

MAKE EL PASO GREAT AGAIN: CORRECTING ALTERNATIVE MEMORY IN
THE BORDER CITY

by

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A thesis submitted to the Graduate Council of
Texas State University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
with a Major in History
December 2017

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DEDICATION

For my mom, dad, and Peca

*You all are my lantern in the darkness.
You brought light at times of stress,
and reminded me to smile and throw the ball around.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am forever grateful for the faculty in the Department of History at Texas State University. They have guided my studies, and I am forever indebted to each one. I also want to acknowledge my friends, colleagues, and mentors in and out of the department who have motivated and relentlessly supported me throughout this crazy journey we call life.

I particularly want to thank Dr. Lynn Denton and Mr. Dan Utley. Without these two urging me to pursue a thesis I would have never found my current topic. Both saw my potential and have committed to my success from the beginning. For this I am thankful and want to give my utmost appreciation. I would also like to extend gratitude to Dr. James McWilliams. You taught me that history is not about memorizing dates, but it is a beautiful story that needs to be preserved for future generations to love. Without you I would have never pursued history at the graduate level. I would also like to express my deepest appreciation to Dr. Peter Siegenthaler, Dr. Nancy Berlage, Dr. Mary Brennan, Dr. Ronald Brown, Dr. Ronald Johnson, Dr. Bryan Mann, and Dr. Peter Dedek for their moral support and counsel. You all have shown me where the practice of history can take you and for that I am forever thankful.

I would not have survived this process without the encouragement and intellectual support of my colleagues in the graduate program. We worked together as a collaborative group and always encouraged each other to persevere and dominate the field that we are in. I want to give special thanks to Jennifer Ruch, Forrest Wales, Ethan Raath, Rachel

Brown, Elizabeth Moeller, Rachael Lunsford, Lindsey Waldenberg, Robert Anzenberger, Drew Goodman, and many others who gave compassion and enjoyed a beer in our times of stress.

I would also like to thank and express my gratitude to my family and friends. I am especially thankful for my mom and dad, Kathy and Robert, who always supported and encouraged me to chase after my dreams. You believed in me, always made me smile in times of hardship, and taught me that a strong work ethic and determination will take me anywhere. I would also like to thank my Aunt Sharon and Uncle Mike, who dared me to be different and pursue my intellectual curiosities. I am forever in debt to you all.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my closest friends who dealt with me throughout this process, without you I might have finished this process a little quicker but with fewer laughs and smiles. Adriane Wagner, Benjamin Cordero, Adam Clark, Cole Heidel, the ultimate Frisbee crew, and my gym family have all provided me with love, motivation, confidence, and the best sort of distractions to pursue my graduate degree.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
THC	- Texas Historical Commission
TB	- Tuberculosis
HABS	- Historic American Buildings Survey
NPS	- National Park Service
SHPO	- State Historic Preservation Office
RTHL	- Recorded Texas Historic Landmark
HTC	- Historic Texas Cemetery
LCA	- Life Cycle Assessments
HPO	- Historic Preservation Office
HLC	- Historic Landmark Commission
H-overlay	- Historic-overlay

I. INTRODUCTION: HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND DOMINANT NARRATIVES

This thesis will examine how local historic preservation efforts, within a national context, determine and support a dominant narrative. Using Manhattan Heights District in El Paso, Texas as a case study demonstrates how the dominant narrative often excludes the complexity of real history and specifically here reinforces a polarized community based on early twentieth century racism. Registered on September 29, 1980, Manhattan Heights District was the first district of El Paso entered into the National Register of Historic Places and became on May 26, 1981, the first locally designated historic district in El Paso. With this dominant narrative established in the cultural landscape, is it possible to retell a history that is considered fixed by the local community? Fixed narratives established by universities and government agencies tend to favor sites that correlate with a prominent architect and choose to disregard or undervalue the local history associated with a site.¹ Currently, preservation is split into two different spheres where, as Ned Kaufman explains, the first group “gauges success of preservation efforts by . . . authenticity and technical competence . . . [and] the second defines success by . . . social relevance or utility.”² Although offices of historic preservation have gravitated

¹ Many preservation efforts occur in order to save a structure due to its correlation with a famous architect. Daniel Bluestone’s *Chicago’s Mecca Flat Blues* showed that the building’s two major identities, that of architectural relevance and its housing of African American residents which inspired songwriter Jimmy Blythe to write the song, “Mecca Flat Blues,” could not hold off the expansion of the Illinois Institute of Technology in 1951. Daniel Bluestone, “Chicago’s Mecca Flat Blues,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 57, no. 4 (December 1998): 382-403.

² Ned Kaufman, *Place, Race, and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation* (New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2009), 1.

toward incorporating minority or neglected histories within sites and districts, the process of shifting from the dominant accepted narrative to an inclusive narrative constitutes a shift in the paradigm of preservation. In regards to Manhattan Heights, the history that is displayed on the markers neglects to address the Mexican American voice at the site.

El Paso has attracted people from across the United States and across national borders. In the late nineteenth century, in particular, individuals from Mexico and the U.S. flocked to El Paso looking for a cure to their tuberculosis symptoms. These patients were a portion of the people from all regions who continued to immigrate to El Paso for its healthful weather and prime location between California and Central Texas. Though these patients were of both genders and represented a variety of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, many narratives regarding preserved sites, districts, and buildings in the city have a dominant Caucasian, masculine influence, while lower socioeconomic places associated with Mexican heritage are under threat of demolition. Presenting the dominant narrative as the only history within a historic district is commonplace within many historical sites and districts. To further impede the preservation of minority spaces, El Paso's plan to revitalize and reinvigorate the city to create an alluring atmosphere for younger generations to become residents counters the preservation of historic spaces and communities associated with Mexican American heritage.

In contrast to the dominant narrative, Mexican American and Mexican presence in El Paso influenced the development of Manhattan Heights Historic District.³ For the

³ The differences between Mexican American, Texas Mexican, Hispanic, and Mexican are based in cultural and class strata. *Mexican American* refers to people of Mexican descent who live in the United States. Nieto-Phillips explained that the label Mexican American comparatively gives Mexicans the opportunity to be part of the “white race” and express their American citizenship. Texas Mexicans are Mexicans who live in Texas

purpose of this thesis I will use the terms Mexican and Mexican American, for they were marginalized equally, but each groups has different identities. With little documented historical content about the establishment of the district, I was curious to learn why this region was safe from the threat of corporate incursion compared to other historic districts. The reason became clear once I read the markers within the district defining the area (Figures 1 and 2).

Historical markers are the product of local entities who apply for the marker, which is approved by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) once a process of content review is completed. The Memorial Park marker (Figure 1), submitted by Una B. Hill, briefly addresses the founding of the park and the means of designation. Una Hill was the former chairman of the Manhattan Heights Historical District committee in 1981 and former president of Memorial Park Improvement Association.⁴ Hill, who first saw

and have yet to assimilate to the United States “cultural and political mainstream . . . [and] clung to their cultural habits.” From John M. Nieto-Philips, *The Language of Blood: The Making of Spanish-American Identity in New Mexico, 1880s-1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 2-4. According to the National Park Service, citing the U.S. Census Bureau, *Hispanic* refers to individuals who are of Spanish origin or descent and live in the United States. The significance of the definition is that it recognizes that the person is from Spain or the Iberian Peninsula, rather than from South America or additionally Latin America. From Brian D. Joyner, *Hispanic Reflections on the American Landscape: Identifying and Interpreting Hispanic Heritage* (U.S. Department of the Interior: National Park Service, 2009), 3-5. To identify oneself as Spanish or Hispanic, as John M. Nieto-Phillips explains, individuals are “resurrecting archaic notions about “purity of blood” that dated to the conquest.” Despite Mexico’s independence from Spain in 1821, the desire to hold onto “Spanishness” persists by marginalizing those who identify as Mexican. When an individual identifies as Mexican, they are stating that they are descendants of people from Spain and an American Indian and originate from Mexico.

³ From John M. Nieto-Philips, *The Language of Blood: The Making of Spanish-American Identity in New Mexico, 1880s-1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 2-4.

⁴ Virginia Turner, “Manhattan Heights is first Historical District,” *El Paso Herald Post*, Newspaper clipping, (El Paso, October 12, 1981), B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103,

Manhattan Heights in 1934, creates a romanticized narrative in her article, “Brief History of Manhattan Heights.” She attributes the neighborhood’s appeal to the “beautiful breeze . . . [and] lush Memorial Park” protected in the 1970s by a horse mounted police patrol that kept vandals at bay. Once the city removed the patrol due to budget cuts and vandals destroyed the Hilltop Gardens, a neighborhood organization named the Memorial Park Improvement Association developed in 1976. After a year of improvements, the group, chaired by Hill, chose to designate the park in hopes of maintaining the park and surrounding “century old homes of which all El Paso can be proud.”⁵ Hill’s perception of the neighborhood is clear throughout her writings and in the marker text; she idealizes and commemorates the “delightful area” as a local heritage site that exemplifies an “exclusive neighborhood [that] has been the home of many prominent El Paso business and professional leaders”⁶

The Mabel Welch marker (Figure 2), which is in Memorial Park, recognizes the importance of Welch as El Paso’s first certified female architect and her work in the city. The marker application was submitted by Will DeBusk, marker chair of the El Paso County Historical Commission in 1995.⁷ DeBusk held a Bachelor of Science Degree in mechanical engineering and a Master of Arts Degree in public administration. After working at White Sands Missile Range as Project Engineer for the Hawk and Pershing

Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

⁵ Una B. Hill, *Brief History of Manhattan Heights*, marker application narrative, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

⁶ First quote from Hill, *Brief History of Manhattan Heights*. Second quote from Historical marker for Memorial Park, El Paso, TX.

⁷ Pres Dehrkoop, Email correspondence, September 5, 2017.

missiles, DeBusk retired and pursued his interest in genealogy, serving as chair of the El Paso Historical Commission and chair of the historical marker committee from 2004 to June 26, 2016.⁸ DeBusk was also a member of “The Men of the Woman’s Club,” which is part of The Woman’s Club of El Paso.⁹ The Woman’s Club, originally named the Current Topics Club, was created in May 1894. The club was a proponent for the “changing roles for women in society” and wanted to “bring culture and the arts to this wild and wooly town” of El Paso.¹⁰ The narrative created by DeBusk emphasizes Mabel Welch as El Paso’s first female architect and pays tribute to her use of Spanish Colonial architecture and her interest in interior design.

The fault with these markers, and many throughout the United States, is that public spaces are marked with a forced dominant narrative created by local entities to exemplify the entire site or region. In this case, the narratives eliminate multiple participants in history and create an idealized history that the majority populace of El Paso accepts. The marginalization of Mexican heritage and cultural practices can be traced to the modernity of Texas.¹¹ According to author Richard R. Flores, the virulent rise of racial discrimination came “in the rapid transition to commercial farming and the erosion of local agricultural and cattle-related practices,” which created a sect of

⁸ Pres Dehrkoop, September 5, 2017.

⁹ “Will E. DeBusk,” Sunset Funeral Homes, last modified 2017, accessed August 26, 2017, <http://www.sunsetfuneralhomes.net/obituaries/Will-Debusk/#!/Obituary>.

¹⁰ “History,” The Woman’s Club of El Paso, last modified 2014, accessed August 26, 2017, <http://wcoep.org/history/>.

¹¹ Modernity, in this instance, specifically marks the rise of capitalism that created new markets and a wage labor system that forced capital and economic change within the state on a new scale. From Richard R. Flores, *Memory, Remembering Modernity, & The Alamo the Master Symbol* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 3-4.

dependent wage laborers and status of landless Texas Mexicans.¹² David Montejano further explains that the social structure established between the Mexican and Anglo population “became undermined and Mexicans found themselves treated as an inferior race, segregated into their own” communities.¹³ By purposely neglecting the Mexican voice throughout historical narratives, cities (such as El Paso), states, and the national government omit the role of Mexicans in the development and growth of the United States. As noted by Kaufman, “minority participation in heritage programs [such as preservation and conservation] has been limited, and the picture of American history presented . . . understates the diversity of the nation’s actual history.”¹⁴

Mexican American heritage, which is neglected and replaced with a romanticized dominant Anglo Caucasian history, is briefly addressed in the Manhattan Heights neighborhood with the marker that mentions Mabel Welch’s choice to design housing highlighting the local influence of Mexican culture, such as the use of adobe and rusticated colors. The omission of Mexican American influence on the region inspired my search for the untold history of the district, because El Paso’s population by the middle of the eighteenth century included about 5,000 Spanish and Mestizos.¹⁵ Though the district is safe from demolition today because of its association with a white female

¹² . Flores, *Memory, Remembering Modernity, & The Alamo the Master Symbol*, 3-4.

¹³ David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836 – 1986*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 114.

¹⁴ Out of 77,000 listings in the National Register of Historic Places in 2004, only about 90 are associated with Hispanic heritage. Quote and information from Kaufman, *Place, Race, and Story*, 76.

¹⁵ A Mestizo is a person who resided in New Spain who was a person born from one Spanish-born and one Indian parent. From “El Paso, Texas,” TSHA Texas State Historical Association, last modified June 12, 2010, accessed August 28, 2017, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hde01>.

architect and prominent white citizens, the story of the neighborhood caused by segregated regulations is hidden from the public.

City officials recognize that El Paso is a border community composed of multiple identities including Mexican Americans, Americans, and Mexicans, which created a classist city.¹⁶ Though city officials recognize that they have a flourishing city mixed with diverse cultures and practices, El Paso's preservation history as presented in official sites and institutions has stayed predominately whitewashed and focuses on the achievements of white Anglo European authoritative figures who designed historically significant architecture, districts, and sites. Presenting the dominant narrative and choosing to understate other voices perpetuates the exclusion of minority perspectives from historic preservation.

Local leaders perceived El Paso as becoming industrially important when an influx of Caucasians migrated to the city for a tuberculosis (TB) cure, but stayed after regaining their health and cultivated the region into the American city of El Paso. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, El Paso's population skyrocketed between 1880 and 1890 with a 1,304.6% increase in population.¹⁷ Following the completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1881, many victims of TB sought a cure in the arid Southwest climate. The vast migration of tubercular patients to El Paso helped establish the city as a health center. Unfortunately, official statistics do not exist for determining the numbers of non-residents who migrated to the city for treatment. An unknown

¹⁶ El Paso was not solely composed of Mexican immigrants. According to the 1910 United States Census Bureau, African Americans, Native Americans, Chinese, and Japanese lived in Texas. From U.S. Census Bureau, *Table I. Composition and Characteristics of the Population for the State and for Counties 1910*, 614.

