

A CENTURY OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN TEXAS

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For my family and Gema

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	ix
Chapter	
INTRODUCTION	1
1. PATRIOTIC AND SAN ANTONIO ORGANIZATIONS	5
2. FIRST STATE PRESERVATION EFFORTS	25
3. CREATION OF THE STATE PRESERVATION SYSTEM	40
4. THE YEARS OF THE GREAT LAWS	53
5. THE SYSTEM ADVANCES	63
6. THE SYSTEM MATURES	76
7. THE PATH TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY	90
8. WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS STATE HISTORICAL PARK: A CASE STUDY	98
CONCLUSION	115
BIBLIOGRAPHY	128

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps
CWA	Civil Works Administration
DRT	Daughters of the Republic of Texas
EBS	Entrepreneurial Budget System
HABS	Historic American Buildings Survey
ISTEA	Intermodal Surface Transportation Enhancement Act
NYA	National Youth Administration
OSA	Office of the State Archeologist
RAMPS	Record, Appreciate, Mark, Preserve, and Survey Program
SACS	San Antonio Conservation Society
SCORP	State of Texas Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
SPB	State Parks Board
TAC	Texas Antiquities Committee
THC	Texas Historical Commission
THF	Texas Historical Foundation
THLA	Texas Historical and Landmarks Association
TPWD	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
TSHSC	Texas State Historical Survey Committee

TSLHC	Texas State Library and Historical Commission
TxDOT	Texas Department of Transportation
WPA	Works Progress Administration

INTRODUCTION

In the world today historical heritage is an essential part of any nation's culture. No one would dare argue against its importance or the obligation to preserve it. This activity, historic preservation, is a very recent phenomenon in the United States, however. In Europe the first state institutions devoted to such a goal were created during the 1830s and 1840s, as a consequence of the damages to historic buildings and the destruction of books and works of art during the Napoleonic Wars and the bourgeois revolutions.¹ The appearance of those institutions did not happen by chance; the nineteenth century was an age of nationalism and, for the first time, the past was considered the very essence of a nation, actual proof of its greatness and achievements. Hence, each country needed a national history to justify its existence, know its past, and proudly show it to the world, especially in a time when the remains of the past seemed more threatened than ever by destruction from war and economic progress. It is not in vain that the nineteenth century is known in Europe as "The Century of History."

For obvious reasons, the United States began to be concerned about its historical heritage much later than European nations. During the first half of the nineteenth century the United States was primarily devoted to its territorial expansion

¹For instance, France created the *Commission des monuments historiques*, in 1837, and Spain the *Comisiones de monumentos históricos y artísticos* in 1844.

and economic growth. Only the present and future mattered; the past was irrelevant for the triumphant white, Anglo Saxon Americans, proud of the progress of their nation. Since other North American cultures (American Indians and Hispanics, for instance) were an obstacle to their development, their past was not only irrelevant, but it had to be trivialized to open the way for the new America. It was not until progress threatened the beloved physical remains of the white Anglo Saxon past that the necessity for the preservation of the historic heritage arose.

In the case of Texas, the beginnings of a preservation consciousness can be dated to 1883. During that year a San Antonio organization of patriotic citizens called “The Alamo Monumental Society” succeeded in convincing the city government to buy the Alamo chapel, to care for the building, and to repair it. An important change of mind had just taken place. For the people of Texas the Alamo was more than a building, it was the “cradle” of their liberty from Mexico, and they considered it a public disgrace that the scene of the most heroic episode in their war for independence belonged to a private owner who could destroy it. Some physical remains of the past now had to be preserved because of their significance to the community and to its future.

The Alamo was enthusiastically defended because of its nationalistic significance to the people of Texas. Thus, it is not surprising that during the nineteenth century Texans did not attempt to preserve a single Indian campsite. Such sites not only lacked any national significance for the white inhabitants of Texas, but they represented the presence of an enemy opposed to their progress.

Historical heritage is seen differently today. The people of Texas appreciate and recognize the historic heritage of Indian peoples as an essential part of their culture and now demand its preservation. In the same way, the Alamo is seen differently today. Aside from its patriotic importance, the Alamo is also known as an arsenal of the U.S. Army and as a landmark of the Hispanic heritage of Texas. Any aspect of this record justifies the preservation of a site whose historical significance has transcended the events of 1836 to include a span of more than two centuries extending from its colonial origins to its touristic present. As we can deduce from this example, the concept of what is considered historical heritage has broadened considerably from a century ago. What follows is an effort to explain why and how such an evolution took place.

There are two main reasons to justify the study the development of the concept and practice of historic preservation in Texas. First, historical research usually ignores the circumstances that allow some historical sources to survive and some not. It is true that most of the sources of history survive by chance, but since historic preservation is enforced, objective criteria are employed to consider those things worthy of being conserved. Researchers in Texas history need to be aware that the sources, remains, and monuments of the past that we enjoy and use today, from a Spanish mission to a single written document, are the product of conscious decisions, and that those decisions have affected dramatically the way we see and understand the state's past. The second reason is that, even though there are some partial investigations on limited periods of time or on particular agencies, no single work in Texas historical literature

provides a comprehensive examination on the history of the preservation of the state's historic heritage. It is necessary, therefore, to fill such a void.²

To provide this general survey, a chronological framework will be employed in chapters one through seven. The intent is to examine as a whole the essential Texas historic preservation laws and organizations, as well as the historic items saved. Chapter one focuses on the three most important private pioneer preservation groups of Texas, while chapters two through seven deal with the state's preservation efforts. These seven chapters supply the basic facts in the histories of these organizations, as well as their overall preservation contributions. Then, to select an individual "tree" from the "forest" of Texas historic sites, chapter eight analyzes the history of Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park as a specific preservation example in the state. Finally, the conclusion summarizes and evaluates the long-term ideas, attitudes, and results that have defined one century of historic preservation in Texas.

²See for instance Jeffrey M. Hancock, "Preservation of Texas Heritage in the 1936 Texas Centennial" (Master's thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1962) and Will E. Wilson and Deolece Parmelee, *The First Quarter Century* (Austin: Texas Historical Commission and Texas Historical Foundation, 1979).

CHAPTER 1

PATRIOTIC AND SAN ANTONIO ORGANIZATIONS

Following its independence from Mexico and subsequent annexation by the United States, Texas concentrated completely on the expansion and organization of its territory and political system. Only after losing the Civil War and with Reconstruction underway, some Texans began to look at the state's past with nostalgia about the "good old days" of the war for independence and the republic, when Texas was young and seemed invincible. One group of these individuals was the Texas Veterans Association. It was created in 1873 and composed of Texas War of Independence veterans who longed to immortalize for future generations the memory of their deeds and those of the republic. Two main interests of these men were to mark the graves of their fallen comrades, and to demand that the legislature acquire the San Jacinto battleground in order to erect a memorial. The state agreed that honoring the state's glorious past would raise the morale of the citizens, damaged after losing the war, and responded promptly to the proposals of the veterans and similar patriotic groups. The first action was to incorporate in the Constitution of 1876 the first official statement with regard to the preservation of Texas history. Article XVI, Section 39, of this document authorizes the legislature

. . . from time to time, make appropriations for preserving and perpetuating memorials to the history of Texas, by means of monuments, statues, paintings and documents of historical value.

The state also attended to the second proposal of the Texas Veterans Association. On May 16, 1883, the legislature purchased ten acres of the San Jacinto battlefield. That same year the perseverance of the Alamo Monument Association, another association of nationalistic citizens created in 1879, succeeded in convincing the legislature to acquire and restore the main patriotic shrine of Texas, the Alamo. On April 23, 1883, the legislature purchased the Alamo chapel and turned it over to the city of San Antonio for management. This building was the first purchased west of the Mississippi for historic preservation reasons.¹

Not only Texas War of Independence veterans and those citizens who had lived during the Republic were interested in the past; their children were interested too. One of the most distinguished of these offspring was Adina De Zavala, granddaughter of Lorenzo de Zavala, Texas revolutionary and first vice-president of the new republic. The De Zavala family inculcated in the young Adina a strong sense of patriotism for Texas and respect for its past. So captivated was the young woman with the history of her state that she devoted her entire life to preserving it. Besides being a fervent patriot, Adina De Zavala had a strong personality that made her a natural organizer and leader of historical groups. In 1887, after some informal meetings with several women

¹Lewis F. Fisher, *Saving San Antonio. The Precarious Preservation of a Heritage* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1996), 42, x.

friends, she created a permanent historic association to record the history of San Antonio and its vicinity and to preserve and mark its historic places.²

Adina De Zavala was not the only descendant who wanted to honor the past. In 1891, another organization that carried the name of Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT) was founded in Galveston with similar objectives. The Texas Veterans Association, whose members were rapidly dying, created the DRT and the Sons of the Republic of Texas to continue transmitting to succeeding generations the memory and legacy of the Texas War of Independence and the republic. The DRT, composed of women whose ancestors had either established or served the Republic of Texas, was the more active of the two organizations. Its objectives were “to perpetuate the memory and spirit of the people who achieved and maintained the independence of Texas . . . [and] to encourage historical research into the earliest records of Texas,” especially those relating to the revolutionary and republic periods. Additional goals were to encourage the preservation of historic documents and artifacts, to publish historical records and narratives related to republic soldiers and patriots, to promote the celebration of patriotic days such as Texas Independence Day (March 2nd) and San Jacinto Day (April 21st), to encourage the teaching of Texas history in schools, to erect monuments, to sponsor the placement of historical markers, and to acquire and hold real estate of historic value. The DRT founded numerous chapters throughout the state, although those located in Houston and San Antonio were always pre-eminent in

²L. Robert Ables, “Adina De Zavala,” in *Keepers of the Past*, ed. Clifford L. Lord (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 204.

the organization, because their activities were fundamentally focused on the conservation of the Alamo and the San Jacinto battlefield.³

Adina De Zavala and her peers immediately noticed the DRT because the interests of the new organization were similar to theirs, although its scope of action extended beyond San Antonio. Finally, in 1893, De Zavala decided to join the DRT, which honored her and her grandfather by naming its San Antonio chapter De Zavala.

It is not surprising that DRT's membership was (and remains) exclusively feminine. Since 1853, when the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association salvaged Mount Vernon, George Washington's historic home located in Virginia, women assumed a dominant role in the early historic preservation movement of the United States. The reason for this was the two main roles that Victorian society had reserved for women -- housewife and teacher. The practice of historic preservation came to be an activity in which women could perform both roles, since it not only gave them an opportunity to take care of neglected buildings, but they also could take advantage of those structures to teach patriotism and national history to children. In addition, historic preservation was a noble cause to which middle and upper class women, financially secure and with plenty of time, could devote their energies.

The first preservation activities of the DRT aimed to continue the patriotic labor which the veterans had already begun. For example, between 1894 and 1912 some graves and important spots were marked on the San Jacinto battlefield. The Daughters also succeeded in lobbying the legislature to purchase additional acreage

³Quote from *Constitution and By-Laws of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas* (Houston: Gray's Printing Office, 1892): article VI, section 1; *Ibid.*, article II.

there in 1900, 1909, and again in the 1930s. Finally, during the Texas Centennial in 1936, the DRT participated in the erection of a magnificent monument to commemorate the battle of San Jacinto. Nevertheless, the preservation endeavor that conferred on the DRT statewide fame was salvage of the Alamo convent building.

Although in 1883 the state had bought the Alamo chapel, a wholesale grocery firm, Hugo and Schmeltzer, owned the remainder of the compound, a long two-story building variously referred to as the convent, monastery, long barrack, or fortress. In 1892 Adina De Zavala had extracted a verbal promise from Hugo and Schmeltzer to give her organization first chance to purchase the property. De Zavala aspired to preserve and restore the convent and to unite it with the chapel. The purchase stalled until 1903, when Clara Driscoll, a young, educated San Antonian, joined the DRT and continued De Zavala's attempt to purchase the convent. In March 1903, Driscoll, an ardent patriot, gave a personal check for \$500 to Hugo and Schmeltzer as an option on the property, which the owners agreed to sell for \$75,000 if a down payment of \$14,000 was made before February 10, 1904. To obtain funds, the entire DRT launched a public campaign to "save" the Alamo, but collected only \$6,000. When the down payment became due, Driscoll not only made up the balance from her personal fortune, but she also signed notes for the remaining \$50,000. Her determination touched the hearts of Texans, who began demanding that the state acquire the Alamo and compensate the efforts of Driscoll and the DRT. The plea was heard, and on January 26, 1905, the legislature purchased the Alamo convent and turned over its management and that of the Alamo chapel to the DRT, on condition that the

organization maintain the monument at no cost to the state. Since then the DRT has been the proud custodian of the Alamo.⁴

In following years, the DRT with infrequent allocations of public funds, carried out some preservation work on the Alamo. For instance they placed a new roof on the chapel in 1922. The buildings and grounds were furnished with monuments and markers to honor its defenders and explain their account of the famous battle. During the 1936 centennial, the Alamo received a generous appropriation of \$250,000 that was used to restore the grounds, to acquire additional land, and to build a museum.⁵

Evidence that the DRT conceived of the Alamo as a battlesite rather than as a historical building was revealed during the debate regarding preservation of the convent walls. Immediately after the DRT gained control of the property, the De Zavala Chapter divided into two factions. Clara Driscoll believed that the building she fought so hard to save was not the original structure. Hence, she longed to have it removed and replaced with a park which would feature a monument to the Alamo heroes and leave an open vista to highlight the Alamo chapel. On the other hand, De Zavala considered the convent to have even more historical value than the chapel; she maintained that the main part of the battle was fought there. Her proposal was to restore it for a museum of history and to unite it with the church. In 1908, the dispute finally went to court, which ruled in favor of Driscoll's group, commonly called Driscollites. An outraged De Zavala barricaded herself for three days in the convent to protest against its forthcoming demolition. To make the matter even more confusing,

⁴Ables, "Adina De Zavala," 205, 207, 208; Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 55-56.

⁵Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 55-56, 103-108.

Governor Oscar Colquitt intervened in 1911 on behalf of De Zavala. He reversed the authorization of demolition and ordered the restoration of the convent. The Driscollites, however, convinced the lieutenant governor to remove the upper story walls of the convent while Governor Colquitt was out of the state. Defeated and disappointed with the DRT, De Zavala and her followers abandoned the organization to create in 1912 their own preservation group, the Texas Historical and Landmarks Association (THLA). Ironically Driscoll, who had fought so passionately to demolish original Spanish era structures, became the leader of the San Antonio DRT chapter, renaming it the Alamo Mission Chapter, to emphasize De Zavala's defeat, and became a Texas legend as the "savior of the Alamo."⁶

Besides obtaining custodianship of the Alamo, the DRT implemented further preservation work throughout Texas. In 1903, it opened a museum to display artifacts and documents from pioneering, revolutionary, and republic times. Originally located in the state capitol, the museum moved in 1917 to the old General Land Office building and remained there until 1989, when it moved to its present location at 510 East Anderson Lane in Austin. In 1945 the legislature placed the French Legation, the French diplomatic mission to the Republic of Texas, under the custody of the DRT. The organization restored it without financial support from the state. In 1955, it opened to the public as a museum. Additionally, the Daughters implemented their own historic-site marker program. Furthermore, the Daughters engaged in many non-preservation activities, the most significant of which were to encourage display of the

⁶Ibid., 57-60. For a detailed account on the Alamo convent walls episode see Robert L. Ables, "The Second Battle for the Alamo," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 70 (January 1976): 372-413.

Texas flag and the naming of schools after Texas heroes, to spread knowledge of Texas history through articles in papers and magazines, and to assist in patriotic commemorations and anniversary celebrations, such as the 1936 centennial. Since 1955 the only preservation contribution of the DRT has been the management of the historic properties under its control.⁷

As years passed the original objectives of the DRT not only became dated but also controversial, especially its glorification of Anglo historic heritage in a multi-ethnic state. Although present-day preservationists recognize, present, and celebrate the contribution of all ethnic groups in Texas history, the DRT still interprets the Alamo as a battlesite where Anglo-Saxon heroes defended their country against the Mexican enemy. Despite the opposition of state preservation agencies and the Hispanic population of San Antonio to this biased interpretation of the Alamo, it is most unlikely that the DRT will return management to the state. The Alamo is Texas' most important tourist attraction, and the revenue it produces is what presently maintains the DRT as a powerful and influential organization. All are obliged to acknowledge the important role that the DRT played in Texas historic preservation, but today its influence contributes more to retard than to advance the development of this activity.

After her separation from the DRT, Adina de Zavala continued to be an influential preservationist. A woman of extraordinary energy, she immediately put

⁷Daughters of the Republic of Texas, *Fifty Years of Achievement. History of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Together with the Charter, By-laws, Constitution and List* (Dallas: Upshaw, 1942), 100; *Vernon's Annotated Revised Civil Statutes of the State of Texas* (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Co., 1925-), art. 678b.

behind her the court defeat with regard to the Alamo and continued working on behalf of preservation by creating a new organization, the Texas Historical and Landmarks Association. The objectives of the THLA were almost identical to those of the DRT: to preserve historic buildings, relics, and documents; to keep alive the memory of the pioneers and early builders of Texas; and, to inculcate patriotism by teaching Texas history, by promoting the celebration of Texas anniversaries, and through the display of the Texas flag. Despite these similarities, the historic interests of De Zavala's association extended beyond the revolutionary and republic periods of Texas, although it copied DRT organization through local chapters. Notwithstanding, the THLA was always an autocracy in which Adina De Zavala was the unchallenged leader.⁸

The THLA's first project was to launch a public appeal for funds to restore the San Antonio missions, but the attempt soon fell stagnant. By 1915 its attention centered on another ancient San Antonio structure, the only Spanish aristocratic residence that survived in the city, mistakenly believed to be the Spanish governor's palace. In the early twentieth century, the building was occupied by several businesses which transformed its original appearance almost completely, except for a coat of arms above the main door that captivated De Zavala. As soon as she realized the historical significance of the structure, the "palace" became an obsession for her. De Zavala opened a campaign for funds to restore it as a museum, but her efforts stalled again. During the following years she continued demanding the salvage of the "palace" from

⁸*San Antonio Express*, 14 March 1915, clipping on file at the Texas Historical and Landmarks Association Vertical File, The Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas (this repository cited hereafter CAH); Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 80. An example of De Zavala's power is that in one THLA meeting she elected personally the new officers by designating them with her pointed finger. (Ables, "Adina de Zavala," 213.)

the pages of a San Antonio magazine she came to edit. Such insistence stirred public interest in the building and enlisted the support of other local historical organizations. Her efforts were finally rewarded when in 1928 the city purchased the “palace” and began its restoration, which was completed in 1931.⁹

During her long career, Adina De Zavala was appointed to several state preservation boards. In 1923 she became a member of the Texas Historical Board, the first state agency instituted exclusively to promote historic preservation. She was also one of the original members of the Committee of One Hundred, out of which came the first plans to celebrate the Centennial of Texas Independence, in 1936, and subsequently served on the Advisory Board of the Texas Centennial Committee. In San Antonio, she was very active in community and social activities, especially those related to preservation and patriotic purposes. For example, during the 1920s De Zavala provided monthly Sunday afternoon history tours in San Antonio.¹⁰

During its existence the THLA did not venture beyond marking some historic sites. Between 1913 and 1938, it placed a total of thirty-eight plaques, almost all of them dedicated to Anglo heroes of Texas, except one for her grandfather Lorenzo De Zavala and another that commemorated the erection of the San Fernando cathedral in San Antonio. The legacy of the THLA as a preservation organization was, therefore, modest. Being too dependent on De Zavala, it remained too small to develop a statewide preservation association and as its leader aged, became increasingly unable

⁹Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 47, 78, 120, 125-27; Ables, “Adina De Zavala,” 213.

