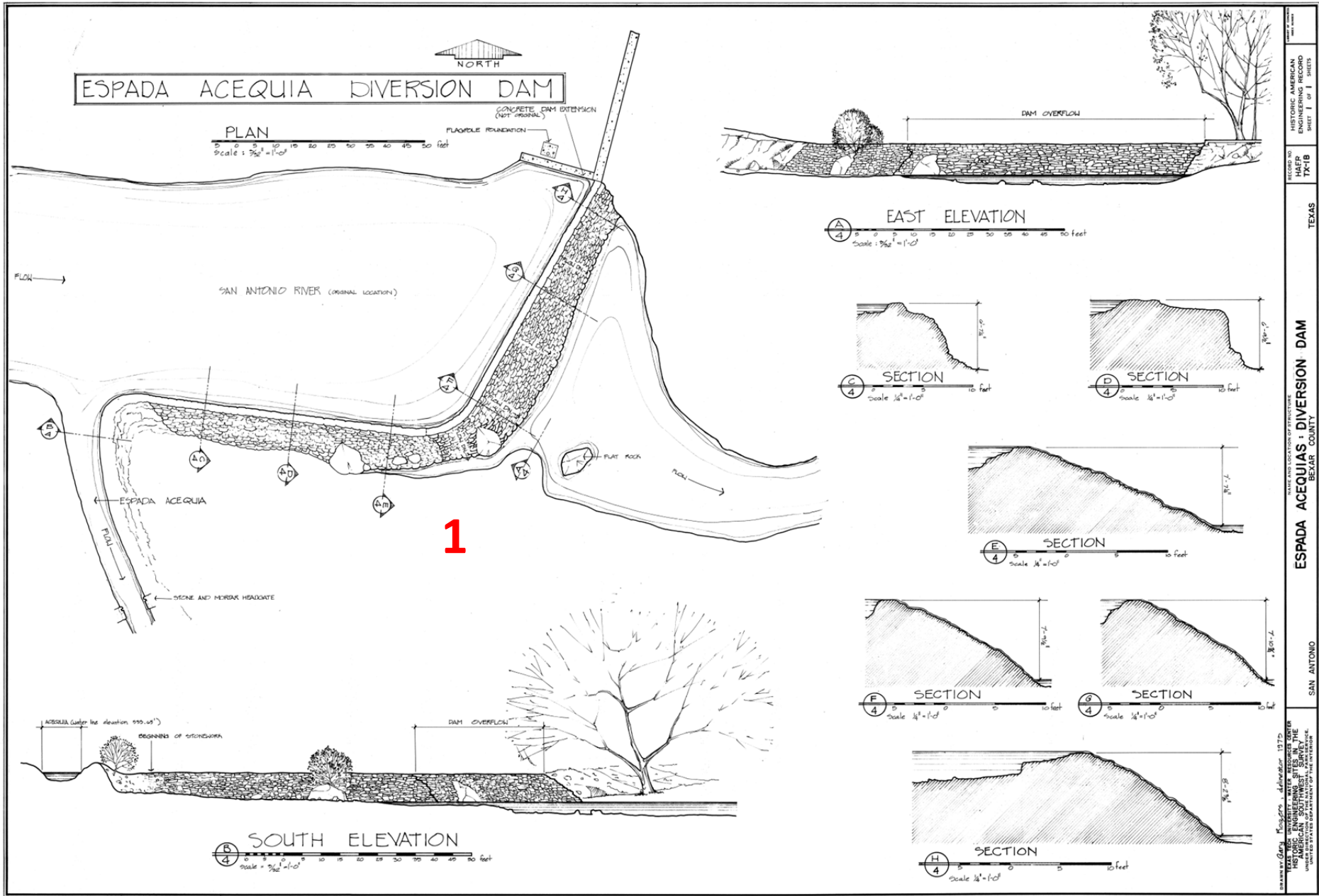


ESPADA AND SAN JUAN ACEQUIAS (north)

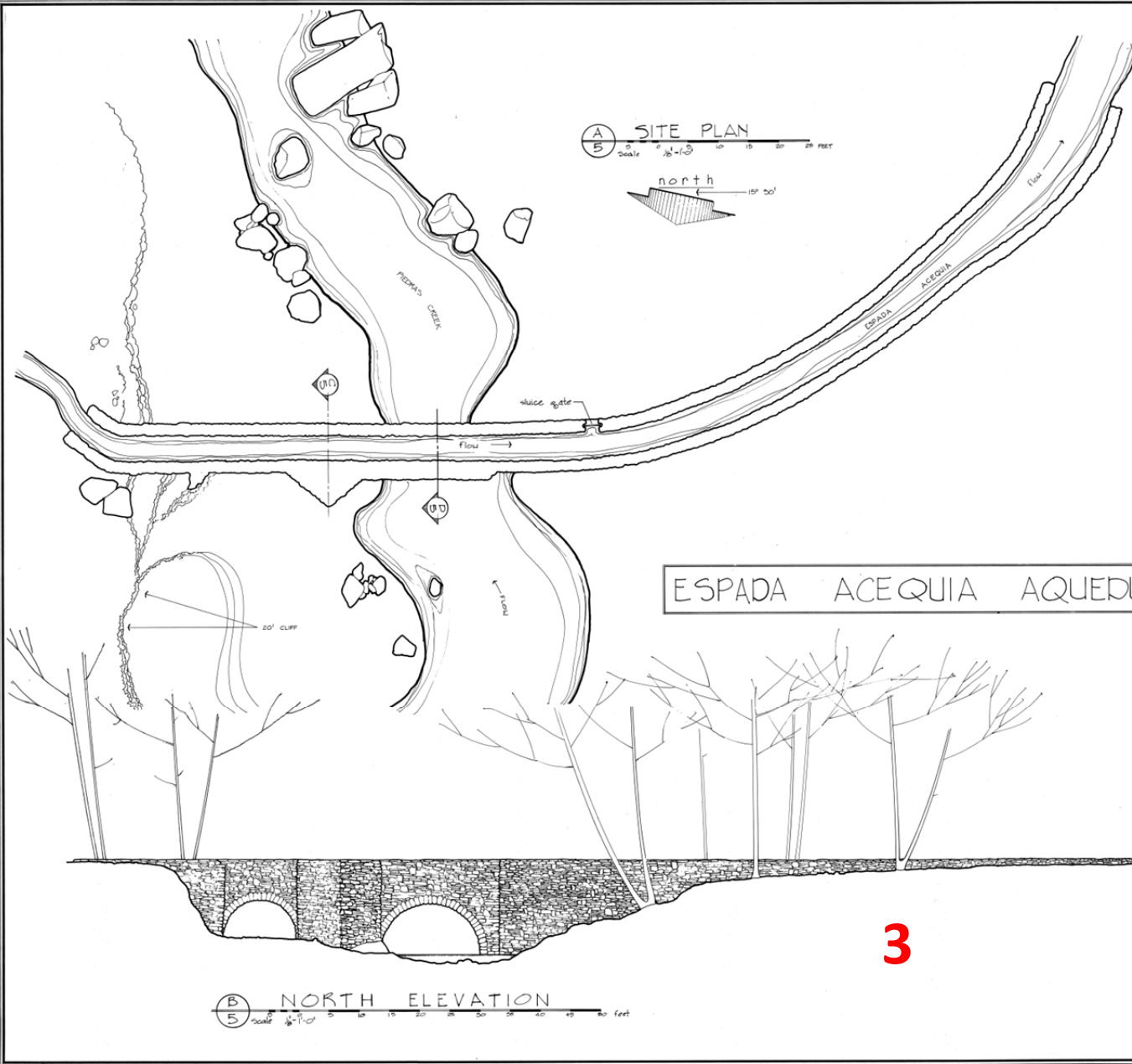
Scale: 1" = 200'

Legend:
 - - - - - EXISTING WATERWAY
 = = = = = PAVED ROAD
 - - - - - UNPAVED ROAD
 ○ STATION POINT
 --- ORIGINAL ACEQUIA PATH (relocated by San Antonio River Authority)