¹⁷ In 1880 the population in El Paso was 736 and by 1890 the population reached 10,338.

physician, however, examined the “death certificates for place of birth” and discovered that of the “2,791 TB victims during the years 1904-1913 . . . a fourth had been born in Mexico, 49 percent in the rest of the country, and only 12 percent in Texas.”¹⁸ It was inconclusive if the individuals arrived with the disease or later contracted tuberculosis upon arrival, but it is estimated that “63 percent had come to El Paso less than two years” earlier than 1913.¹⁹

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, El Paso’s population more than doubled from 1900 to 1910 with a population jump from 24,886 to 52,599 and a percentage increase of 146.9%. In 1900, El Paso’s native white population, which was composed of foreign and mixed parentage, was 11,377, while 16,114 were born in Mexico.²⁰ Because of the wide differences in characteristics among the white population, the bureau divided the group into four entities:

(1) Native, native parentage – that is, having both parents born in the United States; (2) native, foreign parentage – having both parents born abroad; (3) native, mixed parentage – having one parents native and the other foreign born; (4) foreign born.²¹

¹⁸ Ascension Muñoz, “Tuberculosis Turned El Paso Into a Health Center,” *Borderlands*, 2000, accessed September 21, 2016,

<http://epcc.libguides.com/content.php?pid=309255&sid=2583751>.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau 1910, *Table I*, 614.

²¹ The United States Census Bureau in 1910 did not distinguish Mexicans by the color, nativity, and parentage chart and categorized Mexicans with the white population. There was no breakdown of the foreign and mixed parentage of the White population, which included persons from Mexico, Germany, Austria, England, Italy, Russia, Ireland, Sweden, and additional countries. Comparatively, “Negro, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and all other” nationalities were separated. The census differentiated between the foreign nationalities when compiling the “total white stock of foreign origin, which includes persons born abroad and also natives having one or both parents born abroad.” From U.S. Census Bureau, Supplement for Texas: Population, Agriculture, Manufactures, Mines and Quarries, (1910), 596.

Of 1900s foreign born white population within Texas, 51.8 percent were persons born in Mexico, while 38.7 percent represent the “total white stock of foreign origin” of Mexican descent.²²

Minorities, and specifically Mexican Americans in El Paso, are important and influential players in the cultural development of the city.²³ Mexican identity, including the arts, are seen across the city through mosaics, textiles, and pottery, and are covered in ornate designs and colors. Selective neglect of Mexican history and heritage demonstrates that the local Caucasian population, which controls the dominant narrative, views these individuals and practices as second-rate primarily useful for promotional and tourism purposes. El Paso’s historic districts that are in lower socioeconomic areas are today threatened by demolition in hopes of revitalizing the city. El Paso’s revitalization attempts to modernize the city demonstrate how minority and lower socioeconomic groups’ culture and history are the first to be replaced with modernized architecture and

²² U.S. Census Bureau (1910), 595-596.

²³ The term minority represents the psychological connotation of the term rather than the physical representation of the population. According to research collected by William E. Hartmann in 2001, the U.S. Census Bureau surveyed that racial and ethnic minority births will outnumber non-Hispanic White births by 2050. From William E. Hartmann et al., “In Search of Cultural Diversity, Revisited: Recent Publication Trends in Cross-Cultural and Ethnic Minority Psychology,” *Review of General Psychology* 17, no. 3 (2013): 243. The term minority is ultimately used to illustrate the racial discrimination towards persons of Mexican descent. According to a psychological study, conducted by Alan Meca and others, “identity development [of immigrant and ethnic/racial minority backgrounds] can be more complex” and generate individuals with lower self-esteem and less coherent identities due to the multiple cultural reference points presented. Labeled as a minority creates the notion that the individual’s cultural practices are lesser than the dominant culture, which in turn places pressure on the person to adapt to the local heritage and neglect their history and additional cultural practices. From Alan Meca et al., “Personal and Cultural Identity Development in Recently Immigrated Hispanic Adolescents: Links with Psychosocial Functioning,” *American Psychological Association* 23, no. 3 (2017): 349.

institutions. The lack of the Mexican American voices in the Manhattan Heights Historic District demonstrates the racial divide present within El Paso and further propagates a segregated community of Mexicans, Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans. Conversely, once the dominant identity recognizes and incorporates minority history into the development of district narratives, a paradigm shift will occur to signify the importance of minorities in the city's "official" identity.

The correlation between memory and sites begins with an analysis of official and vernacular cultural expressions. According to historian John Bodnar, "official cultural expressions" reduce competing voices that threaten the nationally accepted narrative while presenting a hyper-patriotic and nationalistic perspective. Comparatively, vernacular culture reflects varying interests that surround a part of the whole.²⁴ These two cultural expressions present a dilemma among preexisting sites. Who gained access to the site first? Was it the government official or the defenders of such social units that do not comply with the status quo? El Paso currently has 138 historical markers, 55 of which are National Register properties and 10 historic districts. The districts, which the City of El Paso categorized as either economic or international developments, are diverse areas that focus on architectural relevance. According to the guidelines for El Paso's historical districts, the means to preserve these areas is to "stabilize and improve property values . . . foster civic pride . . . enhance the city's attractions to tourists . . . [and] strengthen the

²⁴ John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 13-14.

economy of the city,” all of which neglect to analyze the cultural relevance of the place and how it relates to the memory and history of El Paso.²⁵

This case study will illustrate how dominant narratives in El Paso omitted the Mexican American voice, particularly in the 1980s, casting the group as outsiders. The next chapter, Chapter 2, will address the development of preservation in the United States and how these regulations influenced the maturation of the preservation entities in El Paso. In studying the participants in the city’s preservation sector, this work will illuminate the city’s pro-development policies. Chapter Three will give the history of the development of Manhattan Heights District, analyze how housing regulations prohibited the Mexican American populace from moving to the neighborhood, and address how the local community of El Paso created an idealized narrative of the district. The following final chapter analyzes how dominant historical narratives influence local memory and create a constructed history. Manhattan Heights shows how the dominant narrative is supported by local memory that excludes minority voices within the historical narratives and creates cultural and racial tension within the city.

²⁵ “Design Guidelines for El Paso’s Historic Districts, Sites, and Properties,” City of El Paso, last modified 2017, accessed August 26, 2017, <https://www.elpasotexas.gov/~media/files/coep/economic%20development/consolidated%20design%20guidelines%20for%20city%20webpage/consolidated%20design%20guidelines%20for%20city%20webpage.ashx?la=en>.

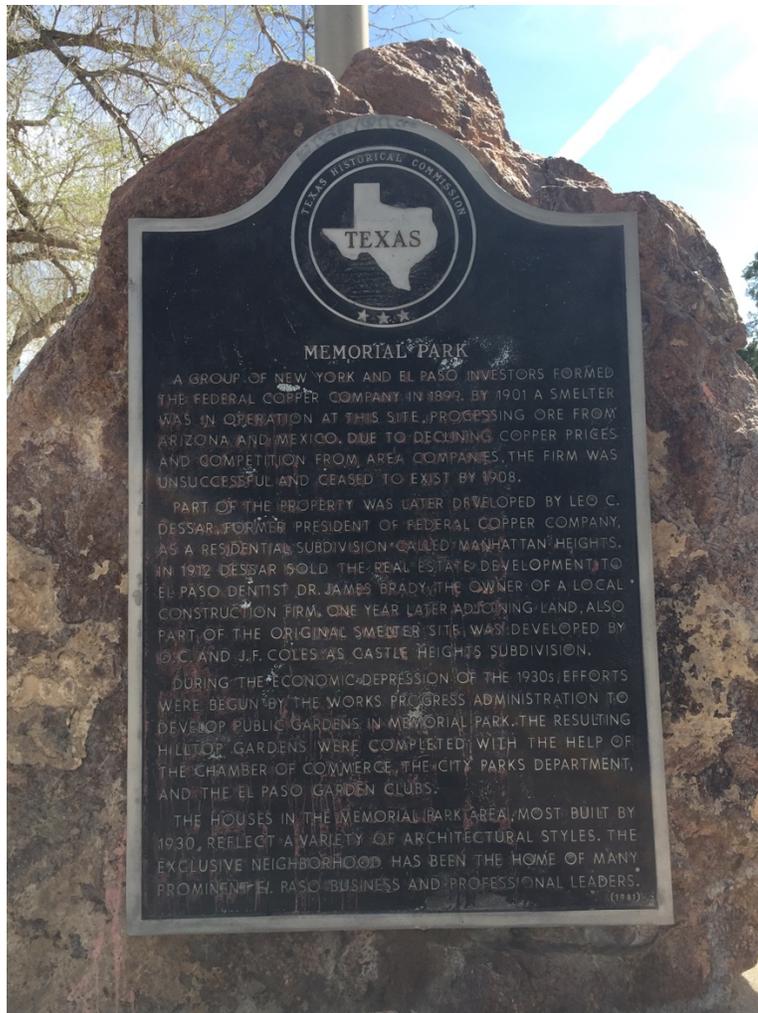


Figure 1: Memorial Park marker. Courtesy of Kimberly N. Diedrich



Figure 2: Mabel Welch marker. Courtesy of Kimberly N. Diedrich

II. THE AGENTS OF PRESERVATION IN EL PASO

Preservation offers many tangible and intangible benefits to communities. A major purpose of any historic preservation project is to communicate the lessons of history, in order that the present and the future may learn from the past.²⁶

The initial act toward preserving the architectural structures in El Paso began in 1933 with the creation of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). El Paso County collected data on the First National Bank, Merrick Building, Simeon Hart Grist Mill, and the Mission de San Antonio de la Ysleta del Sur and submitted sketches and pictures of the structures to catalogue and document the architectural heritage of El Paso. Before HABS was implemented to document historic places during the Depression within the National Park Service, which was created in 1916, preservation was performed by independent parties. As historian Charles B. Hosmer explained, these people who preserved and restored historic buildings focused on supplementing “patriotic education,” which led to a lack of “rationale for their projects” and altered the memory towards sites.²⁷

Preservation in the United States began with the attempt to preserve Independence Hall in 1813. Unfortunately, due to poor planning, officials felt compelled to demolish the adjoining wings to the hall, including the room in which the Declaration of

²⁶ City of El Paso, Texas, Office of Historic Preservation, *The El Paso Historic Preservation Plan, 1987-88*, 1.

²⁷ Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., ed., *Preservation Comes of Age*, vol. 2, *From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926 – 1949*, by Charles B. Hosmer, Jr. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), 1044.

Independence was signed. Leaders wanted to keep the building in use by fireproofing the structure. Philadelphians showed little regard for the original materials and structural elements of the building and allowed officials to begin alterations in 1813. City officials attempted to alter the “structure’s wings and arched piazzas to be replaced by rows of brick buildings for city offices.”²⁸ While attempting to preserve the wings and make the rooms flame retardant, city officials inadvertently destroyed iconic features of the space, forcing them to demolish the two adjoining wings. The destruction of the adjoining halls incited public anger and led Philadelphia city council members to recognize that the building was not only a local landmark, but “embraced the whole United States” and represented the only “free republic the world had yet to see.”²⁹

The historiography of preservation efforts can be characterized in two different categories: places associated with public acts and government action versus private, personal spaces. The first formal preservation efforts occurred in 1850, when Ann Pamela Cunningham and the Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union united to protect and restore George Washington’s estate, Mount Vernon, located in Virginia. This coalition of women set the stage for other groups to preserve sites that represented the Great White Men who politically defined and influenced the nation’s history.³⁰ Creating

²⁸ “Independence Hall by Charlene Mires,” The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia, last modified in 2012, accessed September 7, 2017, <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/independence-hall/>. Charlene Mires is Professor of History at Rutgers-Camden and is author of *Independence Hall in American Memory*.

²⁹ Peter Dedek, *Historic Preservation for Designers* (New York: Fairchild Books, 2014), 4.

³⁰ The term Great White Men is an adapted term from Thomas Carlyle’s interpretation of the “Great Men... [who] shaped themselves in the world’s history.” Thomas Carlyle, “Lecture I. The Hero as Divinity. Odin. Paganism: Scandinavian Mythology.,” in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, (May 5, 1840), 5.

such commemorative sites implemented the notion that preservation is not just about remembrance, but also plays an active and ongoing role in national culture.³¹ According to historian Seth Bruggeman, focus on preserving an individual's home can be traced to the seventeenth century, when the Enlightenment thinkers presumed a link between adult character and birthplace, or where one resided.³² Forging a reverence for sites associated with political characters ultimately created a conundrum for the American identity; while illustrating American exceptionalism, sites also became fixed in a framed "memory with whiteness," which continues to mask the diversity of the nation's shared heritage.³³

This emphasis on sites associated with Great White Men came to define and develop the historical narrative of the United States and included presidents, notable politicians, and other significant historic individuals.³⁴ Cunningham hoped to rally the nation around Washington's memory and repair the growing sectionalism between the North and the South by preserving the site to Washington's latter years.³⁵ With little

³¹ Seth C. Bruggeman, *Born in the U.S.A. Birth, Commemoration and American Public Memory* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 5.

³² *Ibid.*, 6.

³³ *Ibid.*, 7-15.

³⁴ Dedek, *Historic Preservation for Designers*, 3. The ideology of preserving the history of "Great White Men" originates from the teaching of "traditional American history," defined as . . . "the significant constitutional, political, intellectual, economic, and foreign policy trends and issues that have shaped the course of American history . . . and the key episodes, turning points and leading figures involved in the constitutional, political, intellectual, diplomatic and economic history of the United States." This practice notably neglected minority histories and emphasized the actions and achievements of the Great White Men. The main quote is from Gary J. Kornblith and Carol Lasser, "More than Great White Men: A Century of Scholarship on American Social History," *OAH Magazine of History* 21 no. 2 (April 2007): 8. The inner quote is from Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, *Higher Education Amendments of 2005*, 109th Cong., 2d sess., 2005, S. Rep. 26-249 to accompany S. 1614, Sec. 851 <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/T?&report=sr21&&dbname=109&> (accessed December 3, 2016).

³⁵ Dedek, *Historic Preservation for Designers*, 6.

interest and no assistance from the local and national government, Cunningham resorted to raising money and using private funds to purchase, preserve, restore, and interpret the site, which is the general method many preservation offices face today.

Furthermore, Cunningham implemented the practice and belief that architectural design was the main component worthy of restoration. Consequently, preservationists throughout the twentieth century prioritized the conservation of the structure rather than the intangible heritage of the site.³⁶ Intangible heritage refers to the cultural practices of a community that “promote cultural diversity and human creativity.”³⁷ By taking measures to preserve the original materials, Cunningham inadvertently designated a specific historical period to define a property, rather than enveloping the entire narrative surrounding the site.