¹⁰Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 120.

to achieve ambitious goals. Hence, when Adina De Zavala died in 1955, at age ninety-three, her organization died with her.¹¹

The DRT and THLA were organizations that happened to be involved in historic preservation as a way to keep alive the memories of the patriots and ideals they revered. In other words, they were attracted not by the intrinsic characteristics of the historic buildings but by the people who made them historic. In the twenties, however, some preservationists became interested in historic structures because they were architecturally impressive or meritorious. Again, the activity centered on San Antonio. This is not surprising because the city is a unique community in Texas thanks to its mixture of different cultural traditions and heritages. When urban development began to threaten the original atmosphere, a group of concerned San Antonians organized to defend it.

After a September 1921 catastrophic flood devastated the downtown district, the city council proposed to build an overflow channel that passed through the site of the old neoclassical Market House on Market Street. Stirred by the prospect of its demolition, and concerned about the continuous disappearance of the city's historical, artistic, and natural landmarks, two local artists, Emily Edwards and Rena Maverick Green, created the San Antonio Conservation Society (SACS) in 1924.

The essence of the preservation philosophy of SACS is found in the second article of its constitution, written in 1925, which declared that the purpose of the

¹¹Ibid., 97; *Texas Pioneers*, August-September 1936, Texas Historical and Landmarks Association Vertical File, CAH. The Texas Historical and Landmarks Association only organized group chapters in the following counties near San Antonio: Refugio, Comal, San Patricio and Goliad. There was also a chapter in Crockett County in West Texas. (*The New Handbook of Texas* [Austin: The State Historical Association, 1996], s.v. "Texas Historical and Landmarks Association.")

society was “to preserve and to encourage the preservation of historic buildings, objects, and places relating to the history of Texas.”¹² At an unspecified later date, the following paragraph was added at the end of this article to amplify its purposes:

. . . its natural beauty and all that is admirably distinctive to our state; and, by such physical and cultural preservation to keep the history of Texas legible and intact to educate the public, especially the youth of today and tomorrow, with knowledge of our inherited regional values.¹³

As this article implies, the denomination “conservation,” rather than “preservation,” in the society’s name was not due to chance. Its main interest has never been the preservation of isolated historic landmarks, but the conservation of the distinct historical, natural, aesthetic, and cultural characteristics of San Antonio. In other words, the city as a whole was conceived of as an environment worthy of conservation and, by extension, the heritage of all the cultures representative of San Antonio -- Anglo American, Spanish, and Mexican. These purposes were evident from the very first actions of the association, since its first objective was not to save a battlefield or an old home, but the preservation of a commercial building, the old Market House, which was not even one hundred years old.¹⁴

The group was unsuccessful in meeting its first objective, as the old Market House was demolished in 1925. Undaunted, during the 1920s and the early 1930s, SACS carried out other preservation activities. In 1925 it cooperated with the Alamo

¹²*Constitution and By-Laws of the San Antonio Conservation Society* (San Antonio, n.d.), article II.

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴Mrs. Floy Edwards Fontaine, founder of the society and president in 1949-51, declared in a 1971 interview that “we are not deep South and we tolerate others as nice as ourselves . . . we are a melting pot.” (Floy Fontaine Jordan, “Footprints with Footnotes, 1991,” CAH, 307.)

Chapter of the DRT to seek financial support for the purchase of all private property adjoining the Alamo. In 1926 the society backed the creation of San Antonio's first public museum, the Witte. Finally, between 1928 and 1931, it contributed actively to the restoration of the Spanish Governor's Palace. Nonetheless, the most important preservation effort of the society during those years was its leadership in the restoration of San José Mission.¹⁵

Outraged over the ruined state of the missions (for example, the tower of the San José Mission Church had collapsed in 1928) and stimulated by the restoration work being undertaken at the California missions, the society displaced De Zavala's group in carrying out preservation efforts at the missions. Its ultimate goal became establishment of a state park. The original doors of the San José mission, purchased in 1926, became the Conservation Society's first property. San José's granary and adjacent parcels of land were acquired from 1929 through 1931. SACS restored the granary between 1932 and 1933 with the help of state-paid workers. In 1932, a new highway, planned just outside the mission complex, became the catalyst that sparked the restoration of the church and the entire mission compound. Restoration funds came through two New Deal work relief programs, the Civic Works Administration and its successor the Works Public Administration. These programs paid the labor costs for rebuilding San José, while SACS furnished supplies and materials. An additional \$20,000 appropriated from the 1936 centennial funds completed the entire project. The San José church was finally re-dedicated in 1937. Once the restoration plan was

¹⁵Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 519.

finished, the three proprietors of the San José Mission grounds, SACS, the Catholic Church, and Bexar County, continued working to establish a historical park. An agreement was eventually reached in 1940. Mission San José, with the consent of its three owners, would become a state-operated park, and the federal government would designate the mission a National Historic Site. Finally, in 1950, SACS deeded its properties at Mission San José to the State of Texas.¹⁶

The society worked further during the 1930s to preserve the Spanish heritage of the city. In 1937 SACS purchased 1.5 acres bordering the Mission Espada aqueduct, which is the only Spanish aqueduct still extant and usable in the United States. It also collaborated on another federally funded project, restoration of the Spanish neighborhood of La Villita. On this occasion, it was the National Youth Administration, another New Deal work relief program, which carried out the restoration. The project, started in 1939 and completed in 1941, was certainly revolutionary and representative of the objectives of the society. It was the first time that an entire district was to be preserved in Texas in order to keep its original picturesque Spanish colonial and early Texas atmosphere without jeopardizing the historical accuracy of the restoration.¹⁷

During the 1940s, after most of San Antonio's remaining Spanish heritage had been saved, the society shifted its interests to the preservation of the architectural heritage built before the railway's arrival in San Antonio in 1877. Among the most outstanding activities of this period were the purchases of the Jeremiah Dashiell and

¹⁶Ibid., 148-69.

¹⁷Ibid., 198-207.

the Otto Bombach houses (the last popularly known as “Conservation Corner”), the campaign to save the historic Menger Hotel from demolition, and the relocation of two historic homes, the John Twohig and José Francisco Ruiz houses, to the Witte Museum grounds. Not all efforts were successful, however. In 1947 the Society suffered a major shock when it was unable to stop the destruction of the adobe homes of the Blum Street neighborhood. The major reason these historic houses were not saved was the insufficiency of the historical documentation that SACS had accumulated to support its argument against demolition. The society realized then that pure action and inspiration would be useless in achieving good preservation results without documentation. During the late forties, by developing a historic information and photographic database, as well as an inventory of historic buildings, the society started on a path toward becoming a professional preservation organization.¹⁸

Besides documentation, SACS needed an effective strategy to direct preservation objectives during the forthcoming years, since rapid urban development was threatening a great number of historic structures in San Antonio. Thus, in 1951 the society adopted a master plan called “Texas Under Six Flags,” the purpose of which was to select historic landmarks in San Antonio to represent all six nations that once controlled Texas. The six monuments designated were the Spanish Governor’s Palace for Spain; the Guilbeau House for France; the José Antonio Navarro House for Mexico; the Alamo for Texas; the Vance House for the Confederacy; and the U.S. Arsenal complex on South Flores street for the United States.

¹⁸Ibid., 291-293.

Only two of these landmarks, the Alamo and the Spanish Governor's Palace, were not threatened by destruction in 1951. The Guilbeau and Vance houses were eventually demolished in 1952, and the historic structures that substituted them in the "Six Flags" plan were also demolished.¹⁹ The Navarro house had better fortune, for the society purchased it in 1960, restored it, and in 1964 opened it to the public as a museum. In 1975 SACS deeded the property to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the state manager of natural and historical parks, to be maintained as a state historic site. Saving the U.S. Arsenal complex was not complicated either. When the federal government was officially informed of the historic value of the property, the military complex was saved from demolition in 1953, and eventually restored in 1982. Since the outcome of the "Six Flags" plan was only partially successful, and SACS realized that the preservation of the selected buildings was going to take longer than initially expected, the idea was eventually abandoned during the sixties.²⁰

Besides the "Six Flags" strategy, SACS worked actively during the fifties and sixties to preserve other historic buildings all over San Antonio. It received donations of significant houses such as the Victorian 1874 Edward Steves home on King William Street, which was restored and in 1954 opened as a museum. Nevertheless, the most important preservation action of these two decades was SACS's initiative to incorporate historic buildings on the grounds of the HemisFair World's Fair, held in

¹⁹The structure that substituted for the Guilbeau House was the slave quarters also located in its grounds, which was eventually demolished in 1968 after a study of the National Park Service determined that it had no architectural merit. For its part, the Vance house was initially substituted by the Sarah Eagar home, which the society was unable to acquire, and then by the Devine House which was demolished in 1960. (Ibid., 253, 416.)

²⁰Ibid., 253, 403.

1968 in San Antonio. Restoration of the old buildings located in the fairgrounds area, and the relocation of others, gave the exhibition a distinct charm and picturesqueness that delighted visitors.²¹

The society continued saving historic structures between the seventies, eighties and nineties. Some of them are significant San Antonio landmarks, such as the Ursuline convent and school complex and the downtown Aztec Theater, which the society purchased in 1988. None of these preservation ventures, however, can be compared to the spectacular salvaging of the three-story Fairmount Hotel. Between 1980 and 1984, SACS saved the hotel from demolition, and in 1985 it was moved from its original location at the corner of Market and Bowie streets to a new site near La Villita. As such, it became the heaviest building ever moved on pneumatic wheels.²²

Since 1968, SACS has also promoted creation of some of the first historic districts in Texas. This thrust represented a step forward in the evolution of preservation philosophy, because landmarks were no longer considered isolated monuments, but rather as part of a larger landscape where the whole was greater than the sum of its parts. Historic district philosophy coincided with the main purposes of SACS; hence it is not surprising that in 1968 the society intervened directly in the

²¹Ibid., 315-16.

²²Ibid., 482.

establishment of San Antonio's first historic district, the Victorian King William Historic District, and supported creation of no fewer than fifteen others in the city.²³

The most significant of the latest preservation efforts of the society was its cooperation in the establishment of a national park for the San Antonio missions. By the 1950s, preservationists were alarmed by the neglected condition of the missions and feared that the state would never fund creation of a park to unite and protect them. They therefore turned to the federal government for help and asked it to declare the missions a national rather than a state park. Beginning in 1967, three bills were unsuccessfully introduced in the U.S. Congress to create the park. In 1978, however, a fourth bill passed after the San Antonio Conservation Society staged a dramatic last-minute lobbying push to achieve congressional approval. In 1983, the National Park Service, the State of Texas, the City of San Antonio, the Archdiocese of San Antonio, and the San Antonio Conservation Society adopted an agreement that created the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. Unique in the nation, it is the only park to include a complex of four missions, and a Spanish dam and aqueduct still in use.²⁴

Besides conserving significant historic sites in San Antonio, SACS has undertaken numerous initiatives in support of preservation consciousness. Since 1974 it has sponsored numerous preservation seminars. In 1974 it persuaded the San Antonio government to create a Historic Preservation Officer as a permanent city

²³Ibid., 371. They are La Villita Historic District, in 1969; St. Paul Square, Alamo Plaza, and Healy-Murphy historic districts, in 1978; Old Lone Star Brewery, in 1980; Dignowity Hill and Alamo Plaza, in 1984; Cattleman Square Historic District, in 1985; Arsenal, Auditorium Circle, South Alamo, South St. Mary's St., El Mercado, and Paseo del Río historic districts, in 1988; and Monticello Park historic district, in 1995. (Ibid., 524-29.)

²⁴San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Public Law 95-629, 1978.

position. In 1993 it succeeded in including historic preservation requirements in the city's master plan. Furthermore, SACS organized social activities and public events to publicize the society, to raise funds for its preservation projects, and to keep the original popular atmosphere of San Antonio. The most famous of these events is "A Night in Old San Antonio," a spring festival organized since 1947 during Fiesta Week. Today, no fewer than 4,000 volunteers participate in each one of the four nights of the festival, which produces an annual profit of approximately \$700,000, thus making "A Night in Old San Antonio" the single most profitable historic preservation fund raising event in the nation.²⁵

The society is one of the few private preservation societies in the nation, the by-laws, conservation philosophy, organizational structure, and overwhelmingly feminine membership of which have remained practically unchanged since its founding. The society continues to rely heavily on the work of volunteers, although during the last decades it has employed a staff of preservation specialists to work full time and has adopted modern preservation standards. Today SACS is a recognized and respected organization throughout the United States. Not only has it heightened public awareness for the preservation of San Antonio's historic landmarks, but it has also contributed dramatically to saving the distinctive cultural and natural environment of the city. Consequently, it has been primarily responsible for the success of the tourist industry of San Antonio, which annually produces \$3 billion in economic activity.²⁶

²⁵Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 348.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 361-62, 502, 504.

The Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the Texas Historical and Landmarks Association, and the San Antonio Conservation Society were the three most important pioneer preservation organizations of Texas. Although the latter was the most successful in achieving its objectives, all three groups made essential contributions during their early years to fostering among citizens and state officials an attitude in favor of historic preservation, transforming the activity into a public duty. The majority of society began to be concerned about the condition of its historic sites, and demanded that government to take care of them.

CHAPTER 2

FIRST STATE PRESERVATION EFFORTS

It was not until 1909 that the legislature first organized a state agency --the Texas State Library and Historical Commission (TSLHC)-- which included historic preservation objectives among its responsibilities. It was composed of five members appointed by the governor who worked without economic compensation. Its main duty was to control and administer the Texas State Library, but it also had to collect and preserve documents, manuscripts, artifacts, antiquities, and works of art related to the history of Texas, to mark historic sites and houses, and to secure their preservation. The final destination for these antiquities and historical materials was going to be a state history museum that was never built. This catch-all agency was the result of two bills that were combined to create a single agency: one of them was to create a State Library Commission and the other the State Historical Commission.¹

Although the TSLHC was to function as both a library and historical agency, it immediately dropped its historic preservation assignment. Instead, it worked exclusively on the conservation of library and historical archival materials and on the collection of historic objects and relics in a nineteenth-century antiquarian fashion.

¹*General Laws of the State of Texas Passed by the Thirty-first Legislature at its Regular Session Convened January 12, 1909, and Adjourned March 13, 1909* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1909), chapter 70, section 1, page 122 and ff.; unidentified paper, Texas State Library and Historical Commission Vertical File, CAH.

Nevertheless, the TSLHC legally kept its historic preservation duties until 1953, when the legislature transferred them to a new state preservation agency, the Texas State Historical Survey Committee.²

Evidence of how TSLHC ignored its preservation work was apparent, during the 1910s, when new historic sites became state historic parks through the exclusive initiative of the legislature. The parks were Acton in Hood County, acquired in 1911, Fannin Battlefield Ground in Goliad County, acquired in 1913, and, most importantly, Washington-on-the-Brazos in Washington County, acquired in 1916 to commemorate the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence on March 2, 1836.³ These three sites, together with the San Jacinto battlefield, were placed under the jurisdiction of the Superintendent of Public Buildings until 1919, when the legislature transferred management to a new state agency, the State Board of Control. (The Alamo, controlled by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, remained as the sole public historic site managed by a private organization.) Composed of three members (and later five) appointed by the governor, the Board of Control was created by the legislature to be the central purchasing and management agency for state buildings and grounds. Although an advisory commission appointed by the governor to assist it in

²The information about the preservation activities of this agency is non-existent, not only in the agency's archival records, but also in the records of other state agencies or private organizations.

³There were two more state historic parks (Gonzales in Gonzales County, established in 1907, and King's in Refugio County, established in 1915) whose administration was later transferred to the cities where they were located because of their local rather than statewide importance. Texas Legislative Council, "Texas State Parks: A Survey and An Analysis. A Report to the 56th Legislature," December 1958, copy on file at the Texas Capitol Legislative Reference Library, Austin, Texas (this repository hereafter CLRL), 2.

administering some historic parks, the board always had the last word to authorize any action.⁴

Besides historic sites, the state began to take an interest in setting aside natural lands as public parks. Until the 1910s there was no real need for organizing a state park system. Texas was still little urbanized, with vast underdeveloped land areas even near major cities, and thus scenic and recreational possibilities were widely available to everybody. For this reason, when in 1916 Isabella Neff, Governor Pat M. Neff's mother, donated a six-acre tract near Waco to the state as a recreational field, no state agency was legally authorized to accept it. This fact stirred the concern of Governor Neff in establishing a state park system to accept donations of land and develop them for public enjoyment. At the beginning of his second term in 1923, he suggested to the legislature that it create a state department to hold title to park lands and develop them for public use. Its immediate response was to create the State Parks Board (SPB) to manage natural and recreational parks, to solicit donations of land, and to investigate and report possible park sites. During its first years of existence, the activities of the SPB were limited to accepting donated park sites, since the legislature appropriated no funds for park purchase or development. It was not until 1931 that the legislature

⁴*General Laws of the State of Texas Passed by the Thirty-six Legislature at its Regular Session Convened January 12, 1919, and Adjourned March 19, 1909* (Austin: A.C. Baldwin & Sons, 1919), 323; Texas State Board of Control, *Eight Biennial Report of the Texas State Board of Control for the Biennium Ended August 31, 1936* (Austin: The State of Texas, 1936), 50. Although some advisory commissions were appointed the same year the park was created (as happened in 1915 with Washington State Park), their appointments were often delayed for years. For example, the San Jacinto battlefield, purchased in 1883, and the Fannin Battleground Park, established in 1913, did not have their own commissions until 1919 and 1947, respectively.

granted SPB the authority to acquire land for parks and to underwrite park development.⁵

Not only did Governor Pat Neff support natural parks, but in 1923 he also proposed creation of a State Historical Board to promote the purchase of historic sites. The legislature accepted his proposal, and the result was the establishment of the Texas Historical Board. This board, composed of “five patriotic citizens” who served without economic compensation, had as its main goals

to gather data relating to the history of Texas . . . and to present to the Legislature . . . such data and such recommendations as it may see fit looking to the preservation of historic relics, and marking of historic spots, the purchase of historic grounds and the erection of fitting monuments.⁶

The agency, however, was created with three important deficiencies. First, it had no real power to promote historic preservation, but depended upon the decisions of the legislature. Second, it duplicated the duties of the Library and Historical Commission. Finally, the legislature failed to appropriate funds for the board. As with the TSLHC previously, the Texas Historical Board never functioned, and remained inactive until abolished in 1951.