15° NORTH

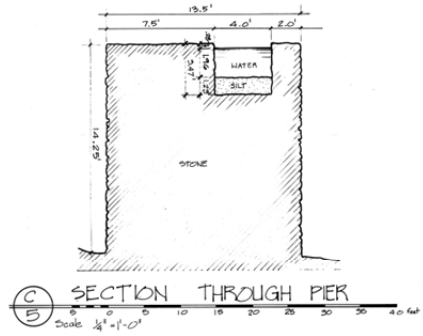


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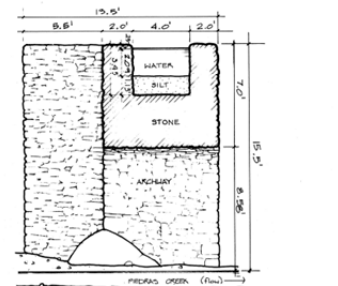


(A) SITE PLAN
 Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"
 north 15° 50'

(B) NORTH ELEVATION
 Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"



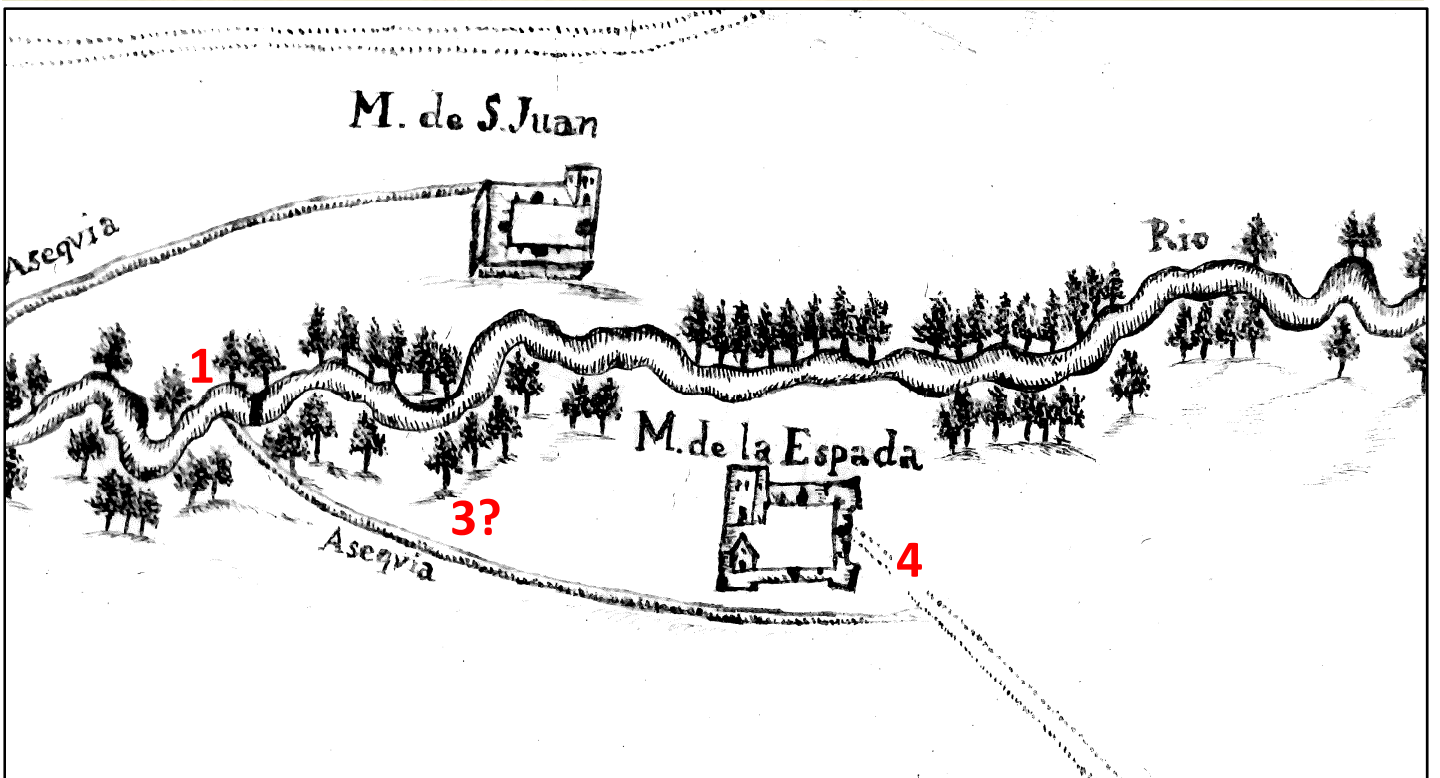
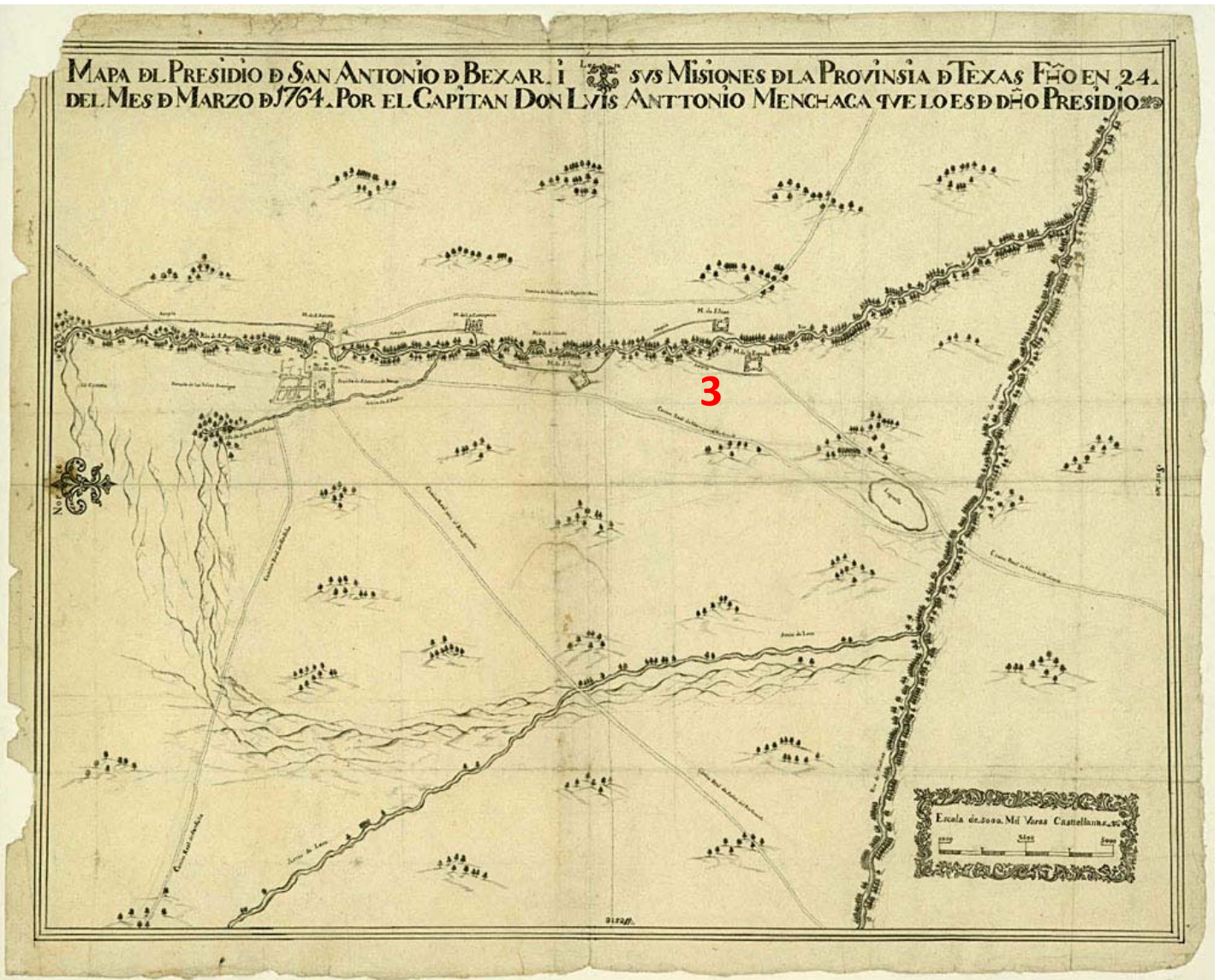
(C) SECTION THROUGH PIER
 Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"



(D) SECTION THROUGH WEST ARCHWAY
 Scale 1/4" = 1'-0"

3

MAPA DL PRESIDIO D SAN ANTONIO D BEXAR. I SUS MISIONES D LA PROVINSIA D TEXAS FHO EN 24. DEL MES D MARZO D 1764. POR EL CAPITAN DON LUIS ANTONIO MENCHACA VE LOES D DHO PRESIDIO



Aqueduct? What aqueduct?