Following the preservation trend of the early 1920s, Reverend Doctor W.A.R. Goodwin petitioned and campaigned to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. for the entire city center of Williamsburg, Virginia to be preserved.³⁸ After he toured the city and recognized the district’s historical significance, Rockefeller agreed to restore the city to create an “open air historical museum” based on the Swedish living outdoor museum, Skansen, which was developed in 1891 in Stockholm.³⁹ Rockefeller and Goodwin wanted to depict life

³⁶ Such examples include culturally significant “practices, representations, and expressions” that transfer from generation to generation, and are constantly adapting and responding to the locals interaction with “their [cultural and natural] environment . . . and their history.” From “Definition of Intangible Heritage,” *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*, accessed October 24, 2016, http://www.unesco.org/services/documentation/archives/multimedia/?id_page=13.

³⁷ “Definition of Intangible Heritage,” *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)*.

³⁸ Dedek, *Historic Preservation for Designers*, 10.

³⁹ Dedek, *Historic Preservation for Designers*, 10.

before the industrialization of the United States and to illustrate the former glory and original appearance of the colonial capital of Virginia. Cultural historian Warren I. Sussman explained, in searching for the past “a search for the ‘real’ America” ensued by utilizing authentic materials and reconstituting the original building techniques that created an interdependent relationship which guided preservationists thereafter.⁴⁰

As reconstruction work on Williamsburg began in 1926 under architect William Graves Perry, Goodwin, and Rockefeller, many sites were demolished because these gentlemen deemed buildings constructed after 1800 as “nonhistoric.”⁴¹ Ultimately, Perry, Goodwin, and Rockefeller attempted to recreate and reinvent Colonial Williamsburg to show their interpretation of an idealized colonial American city which Goodwin perceived as “the Cradle of the Republic” and “the birthplace of her liberty.”⁴² According to Hosmer, because the Williamsburg project had no predecessor, little thought regarding the various preservation approaches of what the visitors would see had been discussed among the preservationists. This omission, he explained, demonstrated that “most of the policy decisions were made of influenced by architects, who became increasingly interested in the artistic and historical integrity” of buildings that highlighted “patriotic inspiration . . . [and] architectural considerations over . . . historical interpretation” of the site.⁴³ Despite the demolition of multiple-century-old structures, the project created

⁴⁰ Stanley Cohen and Lorman Ratner, eds., *The Development of an American Culture* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1970), 196-197.

⁴¹ Dedek, *Historic Preservation for Designers*, 10-11.

⁴² W. A. R. Goodwin, *Bruton Parish Church Restored and Its Historic Environment* (Petersburg, Va., 1907), 13.

⁴³ Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., ed., *Preservation Comes of Age*, vol. 1, *From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926 – 1949*, by Charles B. Hosmer, Jr. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), 38.

public interest in America's heritage and sparked widespread enthusiasm about historic architecture and places.⁴⁴

With a coalition of private citizens and public officials advocating for the protection and preservation of historic buildings, rather than historic districts prior to the 1930s, the federal government created the National Trust for Historic Preservation to generate a "private, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to protecting the irreplaceable."⁴⁵ As Hosmer illustrated, with the nation reevaluating its heritage, the focus to save "the vestiges of America's past" arose among architectural professionals.⁴⁶ By the 1930s some preservationists moved beyond the "patriotic-historical focus" to save "period houses" that were characterized as "buildings that had come through the years with all of their original furnishings intact."⁴⁷

The National Trust's first preserved sites, designated in 1949, were typically associated with the Founding Fathers. Preservationists restored original building structures and made efforts not to replace the original materials. In doing so, political officials and historic preservationists assumed that preserving the authentic materials perpetuated an honest historical identity. Because the first acts of preservation originated with the desire to retain Independence Hall, then later Washington's estate,

⁴⁴ Dedek, *Historic Preservation for Designers*, 11.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁶ Hosmer, Jr., ed., *Preservation Comes of Age*, vol. 2, 1043.

⁴⁷ Hosmer, Jr., ed., *Preservation Comes of Age*, vol. 1, 209. The shift towards saving buildings with aesthetic appeal was due to the collectors and antiquaries who saw the importance in period homes. Preservationists thereafter continued to preserve sites and buildings associated with political figureheads to generate conformity and an American cultural heritage. Reference Charles B. Hosmer's *Preservation Comes of Age* volume 1 and 2 for additional information regarding the development of the preservation movement.

preservationists within the United States affirmed that sites needed to be associated with an idealistic narrative that perpetuated a hyperpatriotic heritage. In creating an idealized national narrative, preservationists generated historic narratives “rigorously historically documented and cherished by the local community,” rather than developing a narrative encompassing the broad history of the site.⁴⁸

Initiated by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register for Historic Places created the “nation’s official list of historic properties deemed worthy of preservation,” which created a broader understanding of what local governments could preserve as individual sites and districts.⁴⁹ According to Title III in Section 301, a district means an area contains “historic properties, [and] buildings have that similar or related architectural characteristics, cultural cohesiveness, or any combination of the foregoing.”⁵⁰ Adopting the National Register standards allowed states, such as Texas, to determine eligibility for local sites through four different sets of criteria: Association with historic events, association with historic people, significance due to architecture, and archeology.⁵¹

The National Park Service (NPS), under the Secretary of the Interior, defines preservation “as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property” and is an important player in preservation in local communities, providing guidance on “preserving, rehabilitating, and

⁴⁸ Dedek, *Historic Preservation for Designers*, 7.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵⁰ National Historic Preservation Act. Public Law 89-665. Statutes at Large 915 (1966): Section 301, <https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/nhpa1966.htm> (accessed May 27, 2017).

⁵¹ Dedek, *Historic Preservation for Designers*, 89-96. Local sites include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects.

restoring historic buildings.”⁵² The NPS set regulations in which the government and institutions can modify or adapt historic properties and still meet federally recognized criteria. With varying historic architectural styles throughout Texas, and more broadly throughout the United States, the government can influence the means in which organizations and owners alter buildings.

Though national preservation standards started to infiltrate local and national government policy, a dichotomy between the modernist or International style and traditional historic preservation arose.⁵³ Preservationists of the 1960s recognized that modern structures reached the “half-century mark” of existence and that they faced the conundrum to save structures that had no correlation to traditional historic preservation efforts focused mostly on historic leaders and political agency.⁵⁴ As Christopher Hawthorne, an architectural critic, noted, the modernist style lacked creativity and demonstrated the “active disdain for architectural history,” which contradicted Lyndon B.

⁵² First quote from United States, Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, by Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer (Washington, D.C.: Heritage Studies Services, 1995), 17. Second quote is from “Preservation Briefs,” Technical Preservation Services, accessed April 23, 2017, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>.

⁵³ Modernist or International architectural style is defined as a “language with an emphasis on form rather than ornament; structure and materials rather than picturesque constructions; and the rational and efficient use of space.” The modern movement flourished in the United States in the 1930s and reanalyzed the “ways humans lived in and used the designed environment.” From “Modern Architecture,” National Trust for Historic Preservation, last modified 2017, accessed June 12, 2017, <https://savingplaces.org/modern-architecture#.WT75UxPyyYU>.

⁵⁴ Christopher Hawthorne, “1960s architecture: L.A. and the paradox of preservation,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 11, 2009, accessed April 17, 2017, <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-ca-notebook11-2009oct11-story.html>.

Johnson's 1960s mantra of liberty for all, urban renewal, beautification, and conservation.⁵⁵

In 1965, President Johnson convened a committee that studied the dismal efforts of preservation in the United States. In its report, *With Heritage So Rich*, the committee rallied for the preservation movement and argued that historic preservation within the United States was an illusion.⁵⁶ According to the committee, half of the 12,000 sites documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey had been destroyed or damaged beyond repair, which made HABS look like "a death mask of America."⁵⁷ Johnson hoped by preserving the beauty and charm of U.S. cities, the quality of "American civilization" would advance to "enrich and elevate our national life."⁵⁸

Interest in historic preservation from the economic, cultural, and aesthetic perspective has grown dramatically since the 1960s. No longer a battle between modern architects and preservationists, politicians and active participants in the preservation sector have incorporated and acknowledged the importance of preserving historic districts and sites for tangible and intangible assets. The goals of historic preservation in El Paso stemmed from the development of the Texas Historical Commission.

Established in 1953 as the Texas State Historical Survey Committee and later renamed in 1973, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) is an important factor in

⁵⁵ Hawthorne, "1960s architecture."; Lyndon B. Johnson, "To Prevent an Ugly America The Great Society," *The Michigan Quarterly Review*, (May 22, 1964) 230-231.

⁵⁶ Special Committee on Historic Preservation United States Conference of Mayors, *With Heritage So Rich* (New York: Random House, 1966).

⁵⁷ "National Historic Preservation Act," National Park Service, accessed June 12, 2017, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/historicpreservation/national-historic-preservation-act.htm>.

⁵⁸ Johnson, "To Prevent an Ugly America," 230.

saving the heritages of local communities throughout the state of Texas.⁵⁹ The agency was created by the Texas Legislature to “lead, coordinate, sponsor projects, and act as a clearinghouse and information center to survey, record, preserve, restore, and mark all phases of Texas history.” It was to do so by coordinating with state, regional, and local groups and individuals.⁶⁰ The THC is the state agency that offers “a wide range of programs that help preserve the past for future generations of Texans, stimulate economic development across the state, and educate students and professionals alike about historic preservation,” and is the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which is a federally recognized entity.⁶¹ Among many initiatives, it provides the Texas Historic Sites Atlas, which is an inventory database open to the public based on a variety of sources. It includes Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHL), preserved cemeteries through the Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC) database, county courthouses, museums, National Register properties, National Historic Landmarks, State Antiquities Landmarks, and neighborhood surveys.⁶² By providing survey requirements to the public, the THC implemented a documentation program that allows the public to explore its heritage and space and ascribe importance to the diverse historic and cultural resources of localities.

⁵⁹ “About Us: Enriching lives through history,” Texas Historical Commission: real places telling real stories, last modified February 9, 2017, accessed September 7, 2017, <http://www.thc.texas.gov/about>.

⁶⁰ “Our Mission,” *El Paso County Historical Commission*, last modified 2017, accessed April 27, 2017.

⁶¹ “Projects and Programs,” Texas Historical Commission real places telling real stories, last modified May 17, 2016, accessed June 12, 2017, <http://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs>.

⁶² “Atlas Data,” Texas Historic Sites Atlas history on your desktop, last modified 2015, accessed June 12, 2017, <https://atlas.thc.state.tx.us/About/AtlasData>.

The THC as well implements policies and incentives, such as tax credits, to “increase the number and quality of rehabilitation projects across Texas.”⁶³

Additionally, the Texas Statewide Preservation Plan established in 2010 allows communities to “blaze a trail for Texans to preserve, protect, and leverage” the historic and cultural significance for future generations.⁶⁴ The plan depends on local communities and governments to take affirmative action to preserve sites.⁶⁵ The goal within the plan is to enable Texans to learn how to identify historic and cultural resources and to integrate these aspects to cultivate a “broader, stronger, and more diverse community.”⁶⁶ But what of the previously designated sites? Will the narratives of previously designated sites be readdressed to include the counter narrative?

The THC does acknowledge that the Atlas and other “relevant inventories are continually updated and managed to keep pace with the increases in survey data,” because of the mass improvements in technology, easy access to survey data, and online inventory.⁶⁷ Though preservation is implemented throughout these various regulations and suggestions, preservation in practice is perceived differently in real world

⁶³ “The Texas Historical Commission’s Contributions Toward Achieving the Goals of the Statewide Historic Preservation Plan,” *Texas Historical Commission*, accessed April 25.

⁶⁴ The Texas Statewide Preservation Plan was first initiated by the THC in 2000 and plans are adapted every ten years, entitled *Preserving Our Heritage*. Planning for the project began in 1999, which was later administered by the National Park Service. Emily Koller, e-mail message to author, November 1, 2017.

⁶⁵ “Texas Statewide Preservation Plan,” Texas Historical Commission real places telling real stories, last modified May 5, 2016, accessed April 23, 2017, <http://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/texas-statewide-preservation-plan>.

⁶⁶ “Visions and Goals,” Texas Historical Commission real places telling real stories, last modified July 8, 2016, accessed April 23, 2017, <http://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/texas-statewide-preservation-plan/vision-and-goals>.

⁶⁷ “Visions and Goals,” Texas Historical Commission, accessed May 28, 2017.

application. Preservationists, such as Andreas Schönle, currently imply that architectural sites must as well illustrate national importance and foster a narrative that accentuates “the ancient heroes, the outstanding people, and the genuinely interesting,” whereas Daniel J. Levi and Azza Eleiche argue that preservation directly correlates with a site’s ability to generate tourism, which would enhance the local economy, promote public awareness, and create a sense of community pride.⁶⁸ These two positions exemplify issues encountered by many preservationists. Schönle’s argument represents the current local preservation techniques, illustrating how preservationists focus on positive narratives that reinforce an idealized broad national identity, rather than addressing the local cultural heritage that minority communities deem significant. Comparatively, Levi and Eleiche’s interpretation neglects to address what occurs to the sites that societies choose to eradicate from the collective memory due to lack of economic potential. Both studies show the complexity local communities encounter when faced with preserving sites. The main concern that arises from the studies is whether districts demonstrate the preservation of heritages that promote positive identities rather than creating a multi-faceted identity that perpetuates a comprehensive narrative.

A. Elizabeth Watson argues that preservation took fifty years to mature into the complex and viable practice it is today. In her idealized interpretation of preservation, she notes that

historic preservation saves cherished places that make communities special, creates jobs, creates (or preserves) affordable housing, spurs

⁶⁸ Andreas Schönle, “Broken History and Crumbling Stones: The Romantic Conception of Architectural Preservation,” *Slavic Review* 71 no. 4 (Winter 2012): 747.

community revitalization, enhances property values, and helps generate revenues for federal, state, and local governments.⁶⁹

Watson concedes that tax credits for rehabilitation, which were implemented in 1976, and public outreach and advocacy are major incentives for individuals to get involved and participate in the preservation sector. Where Watson succeeds in romanticizing preservation efforts, she fails to analyze how and why sites are chosen by the local populace. Though historic preservation is known to stabilize home values and tax revenues, historic preservation of a neighborhood may lead to gentrification. Owners of historic properties do not receive economic relief for the upkeep of the property and are left to their own accord to care for and rehabilitate them. The owners of the properties must be financially stable, too, because they are expected to maintain the property to its designated historical period.⁷⁰

Erica Avrami, author of “Making Historic Preservation Sustainable,” perceives preservation as a means to conserve resources and to produce a sustainable way of living, which Watson omitted. Avrami addresses the ubiquitous preservation issues regarding environmental and economic sustainability and examined the intersection of social goals related to sustainability and preservation. Through life cycle assessments (LCA), which study the carbon impact of rehabilitating an existing building, Avrami argues that preservation can be regarded as highly sustainable in its means of conserving

⁶⁹ A. Elizabeth Watson, “Preservation Planning Comes of Age: Fifty Years After the Passage of the National Historic Preservation Act, Planners Play a Role in Saving our Treasured Historic Places,” *Planning is the property of American Planning Association*, (October 2016).