Since both the TSLHC and the Texas Historical Board never started their historic preservation work, the Board of Control remained, until the 1930s, the only active state preservation agency in Texas. During these years, the Board of Control

⁵*Journal of the House of Representatives of the First, Second and Third Called Sessions of the Thirty-eight Legislature of Texas* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1923), 161; Llo Hiller, “Parks for Texas,” *Texas Parks and Wildlife*, June 1972, 21.

⁶*General Laws of the State of Texas Passed by the Thirty-eight Legislature at its First, Second and Third Called Sessions* (Austin: A.C. Baldwin & Sons, 1923), chapter 28, 63.

cared only for the most basic maintenance necessities of the historical parks and never showed a great interest in their development. On the one hand, the legislature never funded parks beyond what was strictly necessary to keep them open; it merely authorized the Board of Control to collect admission fees and to operate concessions as additional sources of revenue.⁷ The reason for this was the legislature's belief that state parks, both natural and historical, had to be self-sustaining, because state money should be used to fill more urgent needs. On the other hand, historical parks were only conceived as public lands, regardless of their special historical characteristics, thus little or no attention was paid to the interpretive needs of their visitors. Without money or interest in history, the Board of Control never prepared any preservation, development, or interpretive plan for historic sites. It is not surprising that during the 1920s and early 1930s historic parks remained small and unattractive to visitors.

Ironically, it was during the economic depression of the 1930s that money and interest began to materialize for preservation in Texas. One of the more imaginative ways to relieve the hardships of the Depression was to use relief work programs to carry out historic conservation and preservation projects. With the vast majority of the nation's historical buildings, parks, and documents in need of immediate attention, various New Deal agencies and programs hired thousands of architects, historians, archivists, draftsmen, contractors, and laborers with the double aim of providing jobs and income to these professional groups, while at the same time recording and

⁷Texas Legislative Council, "Texas State Parks," 1. The minutes of the Board of Control only relate minor improvements or management details. For instance, on August 31 and September 21, 1936, repair works were approved in Washington State Park. Minutes, 1991/16-1 through 10, Texas State Board of Control Records, Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas (this collection hereafter cited as box number and TSBCR); Sharon Morris Toney, "The Texas State Parks System: An Administrative History, 1923-1984" (Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1995), 14, 37, 95.

preserving the past. The reasons for this sudden interest in the nation's heritage were in part historical, but also aimed to boost tourism. This marked the first time that the federal government got involved in the establishment and development of a nationwide chain of recreational parks. These New Deal programs lasted until World War II ended the economic slump and provided employment opportunities in industry and the military.⁸

In Texas, four New Deal programs implemented preservation. The most influential was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC, established in 1933 and dissolved in 1942, was an emergency program mainly devoted to providing employment to young men and World War I veterans through construction and conservation projects on public lands, many of which were state parks. Because most Texas parks were nature parks, the activities of the CCC focused on the preservation of natural resources: soil-conservation, flood control, reforestation, and utility construction. The CCC did become involved in historical parks, however, undertaking the reconstruction of four historic buildings in Texas, at Fort Griffin, Fort Parker, Mission Tejas, and the Presidio La Bahía and Mission Nuestra Señora del Espíritu Santo de Zúñiga in Goliad State Park, the last of which had been acquired in 1932. To accomplish these jobs, the CCC hired laborers to do the construction and masonry work, professional architects and engineers to provide design assistance and

⁸Michael McCullar, *Restoring Texas: Raiford Stripling's Life and Architecture* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1985), 42.

construction supervision, and historians and archeologists to document the restorations.⁹

Another important New Deal agency was the Civil Works Administration (CWA), founded in 1933. Its goal was to provide short-time relief jobs in a variety of fields. The CWA was superseded in 1935 by another agency, the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which changed its name to Works Projects Administration in 1939, and lasted until 1943. These two agencies carried out the following preservation work in Texas: improvement of the Alamo grounds; implementation of an archeological survey that located, mapped, and excavated fifty Indian villages, camp sites, and burial mounds; restoration of Mission San José in collaboration with the San Antonio Conservation Society; and, the relocation of the John Twohig house from its original setting to the Witte Museum in San Antonio, which also happened to be the last WPA project completed in Texas. The state also used WPA funds for preservation work during the Centennial celebrations.¹⁰

Along with these preservation programs, the WPA financed two other historical projects. The first was the Texas Historical Records Survey, which hired unemployed librarians, historians, archivists, and clerical workers to organize, protect, and catalog the unpublished records and documents of each governmental unit of the state, especially local records. Its final goal was to organize for general consultation

⁹Sue Moss, "CCC 50th Anniversary," *Texas Parks and Wildlife*, September 1983, 5. For more information see Goliad State Historical Park, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Goliad State Historical Park File, Texas Historical Commission Archives, Austin, Texas.

¹⁰*New Handbook of Texas*, s.v. "Works Progress Administration"; Fisher, *Saving San Antonio*, 229; For a detailed list of Centennial WPA funds see Texas State Board of Control, *Ninth Biennial Report of the Texas State Board of Control for the Biennium Ended August 31, 1938* (Austin: The State of Texas, 1938), 16-20.

the public and semi-public records of the state. More than ten million documents were restored, rearranged, and inventoried, and much of the work was published for scholarly use. The other undertaking, the Texas Writers' Project, conducted large-scale research into the state's cultural history. For example, one of its most original projects was the compilation of narratives of former slaves of Texas. Most of the information was published in the form of state and local guides.

Created under the auspices of the WPA, the National Youth Administration (NYA) was established in 1935 with the goal of providing education, jobs, and recreation for youths of both sexes. Despite this origin, the NYA soon developed its own administration. Its most important preservation projects in Texas were restoration of San Antonio's La Villita district and the Chapel in the Woods in Denton.¹¹

Finally, the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) was a recovery program initiated in 1934 under the auspices of the CWA. It employed architects and draftsmen in documenting the nation's pre-Civil War architectural heritage, with a special focus on structures in danger of being demolished. The purpose of HABS was not to save these structures, but to record them for posterity and to put architects and draftsmen back to work. The initial phase of HABS recording lasted only from January to March 1934. A second phase started in 1936 and continued until the outbreak of World War II. When the first catalog of the HABS collection was published in 1941, 272 structures had been recorded in Texas. Although the missions were thoroughly documented, the major emphasis of the cataloging effort was to record neglected areas

¹¹Jim Steely, "Public Works of the Depression Era," *Texas Architect*, May-June 1986, 104.

and building types, including log houses, forts, ranch buildings, and inns. Despite the fact that the program was suddenly interrupted during World War II, it brought to light the state's immense wealth in historic buildings.¹²

In addition to New Deal work relief programs, the celebration of the Texas centennial in 1936 was the other unexpected source of work and money, which resulted in execution of the first unified statewide historic preservation program. In 1923, Governor Neff had envisaged the idea of a centennial celebration in 1936 to “pay tribute to the heroic deeds of its founders” and to “enhance the progress of the State in its social, agricultural and industrial life.” In 1924, Neff created an assembly of prominent Texas citizens, out of which the first centennial organization was created, the Centennial Board of One Hundred. This agency, renamed in 1934 the Commission of Control for Centennial Celebrations, consisted of nine members who worked without compensation. Their duties were to decide which cities and counties were going to hold centennial celebrations, to approve such celebration plans, and to allocate the money necessary to implement them. Since the term “celebration” could be misleading, the text of the law provided a precise definition.¹³

Within the term “celebration”. . . is included the following: the placing of suitable markers, memorials or buildings at places where historic events occurred; the restoring of . . . old houses, forts, Indian villages, and other structures connected with the history of the territory now embraced within the State of Texas; the placing of monuments to early patriots of Texas; . . . and the

¹²McCullar, *Restoring Texas*, 43; Dorothy Victor, “A History of Preservation in Texas,” in *The Texas Historical Preservation Manual* (Austin: Texas Society of Architects, 1977), 5.

¹³Quotes from *Forth Worth Star Telegram*, 17 November 1923; Tom C. King, *Report of an Examination of the Texas Centennial* (Austin: Office of State Auditor and Efficiency Expert, 1939), 19-21; *General Laws of the State of Texas Passed by the Forty-fourth Legislature at the Regular Session Convened at the City of Austin, January 8, 1935, and Adjourned May 11, 1935*, vol. I (Austin: The State of Texas, 1935), chapter 174, section 4, 427.

staging of pageants at appropriate places; exposition in the recognition of the basic industries and their historical significance in the progress and growth of Texas.¹⁴

To assist the Commission of Control in its functions, the legislature created an Advisory Board of Texas Historians. This Advisory Board was composed of three members who also worked with no economic compensation: chairman L. W. Kemp, lay historian and authority on the Republic of Texas period; J. Frank Dobie, writer and southwestern folklorist; and the Rev. Paul J. Foik, authority on the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Texas. None of the members was a professional historian, but they were persons known for their interest in Texas history. Their responsibilities were to study the applications sent by the County Centennial Advisory Boards of the localities wanting to hold a celebration, and to consider if there was enough historical significance at that location to justify a celebration. Once the merit of the claim was determined, the board decided the type of celebration (following the law's definition) to which the community was entitled, together with the expenditures to be allocated. Additional board functions included cooperation with the county centennial advisory boards in implementing their celebrations, as well as cooperation with the WPA, the U.S. Centennial Commission, the Centennial Division of the Board of Control, and the Texas State Highway Department in authenticating sites for the erection of historical monuments and markers. The functions of the Board of Historians were exclusively advisory; after submitting its report to the Commission of Control for Centennial Celebrations, the final decisions vested with the latter body. In spite of this limitation,

¹⁴*General Laws of the State of Texas Passed by the Forty-fourth Legislature*, vol. I, chapter 174, section 4, 431.

the work of the Advisory Board was primarily responsible for the centennial's contribution to the preservation of Texas historic heritage.¹⁵

With all the federal money going to historic preservation and public works through the New Deal agencies, Texas could not have celebrated its centennial at a better time. A United States Centennial Commission had been appointed in 1935 to oversee \$3 million in appropriations for the Texas centennial, an event which both state and federal officials viewed as a wonderful opportunity to create jobs and promote tourism in the state. In addition, the WPA provided a total of \$1,160,000 in grants for various centennial projects. Finally, the Texas legislature appropriated \$3 million in 1935, which completed the centennial budget.¹⁶

Although the Texas Central Centennial Exposition in Dallas would get most of the fanfare and money, a large portion of the funds was used for the erection of permanent memorials and to improve, restore, and reconstruct historic sites and structures. Because of their historic and patriotic significance, the Alamo and San Jacinto projects received the largest appropriations, \$250,000 each, for improvements and erection of memorials. An additional \$360,000 was appropriated to erect the remaining monuments and to finance preservation work, and \$130,000 was appropriated to erect historical markers.¹⁷

The members of the Advisory Board of Texas Historians did not agree on how to spend this money. This disagreement was shown in the final reports submitted on

¹⁵King, *Report*, 22.

¹⁶Ibid., 2.

¹⁷Ibid., 8.

October 7, 1935, to the Commission of Control. Chairman Kemp and the Reverend Foik submitted a majority report, which was eventually accepted, while Dobie turned in a minority report because, in his opinion, a number of subjects were not evaluated according to their importance. First, Dobie was more interested in historical accuracy than in aesthetic values, especially concerning the design of monuments. Second, he wanted to memorialize the men who had contributed to the culture and civilization of the state, not just political and military figures. Third, he also sought to emphasize other episodes and figures of Texas beyond the independence war battles and protagonists. Lastly, he proposed to commemorate the history of the different geographical regions of the state and their people, such as Texas Rangers, cowboys, and frontier Indian fighters. Dobie's approach could have given more substance to the historic preservation work of the centennial, because his point of view went beyond the climate of limited celebration interests of both the Commission of Control and his peers in the Advisory Board of Historians.¹⁸

To conclude the final preservation work eventually carried out during the centennial, nine memorial museums were built, the most significant being the Alamo and San Jacinto museums; sixteen old sites and structures were restored or rebuilt, the most prominent being the Alamo and San José Mission; two state parks, Fannin and Washington, were improved; three new grand monuments were erected, the San Jacinto Tower, the Alamo Cenotaph, and the James Walker Fannin memorial;

¹⁸Hancock, "1936 Texas Centennial," 30-35.

approximately 400 historical markers and 264 highway markers designated historic sites; and 250 graves of Texas soldiers were marked.¹⁹

The 1936 centennial contributed enormously to a resurgence of public interest in history. Various public and private entities carried out valuable preservation and restoration work that remains impressive today, and they established a standard of organization that would be missed in following years. Nevertheless, as Frank Dobie had pointed out, the program lacked power and perspective. First, the state made no specific provision to support and maintain all the work done during the centennial, except for some local or community maintenance. Hence, when the lights of the celebration were switched off, nobody continued the task already begun. Second, no scholarly standard was followed. Therefore, most of the work was done to glorify the Texas past rather than to interpret it, rendering much of the work useless for subsequent historical research. Finally, since the centennial program was carried out hurriedly due to political pressure, the historic preservation and restoration work lacked careful preparation. As a result, some markers had errors or omissions, and many old buildings which deserved restoration were ignored.²⁰

When the federal and centennial funds were gone and the federal government's attention focused on World War II concerns, Texas historic parks and sites went back to the oblivion and decay they had previously suffered. To make things more

¹⁹For a complete list and description of all the preservation work carried out during the Centennial see Harold Schoen, comp., *Monuments Erected by the State of Texas to Commemorate the Centenary of Texas Independence* (Austin: Commission of Control for Texas Centennial Celebrations, 1938).

²⁰Board of Control, *Eight Biennial Report*, 14.

complicated, the legislature began to assign the management of new historic parks to the SPB rather than to the Board of Control. For example, Fort Griffin (1935), Stephen F. Austin Park (1939), San José Mission (1940), Jim Hogg Park (1941), Governor Hogg Shrine (1946), and Independence Historic Park and Port Isabel Lighthouse (1947) were all under the jurisdiction of the SPB from the day they were created. This fact reflected the prevailing opinion among state officials that the SPB was logically the agency to take care of historical parks.

In the late 1940s, the Board of Control finally admitted that the administration of the historical parks had always been foreign to its duties and very similar to the ones exercised by the SPB. The Board of Control also admitted to be “in no way equipped to assist a park in its maintenance problems.” Since the primary function of the State Parks Board was the management of parks and “they had traveling crews and equipment with which to maintain them,” the Board of Control concluded that the Parks Board was doing “a conscientious job and it is for the good of our Historical Parks and better State Administration to centralize all like functions under one service.” As a result, the Board of Control asked the legislature for the transfer of the control and custody of all historical parks to the SPB. Although two bills were introduced in 1943 and 1945, the transfer was not effective until 1949. The management of all historical parks was transferred to the SPB except the San Jacinto

and Fannin battlegrounds, which remained under the custody of the Board of Control.²¹

²¹Goliad State Park in 1932 and Lipantitlan in 1937 were the last two parks whose management was assigned to the Board of Control. First quote from Hall H. Logan, Chairman of the State Board of Control, to J. V. Ash, Chairman of the SPB, 7 January 1948, State Parks Board File 1947-8, 1911/16-64, TSBCR. Second and third quotes from Hall H. Logan to Senator Crawford C. Martin, 7 December 1948, Historical State Parks File 1948-49, 1911/16-63, TSBCR. See also Toney, "Texas State Parks," 95, and *General and Special Laws of the State of Texas Passed by the Regular Session of the Fifty-first Legislature Convened at the City of Austin, January 7, 1949, and Adjourned June 6, 1949* (Austin: The State of Texas, 1949), 320. Why the Board of Control kept the administration of these two parks is stated nowhere, although it could have been due to their patriotic significance, as it can be implied from a 1955 letter in which the DRT communicated to the Board of Control its opposition to a possible transfer of the San Jacinto and Fannin battlegrounds to the State Parks Board. In their opinion, the Parks Board would charge an admission fee to those parks, and that was unacceptable to the DRT, because those two places were national shrines for Texans. (DRT to State Board of Control, 31 March 1955, DRT-Historical Survey Committee File 1956-59, 1911/16-71, TSBCR.)

CHAPTER 3

CREATION OF STATE PRESERVATION SYSTEM

Although the transfer to the State Parks Board seemed to be a wise move for the historical parks, little else was done during the following years to improve their general condition. Three major problems were obvious, two of which were closely related. The first was that neither the Board of Control (initially) nor the State Parks Board (later) had the legal authority to add new historic sites. Instead, the legislature introduced almost all historical parks into the system, often due to pressure from local constituents and interest groups. Consequently, acquisitions were made with little planning, and most parks were of little general interest because of their local rather than statewide importance. The second problem was that both the Board of Control and the State Parks Board ignored the special characteristics of the historical parks and treated them like any other recreational or natural land. Without a set of specific goals, the two agencies almost always failed to meet the preservation needs of these parks and to realize their interpretive possibilities.¹

Most problematical, however, was that the legislature continued to believe that state parks should be self-sustaining and was unwilling to fund them beyond their administrative needs. Hence, appropriations for historic, natural, and recreational areas

¹Texas State Historical Survey Committee, *Report to the Governor and the Fifty-Fourth Legislature* (Austin: The State of Texas, 1955), 29.

were meager and prevented managers from undertaking any maintenance beyond what was necessary to keep parks open. Between 1949 and 1952, for example, the legislature designated only \$16,985 to care for the eight historical parks. So catastrophic was their situation that in 1952 the State Parks Board considered closing the system. Earlier, in 1940, some measure of relief had come with creation of the Special Park Fund which would accept the deposit of all park revenues for redistribution within the system. By 1952, however, only eleven of the thirty-seven parks that comprised the system showed regular earnings, and the rest had to find creative ways to finance themselves, including such ventures as allowing passenger boat concessions or harvesting pecans.² Besides the fund, there were some other unsuccessful attempts to get the money that the parks needed. In 1950, for instance, Governor Beauford H. Jester asked the legislature to appropriate \$2 million, but his request was ignored. In 1955, the legislature took the initiative of launching a \$25 million bond program, but investors were discouraged that the parks lacked sufficient revenue to cover interest on the bonds.³

Unexpectedly, the public image of parks began to change. The economic bonanza of the fifties provided citizens with more money and leisure time than ever before, and people all over the nation began to go to state and national parks to fulfill

²Toney, "Texas State Parks," 95, 141-43; Gordon K. Shearer to Dan M. Walker, 27 October 1952, Box 1977/81-157, Shivers Papers, Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas (this collection hereafter cited as box number and Shivers Papers). The case of the Varner Hogg mansion is an example of the consequences of insufficient funding. Its owner, Miss Ima Hogg, deeded the house to the state in 1956 for the purpose of establishing a park. Fearing that the legislature might neglect to provide funds to maintain the property, she also donated shares of stock to pay for its future expenses. (Texas Legislative Council, "Texas State Parks," 114.)