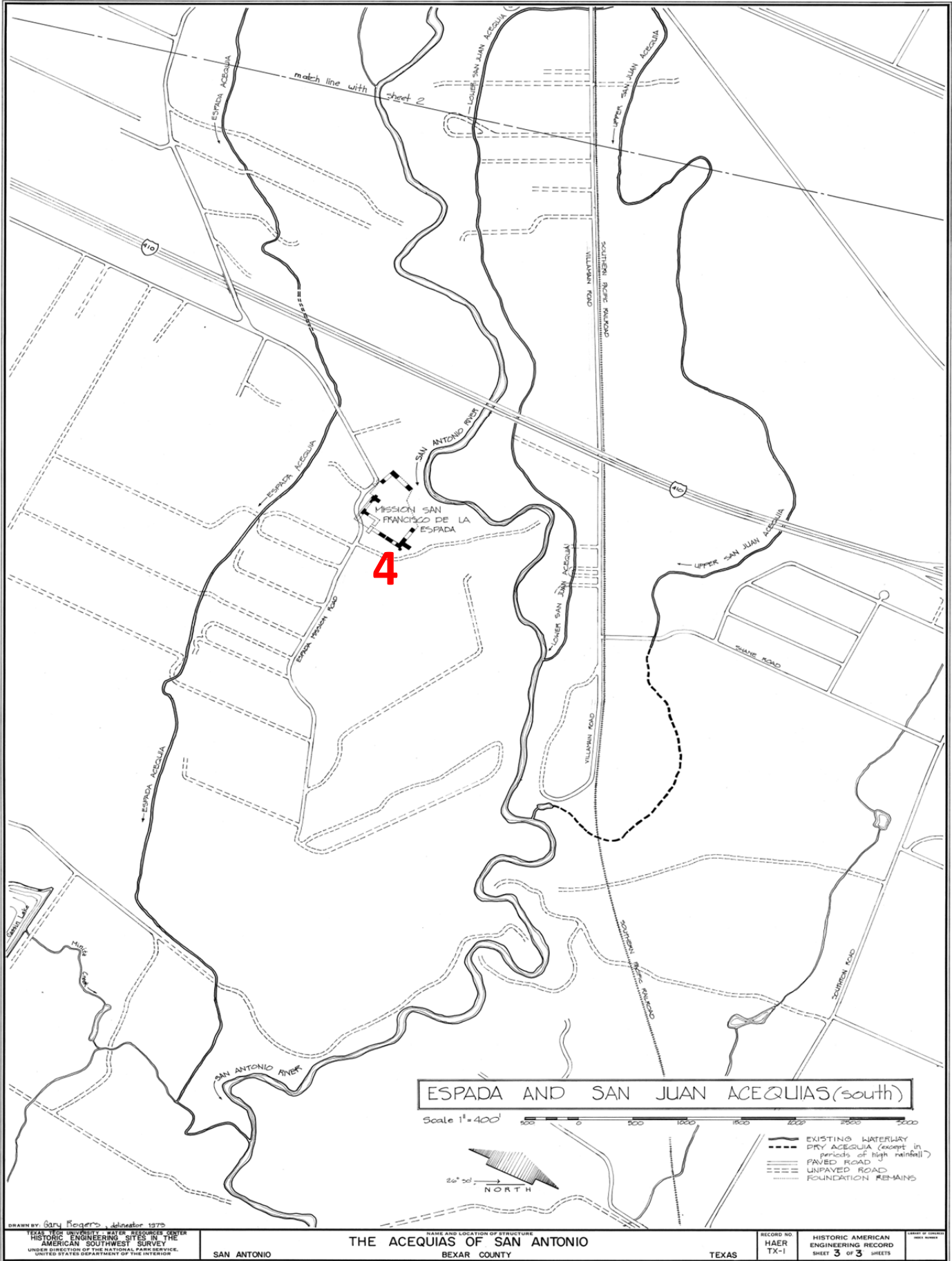
Note that the Menchaca map of 1764 on the previous pages (full map and an enlarged section) shows a dam [stop 1], an *acequia* [stop 2] as part of the Mission Espada [stop 4] irrigation system, but no aqueduct [stop 3] over Piedras Creek, which is also not shown.

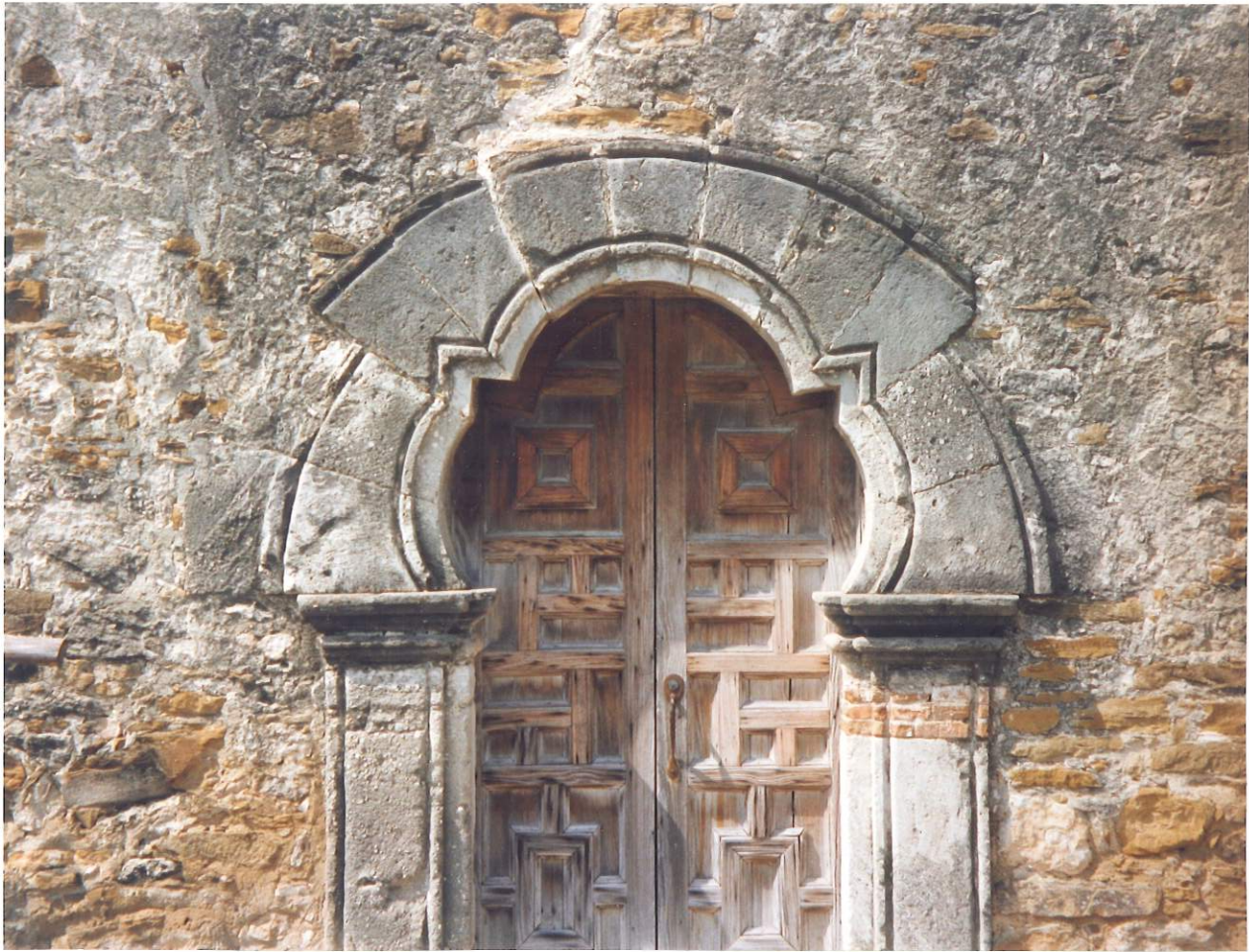
The first written description of an aqueduct here dates to 1772 and was provided by one Fray Saenz, who noted a:

"...conduit of lime and stone of thirty eight varas [105.5 feet]; six [16.6 feet] in height; with its diamond point, and two arches, which allow the currents of said creek to pass..." (Cox 1999:321)

This is clearly a description of the present aqueduct.

The disparity between the map of Menchaca and the description by Saenz has led to speculation that the present aqueduct was built sometime between 1764 and 1772, and that prior to then a less permanent aqueduct, something not unlike the "flumes" or "*canoas*" (hollowed-out split tree trunks supported by a wooden framework) common in northern New Mexico, was used.





Mission San José Today

Grist Mill was built when inhabitants began to eat more wheat than corn.
Operational 1794 and 1809
Reopened 2001

Granary was a warehouse and surplus storage.
Completed ca. 1755
Restored 1930s

Convento provided a residence for the missionary and lodging for visitors.
Completed ca. 1755
Addition ca. 1780s
Modified 1859-1868

Spanish Colonial Bookstore

Church was second permanent church built by mission inhabitants.
Completed ca. 1782
Restored 1930s

Rose Window

Religious Gift Shop

Workshop foundations

Indian Quarters were homes for the families entering the mission.
Completed ca. 1755
Restored 1930s

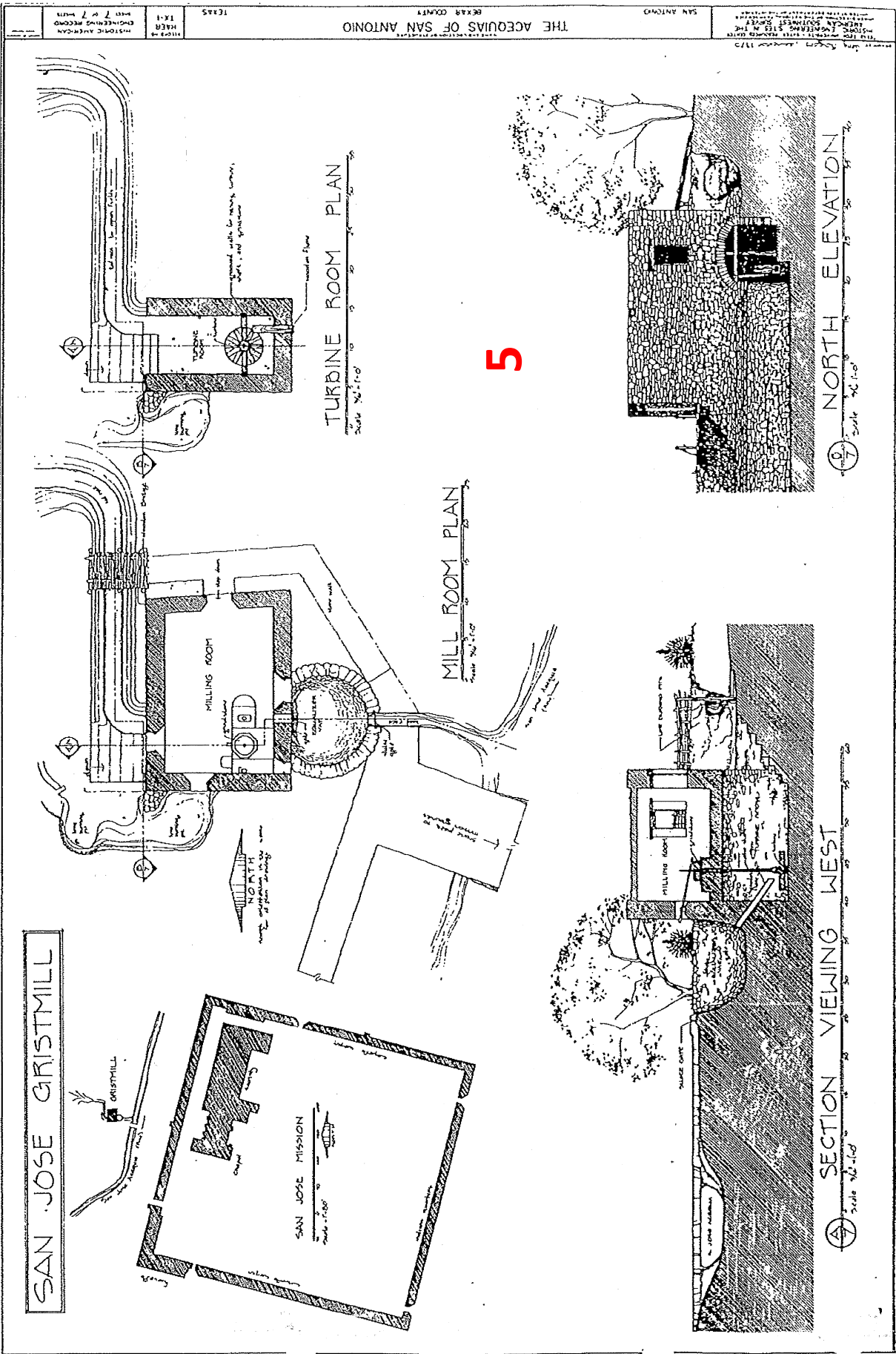
Indian Quarters (open to the public)