⁷⁰ Succinct Research, “Does historic preservation contribute to gentrification?,” *Succinct Research*, April 6, 2017, accessed June 12, 2017, <http://www.succinctresearch.com/does-historic-preservation-contribute-to-gentrification/>.

environmental energy. While demolishing a building requires embodied energy, “or the sum of energy consumed to extract and prepare materials for... on-site delivery, construction, maintenance, renovation and final demolition,” the act of rehabilitating and preserving a structure requires operational energy, which allows the building to receive repairs while focusing on the consumed energy, such as heating and lighting, that the structure uses through its life cycle.⁷¹

Avrami argues that preservation generates a positive economic impact from historic districts through preservation investment in historic assets, which are generated by “tourism, taxes, jobs, and construction.”⁷² This means that preservation has a positive effect on local and regional economies, which in turn builds a strong rationale for public and private support.⁷³ Avrami warns that as the regional economy benefits, city officials recognize the sociocultural characteristics that draw outsiders to a site. To counter the government’s imposed cultural identity, the local community needs to ascribe “collective meaning and significance” by acting to designate the site prior to government intervention.⁷⁴ Furthermore, Avrami recognizes that preservation and the attempt to sustain a cultural heritage leads to inevitable discourse regarding inclusionary community practices, diversity, and intergenerational equity. In this sense, how culturally relevant is the preserved site to the present residents? Should sites have a mandated survey fifty years after the site, district, or landmark is designated to allow council members, local communities, and individuals to provide their heritage perspective? As time progresses,

⁷¹ Erica Avrami, “Making Historic Preservation Sustainable,” (January 28, 2016).

⁷² Avrami, “Making Historic Preservation Sustainable,” (January 28, 2016).

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

preservationists can expect that more stories will manifest regarding the site and these thoughts to be presented through the historic buildings and districts saved.⁷⁵ Additionally, promoting this advocacy planning theory, Avrami argues, will spur the application of “more bottom-up and deliberative processes through which stakeholders can participate in decisions about what to designate and what to preserve.”⁷⁶

Only recently have federal agencies implemented the preservation of diverse heritage sites that were previously ignored in favor of sites that represented and were safeguarded by the dominant community’s idealized narrative. Specifically choosing to “safeguard” the positive narratives and neglect the diverse heritage that envelopes a historic site allows preservationists and government agencies to ignore the practices, representations, and expressions of untold heritages and identities that have influenced the cultural development of a community.⁷⁷ The limited representation of minority voice affects visitors’ perceptions of the site, for they accept the given narrative as historical truth. By safeguarding the constructed narratives desired by the national and local spectators, local officials shadow the complex heritage of sites by freezing the narrative in an idealistic form to perpetuate a positive heritage.

Though federal and state agencies tend to apply idealized narratives to sites, the entities have statutory regulations that frame the methodologies for the preservation sector. Analyzing how historic preservation entities preserve multi-cultural regions will

⁷⁵ Avrami, “Making Historic Preservation Sustainable,” (January 28, 2016).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Dilek Alp Percin, “Intangible Cultural Heritage: A Key Overlooked Concept,” *ARTSBLOG: For Arts Professionals in the Know*, last edited March 5, 2012, accessed April 18, 2016, <http://blog.americansforthearts.org/2012/03/05/intangible-cultural-heritage-a-key-overlooked-concept>.

demonstrate how the interworkings of various preservation players participate in manipulating a district to create a perceived ideal heritage. El Paso's preservation endeavor is taken on by *The City Plan of El Paso*, The El Paso County Historical Commission, and the City of El Paso, which includes the Historic Preservation office, the Deputy Director of Planning, The El Paso Historic Landmark Commission, and the Preserve Americas Community Designation.

El Paso's preservation efforts began in 1925 with the creation of *The City Plan of El Paso, Texas* by the City Plan Commission, which was composed of six Anglo men, including Hughes D. Slater, chair of the commission. Slater was a proponent for the eradication of slums and wanted to build public parks and scenic drives to attract "prospective investors in the Southwest."⁷⁸ Published by authority of the mayor and city council, *The City Plan* extensively addressed expected population growth, because of the city's "favorable climate . . . natural topography and resources . . . [vast] recreational opportunities," and because El Paso is "a most progressive city" that nurtures an "energetic citizenship combine[d] to afford [for] opportunities for unique development."⁷⁹

Of the four pages dedicated to "El Paso Facts," only a miniscule part is given to the city's Spanish-American cultural influence. *The City Plan* states that "the Spanish American contribution is colorful, vivacious, and agreeable," allowing El Paso the

⁷⁸ Paraphrase from *Handbook of Texas Online*, Clinton P. Hartmann, "Slater, Hughes Decourcy [Cap]," accessed September 12, 2017, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fsl13>. Quote from "El Paso Facts," *City Plan for El Paso, Texas*, City Plan Commission, (1925), 8.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

opportunity to “capitalize in numerous ways.”⁸⁰ Though the plan concedes that the Spanish-American influence could create an “exceptionally interesting cosmopolitanism,” El Paso city officials viewed the “Spanish American contribution” as a “peculiar problem” that gave rise to city building problems in the region, for the Spanish-American style did not match the architectural elements used throughout the East coast.⁸¹ The city did not perceive Spanish American, or Mexican American, culture as a viable heritage; rather, El Paso viewed the Hispanic culture as a backdrop to the growing metropolis.

As the desire to preserve El Paso’s history grew, the Civic Improvement Committee of the Women’s Department, El Paso Chamber of Commerce, organized the El Paso County Historical Society in 1954. Under chairman Louise Schuessler, the purpose of the society was to “encourage and support research into the history, archeology, and natural history of El Paso and the region.”⁸² To encourage historical research pertaining to the area, the society started the quarterly *Password* in the spring of 1956 to entice “junior historians and . . . senior citizens” to develop histories that “develop public consciousness of our [El Paso’s] rich heritage.”⁸³

In 1975, the Texas Legislature gave the court of commissioners county funds for the sole purpose of historic preservation, which led to the creation of the El Paso County Historical Commission.⁸⁴ Upon founding the organization, the El Paso County

⁸⁰ “El Paso Facts,” 8.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁸² *Handbook of Texas Online*, Conrey Bryson, “El Paso County Historical Society,” accessed September 12, 2017, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/vte02>.

⁸³ First quote *Ibid.* Second Quote “About Us,” El Paso County Historical Society, last modified 2015, accessed September 12, 2017, <http://www.elpasohistory.com/about/>.

⁸⁴ City of El Paso, Texas, *The Plan for El Paso*, 3.

Commissioners Court appointed forty members to the historical commission to act as advisors and serve as a “governing board for County preservation activities,” and as the “local extension of the Texas Historical Commission” for the surrounding areas of El Paso.⁸⁵ According to the Commission’s current mission statement, the agency has the responsibility to initiate and conduct “programs suggested by the County Commissioners Court and the Texas Historical Commission,” and is “charged with preserving [El Paso] county’s heritage for the education, economy, and enjoyment of future generations.”⁸⁶ The County Historical Commission acts as an extension to the Commissioners’ Courts and the THC in historic and cultural resources, and follows recommendations suggested by the County Commissioners’ Court.⁸⁷

The Plan For El Paso Technical Report VII, created in 1988, stated that the “major purpose of any preservation project is to communicate the lessons of history . . . [to] learn from the past.” El Paso currently faces the issue of adapting historical narratives to the evolving cultural identity of the region.⁸⁸ Alex Hoffman, the current Deputy Director of Planning in the City of El Paso, recognizes that the plan’s original intentions have evolved with the local community’s identity so as to threaten the city’s historic sites because the Council has shifted from being a “very progressive [pro-Anglo-Caucasian], pro-planning government . . . to very pro-developer,” which lessens the restrictions and standards for development.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ City of El Paso, Texas, *The Plan for El Paso*, 3.

⁸⁶ “Our Mission,” accessed April 18, 2017.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ City of El Paso, Texas, *The Plan for El Paso: Technical Report VII Historic Preservation* (El Paso, Department of Planning, Research and Development), 1.

⁸⁹ Alex Hoffman, interview by Kimberly Diedrich, 801 Texas City 3, El Paso, Texas, March 14, 2017.

The goals presented within The El Paso Plan were to:

promote an awareness of El Paso’s diverse cultural heritage[,] preserve structures and relics of significance in El Paso’s development[,] . . . promote historic preservation projections and historic events as tourist attractions[, and] preserve and enhance the unique characteristics of El Paso’s residential and commercial districts.⁹⁰

Though these goals promote the preservation of cultural heritages, the City of El Paso continues to prioritize architectural elements. Understanding the formation and the varying entities in the preservation process in El Paso demonstrates how and why district narratives, such as Manhattan Heights, were created.

The City of El Paso is a different entity from the El Paso County Historical Commission and includes the Historic Preservation Office (HPO), which was created by the city in 1978 as an economic and international development resource. The HPO reviews any proposed modifications to the façade of a building or site, such as “landscaping, painting, re-roofing, repair of walkways, driveways, fences, and replacement of windows and doors.”⁹¹ Designating the preservation office as an economic facilitator illustrates that the program recognizes the “need for contemporary and economical use of historic buildings . . . to balance the . . . demands of today.”⁹² This form of adaptive reuse equalizes the historically significant elements of a building with that of present-day participants which can hinder the proper preservation of a site, for the focus shifts from properly preserving the building to creating a functional business space or a suitable and desirable tourist attraction. Adaptive reuse for business is advocated as

⁹⁰ City of El Paso, Texas, *The Plan for El Paso*, 1.

⁹¹ “Economic and International Development,” *City of El Paso*, last modified 2017, accessed April 27, 2017, <https://www.elpasotexas.gov/economic-development/historic-preservation>.

⁹² *Ibid.*

an important revenue element for local communities in designating new districts or sites, but it often obscures the cultural significance that the site holds for the local community.⁹³

In addition to the Historic Preservation Office, the City of El Paso also incorporates the Deputy Director of Planning in the preservation process. The Deputy Director of Planning is “responsible for helping the Department fulfill its mission of preparing, revising, and maintaining a comprehensive plan that addresses the physical, economic, demographic, environmental, and social components of the City.”⁹⁴ Though the position does not directly dictate the preservation process, the deputy is a vital player to what and how sites and districts get preserved or reused. Through the implementation of the Infill Development Policy, planned for 2017, current deputy Alex Hoffman hopes to counter-balance Texas’ pro-property rights regulations to provide flexible regulations for developers to go into historic neighborhoods, but still ensure compatibility with the current development.⁹⁵

Infill development allows vacant or underutilized lands within a district to get developed or redeveloped in accordance with the design requirements and design guidelines to revitalize “aging and declining urban neighborhoods while utilizing existing

⁹³ An example of an adaptive reuse project that erases the majority of the cultural significance is the Texas Theater in San Antonio. The theater retains its historic façade, but the body of the building was destroyed and replaced with a modern building. Façadism, or the maintaining of the exterior historic scape and the demolition of the of building, is a subset of adaptive reuse and is many times justified as a means of preservation. From Dedek, *Historic Preservation for Designers*, 148.

⁹⁴ “City of El Paso invites applications for the position of Deputy Director of Planning,” City of El Paso, accessed May 14, 2017, <http://www.elpasotexas.gov/~media/files/coep/human%20resources/Deputy%20Director%20Planning.ash>.

⁹⁵ Alex Hoffman, personal interview by Kimberly Diedrich, March 14, 2017.

infrastructure to its full potential.”⁹⁶ The policy, more importantly, offers relief from the inherent set of issues developers face due to the restrictions of traditional zoning standards and facilitates development in a profitable manner to match and maintain the existing character of neighborhoods.⁹⁷ The design requirements ensure the success of the infill projects in terms of maintaining compatibility with existing and surrounding development, and promoting a pedestrian-oriented design.⁹⁸ The main components of the requirements entail that the design must be consistent with pre-existing “street setbacks and building orientation in a manner that contributes positively to existing neighborhoods” that will also provide commercial activity. Simultaneously, the structure must utilize the architectural features and landscaping of the existing neighborhood as a means to avoid site layouts in “which blank building walls face [the] streets” to provide buffers to minimize the threat of expansion on the traditional neighborhood.⁹⁹

The design guidelines within the infill ordinance provide contractors the flexibility desired to develop in historic sectors of the city. Upon submitting an infill proposal, developers must meet a minimum of three of the following guidelines:

1. 50% First Floor Façade Transparency: The façade should contribute to the pedestrian experience and visual interest of the street.
2. 80% Floor Area Ratio: Constitutes adding density or functional space to an existing property. The Floor Area Ratio can be manipulated to fit the 80% requirement as means of having a deep set single story area to a three-story structure that contains the 80% floor ratio.
3. Propose a mix of land use categories: believed to promote higher property values by encouraging mixed-use categories (residential, commercial, office, etc.)
4. Street-Side Commercial Activity.

⁹⁶ City of El Paso, *Infill Development Policy Guide*, Long Range Planning Division and Planning & Inspections Department, January 2017.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

5. 80% Building Width at Frontage: Ensures visual interest will be maintained and that a large gap devoid of activity will be avoided.
6. Utilize Plan El Paso Architectural Style: The component of Plan El Paso contains guidelines that implement that new development will be compatible with the existing architectural styles in the built environment.
7. Building Height ½ Width of Main Street.
8. Stormwater Management: promotes “green infrastructure design,” and light-imprint and low-impact principles that will limit the amount of runoff.
9. Green Building Certification: Encourages green practices in house construction and rehabilitation that support durable, healthy, and energy-efficient homes.
10. Vacant or underdeveloped for 15 years.
11. Private Frontage Types.¹⁰⁰

By creating the guidelines, the Department of Planning encourages developers to mimic the built environment and preserve the general character of the community.