³Toney, "Texas State Parks," 99, 100; Texas Legislative Council, "Texas State Parks," 14; Gordon K. Shearer to Dolph Briscoe, 26 September 1952, 1977/81-144, Shivers Papers.

their recreational needs. In 1952, tourism in Texas produced \$398 million, and the figure was expected to rise in the following years. The state immediately realized the economic potential of the growing influx of visitors and in 1957 decided that the time had come to give a boost to its park system. That same year the legislature assigned to the Texas Research League, an independent organization, the task of studying the needs of the parks -- a first step toward formulating a long-range development plan. The Texas Research League was occupied with some prior commitments, however, and put the project on hold. In the meantime, the legislature asked its investigative arm, the Texas Legislative Council, to carry out a similar study.⁴ It concluded that conditions at most of the parks were unacceptable, and it strongly recommended that the legislature establish an advisory board to administer a sound park acquisition policy, set standards for park development, and allocate sufficient funding.⁵ The legislature ignored these recommendations, however, since Texas tourism increased between 1950 and 1960 from three to six million visitors even though parks were in poor condition. Consequently, the state decided to concentrate its efforts on advertising its attractions rather than repairing and maintaining them. As a result, the State Parks Board continued to be ill-funded; for the 1960-61 biennium only \$664,540 was allocated for the entire park system.⁶

⁴Toney, "Texas State Parks," 151, 149. Established in 1949, the purpose of the Texas Legislative Council was "to investigate departments, agencies, and officials in the State and to study their functions and problems." (Ibid., 153.)

⁵Texas Legislative council, "Texas State Parks," I-iv.

⁶Texas Research League, "Texas State Parks: Blueprint for Rebuilding a Major Resource," October 1961, Copy on file at CLRL, III; Toney, "Texas State Parks," 160-61.

In 1961 the Texas Research League was finally able to survey the parks, and most of its results coincided with those of the Texas Legislative Council. Still, some new conclusions made this study a breakthrough. First, the league demanded the immediate establishment of a long-range plan to direct park acquisition, development, and maintenance. Second, the league affirmed the necessity of hiring professional staff to be responsible for park development and operation. Finally, the league selected, for the first time, a set of standards by which to acquire and keep historical parks in the system: they had to be of statewide importance, and the system had to be representative of all eras of Texas history without overemphasizing any one period. If any park was of local rather than statewide importance, or duplicated a period of Texas history already represented in another park, the study suggested that it not be acquired, dropped from the system, or turned over to a local historical association for operation. In short, historical parks and sites were for the first time considered foremost as preservation instruments.⁷ The legislature accepted the findings of the survey, and in 1962 appropriated \$70,000 for an interagency contract between the SPB and the Department of Horticulture and Parks Management at Texas Technological College to

⁷Texas Research League, "Texas State Parks," IV, 1, 2. In 1962, the historic parks and sites administered by the State Parks Board were Acton in Hood County, Eisenhower Birthplace at Denison, Goliad in Goliad County, Governor James Stephen Hogg Memorial Shrine at Quitman, Independence and Washington in Washington County, Lipantitlan in Nueces County, Monument Hill in Fayette County, Old Fort Parker in Limestone County, Port Isabel in Cameron County, Jim Hogg in Cherokee County, Stephen F. Austin at San Felipe, and the San José Mission at San Antonio. The historical periods portrayed in these parks emphasized, almost exclusively, the Spanish missions, Texas Revolution and Republic, and early economic development.

develop the state's first comprehensive long-range plan for natural, recreational, and historical parks.⁸

To implement this plan, it was again necessary to find new sources of funding. The Texas Research League had recommended in 1961 utilization of revenue from the Game and Fish Commission, manager of the state's wildlife resources, because many of the activities supervised by that agency, hunting and fishing, for example, occurred in natural parks. Many legislators considered the possibility of merging the State Parks Board and the Game and Fish Commission into a single agency. They argued that by joining both agencies the state would eliminate duplicate positions, improve park management, and provide the desired boost to the park system through the infusion of the latter agency's revenues. Governor John Connally, wanting to offer more attractions to tourists, supported the proposal. Consequently, on August 23, 1963, the Fifty-eighth Legislature established the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and charged it with administering the state park system.⁹

There was a further reason why Governor Connally needed the TPWD. The Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, a new federal agency created in 1962 to help states plan and develop their own park systems, offered matching grants on two conditions: (1) a park agency to administer the money and, (2) a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan. The second condition was fulfilled in 1966, when the Texas Legislature presented the State of Texas Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), a ten-

⁸Texas Research League, "Texas State Parks," 10; Texas Technological College, "Texas State Parks: A General Report of Functions, Space Requirements and Policies for the Future," 1962, copy on file at CLRL.

⁹Texas Research League, "Texas State Parks," 15; Llo Hiller, "Parks for Texas," 22; Toney, "Texas State Parks," 169, 290.

year plan that proposed to acquire 150,000 acres of land, 5,000 of which were to contain forty-one new historical sites. Federal money immediately began to arrive; the TPWD received \$3,356,807 in 1966, and \$2,418,825 in 1967 to acquire and develop parks. By the 1968-69 biennium, TPWD's total budget, including state money and federal grants, totaled \$5 million.¹⁰

The increased budget allowed the park system to expand its number of historic places. The first ones were the San Jacinto and Fannin battlegrounds, transferred to the TPWD in September 1965 from the Board of Control. To accompany them, TPWD acquired, in 1966, the 269-acre Lyndon B. Johnson State Historic Park at Stonewall. These parks were incorporated into the system mainly because the local groups that managed them were unable to cope with the maintenance work and costs. This has never been the case with the Alamo, however, for this historic site has always generated revenue far in excess of that necessary for its support. Even though it has been frequently suggested since the 1960s to transfer its management to the TPWD, the powerful and influential Daughters of the Republic of Texas has prevented it and has kept the Alamo as the only state-owned historic site exclusively operated by a private organization.¹¹

Creation of the TPWD, presentation of a development plan, and the influx of federal funding seemed to promise a brighter future for the historical park system. The problem was that TPWD could act only on state-owned historic properties, thus

¹⁰Toney, "Texas State Parks," 215-16; State of Texas, "Park Development Bonds. Series 1968," 1968, copy on file at Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Austin, Texas, 1, 2, 17 (this repository hereafter TPWD); Hiller, "Parks for Texas," 23.

¹¹Bill Dolman, Senior Advisor for Historic Sites, State Parks Division, TPWD, interview by author, August 31, 1998, Austin, Texas, transcript in possession of author; Hiller, "Parks for Texas," 23.

leaving the rest of the sites and objects unattended. Consequently, the state needed another agency to promote and direct historic preservation beyond park limits. In reality that agency already existed, but it was inoperative. Since 1923, the Texas Historical Board had been the official preservation agency of the state, but its faulty legislative statute had allowed the TLHC and the Commission of Control for Centennial Celebrations to take over the board's duties. More importantly, the legislature also failed to fund the board's activities, and its members had to pay their own expenses. As a result, the board almost never met and performed no preservation work during its entire existence. It was finally abolished in 1951, clearing the way two years later for a new and more ambitious agency -- the Texas State Historical Survey Committee (TSHSC), renamed the Texas Historical Commission (THC) in 1973.¹²

The committee was and still is composed of eighteen interested members, who are not necessarily professionals in history or historic preservation. The main objectives of the TSHSC (initially) and the THC (later) have been to provide "leadership and coordination services" to Texas state agencies, organizations, institutions and individuals with responsibilities in the field of historic preservation, and to survey, record, preserve, restore, and mark all phases of Texas history within a comprehensive statewide historic preservation plan. Most of these objectives, however, were later incorporated into the statute. The legislature originally established

¹²Toney, "Texas State Parks," 62-63; *General and Special Laws of the State of Texas Passed by the Regular Session of the Fifty-second Legislature Convened at the City of Austin, January 9, 1951, and Adjourned June 8, 1951* (Austin: The State of Texas, 1951), chapter 185. Since the records of the Texas Historical Board do not survive, it is impossible to determine if any preservation activity was done. That it was seems unlikely. The only known information is that the Board met for the last time in 1939. (Ibid.)

the TSHSC on a temporary basis, with the exclusive objective of identifying the state's most endangered historical landmarks and the persons and organizations involved in historic preservation activities. Hence the name "Historical Survey Committee." The results of this survey had to be reported in 1955 to the legislature, which would then decide whether or not to continue the life of the agency.¹³

In order to accomplish its task, the TSHSC had to overcome two important handicaps. The first one was the lack an organizational body to carry out the survey. As a temporary solution, the eighteen committee members divided themselves into subcommittees specializing in specific subject matter areas. To help them, in 1954 the committee hired the first executive director of the agency, George W. Hill, who remained in the post until 1965.¹⁴ The second handicap was that the legislature, as was the case of the State Parks Board, did not appropriate any money to support the committee and expected it to work exclusively on private financing. To receive monetary donations, the legislature, in 1954, allowed TSHSC to establish the Texas Historical Foundation (THF) as a non-profit foundation. Thanks to the contributions of individuals and organizations from all over the state, the TSHSC could pay its initial expenses and was able to stay alive during its first years.¹⁵

¹³*Vernon's Annotated Revised Civil Statutes of the State of Texas* (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Co., 1925-), art. 6145, section 1; Wilson, *First Quarter Century*, 59.

¹⁴The original subcommittees were Archives, Papers, and Documents; Parks; Houses, Sites, and Landmarks; Museums; Schools; Arts and Crafts; Finance; and Program. (TSHSC, *Report to the Governor and the Fifty-Fourth Legislature*, 3.)

¹⁵Texas State Historical Survey Committee, *Report to the Governor and the Fifty-Fourth Legislature* (Austin: The State of Texas, 1955), 17. A copy of the law that created the TSHSC is available in Wilson, *First Quarter Century*, 59; Stephanie Malmros, Claudia Smith, Michele Ostrow, and David Gunto, "Texas Historical Commission Records. Creator Sketch; Scope and Content Note; Preliminary Inventory; MARC Record; Note on Arrangement," 3 December 1997, pamphlet on file at Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas, 3 (this repository hereafter cited as THC.)

Despite this dependence on the initiative of interested individuals, the TSHSC successfully performed its appraisal between 1953 and 1957, the legislature having extended the life of the committee another two years in 1955 in order to give it more time to finish its task. During these four years the TSHSC found depositories of Texas documents in state and national archives, collaborated with the State Parks Board to determine major needs in historical parks, identified historic landmarks to be preserved, and compiled an index of preservation organizations and institutions in the state. It also requested the establishment of a new marker program to continue the centennial efforts, the selection of preservation criteria for the future statewide preservation plan, the initiation of collaborations with other state agencies and organizations, and sufficient funding from the legislature to carry out all those tasks.¹⁶

By 1957, the legislature was convinced not only of the necessity of setting up a statewide historic preservation program, but also of the necessity of keeping the TSHSC working, for in four years it had provided an excellent service at no cost to the state. Therefore, the legislature made the TSHSC a permanent agency and directed it to start implementing all the projects suggested, especially the marker program.¹⁷

After four years of work, the TSHSC realized that it not only needed money to carry out its preservation responsibilities, but also to pay for publications, to hire professional staff, and for office space and supplies. Hence, it began to request regular

¹⁶Ibid., 3-5; Wilson, *First Quarter Century*, 8, 10, 22; TSHSC, *Report to the Governor and the Fifty-Fifth Legislature* (Austin: The State of Texas, 1957), 4, 7-10.

¹⁷TSHSC, *Report to the Governor and the Fifty-Sixth Legislature* (Austin: The State of Texas, 1959), 5.

funding from the legislature in a campaign that even newspapers noticed and joined.¹⁸ In 1959, the state finally allocated \$19,000, the first appropriation for the TSHSC, thanks mainly to the initiative of Truett Latimer, future TSHSC executive director. It was a meager amount, and although by 1963 the legislature had doubled it to \$45,000, the THF funded seventy-five percent of the cost of TSHSC operations between 1959 and 1963. It was not until 1965 that a more realistic appropriation of \$80,000 was made. In spite of it, state money only covered thirty-four percent of TSHSC's costs in 1965, while the THF supplied the rest.¹⁹

Besides financing, the TSHSC needed a working organization, for it was going to be impossible for an eighteen-member commission with a limited staff to organize and coordinate a statewide historic preservation plan. The solution was to build a network of volunteers to represent and to carry out TSHSC's work in every corner of the state. Hence, the first County Historical Survey committees were appointed in 1956 as the result of an initiative of TSHSC member Judge James E. Wheat. By the end of the year 163 committees had been organized, although passage of its enabling statute was delayed until 1963.

The county committees are composed of seven residents interested in history and preservation appointed by the county judge. The committee members serve without compensation, and although the committees are allowed to receive public

¹⁸TSHSC, *Report to the Fifty-Sixth Legislature*, 5; *Austin American Statesman*, 25 February 1959, 4; *Houston Post*, 11 February 1959, sec. 2, p. 6.

¹⁹Latimer spent ten years (1952-1962) in the Texas House of Representatives where he was very influential in obtaining money and favorable legislation for historic preservation. Wilson, *First Quarter Century*, 15, 24; Malmros, "Texas Historical Commission Records," 3.

funding for their activities from their local governments, most of their economic support has come through grants or donations.²⁰ Since the county committees and the TSHSC worked as a unit, this organizational scheme represented an intelligent step forward in unifying state historic preservation efforts. On the one hand, local communities could take advantage of the expertise and resources of a state agency. On the other, the TSHSC was developing a grassroots movement that would carry preservation efforts even to the more remote parts of the state. By 1966 all 254 Texas counties had established their own committees.²¹

With some regular funding guaranteed and the creation of the county committees, the TSHSC could now start its preservation work. The most important of these early activities was the continuation, beginning in 1962, of the marker program begun during the centennial celebration. This project was also the result of the initiative of two influential TSHSC members, Tyler attorney Lee Lawrence and, especially, John Ben Sheppard of Odessa, former attorney general of Texas and president of the TSHSC between 1963 and 1965.²² The first official Texas Historical Marker was erected in 1962 at Camp Ford, near Tyler. Today there are more than 13,000 all over the state, including other historical markers placed by the Texas Department of Transportation (then named Texas Highway Department) along state highways and roads. Markers are cast brass plates with an inscribed summary of the

²⁰Wilson, *First Quarter Century*, 11; *Vernon's Civil Statutes*, art. 6145.1. For a biography of Judge James E. Wheat see Wilson, *First Quarter Century*, 72.

²¹*The New Handbook of Texas*, s.v. "Texas Historical Commission."

²²Curtis Tunnel, Executive Director, THC, interview with author, August 11, 1998, Austin, Texas, transcript in possession of author. For biographies of Lee Lawrence and John B. Sheppard see Wilson, *First Quarter Century*, 72, 75.

historic significance of the site or building. It was also in 1962 that the TSHSC placed the first Historic Building Medallion at Eggleston House in Gonzales. Medallions, which are round brass plates with a map of Texas engraved, mark historic structures worthy of preservation. During its long and successful existence, the marker program has been an excellent way not only to publicize the state's history at a popular level, but also to bring about preservation awareness among the public.²³

The early actions of the TSHSC were essentially limited to identifying and marking historic sites. Thanks again to Sheppard's initiative, in 1962 the TSHSC finally issued the state's first official preservation policy, the RAMPS program (Record, Appreciate, Mark, Preserve, and Survey). The program adopted a twenty-one goals for historic preservation and marking to be carried out over a five-year period, as well as a springboard from which broader activities could be launched throughout the state. All county committees also adopted RAMPS as a guideline for their work. The most important RAMPS goal was to erect 5,000 historical markers in five years. To accomplish this, the TSHSC ordered the county committees to select and research twenty historic sites, buildings, or subjects in their area that deserved marking. The objective was reached on October 27, 1969, when the 5,000th marker was erected at the site of the historic Rocking Chair Ranch in the Texas Panhandle. Furthermore, RAMPS decided that Historic Buildings Medallions had to be accompanied by an interpretive plate. In 1964, the first of these new medallions was placed at Camp Ford,

²³Texas Historical Commission, *Guide to Official Texas Historical Markers*, (Austin: Texas Historical Commission, 1975), vii; Wilson, *First Quarter Century*, 23. Evidence of the effectiveness of the Texas marker program is that seventeen other states and one Canadian province chose it as a model for their own initiatives. (Texas Historical Commission, "Local History Programs," June 1996, pamphlet on file at the Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas.)

Smith County. Other RAMPS initiatives were to promote the preservation and restoration of historical structures; to survey historic printed materials around the state; to help the county historical committees to organize, finance, and publicize their preservation programs and museums; and to publicize in print all the work done.²⁴

RAMPS was the first real statewide preservation plan of Texas. To implement its demanding objectives, the TSHSC hired its first permanent professional personnel, and, to permit its members to focus exclusively on preservation work, in 1965 it created a separate board for the THF. Once the TSHSC came to rely almost exclusively on state and federal money and volunteer contributions were no longer needed, the two agencies disconnected their activities. Today, the THC and the THF work separately and perform activist roles of their own.²⁵

²⁴Wilson, *First Quarter Century*, 22-25. For a complete text of the RAMPS program see *ibid.*, 78-80.

²⁵Wilson, *First Quarter Century*, 25, 49. Dennis Medina, Librarian, THC, interview with author, August 11, 1998, Austin, Texas, transcript in possession of author. In 1971, the legislature studied whether or not to dissolve the THF, but it finally decided to keep the foundation alive with a separate preservation program. Since then, the most important activities of the THF have been the organization of history congresses, the financing of oral history projects, and the establishment of funds for the publication of *Texana*. (Malmros, "Texas Historical Commission Records," 3.)

CHAPTER 4

THE YEARS OF THE GREAT LAWS

During the mid-sixties, historic preservation in Texas was in a period of effervescence. This was but a reflection of what was going on nationwide; preservation had also become a political issue in the United States. The dynamic economic development of the fifties and early sixties resulted in a rapid urban growth that wiped out literally thousands of historic buildings and archeological sites to make room for new construction. The federal government was in part responsible for this systematic destruction, since public construction projects such as highways and reservoirs, which mushroomed all over the nation, were devastating valuable cultural resources. Public concern over such loss rose to a level that the U.S. government could no longer ignore. Preservationists pleaded for strong federal legislation and leadership to promote the effective protection of the historical resources throughout the country. Congress responded in 1966, and passed the National Historic Preservation Act.¹

The 1966 National Historic Preservation Act updated two previous preservation laws, the Antiquities Act of 1906 and the Historic Sites Act of 1935.²

¹Beth Grosvenor Boland, "Federal Programs in Historic Preservation," in *Public History: An Introduction*, ed. Barbara J. Howe and Emory L. Kemp (Malabar, Florida: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1988), 134; National Historic Preservation Act, Public Law 89-665, 1966.