Bastion gave protection against Indian attack.
Reconstructed 1930s



5





5

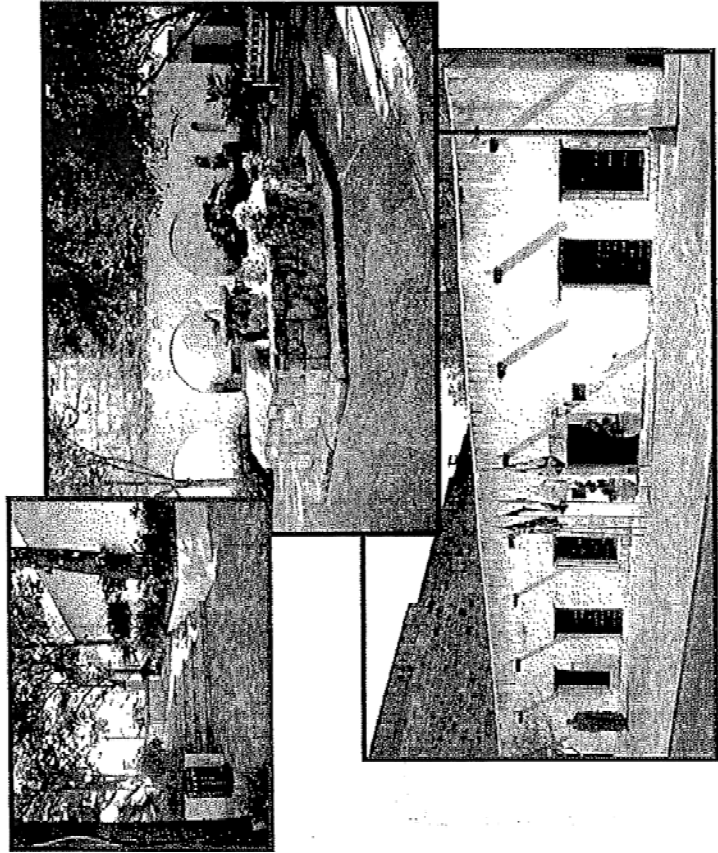
Presidio San Antonio de Bejar

6 Spanish Governor's Palace

105 Plaza de Armas ~ San Antonio, Texas 78205
210-224-0601 ~ www.spanishgovernorspalace.org

The City of San Antonio purchased the historic property, traditionally known as the Spanish Governor's Palace, in 1929 and completed the restoration in 1930 during the formative years of historic preservation in the United States and during the height of the Spanish Colonial Revival movement of the 1920s and '30s. The restoration resulted in structure that was larger than the original building and incorporated an embellished, even romanticized, interpretation of the lives and activities of the families who lived here. This interpretation, although not historically correct, has now become part of the site's 260-year history. Plaques embedded in the walls in each room illustrate this early interpretation.

Research since then, however, has brought to light a different, more historically accurate account of the presidio and its inhabitants. Text panels in each room provide a comparison of the two interpretations.



Call to inquire about school tours, group discounts, or to reserve the courtyard for private parties.

HOURS:

Tuesday thru Saturday 9 AM—5 PM

Sunday 10 AM—5 PM

Closed New Year's Day, Easter Sunday, Battle of Flowers Friday (in April), Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

Call ahead for early closure days.

ADMISSION FEES:

Adults \$4; Military/Seniors (60+) \$3

Children age 7—13 \$2; Children under 7 FREE

The Spanish Governor's Palace is owned and operated by the City of San Antonio, Downtown Operations Department.

6 PRESIDIO SAN ANTONIO DE BEJAR

The *Presidio San Antonio de Bejar* was established as the result of a rivalry between Spain and France in the early 1700s for dominance of the territory that is now a part of the southwestern United States. To guard against French encroachment into eastern Texas, military garrisons accompanied by mission churches were built along the *Camino Real* (Royal Road) from Coahuila in Mexico to Natchitoches in Louisiana. King Philip V of Spain ordered Don Martin de Alarcon, along with fifty soldiers, to build a mission and presidio at the headwaters of the San Antonio River and San Pedro Creek.

On **May 5th 1718** Alarcon established the *Presidio San Antonio de Béjar* to protect the newly established Mission San Antonio de Valero.

(1) 1722 The Marquis de San Miguel de Aguayo, Governor of Coahuila and Tejas, abandoned the original site and relocated the Presidio to its present site in 1722. The Presidio, as envisioned by the Marquis, was to be a large square with pointed bastions at each corner. Based upon a letter from the Marquis to His Majesty in Spain, dated June 13 of the same year, 25,000 adobe bricks and 40 additional laborers were needed for the construction of the compound.

However, a tour of the region in 1744 by former Governor Tomas Felipe de Winthuisen prompted Winthuisen to report that "a presidio as such did not exist, for only its poorly formed houses make up a square plaza, without any wall or stockade". One of these small houses served as the first home (and office) of the Captain of the Presidio.



(2) 1749 The keystone outside above the front entrance is marked with the coat-of-arms of Spanish King Ferdinand VI and the inscription '*año 1749 se acabo*' suggesting construction of this portion of the Presidio compound was finally completed in 1749 by then Captain Toribio de Urrutia. The building traditionally called the Spanish Governor's Palace was the official *Commandancia* (residence and working office) for the Captain of the Presidio and now comprised four rooms: a bedroom in the original one-room home/office, an entrance, the family's main living area, and a separate office.

(3) 1763 The building was sold upon the death of Urrutia in 1763 to Captain Luis Antonio Menchaca who along with his son Jose Menchaca owned the building until 1804. During their residency a large dining room/kitchen was added to the rear of the bedroom and entrance and a room was added to the rear of the captain's office, most likely to enlarge his mercantile business.

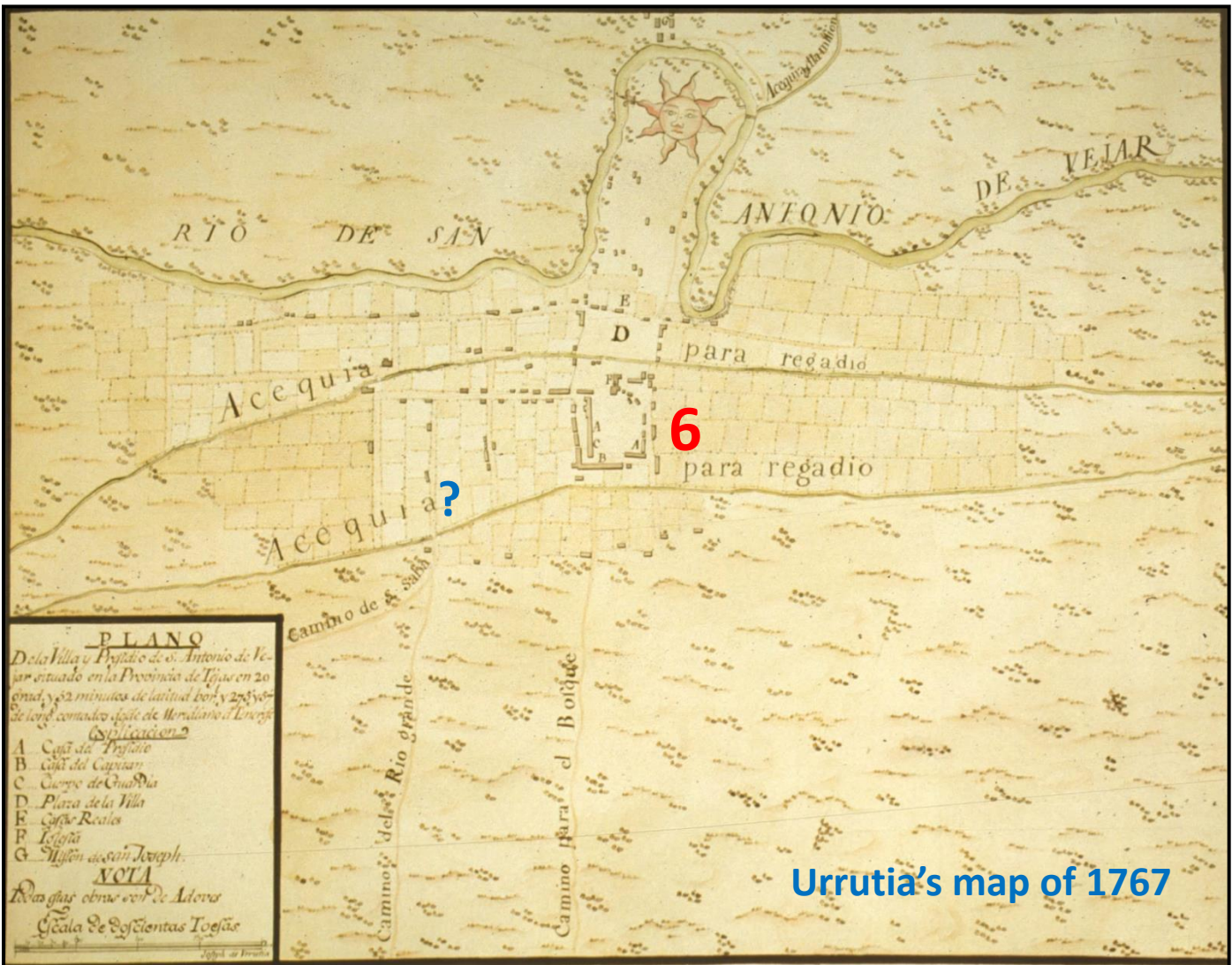
Also in 1763, at the end of the French and Indian War and the elimination of the threat of French encroachment in East Texas, Spain's King Carlos III appointed the Marquis de Rubi to inspect the frontier presidios. Rubi's inspection resulted in the Royal Regulations of 1772 that ordered the capital of Spanish Texas be moved from the Presidio at Los Adaes, near Natchitoches in Louisiana, to the Presidio San Antonio de Béjar. Rubi's orders also stipulated that the Governor would move to San Antonio and take command of the presidio.