The El Paso Historic Landmark Commission (HLC), another entity of the City of El Paso, is a diverse nine-member advisory board composed of no single professional or business interest in order to encourage a diverse analysis of sites considered for designation.¹⁰¹ All members of the commission are selected for demonstrated “special interest, knowledge, and experience in the architectural, archeological, cultural, social . . . history of El Paso, and shall include two architects.... The HLC shall familiarize itself with sites, building characteristics, and districts within the city that may be eligible for designation as historic landmarks as a means to identify districts or properties with Historic-overlay (H-overlay) zoning.”¹⁰² H-overlay zoning is a regulatory tool that generates a “special zoning district, placed over an existing base zone,” which identifies

¹⁰⁰ City of El Paso, *Infill Development Policy Guide*.

¹⁰¹ City of El Paso, *Chapter 2.24 – Historic Landmark Commission*, El Paso: Code of Ordinances, Ord. 1 16369 § 1 (part), https://www.municode.com/library/tx/el_paso/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT2A_DPE_CH2.24HILACO.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

specific regulations in addition to those in the underlying base zone.¹⁰³ This regulation ensures that the historic nature of an area is protected from developers and ambitious homeowners.

The commission reviews and determines the approval or denial of certificates of appropriateness and certificates of demolition or removal for historic sites as well.¹⁰⁴ It address any alterations of historic landmarks and is certified to receive grants from the Texas Historical Commission for historic preservation projects. Essentially, the HLC acts as a partner to the THC and appoints the city Historic Preservation Officer, who acts as the official liaison for the City of El Paso to the community, THC, and the National Park Service to maintain and update historic properties within the city.¹⁰⁵

Finally, the City of El Paso's Preserve Americas Community designation, which is categorized as a Community and Human Development resource implemented in August 2005, is a White House initiative that encouraged and supported community efforts to "preserve and enjoy our priceless cultural and natural heritage."¹⁰⁶ Started by Laura Bush, the goals of the initiative were to:

include a greater shared knowledge about the Nation's past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased local participation in preserving the country's cultural and natural heritage assets, and support for the economic vitality of our communities.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Center for Land Use Education, *Planning Implementation Tools Overlay Zoning*, November 2005, accessed April 19, 2017, <ftp://ftp.wi.gov/DOA/public/comprehensiveplans/ImplementationToolkit/Documents/OverlayZoning.pdf>.

¹⁰⁴ City of El Paso, *Chapter 2.24 – Historic Landmark Commission*, Ord. 16369 § 1 (part).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ City of El Paso, Texas, Community and Human Development, *Agenda Item Department Head's Summary Form*, Preserve America Community (August 30, 2005), accessed http://legacy.elpasotexas.gov/muni_clerk/agenda/08-30-05/08300503B.pdf.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

The benefits of receiving this designation include White House recognition of the site and eligibility for funding allotted to historic preservation and heritage tourism.¹⁰⁸ An evident problem of the designation form is the vocabulary used for what defines an American Community. Most of El Paso's sites neglect to recognize the cultural identity of Mexican Americans and focus on the architect who designed the property or the architectural style.

The complexity of this historic preservation landscape directly and indirectly impacts endeavors made toward saving the heritage and identity of districts in El Paso. Ultimately El Paso is faced with the conundrum of whether to preserve its history for the advocacy of all communities by incorporating all narratives or producing an identity that exemplifies the grander national narrative of inclusion and singular American heritage that complies with urban planning. El Paso currently preserves according to the notion of architectural relevance, which is the easiest to categorize and identify, rather than highlighting the social diversity of the region. The focus of this work on the Manhattan Heights Historic District and its historical contemporary preservation narrative will demonstrate how regulations of the twentieth century allowed preservationists to develop a construed historic narrative of the past that highlights the architectural accomplishments of the site and complies with current principles of ethics and racial tolerance by its residents, which mimics the prejudices of the early twentieth century.

¹⁰⁸ City of El Paso, Texas, *Agenda Item Department Head's Summary Form*.

III. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE MANHATTAN HEIGHTS LEGACY INTO AN HISTORICAL MARKER

El Paso's history is that of a Southwest border community shaped by regulatory laws that created lines of demarcation within the city. The community known as Manhattan Heights was one such area of demarcation, which symbolizes "a boundary marking something off from something else."¹⁰⁹ The story of the emergence of Manhattan Heights begins with the business plan to create a smelter by the Federal Smelter Company created in 1899 as a lead plant.¹¹⁰ El Paso's mineral-rich land provided "thousands of tons of copper and lead-silver" that facilitated the creation of environmental racism and assisted with the demarcation of Mexicans and Mexican American populations through the development of a capitalist economy and human migration.¹¹¹

The smelting of copper and lead-silver released toxic byproducts into the environment, including lead, sulfur, arsenic, and cadmium. The processes determined the formation of urban spaces defined by class and race. As described by a smelter worker, the communities in which they lived were polluted with the smell of exhaust and a

¹⁰⁹ "Line of Demarcation," Dictionary.com, last modified 2017, accessed June 18, 2017, <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/line-of-demarcation>.

¹¹⁰ The ASARCO company originated in Mexico and demonstrated how Mexico's political leaders, such as Porfirio Díaz, chose to encourage "corporatization and proliferation of mines, and discourage small-scale farming," which led to devastatingly high numbers of rural poor. As poverty numbers increased, many poor families migrated to El Paso in hopes of redefining their future. From Monica Perales, *Smelertown: Making and Remembering a Southwest Border Community* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 21-22.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 21.

constant rain of sulfur.¹¹² The implementation of a spatial landscape placed minorities and the poor in unhealthy areas that revolved around their place of work, the smelter. According to a 1970 scientific test conducted on residents of ASARCO's Smelertown, the pollutants emitted caused 43 percent of 223 individuals living within a 1.6-kilometer radius to exhibit life-threatening levels of lead in their bloodstreams.¹¹³ By placing Mexican neighborhoods near the smelter, whites within El Paso had greater access to a healthy physical environment:

Close[d]-in, yet high above the city, away from the smoke and dust, with the business district and the valley spread like a panorama below, this [Manhattan Heights] is El Paso's most beautiful section.¹¹⁴

The city's political and economic elite recognized El Paso's potential and the benefits of transforming the city into a center for industry. As the mining industry increased within the city's borders, mining men and capitalists acknowledged the rapid increase in real estate value throughout the county.¹¹⁵ This chapter traces the development of the Manhattan Heights district and how El Paso's business and wealthy class sought to establish a social and racial hierarchy within the district's boundaries through implementation of property restrictions, creating a line of demarcation based on economic and racial contours.

¹¹² Jesús Gutiérrez, oral history interview by Mario Galdos and Virgilio Sánchez (Spanish), February 26, 27, 1980, tape #568, IOH.

¹¹³ Perales, *Smelertown*, 226.

¹¹⁴ "Its Worth Something to You!," unidentified newspaper clipping, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

¹¹⁵ "Property Goes Up," *El Paso Daily Herald*, February 7, 1901, newspaper clipping, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

El Paso's emergence as an industrial powerhouse did not occur accidentally. As American financiers, politicians, and industrialists sought economic dominance across Southwestern and Western regions, El Paso represented itself as a transcontinental city between Mexico and the United States.¹¹⁶ The potential for international commerce attracted wealthy investors searching to expand their affluence, which enabled the smelting industry to quickly take root.¹¹⁷ It also attracted laborers to make the system viable. The *El Paso Daily Herald* recognized the benefits of transforming El Paso into a smelter city, for "every mining man . . . would buy his supplies here, [and] many of them would keep their money in the banks," which increased the economy of the city exponentially.¹¹⁸

Based on the success of ASARCO, George M. Jacocks, the president of Federal Copper Company of New York, arrived in El Paso in July 1899 to take part in the growing smelting industry. On November 9, 1890, however, the El Paso Smelting Works, which was "the premier center for copper and lead processing in the region" and later sold to the Kansas-based Kansas City Consolidated Smelting and Refining Company in 1899, propositioned Mr. Jacocks to hold off on building the plant for six months to implement a monopoly in favor of the Guggenheims. The Guggenheim family business owned and operated ASARCO.¹¹⁹ By 1882, the Kansas City Consolidated Smelting and Refining Company doubled its original capacity and the company's capital stock, which

¹¹⁶ Perales, *Smelertown*, 28.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹¹⁸ "Wanted A Mint: Views and Opinions." *El Paso Daily Herald*, April 20, 1900, newspaper clipping, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

¹¹⁹ Perales, *Smelertown*, 21.

made the company one of the largest conglomerates in the smelter industry and fueled the company to furnish one fifth of all of the silver bars and pig lead in the United States.¹²⁰ By expunging the smaller smelter company, the large conglomerate hoped to make contracts cheap enough to prevent a competing smelter from developing, thus choking out the competition.¹²¹ Creating a monopoly helped the El Paso Smelting Works, for it allowed the company to capitalize on mining ventures in Mexico and dominate the mineral market, receive rights to federal land and speculation rights, and tax and import duty exemptions.¹²² While Jacocks' smelter was temporarily out of commission, he focused on "buying new mines in [hopes] to have sufficient ore to keep his [future] plant running" upon completion.¹²³ Finally, in May 1901, the Federal Smelter Company began construction on its own smelting and mining facility in the northeast portion of town.¹²⁴

The Federal operation quickly faced a conundrum. According to "an unknown prominent mining man of New York,"

the company at first thought of building a small smelter here, but found that with a small plant the company could not hold out against the Kansas City concern and they would have to change their plans. [Comparatively,] to build a large one with only the ore from a few mines would also result in failure [unless necessary expansionary means occurred.]¹²⁵

¹²⁰ "Certificate Vignette," Scripophily.com, last modified 1996, accessed July 10, 2017, <http://scripophily.net/conkancitsme.html>.

¹²¹ "Will Not Build: Federal Smelter will not now establish a plant," *El Paso Daily Herald*, November 9, 1890, newspaper clipping, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

¹²² Perales, *Smelertown*, 34-35.

¹²³ "Will Not Build," November 9, 1890.

¹²⁴ "The New Smelter: Plans Complete," *El Paso Daily Herald*, January 10, 1901, newspaper clipping, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

The *El Paso Daily Herald* countered this analysis by justifying Jacock's exploration to the west in search of leasing and buying mines to create a plant "equal in capacity to the El Paso smelter . . . [while making] El Paso the greatest smelter center in the world with odds to spare."¹²⁶ The operation opened on September 10, 1901, and operated with an initial force of one hundred men to refine the copper ore. The smelter maintained until the company faced economic troubles and the bank foreclosed on the Federal Company, which caused the organization to disband on December 1, 1908.¹²⁷

The skeleton of the smelter facility stood until 1912, when demolition of the structures occurred in favor of residential development. The Federal smelter property was separated into four different parcels and eventually sold to two different individuals: Edwards Gerrard and Leo C. Dessar. Parcel No. 1, initially purchased in 1908 by Edward Gerrard of Indianapolis, later sold to J.F. and O.C. Coles on January 2, 1913 for \$32,000.¹²⁸ The new owners set out to "subdivide the land into what became known as the Castle Heights subdivision" and a portion of Memorial Park.¹²⁹ The inclusion of a neighborhood park in the planning demonstrated wealthy El Pasoans' desire for

an open space and relief from the brick and pavement of the city, where adults and children may enjoy something of beauty and restfulness of a natural environment, [which operated as a means of escape] to those who could dedicate time to the splendors of relaxation.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ "The New Smelter: Plans Complete," *El Paso Daily Herald*.

¹²⁷ Patrick Rand, "The Federal Smelter," *Password* 22, no. 3 (Fall 1977): 109-115.

¹²⁸ Lawrence, J. Pepin, "The Memorial Park District," (September 7, 1980), 4, unidentified newspaper clipping, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ "Parks, Recreation, Schools," *City Plan for El Paso, Texas*, City Plan Commission, (1925), 36.

Prior to the sale of parcel No. 1 in 1913, parcels 2, 3, and 4, were subdivided into blocks, lots, streets and alleys by Dessar and designated as the Manhattan Heights Addition, the first suburban neighborhood of El Paso, by the City of El Paso. According to the *El Paso Herald*, the property was “El Paso’s newest restricted residence district” and initially to be “disposed of . . . in the form of blocks which must be improved and a residence in keeping with the restricted district.”¹³¹ On April 12, 1912, Leo C. Dessar sold parcels 2, 3, and 4 to Dr. James Brady, “an El Paso dentist, and the president of his own paving and construction company.”¹³² The memory of the Federal smelter was not lost, for developers commemorated the identity of the company with street names such as Gold, Silver, Copper, Bronze, and Federal.

Although the smelter remained marked in public place names and thus public memory, the Manhattan Heights Addition enforced restrictions to create an identity that illustrated a “Place of Beautiful Homes,” and broke away from the smelter nuance.¹³³ The restrictions created within the addition include, but are not limited to the following:

intoxicating liquors shall never be manufactured, sold, or otherwise disposed of as a beverage in any place of public resort in or upon the premises . . . for a period of twenty years from date hereof [the property] shall be occupied for any other purpose than as a private residence or private boarding house and that no residence shall be erected upon said premises unless of the reasonable value of at least two thousand (\$2,000) dollars, . . . and that no stable, carriage house, ash pit, privy, or any out building whatsoever shall be erected within sixty (60) feet of the front line

¹³¹ “Will be Sold on Block Unit Plan,” *El Paso Herald*, March 15, 1912, newspaper clipping, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ “Familiar Phrases,” *El Paso Herald*, April 4-5, 1914, newspaper clipping, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

of said lot . . . no excavations shall be made thereon for the purpose of obtaining clay or sand for making brick.¹³⁴

The significance of these restrictions is that they illustrate the economic and social line of demarcation implemented within the district. According to the weekend edition of the *El Paso Herald* on August 26-27, 1916, these regulations were incorporated into every deed pertaining to the Manhattan Heights district to ensure the neighborhood maintained a positive public image that exuded prosperity and wealth, as well as allowed property owners to maintain a uniformity and control the desirability and integration of people into the district.¹³⁵ Further, by enforcing a restriction “that no residence shall be erected upon said premises unless of reasonable value of at least two thousand” dollars El Paso’s leaders and wealthy demonstrated the residential and social segregation that firmly fixed those of Mexican heritage and working class to their daily life in their city.¹³⁶

Prior to the development of railways and smelters in the 1880s in El Paso, the city and its residents achieved economic prosperity through the Chihuahua trade.¹³⁷ Such traders included James W. Magoffin and Hugh Stephenson, who are considered El Paso’s

¹³⁴ El Paso County Land Records, guaranty deed with V.L. from I. J. B. Brady to A. J. Fullan and Norwood Hall, 24 August 1912, El Paso County, 47008.