²The Antiquities Act of 1906 (Public Law 59-209) was the first federal law creating national accountability for cultural resources. On the one hand, it authorized the federal government to designate and protect nationally significant historic property under federal control. On the other hand, it allowed

This old legislation had an important shortcoming: it confined federal recognition and protection only to those remains of the past significant in the overall history of the nation. The new legislation, however, aimed to expand the protection of state and local historic resources by establishing a national preservation program to be carried out by the individual states. To achieve this objective, the 1966 Act created two agencies. The first one was the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to coordinate local, state, and federal preservation efforts and to review federally assisted projects affecting historic properties. The other was the National Register of Historic Places charged with recording “districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture” on the local, state, and national levels, and to declare the most outstanding historic items of each state a National Historic Landmark. Moreover, the act also established a grant program to assist states in financing their preservation agenda. In short, the new legislation created a partnership between the states and the federal government for a sustained nationwide effort to identify cultural resources, catalog them, and encourage their preservation by providing legal means to protect them from summary destruction.³

the president to declare a national monument any publicly owned historic landmark. This legislation was expanded in the Historic Sites Act of 1935 (Public Law 79-292), which declared it a national policy to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings, and objects of national significance. The new act empowered the Secretary of the Interior to conduct surveys to identify, evaluate, document, acquire, and preserve nationally significant sites and structures, including those not located on federal lands. The law also authorized the designation of National Historic Landmarks. As a result of this act, the federal government started the first two national attempts to compile a national catalog of historic buildings and historic and archaeological sites: the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER). Both programs were part of the relief efforts during the Depression that eventually led to the Registry of National Historic Landmarks in 1960. (Boland, “Federal Programs,” 133.)

³Quote from National Historic Preservation Act, section 101a; Boland, “Federal Programs,” 133-34.

The 1966 Act required the appointment in each state of a Historic Preservation Officer to be responsible for the coordination of activities. In Texas, the legislature designated TSHSC's executive director, Truett Latimer at the time, and gave the whole agency the authority to implement the National Historic Preservation Act and to receive federal funding. Among TSHSC's responsibilities were to prepare a comprehensive state preservation plan, to direct a statewide survey of historic properties to identify nominations for the National Register, to offer consultant services to the federal, state, and local governments in carrying out their preservation responsibilities, to develop educative programs, and to encourage public participation. To assist Latimer with his duties, the TSHSC in September 1968 created a new division within its organization: the National Register Department.

The consequences of the National Historic Preservation Act in Texas were numerous. Fundamentally, federal mandate required that Texas institutionalize its preservation programs, although the TSHSC did not submit its definitive version until 1973.⁴ Moreover, historic properties began to be nominated for the National Register. Since 1969, the National Register has listed more than 2,000 individual Texas properties, and 10,000 others in historic districts. As a result, these properties have received approximately \$1 million annually in federal grant funds, and their owners have been awarded tax benefits for restoring them. The act also resulted in a definitive boost to professionalism in historic preservation, because it obliged state agencies to

⁴Texas Historical Commission, *Historic Preservation in Texas. The Comprehensive Statewide Historic Preservation Plan for Texas* (3 vols.; Austin: Texas Historical Commission and U.S. Department of the Interior, 1973.)

employ a staff of historians, architects, archeologists, cultural resource managers, and other related specialists in order to be eligible to receive federal money.⁵

An additional consequence of the 1966 Act was the creation of the concept of the historic district. After decades of work, preservationists came to realize that many old structures were of little significance by themselves, especially if they lacked architectural or aesthetic merit or never housed famous events. Instead, their importance centered on their relation to neighboring structures, in the context in which they were originally built. It was necessary in these cases to preserve the entire group rather than isolated structures if their historical meaning was to be kept. By acknowledging the existence of historic districts, and by stimulating their preservation all over the nation, the National Historic Preservation Act marked a major development in the conservation of America's historic heritage. Texas' laws had anticipated this necessity in 1962, when the legislature established the "Old Galveston Quarter" historic district, which prohibited new constructions and the demolition and alteration of the old ones without the authorization of a commission of residents.⁶ Notwithstanding, the passing of the National Historic Preservation Act fostered the creation of historic districts all over Texas.

⁵Curtis Tunnel interview; THC and TAC, "Self-Evaluation Report to the Sunset Advisory Commission," December 1993, Copy on file at CLRL, 7.

⁶Architecture Professor Believes In Conservation, <<http://www.tamu.edu/univrel/news/stories/102297-1.htm>>, August 1998. *General and Special Laws of the State of Texas Passed by the Third Called Session of the Fifty-Seventh Legislature Convened at the City of Austin, January 3, 1962, and Adjourned February 1, 1962* (Austin: The State of Texas, 1963), ch. 30, 81.

The last important consequence of the National Historic Preservation Act was legislative passage, in August 1967, of the Historic Structures and Sites Act.⁷ This law assigned to TPWD the acquisition and administration of historic sites and structures, and authorized it to receive federal funding and to enter into agreements with other state or federal agencies. The significance of the Historic Structures and Sites Act is enormous, for it legally confirmed TPWD as the only Texas state agency empowered to manage publicly owned historic sites. As a result, this act validated and made definitive the organizational structure that the state had been spontaneously building to protect Texas historic heritage; from then on, TSHSC would be mainly devoted to implementing the statewide historic preservation program, whereas TPWD would have primary responsibility for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of historic structures and sites owned by the state.

Besides the National Historic Preservation Act and the Historic Structures and Sites Act, the mid-sixties were also significant because of the boost given to the preservation of Texas archaeological and prehistoric resources. In contrast to Europe, where conservation of archeological resources had been an integral part of the preservation movement, and embodied in law since its very origin in the 1830s, the Texas preservation movement left its archeological resources unprotected until recent times. Sound reasons explain this behavior. First, archeological remains are buried, hence their presence for early preservationists was less “obvious” than the existence of documents or built structures. Second, archeological objects and structures are unlikely

⁷*Vernon's Civil Statutes*, art. 6081s.

to draw public attention because of their limited aesthetic merit. Third, their value as historical sources escaped the minds of the amateurs who, with little or no scientific education, made up the rank and file of the early preservation movement. Finally, and most importantly, archeology is usually the only source of information on prehistoric and Indian cultures. These cultures not only were unattractive to the early white, middle-class, Anglo-American preservationists, who were basically interested in preserving the glorious national past of Texas, but they also represented former Indian aggressions and opposition to white rule. Consequently, it is not surprising that the state's official preservationist movement ignored for so long the existence of an archeological heritage that deserved protection.

Such neglect began to be corrected in 1965, when the Office of the State Archeologist (OSA) was established to develop the state's first archeological program. Originally a subdivision of the State Building Commission, the agency responsible for state structures, the OSA was empowered to inventory, evaluate, preserve, excavate, and interpret only the archeological resources located on public land. The first director of OSA was archeologist Curtis Tunnel, who later became THC's executive director. Among the most significant highlights of his term in office were the salvaging (along with the Texas Highway Department and the Texas Water Development Board) of sites endangered by road and reservoir construction and carrying out the first professional archeological excavations ever undertaken, at such significant historic sites as the Alamo and the San Antonio missions.⁸

⁸THC, *Historic Preservation in Texas*, vol. 1, 77; Wilson, *First Quarter Century*, 25.

Completing the decisive effort to consolidate archeology as an integral part of state preservation efforts was enactment of the Texas Antiquities Code on September 10, 1969. The code not only declared the preservation of antiquities a public interest, it also constituted the first thorough and definitive statement of the general policy of the State of Texas regarding objects of historical significance. For the first time the state recognized antiquities as sources of history beyond their monetary worth, as noted in the text of the law:⁹

It is hereby declared to be the public policy . . . of the State of Texas to locate, protect and preserve all sites, objects, buildings, pre-twentieth century shipwrecks, and locations of historical, archeological, educational, or scientific interest, including but not limited to prehistoric and historical American Indian or aboriginal campsites, dwellings, and habitation sites, archeological sites of every character, treasure imbedded in the earth, sunken or abandoned ships . . . or any part of the contents thereof, maps, records, documents, books, artifacts, and implements of culture in any way related to the inhabitants, prehistory, history, natural history, government, or culture in, on or under any of the lands in the State of Texas, including the tidelands, submerged lands, and the bed of the sea within the jurisdiction of the State of Texas.¹⁰

Enactment of the Antiquities Code resulted from controversy generated by the discovery of three Spanish shipwrecks containing a “sunken treasure” near Corpus Christi. In September 1967, an Indiana treasure-hunting firm, Platoro Ltd., removed archeological artifacts from the vessels and brought them to its home offices. The Texas attorney general alleged that such removal was illegal since the firm had never obtained a permit to conduct archeological activities, as required by the Texas Penal

⁹R. Ranall Bridwell, “The Texas Antiquities Code: An Historical Commentary in a Contemporary Context,” *Southwestern Law Journal* 24 (1970): 338.

¹⁰*Vernon’s Civil Statutes*, art. 6145-9, section 2.

Code. Moreover, the attorney general argued that the state had a lien on the sunken ships and their contents. Platoro, for its part, claimed ownership of the artifacts on the grounds that it had made the initial discovery. To make things worse, the federal government claimed possession of the objects as well. The question of this sunken treasure made Texas legislators realize that there was not a clear statutory provision to determine the ownership of shipwreck contents. Although Platoro eventually returned the artifacts to Texas, the dispute showed that Texas's laws needed a comprehensive statute to deal not only with archaeological, but with all kinds of antiquities. The outcome was the Texas Antiquities Code in 1969.¹¹

Implementation and coordination of the code was assigned to both the TSHSC and to the OSA, which, on September 1, 1969, was transferred to the TSHSC in order to facilitate the coordination between the two organizations.¹² In addition, the antiquities code created the Texas Antiquities Committee (TAC). The committee was a seven- member agency, the primary responsibilities of which was to adopt rules to protect and preserve the state's archeological and historical resources; to determine and designate "State Archeological Landmarks" to be the property of the state; to nominate archeological landmarks for the National Register; to issue permits and contracts for the salvage of archeological and historical sites; and to serve as legal custodian of the items recovered, to keep an inventory of them, and to determine their

¹¹For a complete account on the Platoro case see Bridwell, "The Texas Antiquities Code," 326-33.

¹²*Vernon's Civil Statutes*, art. 6145-6.

ultimate disposition. Although the TAC worked as a separate organization, its staff members were considered TSHSC employees.

The antiquities code authorized two categories of state archeological landmarks. The first applied to the sites, objects, and buildings located on state-owned property within the Texas tidelands (to prevent future disputes regarding the contents of sunken vessels) and on all lands belonging to any county, city, or political subdivision of the state. The second applied to any site, object, or building located on private property, but only if its owner requested such designation in a written application.¹³ Hence, despite the revolutionary terms of this law, its effective protection was limited only to public lands and to a very few private lands. Consequently, the OSA had to rely on donations, negotiations, and public outreach to achieve protection of archeological resources located on private property. On the other hand, the code was successful in creating a legal obligation to review all construction projects to be undertaken on public lands. Beginning in 1969, the antiquities code required state agencies and private contractors to report to the TAC the discovery of any previously unknown cultural landmark located on public land. After a preliminary study, it could determine whether to interrupt a project in order to carry out a more thorough archeological investigation.

With the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the state of Texas attempted to prevent or to limit the destructive impact of public works on cultural resources. Thanks to this legislation, many archeological landmarks have been saved,

¹³Ibid., art. 6145-9, sections 5, 6, 7.

recorded, and investigated in Texas since 1969. By 1993, the year before the TAC was abolished on the grounds that it duplicated THC's archeological preservation functions, the TAC had designated 2,258 public and 54 private sites with archeological and historical landmarks.¹⁴

The sixties were a vibrant period during which Texas preservation adopted modern preservation standards and reached a high level of organization. At the end of the decade the state had two fully developed agencies, the TSHSC and the TPWD, devoted respectively to developing a statewide preservation plan and a statewide system of public historical parks and sites. Equipped with sound legal foundations and a clear set of objectives, both agencies began to work on the obligations assigned to them.

¹⁴Texas Sunset Advisory Commission, "Texas Historical Commission. Antiquities Committee. Staff Report," 1994, copy on file at CLRL, 13-14.

CHAPTER 5

THE SYSTEM ADVANCES

Despite advances on the administrative and regulatory front, historical parks were in a decayed condition at the end of the sixties. Visitation rates for the entire park system increased forty-eight percent between 1963 and 1968, but visitors went predominantly to natural and recreational areas. With the possible exception of the San Jacinto Park, historical parks remained relatively small (in 1968 they comprised 948 acres, one percent of the total park land) and attracted a modest number of visitors. As a result of their low visitation rate, historical parks as a group produced the least revenue of the system. Unfortunately, they were also the most expensive parks to maintain because of their high restoration and preservation costs. Since most historical parks were poorly maintained, they were at a disadvantage in attracting visitors, which meant less money for their development, a condition that produced a vicious circle. It is not surprising they were a low priority for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in terms of capital outlays for improvements, maintenance, and number of employees.¹

The passing of the National Historic Preservation Act was the motivation that TPWD needed to give a much needed attention to its historic sites. Not only did the law obligate the agency to develop a statewide system of historical parks, but it also

¹“Park Development Bonds. Series 1968,” 1.

provided some matching grants to help finance it. Still, more funding was needed, and TPWD looked for alternative ways to obtain it. The solution chosen was the issuance in 1967 of \$75 million in bonds for a ten-year state park land acquisition and development program. By September 1968, \$5,750,000 in bonds had already been sold, and that same year TPWD instituted entrance fees to help paying the interest of the bonds.² As money became available, the agency acquired new historic sites. Between 1967 and 1969 TPWD incorporated into the park system Fort Leaton at Presidio, Fort McKavett near Fort McKavett, Fort Lancaster at Sheffield, Fort Richardson at Jacksboro, and Hueco Tanks near El Paso.³

Although the bond money permitted new acquisitions, it was still insufficient to develop all historical parks. By 1971, the bond program had produced \$15.75 million, but the limited revenues from park entrance fees made it impractical and imprudent to issue a new bond series. Official estimates indicated that at least \$11 million were still needed to expand and develop the historical parks system, and TPWD called on the legislature for help. The response was the establishment in 1972 of the Texas Park Fund No. 31, commonly known as the “cigarette tax,” because the revenue came from a tax of one cent per pack.⁴

²“Park Development Bonds. Series 1968,” 18; Hiller, “Parks for Texas,” 23, 25; *New Handbook of Texas*, s.v. “Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.”

³Hiller, “Parks for Texas,” 23. The Hueco Tanks are natural cisterns with Indian pictographs. The County of El Paso conveyed the property by warranty deed to the state at no cost.

⁴State Interim Committee on Parks and Recreation, *This Land is Our Land: A Report on Texas' Natural Environment* (Austin: The State of Texas, 1969), 5, 40-41; *Texas State Park Policy Issues Workshop*, 24-25 January 1977, copy on file at TPWD, 53; Toney, “Texas State Parks,” 248.

The purpose of the cigarette tax was to provide money to update and improve the parks that existed prior to the enactment of the bond program (by statute, bond funds could not be spent on older parks) and to accelerate acquisition of endangered historical and archeological areas. It was expected that if more parks were established, entrance fee revenues would increase, thus allowing additional issues of bonds to finance park development. In its first year of existence, the cigarette tax raised \$13 million, and, during the entire decade, the tax garnered an average of \$17 million annually. Between 1971 and 1975 TPWD targeted one million of this amount solely on historical parks acquisition and development, but by 1979 the percentage of cigarette tax money invested on historic sites had risen to approximately twenty-five percent.⁵

The cigarette tax not only increased park financing, but in 1972 it provoked a major structural change that recast TPWD along lines more sensitive to the preservation needs of historical parks. The reorganization consisted of the creation of two new branches within the division responsible for parks, the State Parks Division, to deal with specific preservation issues; their names were the Historic Sites and Restoration branch, and the Interpretation and Exhibits branch. To the Historic Sites branch was assigned the acquisition, development, restoration, and planning of historic sites, as well as the monitoring of construction projects in historical and archeological areas. The Interpretation and Exhibits branch was responsible for the development of interpretive and educational programs for both natural and historical parks. Before

⁵Ibid., 258, 263. Bill Dolman interview.

1972, these responsibilities were shared by various branches within different TPWD divisions, so the centralization aimed to streamline the agency's performance.⁶

In addition to this reorganization, during the early seventies TPWD codified its policies for acquisition, development, and operation of historical parks. The agency focused on three major points. First, the significance of historic sites was to be determined by the specifications stated in the 1967 Historic Structures and Sites Act. In other words, potential sites had to be selected on the basis of their association with an historic event or person, their distinguishing architectural or craftsmanship type, or their significance to the understanding of Native Americans.⁷ Second, the park system was intended to represent and to interrelate all the multiple aspects of Texas history in order to complete a comprehensive presentation of Texas's past. To direct this objective, in 1970 TPWD established a chronological and thematic division to classify historical parks. It was determined that the agency had to own at least one site for each subtopic and time period.⁸ Finally, historic properties had to be of statewide importance, and their interpretation should emphasize it.⁹

With the cigarette tax money, its reorganized structure, and its set of policies, TPWD engaged vigorously in augmenting the number of historical parks under its

⁶Bill Dolman interview.

⁷*Vernon's Civil Statutes*, art. 6081s.

⁸The chronological periods were: 1) Paleo-Indian, 2) Archaic, 3) Neo-American, 4) Early Exploration and Colonization, 5) Early Anglo-American and European Colonization, 6) Mexican Texas and the Revolution, 7) Republic of Texas, 8) Early Statehood, 9) Confederate Texas, 10) Reconstruction, 11) Victorian, and 12) Twentieth Century Texas. See TPWD, *A Future for the Past: Texas State Historical Parks*, January 1996, copy on file at TPWD, 22.