(4) 1804 The last captain to live in the *Commandancia* was Juan Ignacio Perez who purchased the building from Jose Menchaca in 1804. Perez also served as Interim Governor in 1816. Perez and his descendants lived in the four-room residence through the late 1860s. The two-room office was also used as a shop by Captain Perez and later leased to other businesses.

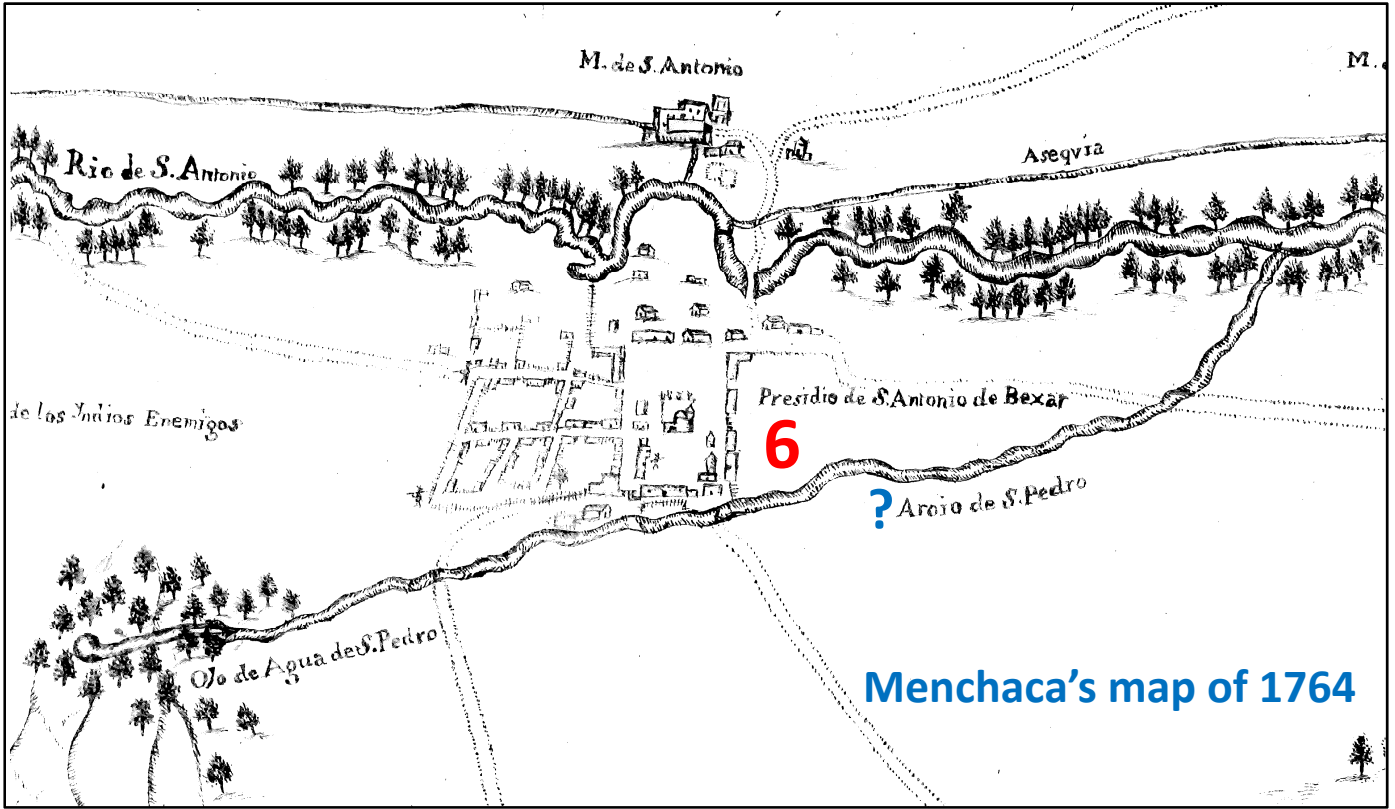
By the late 1860s the surrounding neighborhood had changed from residential to commercial and the family moved to their ranch outside of town. They leased the building over the next 50 years as a residence and to various businesses such as a pawn shop, a wholesale produce store, saloons, a clothing store, and a tire shop. A large room was added by one tenant behind what had been the family's main living area.

1915 In 1915 Adina Emilia De Zavala, early preservationist and granddaughter of the first Vice President of the Republic of Texas Lorenzo De Zavala, announced to the residents of San Antonio that the worn adobe building adjacent to City Hall was, in fact, the "Spanish Governor's Palace". Her 13 year campaign to save the historic property culminated in the City of San Antonio's purchase and restoration of the building in 1928-1930. Through Adina's efforts, the *casa del Capitán*, as it was referred to on all previous maps, would become a royal governor's palace.

1930s Bedroom	1930s Passageway and Loft	1930s Spanish Colonial Kitchen
(3) Late 1700s Captain's Shop	(4) Late 1800s Addition by a Tenant	(3) Late 1700s Dining Room/Kitchen
(2) 1749 Captain's Office and Shop	(2) 1749 Living Area	(1) 1722 Captain's Home/Office



Urrutia's map of 1767



Menchaca's map of 1764

¿Acequia o Arroyo?

Note that the maps on the previous page differ. Both show the San Antonio River. However, on the west side of the river, Urrutia's 1767 map shows two irrigation canals and no arroyo, whereas Menchaca's 1764 map shows an arroyo and no canal.

This confusion goes all the way back to the early explorations and the reason why this site was chosen for a presidio and mission.