¹³⁵ “Rapid Growth is Due to a Cause,” *El Paso Herald* Week-End Edition, August 26-27, 1916, newspaper clipping, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

¹³⁶ Quote guaranty deed, 24 August 1912. With the U.S. dollar experiencing an average of 3.09% inflation per year between the years 1912 and 2012, \$2,000 in the year 1912 would be worth \$48,847.65 in 2017. From “Inflation Calculator,” 1912 dollars in 2017 dollars, last modified 2017, accessed June 24, 2017, <http://www.in2013dollars.com/1912-dollars-in-2017?amount=2000>. Paraphrase from Perales, *Smelertown*, 24.

¹³⁷ The Chihuahua trail, which connected central Mexico to Santa Fe, ran through “Paso del Norte,” or El Paso, and opened the region to the trade market of Chihuahua. From “Immigration, Population, and Economic Growth in El Paso, Texas,” Center for Immigration Studies, last modified September 1, 1993, accessed October 23, 2017, <https://cis.org/Immigration-Population-and-Economic-Growth-El-Paso-Texas>.

Anglo founding fathers for they negotiated and abided by the business customs and laws in the Spanish Mexican world. The period of accommodation to Spanish Mexican regulations and customs proved short lived for once Texas joined the United States in 1845, American immigrants, business interests, and railroads flooded the region to de-establish the preexisting trading regulations and created laws that benefited the new Anglo American settlers and disenfranchised the American citizens of Mexican descent.

The arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1881 dramatically altered the economy for El Paso. The Southern Pacific expanded its lines from eastern Texas, which were used to transport cotton, to the first southern transcontinental lines, which transformed El Paso from a “little adobe village” into a “flourishing frontier community.”¹³⁸ Although the railways facilitated trade throughout the U.S. Southwest and Mexico, wealthy Euro-Americans contributed to the growth and modernity of the city with the introduction of the American-based railway, Southern Pacific, which initiated the disenfranchisement of the Mexican American population in the region. As historian Owen White commented in 1923, echoing what much of the Anglo population came to believe, “El Paso got the railroads with their shops and their payrolls because the Americans in the town went after the business, while the Mexicans . . . sat around following the shade from one side of the house to the other.”¹³⁹ The chamber of commerce officer Frank H. Knapp additionally argued that immigrants were adaptable, docile, and willing to work under a wage scale that allowed factories to pay those

¹³⁸ W. H. Timmons, *El Paso: A Borderlands History* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1990), xix.

¹³⁹ Owen White, *Out of the Desert: The Historical Romance of El Paso* (1923), quoted in Mario T. García, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880-1920* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), 38-44.

laborers of Mexican descent much less than their counterparts in the East and North.¹⁴⁰ Because Anglo citizens viewed Mexico as a source of raw materials and “unlimited supply” of cheap, unskilled Mexican laborers while providing little opportunity for managerial positions, the ability for Mexican immigrants to mitigate their social standing in El Paso was non-existent. Anglo Americans held most of the managerial, skilled-craftsmen, and city professional careers, while Mexicans generally filled jobs as service workers, laborers, and semi-skilled employees.¹⁴¹

El Paso’s racialized labor dynamic directly affected wages. Common laborers of Mexican descent earned “one-half to one-quarter” as Euro-American skilled craftsmen.¹⁴² According to a report in 1911, the U.S. Immigration Commission, also known as the Dillingham Commission, recorded that more than eighty percent of Mexican and Mexican American workers earned less than \$1.25 per day, while many native and foreign-born workers of Western European descent earned more than \$1.50 per day while working on railroads in the West.¹⁴³ The implications behind the differentiation in wages illustrates how business owners recognized the surplus of availability of laborers of Mexican descent and that these people were expendable and less valuable compared to their Euro-American worker counterparts.

Likewise, as El Paso grew into a prosperous city in the 1880s, the need to accommodate its commercial expansion occurred by aggressively attacking the preexisting architecture that illustrated the Mexican heritage. Commercial and residential

¹⁴⁰ Frank H. Knapp, “El Paso, Growing Factory Center, Has Requisites for Success,” *GEPSC* 2, no. 5 (November 1921): 4.

¹⁴¹ García, *Desert Immigrants*, 69, 86-88.

¹⁴² Perales, *Smelertown*, 107.

¹⁴³ García, *Desert Immigrants*, 90-91.

builders targeted adobe structures and replaced them with wood frame and brick houses and buildings.¹⁴⁴ The *El Paso Times* newspaper pushed for the demolition of “adobe buildings and all of their negative associations” and replacement of the structures with “modern pavement” to show El Paso’s new identity.¹⁴⁵ As the demarcation between Anglo Americans and Mexican Americans developed within El Paso, and subsequently Manhattan Heights, El Paso’s Mexican population became subordinate to the social hierarchy placed upon them via reinforced practices, laws, and advertisements that depicted Manhattan Heights as an illustrious neighborhood, full of “beautiful homes” that were technologically progressive and affluent.¹⁴⁶

Manhattan Heights’ modernity illustrated the district’s attempt to dismiss the Mexican southwest culture by building popular architectural styles of the 1910s. Progressive styles, such as the bungalow and Georgian Colonial, dominated the district, while architects dismissed the Spanish Colonial style that historically dominated the region. The first house to be built in Manhattan Heights in 1914, at 3037 Federal, demonstrated how wealthy locals, such as C. H. Leavell, desired to emulate the culture of the North, shipping bricks from Pennsylvania to make a Georgian Colonial home as authentic as possible.¹⁴⁷ As the residential growth of El Paso expanded, many new home builders sought to mimic the anglicized styles, which dominated the “handsome homes”

¹⁴⁴ Perales, *Smelertown*, 46.

¹⁴⁵ First quote is from *El Paso Times*, April 14, 1883. Second quote is from *El Paso Times*, January 14, 1885, newspaper clipping, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

¹⁴⁶ “Manhattan Heights,” *El Paso Herald*, May 23-24, 1914, newspaper clipping, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

¹⁴⁷ Pepin, “The Memorial Park District,” 6.

that characterized the Manhattan Heights district.¹⁴⁸ Abandoning the local styles in response to the broader national identity further polarized the Mexican American population from the white Anglo-Europeans.

In addition to neglecting the Mexican American heritage that existed in El Paso, the advertisements for Manhattan Heights perpetuated the district as having the “streets paved with gold” that alluded to the demographic that would inhabit the area (Figure 3).¹⁴⁹ The district was “high class, improved, [and a] restricted residence,” which allowed C.H. Leavell, the sole agent for the district, to discriminate against property buyers to maintain the purposefully constructed elitist identity of the area and so the modernity of the neighborhood.¹⁵⁰ With its paved streets and “splendid improvements,” such as three lines of street car service, the Manhattan Heights district presented itself as an avantgarde neighborhood designed to illustrate the “dozens of leading business men and shrewdest investors” that would inhabit and develop the area.¹⁵¹ With a classist line of demarcation clearly constructed by the previous and current developers of 1914, El Paso’s cultural dynamic became defined by wealth, then by racial means.

¹⁴⁸ “Residential Growth of El Paso is reflected in Pretty Additions Which Attract Many New Home Builders,” *El Paso Herald*, August 29-30, 1914, newspaper clipping, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

¹⁴⁹ “Manhattan Heights Streets Paved with Gold,” *El Paso Herald*, December 5-6, 1914, newspaper clipping, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

¹⁵⁰ “Residential Growth of El Paso,” *El Paso Herald*.

¹⁵¹ First quote Ibid. Second quote from “Manhattan Heights Streets Paved With Gold,” November 28-29, 1914.

MANHATTAN HEIGHTS
- The Place of Beautiful Homes.

STREETS PAVED WITH GOLD

would make MANHATTAN HEIGHTS a finer Residence District than it is today. But little else could be suggested in the way of making this a more beautiful and splendidly improved section. OVER A QUARTER OF A MILLION DOLLARS IS BEING SPENT ON PAVING AND PERMANENT IMPROVEMENTS.

RESTRICTIONS are something many people do not realize the full significance and value of. In fact some people are so foolish as to buy residence property without even giving the matter of restrictions a thought, which proves almost always to their sorrow. As a matter of fact restrictions is one of the most important points to be considered in buying either for a home or investment. If there are no restrictions a livery stable, a shack, a butcher shop--in fact any one of a dozen nuisances that might be named--may be built alongside you or across the street, spoiling the attractiveness and exclusiveness of your home and ruining the chances for your property increasing to big values. The restrictions in Manhattan Heights are the most complete and modern of any section of EL Paso; they are modeled after the very finest additions of Kansas City and Los Angeles.

Lots Will Be Worth Away Up in Thousands

Figure 3: Manhattan Heights Advertisement published in 1914. Courtesy of Kimberly N. Diedrich.¹⁵²

Ironically, with the Progressive Era defining the political climate during the 1910s and with the massive increase of residents and migrants, advertisements regarding Manhattan Heights district shifted towards inclusivity among those of lower economic stature.¹⁵³ From 1910 to 1920, El Paso quadrupled in size; in 1900, the city contained

¹⁵² "Manhattan Heights Streets Paved with Gold," *El Paso Herald*.

¹⁵³ The Progressive Era was a social movement that grew into a political movement to eliminate problems within urbanization, industrialization, immigration, and political corruption across the United States. From "The Progressive Era (1890-1920)," Teaching Eleanor Roosevelt Glossary, accessed June 27, 2017, <https://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/teaching/glossary/progressive-era.cfm>.

24,886 people; in 1910 El Paso grew to 52,599 citizens; and in 1920, the population had increased to a total of 101,877 civilians. The U.S. born population, according to census records, remained consistent with a population of 39,279 in 1910, increasing to 42,000 by 1920, while the foreign-born population increased more than twofold to 42,305 in a matter of a decade.¹⁵⁴

Congruently, in the *El Paso Herald* of Friday, February 12, 1915, an advertisement concedes that “real estate investments [had been] limited to men and women of considerable means . . . [who included] well-known and responsible business men of El Paso,” but with the implementation of the Manhattan Heights Lot Club, now “El Paso’s beautiful spot” was open to those of lower economic means, as long as the prospective new owners were considered desirable people.¹⁵⁵ An undesirable person alluded to those who were foreign born and of Mexican descent. According to Dr. Hunter and Inspector Flannery, inspectors of immigrants with diseases and other “ailments” in 1917, an undesirable immigrant embodied an individual who did not conform to the status quo and held communicable diseases. The immigrants who were deemed undesirable were those who “[could receive] public charges, also professional beggars, feeble minded, idiots, totally blind, public prostitutes, aliens who attempt to import prostitutes, contract laborers, etc.”¹⁵⁶ The implications of these labels illustrate that the

¹⁵⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, vol. 2: 1920 Population General Report and Analytical Tables* (New York: Norman Ross Publishing, 2001), 993, 1000.

¹⁵⁵ “Join Manhattan Heights Lot Club,” *El Paso Herald*, February, 12, 1915, newspaper clippings, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

¹⁵⁶ J.P. Reynolds, Chief Inspector, Brownsville Station, “Final Report Regarding Complaints at Rio Grande City – J.P. Reynolds,” May 26, 1917, RG 59, State

Caucasian population in El Paso viewed Mexicans and Mexican Americans as individuals who could decrease the value and desirability of the “modern, high-class, [and] restricted district . . . where shacks and nuisances can never intrude.”¹⁵⁷ As this rigid dichotomy arose between those of Mexican descent and the white populace of El Paso, the line of demarcation further defined the sociocultural dynamics within the city, despite what advertisements depicted.

Ultimately, these racial and classist transgressions came to define the cultural dynamics of the city and the heritage presented at historic districts, such as that of Manhattan Heights. Currently the district is loosely recognized by two state historical markers that make general associations to the district, and the neighborhood has a National Register listing that neglects to recognize the discriminatory terms enlisted within the deeds that dictated the means of occupancy for those in the district and the development of the city. The favorable outcome of generating a marker to emulate a site’s history is that it creates unified identity among residents and propagates “high levels of investment in . . . properties [that] make local-history initiatives an easy sell in neighborhoods.”¹⁵⁸ Ultimately, the reasoning behind preserving sites is not to preserve the history of the site, but to ignite property values and enable a greater flow of currency to the region.

Department, Decimal Files, 1910-1920, Enclosure XII, 158.1208/13, Enclosure II, NACP.

¹⁵⁷ “Its Worth Something to You!,” unidentified newspaper clipping, B3, box 922, Coll. 08233 SW 103, Manhattan Heights Historic Papers and Historic Preservation Publications, El Paso Public Library.

¹⁵⁸ Andrew Hurley, “History that Matters: Integrating Research and Neighborhood Planning,” in *Beyond Preservation* (Tempe: Temple University Press, 2010), 95.

The Memorial Park marker, created in 1981, presents a vague historical narrative of the area by addressing the history of the Federal Copper Company and the development of the neighborhood and park, and recognizes how the “houses in the Memorial Park area . . . reflect . . . the exclusive neighborhood [that] has been home of many prominent El Paso business and professional leaders.”¹⁵⁹ The marker lacks the cultural significance of the region itself. It states:

A group of New York and El Paso Investors formed the Federal Copper Company in 1899. By 1901 a smelter was in operation at this site, processing ore from Arizona and Mexico. Due to declining copper prices and competition from area companies, the firm was unsuccessful and ceased to exist by 1908. Part of the property was later developed by Leo C. Dessar, former president of Federal Copper Company, as a residential subdivision called Manhattan Heights. In 1912 Dessar sold the real estate development to El Paso dentist Dr. James Brady the owner of a local construction firm. One year later adjoining land, also part of the original smelter site was developed by O.C. and J.F. Coles as Castle Heights subdivision. During the economic depression of the 1930s, efforts were begun by the Works Progress Administration to develop public gardens in Memorial Park. The resulting hilltop gardens in Memorial Park were completed with the help of the Chamber of Commerce, the City Parks Department, and the El Paso Garden Clubs. The houses in the Memorial Park area, most built by 1930, reflect a variety of architectural styles, the exclusive neighborhood has been the home of many prominent El Paso business and professional leaders. (1981)¹⁶⁰

The information presented within the marker leaves the reader with the big question: So what? The marker hardly addresses the historic district itself and focuses on the origin story of Memorial Park without establishing historical context to how and why the park

¹⁵⁹ “Memorial Park,” Historical Marker, El Paso, Texas.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. During the 1980s the marker application process relied heavily on the local voices to provide the historical context to the sites. Because the role of the state was more hands off, no external analysis for local stories often meant that the broader context was omitted, and the narratives provided became permanently embedded into the built landscape. In regards to the Memorial Park marker, correspondence between THC and Ms. Hill occurred, but it related to the boundaries of the designation not the content of the marker. Correspondence from Dan K. Utley, October 30, 2017.

received its name. The marker does not attract individuals and is poorly maintained, unlike the surrounding neighborhood and the park. It implies that citizens of El Paso did not have a true desire to preserve their history; rather, were concerned with the notoriety associated with having a historic district within the city limits.