⁹TPWD, *Historic Sites and Restoration Program Policy Statement*, March 1979, copy on file at TPWD, 1-5.

management. In 1972, a team of TPWD architects, in collaboration with the Texas State Historical Survey Committee, selected forty-two top-priority historic places for acquisition. Since architects composed the team, most of the fourteen properties eventually incorporated in the TPWD system during the decade were historic buildings: the Texas State Railroad in 1971; Sabine Pass Battleground and Mission Rosario in 1972; Seminole Canyon in 1973; Landmark Inn in 1974; Caddoan Mounds and Casa Navarro in 1975; the Starr Family Home, the Sebastopol House, the Sam Bell Maxey House, Magoffin Home, and the Fulton Mansion in 1976; and the Kreische Brewery and Fanthorp Inn in 1977. Additionally, Fort Richardson, Fort Leaton, Fort McKavett, and Governor Hogg Shrine historical parks were expanded with additional tracts of land.¹⁰

Besides receiving and developing new parks, during the seventies and the early eighties TPWD modernized the old ones. Master plans for park development were now obligatory, and the agency devoted most of its energies to preparing them. Between 1972 and 1984, the Historic Sites and Restoration branch produced 17 preservation plans for historical parks, each of which included an analysis of the conditions and characteristics of the site, an evaluation of its interpretive value, and a scheme for its reconstruction, restoration, or preservation. The Interpretation and Exhibit branch produced during the same period 22 interpretive exhibits, 22

¹⁰Curtis Tunnel interview; TPWD, *Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission Policy for the Administration of the Texas State Park System: Policy Guidelines for Acquisition Development and Operation* (Austin: Texas Parks and Wildlife, 1975), 1-10; Hiller, "Parks for Texas," 25.

interpretive trail or signage systems, 10 historic furnishings projects, 9 audio-visual programs, 6 interpretive publications, and 2 educational programs.¹¹

To streamline even more the coordination of the different parks' programs, TPWD again reorganized its Parks Division in 1982 by creating three new branches: Special Services, Planning and Development, and System Operations. The Special Services branch investigated and purchased new park land and provided financial assistance to park projects. After a historic site was acquired, the Planning and Development branch developed it following a master plan. When the site was ready for visitation, its operation was transferred to the System Operations branch.¹²

Still, park progress was very slow during these years. Insufficient staff and monetary resources delayed for seven or more years the execution of some master plans and opening parks to the public, with the consequent loss of revenue from entrance fees. Those were the cases of Landmark Inn State Historic Site, bought in 1974 but opened to the public in 1981, and Caddoan Mounds Historic Site, acquired in 1975 but opened in 1983. The longest delay occurred in Sebastopol House State Historical Park at Seguin, which was acquired in 1976 and remained closed to the public until 1989, even though its original preservation plan had been completed in 1979. Another significant detail is that in 1984 no less than thirty-one historical parks and sites had no interpretive facilities.¹³

¹¹TPWD, "Sunset Advisory Commission: Self Evaluation Report," 1984, copy on file at CLRL, 78.

¹²Texas Sunset Advisory Commission, "Staff Evaluation. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department," June 1984, copy on file at CLRL, 25-26.

¹³Toney, "Texas State Parks," 291; Sunset, "Parks and Wildlife," 52; TPWD, "Sunset Self-evaluation," 71.

Contrasting the slow progress of the historical park system, TSHSC's work was brisk during the seventies, basically because it required less staff and money than TPWD's historic sites development. A meaningful indication of the new times that awaited the agency was the dropping of the word "survey" when in 1973 the legislature renamed it the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The need to make Texans aware of their heritage through use of the term "survey" had long since passed; the objective was now to realize the statewide historic preservation plan assigned by the National Historic Preservation Act with the organizational structure developed during the past decade. Besides renaming the agency, the legislature strengthened, expanded, and updated its powers and responsibilities, and confirmed it as the official permanent preservation agency of the state.¹⁴

Money continued to come from state appropriations and federal preservation grants. For instance, between 1971 and 1973, the U.S. government financed fourteen agency projects with \$225,000, and at the end of the decade, federal revenue totaled more than half of THC's budget.¹⁵ The percentage of this type of funding declined in importance during the late eighties and nineties, and by 1993 represented only twenty-five percent of the agency's annual budget. Despite the reduction, the productivity and

¹⁴THC, *Historic Preservation in Texas*, vol. 1, 77. For a list of THC's new responsibilities see *Vernon's Annotated Government Code of Texas*, vol. 4 (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Co., 1990), art. 442.005, 591.

¹⁵In 1979, for instance, THC received \$814,225 in federal funding for a total budget of \$1,577,617. The same percentage occurred in 1980: THC received \$1,194,542 in federal grants for a total budget of \$2,000,868. (THC, *Historic Preservation in Texas*, vol.1, 76.)

the quality of THC programs have kept the agency among the top five recipients of federal grants of this kind in the nation up to the present day.¹⁶

The THC continued its regular preservation activities during the seventies, including the marker program, the nomination of more historic properties to the National Register, and the stimulation of local preservation through county historical commissions. In addition, the agency continued publishing literature on historic preservation and sponsoring professional meetings such as the annual Historic Preservation Conference and the Winedale Museum Training Seminar.¹⁷ Moreover, during these years, the THC became for the first time the manager of a few historic properties. In 1969, the legislature transferred the ownership of the Carrington-Covert House and the neighboring Gethsemane Church, both in Austin, to serve as headquarters for the agency. Both edifices were restored, and in 1972 the agency relocated its offices there. In 1973, the THC received the Sam Rayburn house, located in Bonham, and the personal possessions of Sam Rayburn, former congressman and longtime speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. After its restoration, in 1975 the house became an historic museum. In addition to the management of these two properties, in 1989 the legislature added to the THC statute oversight of the governor's mansion in Austin.

¹⁶Ibid.; Sunset, "Texas Historical Commission," 7. In 1993, THC received \$771,510 in federal grants for a total revenue of was \$3,069,497. (Ibid.) THC, "Strategic Plan for the Fiscal Years 1999-2003 Period," 15 June 1998, copy on file at CLRL, 17.

¹⁷THC, *Biennial Report 1973-1974* (Austin, 1975), 73-74, 9. The Annual Historic Preservation Conference, first held in 1953, is a gathering of professional and volunteer preservationists from across the state. The Winedale Museum Training Seminar, first organized in 1971, trains museum professionals and volunteers and has proven popular.

Also, during the seventies the THC's Archeology Department and the Texas Antiquities Committee carried out the inventory, evaluation, preservation, and interpretation of state archeological resources. Both agencies investigated and recorded several hundred new archeological sites whose data was stored in traditional and computerized systems. They also strengthened their consultation services regarding the destruction of archeological sites in the course of public works. Their aspiration was that builders consider in their planning the possible existence of significant cultural resources that could be threatened by land modifications. Finally, in 1972 the THC and the TAC launched the first state-funded underwater archeological program in the nation to locate, investigate, and protect historic shipwrecks.¹⁸

As part of the statewide preservation program in progress, the state increased its attention to the preservation of its own historic heritage. It took the first step in 1971, issuing the Historic Courthouse Act. The law decreed that no county could demolish or impair the historical or architectural integrity of its courthouse without giving six months notice to the THC. Eventually, in 1973, the legislature incorporated the care of the courthouses into THC's statute. The renovation and restoration of these public buildings became an important objective in the eighties.¹⁹ Texas was also the first state in the nation in adopting a law for the reuse of historic buildings. A 1979 law required state agencies to give preference to structures listed in the National Register,

¹⁸THC, *Biennial Report 1973-1974*, 6; THC, *Historic Preservation in Texas*, 1: 87.

¹⁹*General and Special Laws of The State of Texas Passed By The Regular Session of the Sixty-Second Legislature Convened at the City of Austin, January 12, 1971 and Adjourned May 31, 1971* (Austin: The State of Texas, 1971), ch. 496, 1718; *Government Code of Texas*, art. 442.005, 591. During the 1983-1984 biennium, for example, the THC awarded \$1 million in grants to help 132 counties in the restoration or renovation of their historic courthouses. See THC, *Biennial Report 1983-1984* (Austin: 1985), 11.

recorded as Texas Historic Landmarks, or designated landmarks by local governments for use as government facilities, as long as the cost was not substantially higher than using a modern structure. Yet, the significance of these legislative actions does not match in importance the establishment in 1983 of the State Preservation Board to restore and preserve the state capitol at Austin.²⁰

A disastrous fire in the east wing of the Capitol on February 6, 1983, alerted the legislature to the extent to which the century-old building had deteriorated. The General Services Commission had treated it as a modern construction, and had failed to meet the specific maintenance demands of the historic edifice. As a result, not only had many of its historic and the architectural features deteriorated, but they also posed safety hazards to occupants. The legislature understood that restoring the affected wing only would not solve all safety concerns, and thus it decided to undertake a thorough restoration of the building. This approach not only aimed to make the Capitol a safe building, but also to recover its architectural and historical qualities. To oversee the preservation work and to maintain the Capitol, its contents, and the other buildings located on its surrounding grounds, the Sixty-eighth Legislature, in 1983, created a new preservation agency, the State Preservation Board.²¹

²⁰THC, *Biennial Report 1979-1980* (Austin: 1981), 7; *General and Special Laws of the State of Texas Passed by the Regular Session of the Sixty-sixth Legislature Convened at the City of Austin, January 9, 1979, and Adjourned May 28, 1979* (Austin: The State of Texas, 1979), ch. 773, sec. 5.01.b, 1924.

²¹For general information on the State Preservation Board see Texas Sunset Advisory Commission, "State Preservation Board. Staff Report," 1996, copy on file at CLRL; Texas Capitol Restoration Celebration, April 1995, booklet on file at CLRL, 4; Bonnie Campbell, Project Manager, State Preservation Board, interview with author, August 25, 1998, Austin, Texas, transcript in possession of author; *General and Special Laws of the State of Texas Passed by the Regular Session of the Sixty-Eighth Legislature Convened at the City of Austin, January 11, 1983 and Adjourned May 30, 1983* (Austin: The State of Texas, 1983), 2766-73.

There were powerful reasons that explained why the legislature created a new and independent agency to care exclusively for this monument. First, the Capitol is a building beloved by Texans, hence the legislature believed that it deserved special attention from the state. Second, it is a complex structure that blends its distinctive architectural and historical characteristics with its function as a government office. Consequently, the restoration had to be sensitive to both issues. Finally, legislators wanted to have absolute control of the project and its budget, because it was going to affect dramatically its future working venue. To avoid conflicts between senators and representatives, the three major powers of the state, the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the speaker of the house, were made *ex-officio* members of the State Preservation Board.²²

When the board was established, it received all the powers and duties related to the capitol formerly vested in other state agencies. Furthermore, the board was made responsible for the capitol's historic collections, with some opposition from the senate and the house of representatives; the two chambers had traditionally cared for the objects and considered them to be their property. After receiving control of the building and its collections, the next step was to prepare the restoration master plan. The board considered that the main objective should be to restore the Capitol as close as possible to its original 1888 design. Fortunately, politicians applauded and supported the suggestion. Funding would come from generous state appropriations as

²²Bonnie Campbell interview.

well as from private donations deposited in the Capitol Trust Fund, established in 1989.²³

The State Preservation Board carried out the work in a logical and sound manner. During a period of economic depression between 1983 and 1989, the board limited itself to performing a deep historical and architectural investigation of the building. In 1989, when the research was complete and state funding was made available, the actual restoration began. By the time it was finished in 1997, the final investment totaled \$187 million, but the results were extremely successful; not only had the Capitol recovered its original appearance, but with 1.5 million visitors per year, it became the number two tourist attraction in the state after the Alamo. Since then, the duties of the State Preservation Board have shifted from construction management to building management. With an annual budget of \$1.4 million, the board is now responsible for the regular maintenance of the Capitol in order to keep its historical integrity and avoid another costly renovation. Additionally, the board provides services to the Capitol's occupants and visitors. To that end, a visitor's complex was opened in 1994 in the Old General Land Office Building.²⁴

Given its composition, duties, and achievements, the State Preservation Board is an exceptional agency. Furthermore, it has successfully integrated the two historic preservation functions that the state of Texas divided between the TPWD and the THC, historic property management and historic preservation work. The experience of fifteen years overseeing the Capitol, and recognition that its labor could not have been

²³Ibid.; Sunset, "State Preservation Board," 17-20.

²⁴Bonnie Campbell interview; Sunset, "State Preservation Board," 1, 2, 22.

better performed by the TPWD and the THC, because of their many responsibilities, assure the future existence of the board as a separate entity.²⁵

²⁵Ibid., 7.

CHAPTER 6

THE SYSTEM MATURES

In 1983, the future of Texas historical parks seemed cloudy. It was true that the TPWD had recently acquired thirteen new interesting historic sites, but stagnant revenues since the beginning of the decade hampered further acquisitions, new site development, modernization of old parks, and the hiring of more specialized staff personnel. Cigarette tax money, which had been so helpful during the seventies, decreased at the same rate that the population began to cut back on smoking. Although the legislature renewed the tax in 1983, and \$187 million was collected that same year, the cigarette tax failed to keep up with rising land prices and TPWD's expenses. To make matters worse, the legislature diverted some of the agency's tax money in 1982 and 1983 to a special Texas Sesquicentennial Fund, and the influx of federal revenue from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation decreased from \$15 million in 1979 to nothing in 1982. Although the federal government resumed its allocations in 1983, when Texas received more than \$3 million, the future of this revenue source was uncertain. Thus, TPWD found itself in a difficult position, as the disappearance of so many funding sources coincided with increasing demands for park maintenance and improvement.¹

¹Sunset, "Texas Parks and Wildlife," 107.

When in 1984 the Sunset Commission reviewed the TPWD for the first time, some solutions were proposed to help historical parks get past their straits. Two Sunset Commission recommendations were particularly significant because they outlined actions that the agency implemented in following years. The first one suggested that TPWD promote more local support for state parks by organizing volunteer groups of “friends,” by encouraging neighboring communities and users to establish endowment funds to collect money for historic sites, and by instituting partnerships with local institutions. The Sunset Commission also advised TPWD how better to coordinate its activities with the THC. As a possible way to do this, the Sunset Commission proposed a modification of TPWD’s statute in order to authorize THC to review the preservation plans of historic areas and their development.²

Parks and Wildlife rejected this second recommendation on grounds that the Texas Antiquities Code had already authorized a collaboration framework between the two agencies. The code required TPWD to submit to TAC all plans and construction documents that could affect State Archeological Landmarks and to notify it of any action other than routine maintenance that could affect buildings at least forty-five years old. Since TAC members were also THC employees and TPWD’s executive

²Established in 1977, the Sunset Advisory Commission is a state agency that periodically evaluates other state agencies, determines their efficiency, decides if their services are still needed, and, if necessary, terminates unnecessary organizations. When an agency passes its examination, the Sunset Commission can recommend statutory changes to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. See Sunset A. Commission, <[http:// www.sunset.state.tx.us/sunset/sunseta.htm](http://www.sunset.state.tx.us/sunset/sunseta.htm)>, August 1998; Sunset, “Texas Parks and Wildlife,” 5-6. Other Sunset recommendations were to clarify the classification of historic parks and sites so as to provide a better guide to the public and for park development; to seek professional financial advice for parks’ investment and management, and for future bond sales; and to eliminate several statutory restrictions that limited TPWD’s ability to disseminate information from park sites.

director was a TAC ex-officio member, TPWD saw no necessity to expand the current legislation.³

In contrast, TPWD immediately implemented the first Sunset Commission suggestion and, between 1984 and 1997, twenty-five historic sites organized “friends of the park” groups. In fiscal year 1995 these organizations reported almost 150,000 volunteer hours with an estimated value of \$1 million. In addition, by 1997 TPWD had signed fourteen memoranda of agreement with local institutions in order to research and develop joint promotional plans for historical parks. The links between the local communities and their parks have continued to strengthen ever since, and they have saved TPWD so much work and money that their support is now considered “vital to management and educational efforts at historical parks.”⁴

In 1984, after its sunset review, TPWD adopted a six-year plan to provide new planning and directions for the entire agency. Its main goal was to achieve a balanced development among recreational, natural, and historical areas. Regarding historic sites, the six-year plan did not propose any innovative objective, but continued the work already in progress.⁵ It was a more urgent need to search for alternative funding sources to replace the declining cigarette tax. TPWD’s first proposal was to create a tax on real estate transactions, following the example of other states, but it was not until 1993 that a “healthier” tax on sporting goods sales eventually replaced the

³TPWD, “Agency Response to Sunset Staff Suggestions,” 15 June 1984, copy on file at CLRL, 5; TPWD, “Sunset Self Evaluation,” 82.

⁴TPWD, *Future for the Past*, 5; TPWD, “Texas Historic Sites: A Response to a Report by KPMG Peat Marwick,” 1997, copy on file at CLRL, 24-25. Quote from TPWD, *Future to the Past*, 5.

⁵Toney, “Texas State Parks,” 296.

cigarette tax. In the meantime, TPWD returned to the traditional solution of selling development bonds. In 1985, the legislature authorized issuance of \$30 million worth of revenue bonds. To finance them, TPWD had to raise the fees of all services it provided. Another funding strategy was the creation in 1991 of the Parks and Wildlife Foundation, a non-profit enterprise authorized to accept donations and grants and to raise money for parks.⁶

Because of the economic difficulties, TPWD acquired only four new historic sites during the eighties: the battleship *Texas* at La Porte in 1983, the Admiral Nimitz Museum at Fredericksburg and the Confederate Reunion grounds at Mexia in 1984, and the Lubbock Lake Landmark at Lubbock in 1988. No other historic sites have been included in the state park system since then.⁷

Despite its inherently limited budget, between 1984 and 1996 the TPWD performed a significant amount of work at historic sites and parks, improving their condition considerably. For example, most of the parks prepared and implemented developmental master plans that included a resource management plan to identify, inventory, and document cultural resources, along with interpretive plans to present them to the public.⁸ In addition, TPWD expanded its interpretive and educational program offerings. By 1996 twenty-five parks had permanent interpretive exhibits and nineteen parks had furnished historical interiors. That same year, sixty-three percent of

⁶Sunset, "Texas Parks and Wildlife," 107-109; TPWD, *Future for the past*, 14; Toney, "Texas State Parks," 297-98.

⁷Ibid., 296; TPWD, *Future for the past*, 22.

⁸Ibid., 2; TPWD, "State Historical Parks Activity Report," February 1995, copy on file at TPWD, 7.

the 22,400 interpretive activities organized in all state parks were carried out at the historical locations, although they comprised only a third of the system's acreage. Besides organizing traditional activities, such as guided tours, literature publication, and historic commemorations, TPWD tried new interpretive initiatives: audio-visual exhibitions, "virtual tours" through CD-ROM or the Internet, and television programming. The agency created an interdivision education team to assist all divisions in their educational programs and to expand staff awareness of the educational value of parks.⁹

Yet, the definitive boost to historic interpretation came in 1995 when the Parks Division designed a standard interpretive plan and required all historical parks and sites to adopt it as part of their overall development and management. Goliad State Historical Park tested this master plan in 1998 and, if funding is available in coming years, the plan will be implemented at all parks following a ranking based on need.¹⁰ It is also worth noting that interpretive programs became more sensitive to the needs of the different population segments and began to present previously neglected aspects of Texas history. For example, TPWD now utilizes specific exhibition formats for particular audiences such as children, and programs such as the "Texas Buffalo Soldier" Outdoor Educational Program and "Exploring Texas Roots" emphasize the heritage of minorities, including Hispanics, African Americans, and women.¹¹

⁹TPWD, *Future for the Past*, 9-10.

¹⁰Ibid., 7; TPWD, "Response to KPMG," 28.

¹¹Ibid., 9.