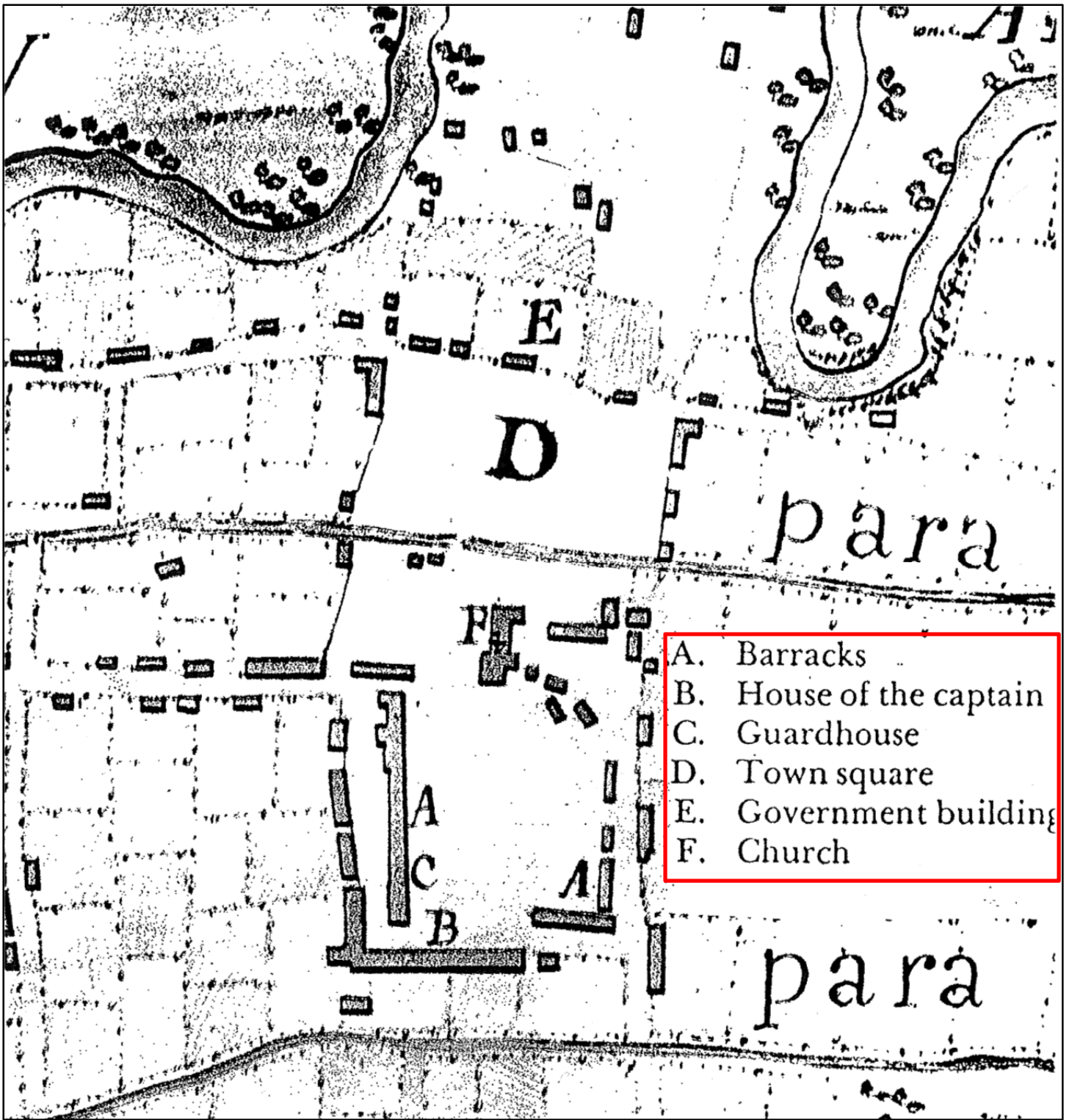
On 5 April 1709, Fray Isidro de Espinosa, Fray Antonio de Olivaras, Captain Pedro de Aguirre and 14 soldiers left the Presidio San Juan Bautista on the Río Grande (south of present-day Piedras Negras/Eagle Pass) to reconnoiter central Texas. According to Espinosa's diary, on 13 April:

"...dimos en una acequia de agua muy poblada de arboles que era suficiente para un pueblo, y toda llena de tomas de agua por estar alta la acequia y colgadas las tierras pusimosle por nombre el agua de S. Pedro." (Foster 1995:99)

"...we came to an irrigation ditch, bordered by many trees and with water enough to supply a town. It was full of taps or sluices of water, the earth being terraced. We named it San Pedro Spring." (Tous 1930:5)

Some scholars (Foster 1995:99, 302; Weber 1992:163) interpret this to mean that natives of the area not only were agricultural, but irrigated as well. Others (e.g., Doolittle 2000) argue otherwise, in part because no crops were mentioned. Most scholars (e.g., Almaráz 1989; de la Teja 1995) recognize it as simply a misidentification—Espinosa saw a spring-fed stream and thought it was an acequia; Urrutia did likewise, Menchaca didn't.

On another note, *Isleños*, or Canary Islanders who arrived in 1731 to found the civil settlement, are claimed by their descendants and one scholar (Glick 1972:29) to have built the first irrigation canal in San Antonio. In fact, however, construction on the first canal was carried out by presidio soldiers in 1718-19 (Castañeda 1936:96; Fox 1985:1).



6



Military Plaza, San Antonio, Texas ca. 1840. Engraving by James D. Smillie, from the William H. Emory, *Report on the United States and Mexican Boundary Survey*, 1857.



The Church of San Fernando before 1867 and after 1840s remodeling. Stereo view slide collection of Albert Steves. Source: the Witte Museum.

Table 3.6, Estimated Population of Texas Presidios and Towns, 1731-1774.

Places	1731	1741	1748	1751	1756	1763	1769	1772
Dates	1740	1747	1750	1755	1762	1768	1771	1774
E. Texas	300	400	460	450	500	550	600	120
Béxar	350	500	530	600	660	750	860	1,250
Bahía	200	225	225	250	300	325	350	425
Orcoqui.	X	X	X	X	90	100	105	X
Xavier	X	X	100	100	X	X	X	X
S. Sabá	X	X	X	X	350	350	350	X
Bucareli	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	350
Totals	850	1,125	1,315	1,400	1,900	2,075	2,265	2,145

X = The presidio or settlement was not established at that time. All of these numbers are estimates. Sources: See Table 3.1 and S1726; S1749; S1756; S1759; S1778; S1779; MAH1756; T3-T-2; T3-N-1.

Source: Tina Loral Meacham, *The Population of Spanish and Mexican Texas, 1716-1836* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of History, University of Texas at Austin, 2000, pp. 128.

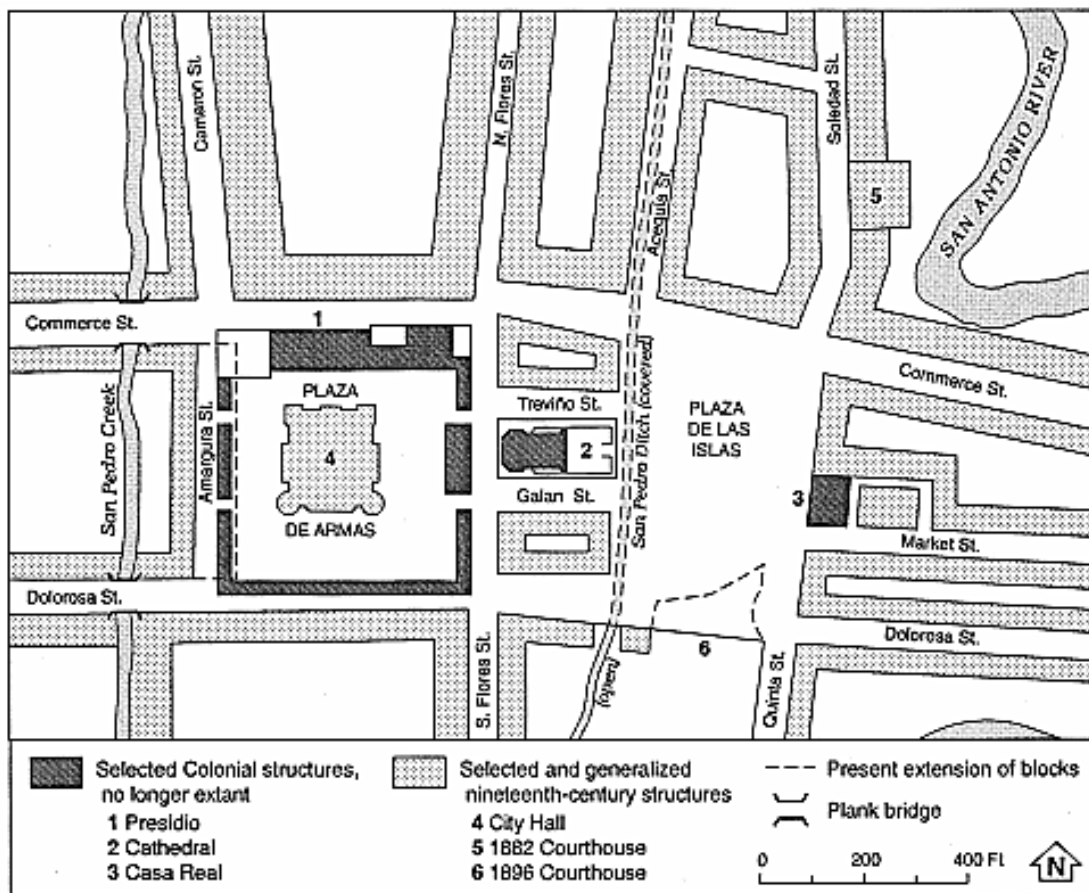


FIG. 1—Principal plazas and surrounding blocks, San Antonio circa 1900. Sources: Corner 1890; Sanborn-Perris Map Co. 1892.