Comparatively, the second marker that correlates with Manhattan Heights district is the Mabel Welch marker, dedicated in 2009. The marker enabled the citizens of El Paso to claim Mabel Welch as its first female architect and recognized that she knew the importance of El Paso's Spanish-Indian heritage.

Mabel C. (Vanderburg) Welch, El Paso's first certified female architect, is credited with reintroducing Spanish-style architecture to the city. Early El Paso residents built with adobe bricks, a method common to the region. After the arrival of the railroad in 1881, El Paso grew into a thriving city, and this regional architecture disappeared, replaced by styles and building techniques that reflected the traditions and experiences of those who settled here. Within four years of their 1916 arrival in El Paso, Mabel and Malcolm Welch began designing and constructing homes. When Malcolm was hospitalized with tuberculosis, Mabel completed the construction of a home that her husband had begun. She subsequently assumed the entire design and construction process for his other projects, and continued to work on her own after his death. Through 1926 and into early 1927, Mabel designed and built nine houses in the 3100 block of Wheeling Ave. Trips across the southwest during this period introduced Mabel to the Spanish architectural style, which she believed was more in keeping with the Spanish-Indian heritage of El Paso than the red brick bungalows that lined the city's streets. Upon her return she designed exclusively in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Welch continues her work in El Paso and throughout the region into the early 1950s. Examples are located in the Manhattan Heights Historic District, the Castle Heights Addition and along Rim Road. The state of Texas certified Welch as an architect in 1939. She designed as many as 1,500 homes in El Paso and across the Southwest during her career. (2009)¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ "Mabel Welch (1890-1981)," Historical Marker, El Paso, Texas. Although women have participated and played an important role in the preservation movement, the exclusion of women in the historical context was fairly common. Women were perceived to be "invisible residents of the thousands of historic houses and sites" for the exploration of women beyond the domestic realm lacked in the historic preservation realm. *Her Past Around Us*, a book with a collection of essays, discusses how existing historic sites can

The marker addresses Welch's prior trips across the Southwest, which introduced her to the Spanish Colonial architectural style. Welch chose to reintroduce El Paso, and specifically the Manhattan Heights District and Castle Heights Addition, to Spanish Colonial Revival style because she believed that it reflected the cultural identity and heritage of the region more than the modernized styles of the East. But to give meaning to the significance of the introduction of Spanish Colonial Revival to the area, the marker needs to include why there is a lack of early Spanish Colonial and Pueblo style homes. Addressing the lack of Mexican cultural elements throughout the region will exemplify Welch's significance to the site and will demonstrate El Paso's local communities' dire need to create an Anglicized identity separate from the Mexican heritage that previously dominated the cultural landscape.

The lack of Mexican American intangible heritage within the markers illustrates the cultural and racial attitudes of the 1980s. El Paso's preservation techniques focused on the architectural elements of a structure rather than the cultural relevancies of the site, which created a filtered narrative of the site. As seen in Manhattan Heights, the narratives portray an idealistic history that depicts the district as a developing Anglo neighborhood

“rethink the stories they present” and teach the “public about cultural values and ideals . . . of the past.” The growth of the inclusion of women in historic preservation is further addressed in a succession of essays in *Restoring Women's History Through Historic Preservation*, which discusses how in the past twenty years, “historians and preservationists have concentrated many of their intellectual and political efforts on finding the stories of women in established historic sites.” The inclusion of women and other minority voices in a site will not only broaden the historical record of the site, but it will demonstrate how these individuals influenced the development of the community. Jennifer Pustz, “Her Past Around Us: Interpreting Sites for Women's History/Restoring Women's History Through Historic Preservation,” *State Historical Society Of Iowa: The Annals of Iowa* 62, no. 3 (Summer 2003): 404-406.

open to the wealthy citizens of El Paso. Presenting this narrative creates an alternate memory toward the site that marginalizes the minority Mexican American voice within the city.

IV. REMEMBERING MANHATTAN HEIGHTS AND THE ALTERATION OF MEMORY IN EL PASO

The Manhattan Heights district embodies the way that history presented at sites materializes to form historical truths that become accepted as the dominant narrative. Historical marker information, cast in metal as protection from change by time and the elements, literally fixes narratives in place. This example reinforces grander history and a negative bias toward the underrepresented Mexican-American citizens in El Paso. Historic sites, such as the Manhattan Heights district, created a distorted narrative that transcended the community and fueled an alternative memory regarding the development of El Paso.

How do historical sites alter memory? “Memory . . . [is the] conscious and living memory of human actions, [and] only apparently presents a continuous link between the present and the past.”¹⁶² When sites have an attached cultural memory, or an association with “cultural products imbued with cultural meaning,” the cultural memory entangles with the history of the place.¹⁶³ As David Glassberg explains, “individual memory is the product of group communication, [and is] intimately linked to a collective memory of the community.”¹⁶⁴ The interconnection between memory and community extends to the public on a wider scale through the natural and developed landscape to construct an

¹⁶² Anita Kasabova, “Memory, Memorials, and Commemoration,” *History and Theory*, 47 no. 3 (October 2008): 334.

¹⁶³ Richard R. Flores, *Memory, Modernity, & the Master Symbol: Remembering the Alamo* (Austin: University of Austin, 2002), 17.

¹⁶⁴ David Glassberg, “Public History and the Study of Memory,” *The Public Historian*, 18 no. 2 (Spring, 1996): 10.

individual's identity. If that landscape presents an altered history or silences history, it is naturalized as factual. El Paso's cultural climate exemplifies the impact on individual and community identity, for the memory of the place associated with Manhattan Heights neglects the story of segregation implemented by the district in the early 1910s, which extended into local history lore and the cultural relations of the city.¹⁶⁵

According to Pierre Nora, the French historian known for his work on memory and identity, memory is in "permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting," while history is bounded by archives and a representation of the past.¹⁶⁶ Although memory is constantly changing and fading, the history presented at a site depends on the memory associated with the place. History of place cultivates a narrative that corresponds with the desired memory of the site. Hence, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot explains, the silence of memory and history has dramatic effects on the construction of societies. The silence of history reinforces the socio-construct of the society and allocates power to the regime in control; the silence of memory "naturalizes both the social order and its social actors' identities."¹⁶⁷ Manhattan Heights represents both silences. The lack of Mexican American voice represented for this place's story reflects the dominant

¹⁶⁵ Historically, Mexican identity and cultural practices have been threatened by the United States since the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in 1848. The Treaty expanded the U.S. territory by fifty percent and grandfathered in 100,000 Mexicans as U.S. citizens. Although the treaty granted citizenship, the right to own land, and the maintenance of Mexican cultural traditions, those rights were largely ignored. From Brian D. Joyner, *Hispanic Reflections on the American Landscape: Identifying and Interpreting Hispanic Heritage* (U.S. Department of the Interior: National Park Service, 2009), 5.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 27.

Anglo-Caucasian power within El Paso. Simultaneously, it naturalized a specific type of Mexican American identity of the region.

The entangling of memory and place reveals how knowledge of the past allows those in the present to apply meaning to public structures and provide a “social map through which social agents find their way to themselves and their place in the world.”¹⁶⁸ The power given to historical markers develops a “thintelligence” that does not push for individual research or grander exploration. Rather, as thintelligence suggests, the public digests the dominant narrative presented and accepts the history as final word and the ultimate truth.¹⁶⁹ The lack of representation further distances the individual from the community, alienates the minority from the majority, and limits their acceptance in society.

The distinction between memory and reminiscence confirms that the way information is transmitted has a formative effect on the participants involved and can create false memory. By definition, to reminiscence about a site, participants digest information from a past event that is remembered by the narrator or presented with a “collection in literary form of incidents and experiences” that present their recollections.¹⁷⁰

Historic preservationist Ned Kaufman explains that such stories, or anecdotes, recollections, and place-stories, once embedded in “people’s minds and remembered or retold to visitors” are presented as fact and act as a means to draw people back to the

¹⁶⁸ Flores, *Memory, Modernity, & the Master Symbol*, 34.

¹⁶⁹ Michael Crichton, *Jurassic Park* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990), 284.

¹⁷⁰ “Dictionary: reminiscence,” Google, accessed August 29, 2017.

site.¹⁷¹ As the story is passed to the next generations, memories get presented as history and fact. These stories that live through a site provide meaning to the place and eventually become part of the site's heritage, which transforms "the cityscape [to] . . . a *storyscape*."¹⁷² The *storyscape*, or *story site*, which is the collection of "stories, meaningful memories, or intense feeling," tends to support "socially useful or meaningful narratives."¹⁷³ The memory chosen to represent the story site is the direct result of community investment in the site. The story site of Manhattan Heights represents the broader context of early twentieth century racism that suppressed the Mexican American populace of the area and became particularly fixed in the period from 1910 to 1920.

The cultural representation of Mexicans and Americans of Mexican descent in the first decades of the twentieth century presented the men as drunk deviants who preyed on innocent American women. The 1915, film *The Martyrs of the Alamo, or the Birth of Texas*, is presented as a historical drama of the story of the Alamo and Texas Independence. *Martyrs of the Alamo* purposefully uses visual imagery and text that portrayed Mexican soldiers and civilians as disrespectful individuals who did not live in a "civilized" fashion. Flores argued the film's radical representation of the Mexicans' social and sexual behavior "ascribed dominance . . . [to the] Anglo superiority" to assert "social order" within the broader Texas community.¹⁷⁴ *Martyrs of the Alamo* projected the racial fears that many demographically-polarized citizens faced during the early twentieth century. The dissonance between the Anglo population and those of Mexican

¹⁷¹ Ned Kaufman, *Place, Race, and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 3.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ First quote Ibid. Second quote Ibid., 22.

¹⁷⁴ Flores, *Memory, Modernity, & the Master Symbol*, 105.

descent in the film reflected broader regional and national anti-Mexicans attitudes. Racist regulations, such as those placed within the Manhattan Heights District, reflected the cultural attitudes of the early twentieth century and led to the segregation of the Mexican and Mexican American population from the Anglo community.

By the early 1900s, as a reaction to the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, progressive reformers sought to improve the compacted downtown districts of New York as well as "encourage suburban development... [to] promote moral and civic virtue."¹⁷⁵ As land-use regulations became synonymous with city betterment, the exclusion of low-income and racial minorities households became a necessity to separate the wealthy white majority from the "crowded... ghettoized slums," and the integration of racially restrictive covenants became the norm.¹⁷⁶ Racially restrictive covenants, as defined by the Seattle Civic Unity Committee in 1946, were "agreements entered into by a group of property owners, sub-division developers, or real estate operators in a given neighborhood, binding them not to sell, lease, rent or otherwise convey their property to specified groups because of race, creed, or color."¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ "How Land-Use Regulation Undermines Affordable Housing," Mercatus Center George Mason University, last modified November 4, 2015, accessed September 21, 2017, <https://www.mercatus.org/publication/how-land-use-regulation-undermines-affordable-housing>.

¹⁷⁶ Richard R. W. Brooks and Carol M. Rose, *Saving the Neighborhood: Racially Restrictive Covenants, Law, and Social Norms* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 38-39.

¹⁷⁷ Catherine Silva, "Racial Restrictive Covenants: Enforcing Neighborhood Segregation in Seattle," *Seattle Civil Rights & Labor History Project*, 2008, accessed September 21, 2017, http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/covenants_report.htm#_edn3. Originally from Katharine I. Grant Pankey, "Restrictive Covenants in Seattle: A Case Study in Race Relations," 1947, CUC Collection, Box 17, Folder 19.

The restrictive covenants generally targeted African Americans, but many Mexican Americans in the 1920s endured racial segregation as well. As described by attorney Christopher Arriola in *Mendez v. Westminster* (1946), “segregation was institutional [in southern California] and was visible in all aspects of daily life . . . Mexicans were sold ‘miserable little houses’ on cheap lots in the center of town” in the 1920s.¹⁷⁸ The use of covenants in the development of neighborhoods drastically alters the grander narrative of the site. It provides meaning to why districts lack a minority voice and how cultural attitudes of the early twentieth century need to be taken into account to develop a well-rounded storyscape.

According to Kaufman, to perform a storyscape survey one must apply the stories to the “life and beliefs of the community, demonstrate their connection to specific places, and document the ways in which those places’ form or appearance supports the retelling of reliving of the stories.”¹⁷⁹ While Kaufman’s storyscape, or story site, concept is useful, he neglected to address stories that are omitted from the narrative. Flores acknowledged the power of such stories and how memory of place acts as “physical and concrete evidence, validates and authenticates . . . the past . . . [while] the silence of memory serve[s] to anchor the past concretely, naturalizing both the social order and its social actors’ identities.”¹⁸⁰ In the case of the Manhattan Heights district, the lack of recognition of Mexican American identity within the marker subdues that voice and places the white narrative on a pedestal. The narrative presented as well shows what the local community

¹⁷⁸ *Mendez v. Westminster School District, et al*, 64 F.Supp. 544 (C.D. Cal. 1946), *aff’d*, 161 F.2d 744 (9th Cir. 1947) (en banc.).

¹⁷⁹ Kaufman, *Place, Race, and Story*, 53.

¹⁸⁰ Flores, *Memory, Modernity, & the Master Symbol*, 21.

held virtuous and true, and illustrated the cultural capital rendered important.¹⁸¹ While cultural capital can encourage cultural diversity within a community, its consistency depends on the people's "awareness of history and a desire to maintain" the same historic memory as a means to attach meaning to a place and "anchor the community's cultural identity."¹⁸²

As Bodnar explains, sites "contain powerful symbolic expressions . . . that give meaning to . . . interpretations of past and present reality . . . and stimulate ideals of social unity and civic loyalty."¹⁸³ If this is the case, then what does it say of the voices that are neglected from the local and national narrative? The outcome from lack of representation of minorities in sites, particularly those of Mexican Americans in El Paso, is that community's disregard for the group's involvement in the creation of the local landscape through historic sites and written sources. By excluding ethnic enclaves, El Paso's community public memory perpetuated the idea that minority entities are second class citizens and are by default not important, for they were not "ideologically important because [the groups did not] shape a nation's ethos and sense of identity."¹⁸⁴ They are not included or given standing as participants in creating or sustaining unity and civic loyalty. As C. Vann Woodward wrote in 1955, a "twilight zone that lies between living memory

¹⁸¹ Cultural capital denotes society's stock of traditions, lifeways, beliefs, and modes of thought and expression. The importance of cultural capital is represented in what cities choose to preserve and maintain as a means to represent an "unbelievably rich" heritage. From Kaufman, *Place, Race, and Story*, 43-44.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 46-47.