During these years, TPWD's organization evolved. Since 1990 executive director Andrew Sansom has promoted the decentralization of the park system by transferring administration and operation of sites to the ten regional offices (pared to eight in September 1997 so as to reduce staff costs). Headquarters functions are now limited to allocating park operations resources and to performing oversight functions such as keeping sites' records and legal documents. Between 1984 and 1996, moreover, TPWD made a substantive commitment to professionalism in its field staff. Specialists with a solid background in preservation-related academic fields now make up a the majority of TPWD's historical park employees, and the department provides them with regular opportunities to update their professional skills. Historic preservation work has been recognized since 1982 with six awards from state and national organizations, including recognition in 1993 for the battleship *Texas* restoration project from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the main federal preservation agency.¹²

For its part, THC's activities evolved during the eighties and early nineties according to a philosophy very close to TPWD's. It involved communities more deeply in preservation projects, encouraged the work of volunteers, raised preservation consciousness among private owners, attended previously neglected aspects of Texas history, and incorporated new technology to publicize information and the agency's resources. This coincidence of objectives was clearly evident during the decade in

¹²KPMG Peat Marwick LLP, "Texas Historic Sites. A Study Conducted for the Texas Historical Commission and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department," January 1997, copy on file at CLRL, 18, 88; Bill Dolman interview; TPWD, *Future for the past*, 5, 11,1.

THC's archeological work and in the promotion of a new field: local and regional historic preservation programs.

When former State Archeologist Curtis Tunnel became THC's Executive Director in 1982, his influence was immediately felt. During his first biennium in office, the number of State Archeological Landmarks quickly rose to 1,900, including one thousand archeological sites, 650 shipwrecks, and numerous historic buildings and other structures. Furthermore, archeological research continued to thrive throughout Texas, with excavations in such important places as the pueblo village at Landergin Mesa in 1981, and the preservation of prehistoric rock art in caves abutting Amistad Reservoir in 1987. The THC also recorded extensive information about archeological sites, documented archeological collections and stored them for permanent curation, and published reports on the sites excavated. In the 1983-1984 biennium, the computerized archeological database, "Texas Heritage Conservation Plan," became operational, and has since been a very effective tool for cultural resource management.

Another notable effort was the creation in 1983 of a statewide stewardship network of volunteer archeologists to assist the OSA in identifying and protecting archeological sites. Originally established with twelve volunteers situated around the state, the network assists in discovering and researching archeological sites at the local level, documents private artifact collections, offers consultant services to landowners interested in preserving the archeological resources located on their lands, motivates the donation of sites or artifacts, performs educational activities, and distributes educational material. In other words, it cares for archeological resources located on private lands, which are therefore unprotected by state or federal laws. By 1995 the

network had grown to fifty stewards who donated an estimated \$200,000 in time. As a tool of the THC, the volunteer network performs a vital role in spreading archeological awareness at the community level. This successful program was the first of its kind in the nation and has been used as a model in other states.¹³

Other endeavors also aimed at raising public consciousness about archeology. Since the eighties the OSA has also developed a series of strategies to obtain the cooperation of private landowners in archaeological preservation. They were aimed at encouraging landowners to consider the impact of construction and land movements on their cultural resources, to offer consultant services to those owners willing to preserve their archeological sites, to promote protective designations such as State Archeological Landmark, to seek acquisition and donations of designated sites, or, if those are not possible, to obtain tax exemptions for such proprietors.¹⁴ On the other hand, the Archeology Department of TAC and THC have focused on the archeological resources located on public land. Their most recent concern has been to review all public construction projects before they affect a site. This procedure not only minimizes damage to cultural resources but also avoids tempting construction companies to violate the Antiquities Code, since it is no longer necessary to interrupt ongoing projects and thus increase costs due to lost time. Finally, since 1989 the THC annually celebrates Archeology Awareness Week in April; a program of activities

¹³THC, *Biennial Report 1983-1984*, 81-82; THC and TAC, "Self Evaluation to Sunset," 5; THC, "Office of the State Archeologist," June 1996, pamphlet on file at the THC.

¹⁴THC, *Biennial Report 1983-1984*, 23; Sunset, "Texas Historical Commission," 69.

designed to acquaint Texans with their archeological heritage and involve them in its preservation.

The other important enterprise in which the THC has been engaged during the eighties and nineties is promotion of local and regional historic preservation plans. This project is not exclusive to Texas, for the federal government has strongly promoted community, historic district, and regional historic preservation as an essential part of its national preservation policy since the late 1970s. The Certified Local Government Program was the first of these projects. Established in 1980 as a product of a local, state, and federal partnership, and coordinated by the THC's National Register Department, the Certified Local Government Program is a cooperative network of thirty-six cities and counties involved in developing high-quality preservation work in their communities. Although these cities and counties carry out their projects independently, they receive services and assistance from state and federal agencies and, most importantly, funding through federal grants. In 1996, for example, \$73,000 in grants was distributed to help more than thirty preservation projects statewide.¹⁵

To offer communities a complement to state and federal funding, the legislature established the Preservation Trust Fund in 1989. Administered by the THC, the fund is an interest-earning pool of public and private monies that can also receive private donations and gifts. It is maintained as a separate account in the General Revenue Fund, and its interest is spent exclusively on preservation matching grants or

¹⁵THC, "National Register Program," June 1996, pamphlet on file at THC.

low-interest loans. The fund has been a sound source of money since its establishment, and the THC aims to expand it during the next few years as part of its financial plan.¹⁶

More revolutionary for local preservation was the nationwide launching of the Main Street Program. Designed in the late seventies by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Main Street Program aims to revitalize the historic central business districts of small cities through the use of preservation and economic strategies. The preservation work consists of rehabilitating the façades and interiors of historic buildings so as to recover an attractive and unified image within the district. The program then seeks the cooperation of local governments and private interests to locate traditional and established businesses in the restored buildings. Finally, the town is marketed through advertising and the organization of special events. To make the restoration of existing buildings economically attractive, the federal government launched a series of tax incentives. The most important of these was the Economic Recovery Act of 1981 which created a twenty-five percent investment tax credit for rehabilitation of historic commercial, industrial, and residential buildings located in designated historic districts. Subsequently, the Tax Reform Act of 1986 reduced the percentage to twenty.¹⁷

The National Trust selected Texas to commence one of the six pilot main street projects in the nation. In 1981 five cities, Eagle Pass, Hillsboro, Navasota, Plainview, and Seguin, formally launched the project. As of 1998, 108 cities have participated.

¹⁶THC, "Strategic Plan. 1997-2001 Period," 14 June 1996, copy on file at CLRL, 47; THC, "Strategic Plan 1999-2003," 30.

¹⁷Victor, "A History of Preservation in Texas," 28; William J. Murtagh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America* (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., 1993), 112.

During these seventeen years, the Texas Main Street program revitalized 80 downtown areas, established 3,606 new businesses, created more than 11,000 new jobs, and stimulated private reinvestment in 6,100 historic buildings estimated at \$518 million. These figures make the Texas Main Street program the most successful in the nation and one of the greatest success stories of the THC.¹⁸

The Main Street programs meant a major step forward in the evolution of the concept of historic preservation. Rather than being preserved exclusively for their value as remnants of the past, historic districts now recovered their original function as places of business. There were three main benefits. First, rather than creating static museums, the restored main streets came back to life as business districts and became tourist attractions in the cities where they were located. Second, the revenue that these new businesses produced made the Main Street project economically self-supporting. Finally, locals developed a new pride in their communities, and were more willing to invest and volunteer in preservation projects.

This strategy was taken to a higher level in 1989 when a committee made up of the THC, the TPWD, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Texas Department of Commerce, launched the first regional preservation project in the state: the Old San Antonio Road program. This program had two objectives. The first one consisted in placing markers along the 300-year-old route that linked Texas and Louisiana with Mexico City during the Spanish colonial era, an area extending from the Sabine River to Eagle Pass. The second objective was publication of historical

¹⁸THC, "Texas Main Street Program," June 1996, pamphlet on file at THC; THC, "Strategic Plan 1999-2003," 19; Curtis Tunnel interview.

literature and the organization of celebrations in seventy communities to publicize the historical significance of the road. The project, completed by 1991, was extremely successful in raising public interest for the route.¹⁹

Los Caminos Del Río, launched in 1990, was and still is a more ambitious regional preservation project. Organized by the Meadows Foundation of Dallas, the THC, the TPWD, and other state agencies, *Los Caminos Del Río* also cooperates with Mexican agencies and organizations, thus becoming a binational endeavor. The idea is to take advantage of the historic and cultural continuity of the U.S.-Mexican border in order to create an historic heritage and touristic region along the lower Rio Grande, between Laredo and Brownsville, Texas, and Colombia and Matamoros, Mexico. *Los Caminos* focuses mainly on the conservation of the vernacular architecture and the cultural heritage of the region, either by organizing cultural activities or by restoring historic structures. The TPWD was responsible for one of the most important of these restorations in the historic district of Roma, Texas, later recognized with the designation of National Historic District Landmark. Since its inception, *Los Caminos* has attracted more than \$9.3 million in financial support from foundations and the private and public sectors to sustain cultural resources development in these rural border communities.²⁰

The benefits of the regional heritage programs are quite similar to those of the Main Street program, but they affect a larger number of people. They also revitalize

¹⁹THC and TAC, "Self-Evaluation to Sunset," 31-32; THC, *Biennial Report 1991-1992* (Austin, 1993): 39.

²⁰THC, "Regional and International Heritage Programs," June 1996, pamphlet on file at THC.

the economy of depressed zones, foster local initiative in historic preservation, and enhance community pride in the value of their heritage. Aside from the original benefits of the Main Street Program, *Los Caminos* project had two additional advantages. First, it generated stable collaborations between several state agencies and public-private partnerships so as to meet the demanding necessities of these kinds of programs. Second, the final product wisely combines culture and historic preservation in order to offer a high quality tourist destination.²¹

Because of the success of the heritage tourism programs, other state agencies realized the economic potential of historic areas. Following the example of *Los Caminos*, during the nineties TPWD launched marketing programs to promote historical parks as touristic destinations. Another interesting initiative was the federal program ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Enhancement Act), administered by TxDOT between 1994 and 1997 in collaboration with the THC. The ISTEA program executed enhancement work on the roads and carried out some historic preservation activities. In 1994, for example, \$33 million were invested in 54 preservation projects, including the restoration of 13 historic depots, 8 historic courthouses, and 4 historic bridges. Since the 1994-1995 biennium, an ISTEA grant has also financed the Texas Historic Sites Atlas, a database of 250,000 historic sites that integrates in one place information scattered in various locations. To serve this project, in 1996 the THC initiated the Markers 2000 program to survey, record, document, and repair the state's 11,500 historical markers. This database is available

²¹THC and TAC, "Self-Evaluation to Sunset," 31-32.

to the general public on the Internet, along with other THC web pages related to historic preservation, tourism, and educational issues.²²

Besides tourism, the THC has expanded its preservation interests to other fields. Since 1993, for example, the THC has implemented the federal program “Save Outdoor Sculpture!”, destined to be the first comprehensive survey of American outdoor sculpture. The agency’s interest in ethnic and minority heritage issues has increased as well: For example, in 1992 the agency helped to found the Texas African-American Heritage Organization, promoted the passing of laws to protect unmarked Indian cemeteries, and organized an annual women’s history month. Furthermore, the THC has recently attended to certain less-studied aspects of Texas history. In 1995, for example, it launched the Military History program to preserve the significant military sites of Texas. Working with state universities and local governments, it launched the Texas Courthouse Alliance to restore and preserve the fifty-five more significant historic courthouses. Recently, the agency became responsible for preservation duties at the Texas State Cemetery, which was restored between 1996 and 1998 with the cooperation of the TPWD.²³

²²THC, *Biennial Report 1993-1994* (Austin, 1995), 3; THC, “Historical Markers 2000 Project,” N.D., copy on file at THC; THC, *Biennial Report 1995-1996* (Austin: 1997), 5-12.

²³*Ibid.*; THC and TAC, “Self Evaluation to Sunset,” 35.

CHAPTER 7

THE PATH TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Because of the dispersed responsibilities for historic preservation among several state agencies, legislators have regularly considered combining them into one superagency so as to unify functions and eliminate duplication of efforts and budgets. In 1971, for example, the Sixty-second Legislature made a weak attempt to coordinate the six agencies that then shared preservation responsibilities by establishing the Historical Resources Council. Its existence ignored, the council held just one meeting before being abolished by the legislature in 1981. The council was superfluous, as the state's preservation agencies shared information on historical resources in the normal course of their operations. When the creation of a superagency was again suggested in 1993, the THC rejected the idea on similar grounds. In its opinion, there were sufficient interagency agreements and contracts to coordinate the six agencies responsible for preservation: THC, TPWD, TxDOT, TAC, the General Land Office, and the State Archives, Library and Archives Commission. Besides, the THC argued, the functions and programs of each agency did not overlap, and it insinuated that if Texas was a national *leader* in historic preservation, then it was due to the overall quality of its organization and preservation work.¹

¹THC, *Biennial Report 1993-1994*, 41.

This contention was not completely true. When in 1994 the Sunset Commission reviewed the THC for the second time, it decided to abolish the TAC and to transfer its functions to the THC precisely because the two agencies duplicated functions and their responsibilities overlapped in archeology. Moreover, a crisis developed at TPWD when it announced during the same year that twenty historic sites would undergo cutbacks and that some sites would be closed altogether. These reductions derived from funding decrease, reduced personnel, and low visitation rates. After many public and THC protests, TPWD altered its strategy and, as a tentative solution, turned over the management of five historic sites to a private corporation, Texas Rural Communities, Inc. Nonetheless, more definitive actions were needed, since the state of historic preservation in Texas was not as splendid as the THC boasted.²

Parks and Wildlife began to act to get out of the deep management troubles in which the historical parks were submerged. Its first act was the creation of the Entrepreneurial Budget System (EBS). As its name suggests, the EBS promotes businesslike management of state parks and entrepreneurial creativity in expanding park services and visitation. Moreover, EBS aspires to increase sources of park revenue in order to become an economically self-sufficient system by the year 2000. This objective shows how TPWD had finally learned a lesson. Rather than expecting improbable generous allocations of public funds, the agency realized that it should obtain most of its money from its customers and from other private sources. Since its

²Sunset, "Texas Historical Commission," 31-37; THC, *Biennial Report 1993-1994*, 3.

implementation, EBS has allowed parks to develop new and innovative ways to increase revenues and visitation. For instance, most parks now have their own stores where they sell a wide variety of products and merchandise, and some parks are renting their facilities as venues for exhibits, social and business meetings, or for special events such as Halloween or historical reenactments. In addition, EBS also permits parks to manage their budgets in a more independent fashion. For example, if a park exceeds its annual growth target, it gets back as much as thirty-five percent of those extra revenues, and twenty-five percent of the “exceeded target” revenues is deposited in a fund for revenue-generating programs. At present, parks can roll over unspent funds from one fiscal year to the next, instead of returning them to the General Revenue Fund.³

Since EBS substantially modified and decentralized the structure of park management, TPWD realized that its operations should be streamlined as well. Consequently, in 1996 TPWD reorganized itself into eight divisions, four of which provide services to historic sites.⁴ Moreover, it appointed a Historic Sites Liaison Committee and a Senior Advisor for Historic Sites to coordinate the four divisions

³KPMG, “Texas Historic Sites,” 33, 34; Rebeca D. Childress, Michael L. Crevier, and Juliann C. Pool, “Texas Historical State Parks Promotional Activities,” Spring 1996, copy on file at TPWD. 1-3.

⁴These four divisions are: the Administrative Resources and Chief Financial Officer Division, which performs the administrative and communications functions for the agency; the Land Policy and Wildlife Division, which performs the cultural resource management; the Infrastructure Division, which is responsible for the assessment, documentation, planning, design, and implementation of the Department’s programs and projects, including those involving historic resources; and the Division of State Parks, which protects and manages all parks.

Within this last division, the following sections provide direct services to historical parks and sites: the Interpretation and Exhibits section, which produces the preservation, development, and interpretation plans; the Community Services section, which guides volunteer participation and volunteer fundraising; and the Revenue Management section, which determines the most appropriate fee for each park, and estimates the revenue that will be collected by these means. (KPMG, “Texas Historic Sites,” 33-40.)

responsible for historic preservation, and to serve as a clearinghouse for operations and information on historic sites.⁵

The most revolutionary step toward the improvement of historical park operation was the signing on October 1, 1996, of the first collaboration agreement between the TPWD and the THC. This move was a logical consequence of the relationship that the two agencies had informally maintained for more than eight years in the different preservation projects on which they worked together. These collaborations dissolved most of the past differences separating the two agencies to the point that they realized that their skills, resources, and experience were complementary.

The partnership is grounded on three principles. First, a piece of legislation has to consolidate the collaboration and determine the different functions that each agency is going to perform. Above all, the law has to assure the THC a role in the preservation, development, and maintenance of historical parks. Second, both agencies will muster their resources for their mutual preservation concerns. Finally, they will submit to the legislature a joint report expressing their mutual concerns and solutions regarding the preservation and management of historic sites. The text of the agreement also listed six development areas in which both agencies have to cooperate: the enhancement of staff professional training and the improvement of park management; the implementation of interpretive programs in all historical parks; the promotion of visitation and tourism campaigns with other state agencies; the promotion of local relations to secure volunteer work and financial support; the scheduling of regular

⁵Ibid., 32; TPWD, "Response to KPMG," 1, 27.

maintenance for all parks to avoid costly restorations; and the garnering of adequate funding to achieve all these objectives.⁶

Both TPWD and THC agreed to commission an independent agency, KPMG Peat Marwick, to conduct the first evaluation of state-owned historic sites under TPWD management in order to determine their situation and to suggest areas of improvement. The study, presented in January 1997, highlighted the main deficiencies of the state park system, estimated that TPWD would need \$187 million to solve its infrastructure problems, and presented an ambitious and innovative master plan. The Texas Cultural Heritage Plan not only aims to solve all park system's problems, but also aspires to create "the finest state historic site system in the nation" and to benefit the people of Texas with an "improved quality of life."⁷

The Texas Cultural Heritage Plan, scheduled to be prepared by 1999, is a joint effort by the TPWD and THC to collect all public and private preservation initiatives under one roof and to provide them with common guidelines to direct their preservation strategies during the next century. This master plan will ascertain the present status and the future needs of the historic resources of the state, and it will also estimate the money necessary for their regular maintenance and marketing. In the long run, it expects to develop the six preservation areas listed in the 1996 memoranda of agreement.⁸ Some of the findings of the Texas Cultural Heritage Plan are known, and

⁶KPMG, "Texas Historic Sites," 75-91.

⁷Ibid., 89. In 1997, the Legislature authorized TPWD to issue \$60 million in bonds for infrastructure repairs. Of these, \$3.3 million were intended for historic sites. (TPWD, "Response to KPMG," 24.) Quote from KPMG, "Texas Historic Sites," 100.