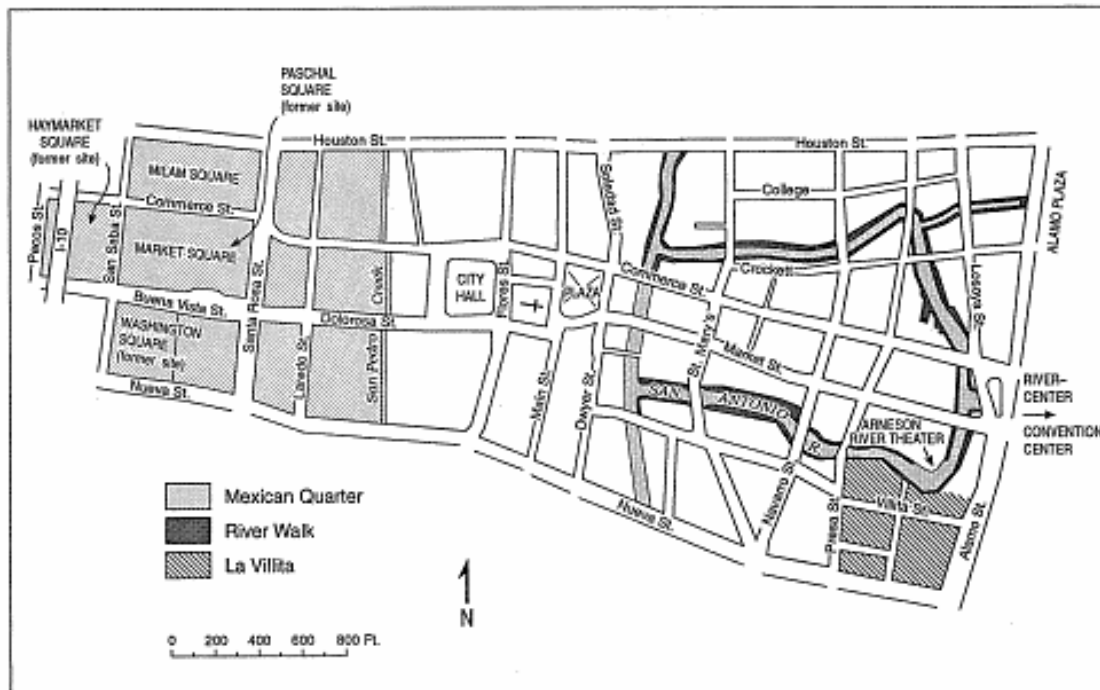
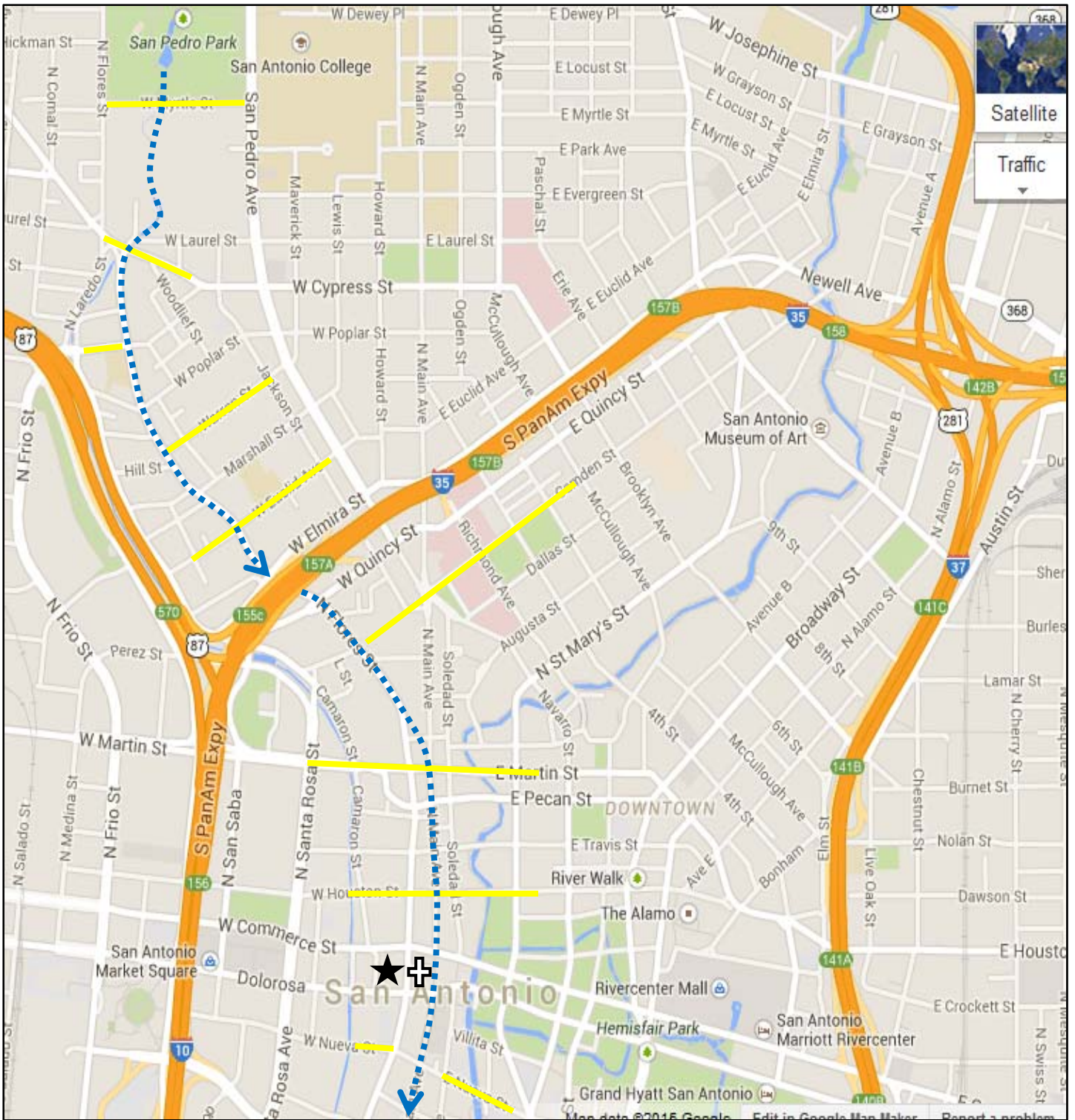


FIG. 2—Hispanic landscape districts in downtown San Antonio. Sources: Sologaitoa 1924; Federal Writers' Project 1938, 1939; Workers of the Writers' Program 1941.

Arreola, D.D. 1995. "Urban Ethnic Landscape Identity," *Geographical Review* 85:518-534



Star: Plaza de Armas, Cross: Cathedral, Dashed blue line: irrigation canal under Flores and Main streets, Yellow lines: side streets perpendicular to the old canal.

***Suggested Additional Readings on San Antonio
and its Cultural-Historical Landscapes***

Almaraz, Felix D. *The San Antonio Missions and Their System of Land Tenure*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989.

Arreola, Daniel D. "The Mexican American Cultural Capital," *Geographical Review* Vol. 77, No. 1, pp. 17-34, 1995.

Benavides, Adan, "Sacred Space, Profane Reality: The Politics of Building a Church in Eighteenth-Century Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 108, No. 1, pp. 1-33.

Cox, I. Wayne. *The Spanish Acequias of San Antonio*. San Antonio: Maverick Publishing, 2005.

De La Teja, Jesus F. *San Antonio de Bexar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995.

Glick, Thomas F. "The Old World Background of the Irrigation System of San Antonio, Texas," *Southwestern Studies Monograph No. 35*, El Paso: Texas Western Press, The University of Texas at El Paso, 1972.

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