¹⁸³ Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 16.

¹⁸⁴ Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: First Vintage Books Edition, February 1993), 13.

and written history” was created when sites presented traditions that misled and distorted the history of the landscape.¹⁸⁵

The lack of Mexican American voice within Manhattan Heights represents the competition between memory and history. *Images of America, El Paso 1850-1950* and *Images of America, El Paso's Manhattan Heights*, by Arcadia Publishing, are produced for mass consumption and illustrate the way that the “twilight-zone” between history and memory becomes embedded for public consumption. Analysis of the language and images used in the books provides a clear understanding of the perception of Mexican descendants in El Paso and how the dominant narrative permeates multiple platforms.

Arcadia Publishing was founded in 1993 and has since published, alongside The History Press, 12,000 titles and continues to print 900 books each year.¹⁸⁶ The company strives to create histories to reconnect “people to their community, their neighbors, and their past by offering a curbside view of hometown history and often forgotten aspects of American life.”¹⁸⁷ As Mark Rice, Chair of the Department of American Studies at St. John Fischer College asserted, the books present a desired history that ignite nostalgia and feel-good emotions, but “minimize social and economic tension.”¹⁸⁸ Written by local community history enthusiasts, the books are easy to read, represent the dominant narrative and accepted memory of the place, and are theme-centered. Most of the books use historical photographs collected from local community archives as supplemental

¹⁸⁵ C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York, 1955), viii.

¹⁸⁶ “Our Story,” Arcadia Publishing and The History Press, last modified 2016, accessed September 7, 2017, <https://www.arcadiapublishing.com/About/OurStory>.

¹⁸⁷ “Arcadia Publishing,” Arcadia Publishing and The History Press, last modified 2016, accessed September 7, 2017, <https://www.arcadiapublishing.com/arcadia-publishing-books>.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

evidence to justify the author's subjective interpretation of the location.¹⁸⁹ As Lawrence Levine explains, historical photographs act as a “quintessential objective document — reality in black and white — and thus makes a greater claim on our credulity than other types of documents.”¹⁹⁰

Although the books present their narratives as historical fact, many of the histories lack cultural diversity and only represent the dominant narrative. In *Images of America, El Paso 1850-1950*, published in 2009, James R. Murphy starts the book with a wholly-inadequate explanation of the dichotomy between Mexicans and Hispanics. Murphy, who is the current director of development for the History of El Paso Museum of History, explained that the vast number of citizens in El Paso migrated from Mexico, but neglected to go beyond origins to explore the ways Americans of Mexican descent shaped the cultural landscape of the region. Murphy alluded that the connection to the American way of life proscribed a higher standard of living and created a more democratized life for Mexican Americans. This shallow cultural representation minimized the historic Mexican population who settled El Paso.

The importance of noting the difference between Hispanics and Mexicans, as Nieto-Philips explained, is that those who identify as Hispanic have an elevated status within the Latin community compared to those who identify as Mexican.¹⁹¹ He claimed that those who were born in the United States preferred to be referred to as Hispanics, for

¹⁸⁹ Mark Rice, “Arcadian Visions of the Past,” *CJAS: The Columbia Journal of American Studies*, accessed September 7, 2017, <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cjas/rice-1.html>.

¹⁹⁰ Lawrence W. Levine, *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 269.

¹⁹¹ John M. Nieto-Philips, *The Language of Blood: The Making of Spanish-American Identity in New Mexico, 1880s-1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 2-4.

they were “American born Mexicans.” Claiming that the term Hispanic relates to an individual’s Americanness, rather than its Spanish origin, belittles the relevance in the cultural strata within the Latin culture and further discredits the Mexican and Mexican American identity within El Paso. Diminishing the importance of Mexican heritage implied that an individual who was born in Mexico does not have a heritage to claim. By denouncing the significance in the cultural strata and claiming that term Hispanic solely deals with the peoples’ association with the United States, Murphy reassigns power to the American culture while demeaning the Hispanic and Mexican heritage.¹⁹²

Murphy further depicts the Mexican populace as insignificant to El Paso’s cultural heritage, prior to the introduction of Anglo Americans into the area, by only using images that portrayed them as second-class citizens. Murphy’s first image shows what can be presumed to be a Mexican with a family next to a home constructed of straw and wood planks with a caption describing El Paso as a place where “many lived a life of near squalor” (Figure 4).¹⁹³ Murphy’s association of the Mexican American heritage with the term “squalor” is a gross generalization that conflated class, poverty, and ethnicity to one stereotype of community as: “extremely dirty and unpleasant [conditions] that resulted from mass poverty.”¹⁹⁴ Murphy further presents the introduction of United States

¹⁹² From James R. Murphy, *Images of America: El Paso 1850-1950* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 7 and from “What is the Difference Between “Hispanic,” “Mexican,” “Latino,” and “Chicano”?”, SpanishDict, accessed August 17, 2017, <https://www.spanishdict.com/guide/what-is-the-difference-between-hispanic-mexican-latino-and-chicano>.

¹⁹³ Murphy, *Images of America*, 9.

¹⁹⁴ “Dictionary: squalor,” Google, accessed August 29, 2017, <https://www.google.com/search?q=squalor&oq=squalor&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l5.1144j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>.

citizens as the introduction of civilization into the region, which allowed a thriving cityscape.¹⁹⁵



Figure 4: Described as “Life along the Rio Grande . . . Many lived a life of near squalor” by James Murphy. Courtesy of *Images of America El Paso, 1850-1950*.¹⁹⁶

The only additional mention of Mexicans and Mexican Americans and the development of El Paso in the book is when Murphy branched out to Pauline R. Kibbe’s book *Latin Americans in Texas*, published in 1946.¹⁹⁷ He chose to include a quote from Kibbe that described the “Latin American migratory worker going into west Texas . . . as a necessary evil . . . [and] one might not assume that he is not a human being at all, but a species of farm implement that comes mysteriously and spontaneously” (Figure 5).¹⁹⁸ Kibbe’s quote illustrates the cultural attitude toward anti-Mexican sentiment during and

¹⁹⁵ Murphy, *Images of America*, 9, 20.

¹⁹⁶ Murphy, *Images of America*, 9.

¹⁹⁷ Pauline R. Kibbe, *Latin Americans in Texas*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1946).

¹⁹⁸ Murphy, *Images of America*, 48.

after World War II. In 1942, in the midst of World War II, the Bracero program was created by an executive order that allowed Mexican men to enter the United States to work as agricultural laborers on a short-term basis.¹⁹⁹ The implementation of the program was to counter labor shortages within the U.S., though employers hired braceros for the “plentiful, cheap labor” and to counter strikes made by domestic field hands, which caused their domestic counterparts to view the braceros as “competitors and foreigners, not as natural class allies.”²⁰⁰ Because braceros had no authority to delegate power over their working and living conditions, farmers favored “Mexicans . . . for their tractability, deportability and willingness to work for lower wages.”²⁰¹ Murphy’s decision to include this quote from the mid-nineteenth century in a 2009 publication with no context demonstrated the cultural bias of the book. In no instance did the author mention any positive relation of Mexican American history or culture with the development of El Paso into a major commercial city. Rather, Murphy presents a constructed memory of the past by using 1940s rhetoric to define the history of Manhattan Heights in the present.

¹⁹⁹ “About,” Bracero History Archive, last modified 2017, accessed September 21, 2017, <http://braceroarchive.org/about>.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. Second quote from Elizabeth W. Mandeel, “The Bracero Program 1942-1964,” *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* 4 no. 1 (January 2014): 179.

²⁰¹ Lilia Fernández, “Of Immigrants and Migrants: Mexican and Puerto Rican Labor Migration in Comparative Perspective, 1942-1964,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 29 no. 2, (Spring 2010): 23.



Figure 5: “Latin American migratory work.” Courtesy of *Images of America El Paso 1850-1950*.²⁰²

Further illustrating the polarity between the perceptions of Anglo and Mexican American people is the book *Images of America, El Paso’s Manhattan Heights*, by Craig M. Peters, published in 2011. The book provides a brief history of Manhattan Heights and illustrates the neighborhood architecture. The book paints the neighborhood with the same ideals originally created in the early 1920s. It portrays Manhattan Heights as a community “built for the wealthy of El Paso . . . the residences . . . large and opulent, to reflect the wealth and position” held by their owners.²⁰³ The images Peters uses reinforces a white predominant narrative. The only presentation of a Mexican American within the book is that of a mason employed as a “stonecutter.” According to Peters, Mexican Americans “built the Cathedral of San Antonio and many government buildings

²⁰² Fernández, “Of Immigrants and Migrants,” 23.

²⁰³ Murphy, *Images of America*, 99.

and personal estates.”²⁰⁴ Peters had the opportunity to address why there is a lack of Mexican American presence within the book by analyzing the housing restrictions implemented in the community. He chose, however, to depict a historically decontextualized, wealthy white neighborhood.

The lack of Mexican American representation within these contexts represents the grander-altered memory of El Paso. The current associated memory of El Paso delegates the majority of the power to the Caucasian population and recognizes their contributions, rather than acknowledging the racist regulations that hindered Mexican American citizens. The implications of the lack of Mexican American voice is that their heritage will be pushed aside and deemed insignificant to the overall historical narrative. As a result, Mexican descendants lose power over their community and identity, and are forced to abandon their cultural identity to assimilate the dominant authority. Because memory influences the shape of the cityscape and the overarching historical narrative of a site, it is important to look beyond the prescribed history for the missing contextual clues.

²⁰⁴ Craig M. Peters, *Images of America El Paso's Manhattan Heights* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 93.

V. CONCLUSION

El Paso's current means of preservation showcases how historic preservation can suppress people of an area through dominant narratives that sculpt the memory associated with a site. Analyzing the various preservation entities in El Paso showed how local communities drive national preservation motifs that influence the means of preservation in the border city. Just as preservation efforts in the early nineteenth century aimed to save sites associated with significant leaders, El Paso's preservation parties sought to preserve sites associated with important architects and constructed idealized histories to match the accepted cultural memory.

Unfortunately, the accepted cultural memory of a site does not always depict the grander historical narrative. As seen with the Manhattan Heights district, the markers show a romanticized history, which was pushed by locals, that exhibits the unique architectural styles of the area, yet purposely neglects to address the lack of Mexican American influence due to property restrictions created in the mid 1910s. This prosthetic history presented at the site fuels an alternative memory that reinforces a negative bias toward Mexican Americans within El Paso. As a result, amateur historians used this memory to shape their grander historical narrative of the landscape which exhibited early and mid-twentieth century racial tensions of the neighborhood. The use of memory as the dominant historical narrative led to the subjugation of Mexican Americans in El Paso because it erased their contributions to the creation of the greater community.

In the previous years, El Paso's preservation efforts marginally failed because the preservation code was "poorly written with loopholes and redundancies . . . [that] offered

little protection for even the city's most significant architecture."²⁰⁵ Currently, the city government faces a conundrum: save the historic downtown and Mexican American areas south of downtown that had historically contributing properties through renewal or demolish historic minority districts in the name of innovation. Though the city has acted to preserve architecturally significant properties, government officials, who are outsiders and elitist in their perspectives of a national heritage, continue to disregard the cultural significance of sites, which allows private investors to oppose preservation attempts and threaten the historic cityscape.

The history of the border city spans almost two centuries and includes a variety of cultural identities. El Paso's dominant preserved narrative, however, represents the Anglo-American population, rather than its broader identity. The lack of a counter narrative of Manhattan Heights Historic District is an example of how preservation can reflect historical ideologies inscribed in the past and how preservation entities often emphasize architectural preservation and inventory over minority influences that shaped the community.

As a preservation case study, the Manhattan Heights story exemplifies how the history of property regulations within an area requires a reexamination of narratives of historic districts that present a romanticized perception of a neighborhood. It reinforces the need for opportunities that allow members of the "outside group" to position its voice

²⁰⁵ Max Grossman, "Saving Downtown El Paso," *National Trust for Historic Preservation: Preservation Leadership Forum*, April 20, 2016, accessed September 21, 2017, <http://forum.savingplaces.org/blogs/special-contributor/2016/04/20/saving-downtown-el-paso>.

as mainstream.²⁰⁶ Counter narratives at preservation sites reveal the social and cultural constructs of the past and how they influence current relations. Similarly, Manhattan Heights Historic District demonstrates how preservation agencies tend to preserve regions based on architectural relevance rather than developing an inclusive identity.

The narratives provided at sites have great potential to distort the history of a community. Preservationists tend to focus on the architectural aspects, rather than analyze the sociocultural development of the neighborhood, which skews the narrative of the site. This approach to preservation has altered the memory of many districts and unintentionally suppressed and abnormalized outsider group voices.²⁰⁷ To avoid this, historic preservationists must expand their research to include counter narratives, memory, and heritage and identity practice to grasp fully the cultural relationship between neighborhoods, sites, and society.

Counter narratives, memory, and heritage and identity practice provide one path to insightful analysis of the development of sites and buildings. Interconnecting the subtopics to develop a broader narrative provides an understanding of the varying historical participants of the site. This approach allows for an in-depth analysis of the cultural and social relevance of the site and how individuals interpret the designation. Presenting the complexity of a place is particularly important, because as time passes, the narrative presented gets interpreted as fact and alters the memory associated with the site.

El Paso's historic preservation scene contains a diverse range of architectural styles and cultural relevance, but based on those sites preserved, many of the districts

²⁰⁶ Michael Bamberg and Molly Andrews, *Considering Counter-Narratives: Narrating, resisting, making sense*, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004), 1-2.

²⁰⁷ Bamberg, *Considering Counter-Narratives*, 2.

neglect to address the minority perspective. Regardless of the area's diverse population, the Anglo-American voice dominates the regional identity. Presently, El Paso's Mexican American population faces the dilemma of whether or not to be interpreted as Anglo American. The Manhattan Heights designation is due to the effort made by Una B. Hill, who wanted to save the neighborhood from vandals. Although this case study is a regional study, the preservation of the identity of historic neighborhoods continues to neglect the counter narratives.

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