⁸Ibid.

the TPWD and THC are already working on them. For example, one of today's most important priorities for the TPWD is to acquire historic sites related to underrepresented chronological periods, such as the twentieth century, and ethnic groups, such as Hispanics and Blacks.⁹

The THC is also working today toward the goals stated in the 1996 agreement and the Texas Cultural Heritage Plan. Consequently, its current preservation objectives are now very connected with those of the TPWD. Following the example of this agency, in 1998 the THC also adopted as a guiding principle "to improve the quality of life" of Texans and "to make the preservation benefits accessible to all." Furthermore, the THC is very concerned with the rising role of population and ethnic minorities and has initiated strategies to identify historic sites related to them, incorporate minority personnel in its staff, and allow greater minority participation in the programs of the agency.¹⁰

The promotion of heritage tourism as part of the state's overall tourism effort is another of the most important future objectives of the THC. Aspiring to become "the first voice in the state to promote this kind of tourism," the agency has been developing since 1996 its own heritage tourism project in collaboration with TPWD, TxDOT, the Texas Department of Economic Development, and the Texas Commission on the Arts. This program, scheduled to be launched in 1999 in El Paso and Houston,

⁹Bill Dolman interview. In 1998, "Early Statehood," "Mexican Texas and Revolution," "Reconstruction," and "Twentieth Century" were the chronological periods more represented in the TPWD's system with twenty-five out of thirty-nine historic parks and sites. The rest of the chronological periods established in 1970 are today represented by three parks or less. (TPWD, *Future for the past*, 22.)

¹⁰THC, "Strategic Plan 1999-2003," v, 32.

intends to identify new regional historic corridors in the state, to preserve their historical resources, and to develop their economic possibilities. To supplement it at the local level, the THC will continue administering the Main Street program, which is also extremely necessary in order to obtain federal tax credits to rehabilitate income-producing historic properties.¹¹

In conjunction with TPWD, THC continues creating new working relationships with as many state agencies as possible so that they can share resources, eliminate overlaps, and improve their level of service. So far, THC has signed memoranda of agreement with some Mexican agencies as part of the *Los Caminos Del Río* assignments, and all the state agencies that manage public lands (TPWD, TxDOT, and the General Land Office) to ensure the protection of the historic resources located within their jurisdictions.¹²

Some other future objectives of the THC are to strengthen its ties with local preservation groups through the County Historical Commissions and the network of archeological stewards, to streamline its channels of communication in order to increase its public outreach, to utilize the latest technological advances in its everyday work, and to publicize historic preservation. Regarding this last point, the THC is currently designing its own intranet and inventorying historical resources in the new

¹¹THC, *Biennial Report 1995-1996*, 5-12; THC, "Strategic Plan 1999-2003," 13; THC, "Strategic Plan 1997-2001," 47. By 2001, THC expects to complete the eighty percent of all the building renewals planned and the fifty percent of all the heritage tourism attractions.

¹²THC, "Strategic Plan 1999-2003," 17-18.

computerized databases, the Texas Historic Sites Atlas and the Texas Courthouse Alliance.¹³

Despite the fact that THC's budget is now larger than ever (\$12,341,750 for the 1998-99 biennium), Texas today ranks thirty-seventh in the nation in state funding for historic preservation, with an average of three cents per Texan. Thus, another essential THC objective for the future is to secure increased funding from both the legislature and federal agencies. Lastly, THC is involved with other agencies in two of the most important current preservation projects of the state. The first one is the restoration of the Governor's Mansion in Austin and the establishment of a Governor's Memorial Park as a new tourist attraction for the city. The second and more impressive one, is the creation of the Texas State History Museum in Austin. If this museum becomes a reality, it could be one of the historic preservation highlights of the next century.¹⁴

Some critical advances have occurred since 1994. To begin with, new master plans are laying the groundwork for historic preservation with years of lead time. In addition, the responsible agencies have established beneficial working relationships so that they can join their resources to achieve their common objectives. It is not surprising, therefore, that today's preservation goals are more ambitious than ever. If regular and sufficient funding is obtained, years of exciting progress awaits historic preservation in Texas.

¹³THC, "Strategic Plan 1997-2001," 19.

¹⁴THC, "Strategic Plan 1999-2003," 29-31, 17, vi.

CHAPTER 8

WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS STATE HISTORICAL PARK: A CASE STUDY

On March 2, 1836, the small town of Washington in Washington County entered history when fifty-two men who represented the largest settlements in Texas huddled inside an unfinished building on the banks of the Brazos River to declare independence from Mexico. Eighty years later, the state bought two tracts of land in Washington to create a public park that would commemorate the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Those grounds, today known as Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park, were the seventh site that the Texas Legislature set aside as a historic park. In addition to the historic events that happened in Washington, the history of its park also deserves studying for it is a revealing illustration of how historic preservation in Texas has evolved during the twentieth-century.¹

As had happened before at the Alamo and the San Jacinto battleground, the historic importance of Washington-on-the-Brazos (as the city of Washington is known today) was first noticed by patriotic citizens interested in the educational benefits of national history. It was not surprising, therefore, that an individual related to education initiated the first public campaign to erect a monument there. He was E. W. Tarrant,

¹March 2, 1836 is the official anniversary of Texas' Declaration of Independence. However, it is very likely that this document was really signed on March 3, with additional signatures added later. (R. Henderson Shuffler, "The Signing of Texas' Declaration of Independence: Myth and Record," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* LXV (January 1962): 312.)

superintendent of Brenham Public Schools. On April 21, 1900, Tarrant erected a granite shaft with inscriptions on the exact spot where the building in which the Declaration of Independence was signed once stood. The cost of the monument had been paid thanks to a popular subscription campaign in which the children of Brenham, directed by Tarrant, raised money among the citizens of Brenham and Washington County. Tarrant's patriotic initiative received statewide commendation and praise from the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

From the erection of that first monument, the residents of Washington County cherished the idea of purchasing the site where the Declaration of Independence was signed and creating there a public park. No serious attempt to purchase land was made, however, until another group of patriotic citizens, the Young Men's Business Association of Brenham in 1914 passed a resolution asking the legislature to appropriate funds to purchase a tract for a state park. Because of their pressure and the historic importance of Washington-on-the-Brazos, their proposal was heard, and in 1915 the legislature appropriated \$10,000 to purchase fifty acres of land that included the 1900 shaft. The first two tracts, 32.12 and 17.28 acres, were acquired the following year, and a granite marker was erected on March 2 to commemorate the acquisition.²

As was the case with the rest of the publicly owned historic sites, the state ignored Washington-on-the-Brazos park during its first years of existence. Finally, in 1923, the state named it "Washington State Park" and appointed an advisory

²*San Antonio Express*, 2 March 1916, clipping on file at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park Vertical File, CAH; *General Laws of the State of Texas Passed at the First Called Session of the Thirty-fourth Legislature Convened April, 29, 1915, and Adjourned May, 28, 1915* (Austin: A.C. Baldwin & Sons, 1915), 3; Washington State Park Land Titles, copies on file at TPWD.

commission named “Washington State Park Commission” to preserve, protect, improve, and beautify the park. The commission, however, did not have real management power, since their decisions had to have the approval of the State Board of Control. Commissioners, as in the case of other parks, served with no economic compensation, but they were obliged to employ a caretaker whose salary came from the park’s yearly appropriation.³

In 1924 the commission requested funds from the Board of Control to implement a landscape plan, create of a new entrance, and construct a museum. Their objective was to “develop a park that will be a credit, not only to Washington County, but to the State of Texas.” The Board of Control rejected these suggestions for economic reasons; it had already invested \$26,800 in the park and wanted all historical parks to be as self-supporting as possible. This attitude was not surprising; the Board had a land and building management function. It was not a historic preservation agency interested in interpreting the site. Hence, the park received no funds for its initial development. The meager yearly appropriation financed the most basic maintenance necessities, such as constructing a small storage building for tools and a fence to prevent cattle invading the park.⁴

Despite the Board of Control’s generally negative attitude toward financing parks, Washington State Park developed its interpretation possibilities exceptionally

³*General Laws of the State of Texas Passed by the Thirty-eight Legislature at the Regular Session Convened January 9, 1923 and Adjourned March 14, 1923* (Austin: A.C. Baldwin & Sons, 1923), 123-124.

⁴F. W. Hensel to Mrs. J. Wallace Brosig, 28 April 1924, Washington File, 1911/16-35, TSBCR; State Board of Control to Mrs. J. Wallace Brosig, 17 May 1924, *Ibid.*; Board of Control Minutes, 31 May, 6 November, and 10 December 1926, 1911/16-2, TSBCR.

early. The first major interpretive activity took place in 1926, when a replica of the building where the Declaration of Independence was signed, pompously called “Independence Hall,” was constructed. The structure, dedicated on June 3, exhibited in its interior a “weird assortment of pictures, clippings and artifacts in battered display cases.” Although the Board of Control believed the replica to be accurate, its authenticity was questioned from the day it was dedicated. For example, in 1927 Adina de Zavala complained to the Board that the replica was actually a reconstruction of the wrong structure, and she was indignant that it would go into posterity as the first capitol of Texas. Further historical research determined not only that the replica was inaccurate, but that it had been incorrectly placed. Even so, the inhabitants of the area were delighted with the replica, because it attracted a substantial number of visitors.⁵

In the following years other improvements were made: the park was graded, pecan trees were planted, and a copy of the Declaration of Independence was exhibited in the Hall. The second building went up in 1931, a brick auditorium to be used for

⁵H. H. Harrington, chairman of the State Board of Control, to J. J. Marek, chairman of the Washington Park Commission, 2 September 1926, Washington File, 1911/16-35, TSBCR. Quote from Shuffler, “Texas Declaration of Independence,” 310; H. H. Harrington to Adina De Zavala, 15 October 1927, Washington File, 1911/16-35, TSBCR; TPWD, “Preservation Plan and Program for Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park,” November 1977, copy on file at TPWD, a-95; H. H. Harrington to Adina De Zavala, 11 January 1928, Washington File, 1911/16-35, TSBCR; Adina De Zavala to the State Board of Control, 1 November 1927, *Ibid.*; Mrs. J. Wallace Brosig to H. H. Harrington, 12 September 1927, *Ibid.* It is impossible to know which information was employed to document the reconstruction, since no related records survive. It is very likely, however, that the replica was built after an old photograph of Washington showing a wooden warehouse believed to be the original Independence Hall. The remaining descriptions and graphic representations of the original building are scarce and dubious. For general information on Independence Hall see Shuffler, “Texas Declaration of Independence.”

patriotic gatherings such as the Texas Independence Day Celebration, on March 2, which the American Legion sponsored since the end of World War I.⁶

In 1934, when the legislature approved a budget to be used to improve state historical parks as part of the 1936 centennial celebration, the park commission unanimously demanded an additional appropriation. Their petition was heard, and Washington State Park became one of the main recipients of money because of its direct connection with the historic events celebrated. The final allocation of \$34,000 came from Works Progress Administration and centennial funds. The money was employed in many ways. First, the state purchased 20.98 additional acres of land for the park. Second, Civilian Conservation Corps workers constructed a stone amphitheatre for open-air events. Third, utility and landscaping work was carried out, and the picnic area was improved. Fourth, a monument honoring George Campbell Childress, author of the Declaration of Independence, and the signers was erected. Finally, the state decided to move a historic home to the grounds of the park as an additional visitor attraction. The house was "Barrington," the farm of Anson Jones, last President of the Republic of Texas. It was located five miles south of Washington-on-the-Brazos. The initial project aimed to restore the exterior and the interior of the house for a museum.⁷

⁶H. H. Harrington to Mrs. J. Wallace Brosig, 24 July 1928, Washington File, Box 1911/16-35, TSBCR; *Houston Post*, 28 April 1936, clipping on file at Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park Vertical File, CAH; Stanley Siegel, *Big Men Walked Here! The Story of Washington-on-the-Brazos* (Austin: The Pemberton Press, 1971), 98.

⁷Report of the Washington State Park Board, 6 July 1934, file DC10. 172, Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park Archive, Washington, Texas (this repository hereafter cited as WSHPA); Texas State Board of Control, *Eight Biennial Report of the Texas State Board of Control for the Biennium Ended August 31, 1936* (Austin: Knape Printing Co. 1936), 54; Centennial Division of the Board of Control Minutes, 3 October 1936, 1911/16-80, TSBCR; TPWD, "Preservation Plan for

Despite all the valuable preservation and restoration work done during the New Deal and centennial, the state made no specific provision to support and maintain the new facilities and improvements constructed in historical parks. Washington State Park was no exception. Thus, when the centennial ended and World War II interrupted the flow of federal money, the park returned to its previous condition of neglect, in which it persisted for nearly twenty years. For instance, the Barrington project was never fully implemented and, although the house was moved, it was employed to provide shelter to the park caretaker's mules. In fact, the caretaker left to join the army during the war. Since the Board of Control appropriated only \$260 per year for the park, the commission was obliged to find additional sources of outside revenue, such as harvesting the park's pecans. Visitors often expressed their disgust about the "dangerous and ugly condition" of the park.⁸

In 1949, management of Washington State Park and that of the other state historic sites was transferred to the State Parks Board. Since the transfer did not improve the general condition of the park, it was again the initiative of a group of concerned citizens which took the first steps to rekindle interest in its development. On the occasion of the 120th anniversary of Texas independence in 1955, the Brenham Chamber of Commerce organized the Texas Independence Day Organization, later renamed Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association, with the double objective of perpetuating the memory of the events that happened at Washington-on-the-Brazos

Washington-on-the-Brazos," a-117.

⁸Siegel, *Big Men Walked Here!*, 98; Washington-on-the-Brazos file, 1944-48, 1911/16-54, TSBCR; Gordon K. Shearer to Dan M. Walker, 27 October 1952, 1977/81-157, Allan Shivers Papers, Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas. Quote from Minutes, 22 June 1955, TSBCR.

and saving the park. Its board of directors was made up of professional historians and representatives of the preservation-minded public. In addition to sponsoring the independence day celebration, the association began to raise funds to start a park development plan, whose ultimate objectives were to build a museum to deposit and exhibit historical relics of the Republic era, and to erect a better replica of Independence Hall. The association financed a statewide campaign to raise a million dollars for the construction of the museum, but the campaign was never launched. In addition, in 1957, a group of Brenham women organized the Barrington Society with the purpose of restoring and furnishing Barrington farm to its original appearance. The society also started its own fund raising in order to pay for the restoration of the property and provide a full-time hostess to care for the house.⁹

These organizations, along with the Washington State Park Commission, made various appropriations proposals to the state legislature. Not until 1965 were funds forthcoming, thanks to the increased budget of the new Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the arrival of federal money from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. As part of the State of Texas Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, the Fifty-ninth Legislature allocated \$500,000 to finance Washington-on-the-Brazos park development plan. The Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association persuaded the Jesse H. Jones Foundation of Houston to contribute \$200,000 more toward the plan. The budget was completed with an additional \$300,000 from the Sixtieth

⁹Siegel, *Big Men Walked Here!*, 98-99; *Austin American Statesman*, 7 September 1955, Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park Vertical File, CAH; "Barrington Society Has Only One Main Project," *Brenham (TX) Banner Press*, 6 July 1967, 1.

Legislature and federal grants, and \$100,000 from other private donations. The development project began in 1966 and lasted until 1970.¹⁰

This effort changed the park's image completely and provided it with almost all of its present attractions. First of all, an appropriate name resulted: Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park. Second, the banks of the Brazos and the picnic areas, mostly eroded and abandoned, were reconditioned. Third, the auditorium underwent major refurbishment, which changed its original appearance to provide a more flexible structure, including dining facilities and seating for five hundred. Fourth, the Barrington Society completely restored the Anson Jones home, kitchen, and office, including the relocation of the whole complex to a new spot on level ground. Fifth, a star-shaped museum, called the Star of the Republic Museum, was built to exhibit collections of printed and graphic documents, artifacts, and other memorabilia related to the period from the origins of Anglo-American colonization in Texas to the end of the Republic in 1846. Due to the influence of Gus F. Mutscher, Speaker of the House and a native from Washington County, control and custody of the museum was assigned to Blinn College, Brenham, a local community college that has always operated the museum separately from the park. Finally, a new replica of Independence Hall was erected alongside the 1900 granite shaft.¹¹

¹⁰*Houston Post*, 26 February 1967; Siegel, *Big Men Walked Here!*, 100.

¹¹*Dallas Morning News*, 27 February 1965, Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park Vertical File, CAH; "Barrington Society Has Only One Main Project," *Brenham (TX) Banner Press*, 6 July 1967, 1; Siegel, *Big Men Walked Here!*, 103; unidentified newspaper article, [1970?], Park Clippings, WSHPA; *General and Special Laws of the State of Texas Passed by the Regular Session of the Sixty-first Legislature Convened January 14, 1969, and Adjourned June 2, 1969* (Austin: The State of Texas, 1969), 379.

The new replica of Independence Hall was in response to the interest of Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association in having a more accurate reconstruction of the original structure. In 1969, the state Building Commission issued a contract for the \$45,000 reconstruction project to Raiford Stripling, a renowned Texas architect with thirty-six years of experience in reconstructing historical structures. Intent upon historical accuracy, Stripling based his reconstruction on historian R. Henderson Shuffler's article on Independence Hall, the archeological data from 1964-68 excavations of the site, and his own intuition as an experienced restoration architect. Since Stripling knew that the data with which he was working was limited and questionable, he never maintained that his replica was *the* reconstruction of the original building, but only his own interpretation of how the building might have looked. Although neither Stripling, historians, nor archeologists were completely satisfied with the results, the main goal was satisfactorily achieved; the public eventually had a major, substantially correct attraction to visit. Since the reinauguration of the park on February 27, 1970, the replica has become its jewel and its most visited attraction.¹²

Although during the first years after its reinauguration the park revived as a tourist attraction, its visitation rate was so low that two years later the TPWD conducted a conceptual study to propose further improvements. There were two major causes which explained the lack of public interest in the park; the first one was its location far from major cities and principal highways, and the second was the almost

¹²The most renowned work by Stripling was the restoration of La Bahía Mission and Mission Nuestra Señora del Espíritu Santo de Zúñiga, both at Goliad; see McCullar, *Restoring Texas*, 94; *Dallas Morning News*, 28 February 1970; *Houston Chronicle*, 3 March 1970.

complete absence of original physical evidence of the historic events that occurred at the site. In order to overcome these handicaps TPWD made a list of proposals in the conceptual study, the most significant of which were the following: to purchase additional land to expand the park grounds; to expand the recreational area; to reconstruct the whole Barrington farm to its original appearance; to construct walkways; to erect better interpretive signs to integrate the different attractions into a whole; to promote park facilities for meetings and celebrations; and, to build a headquarters-visitor information center.

This 1972 study also proposed to reconstruct the original town of Washington-on-the-Brazos as it looked in 1836 so that living history programs could be implemented. The project seemed to be the logical continuation of the Independence Hall reconstruction, and excited the imagination of the local residents, who dreamed that their park would become “not only a tourist attraction for Texas but for the entire nation.” Primary archeological research had already been carried out on the townsite during the late 1960s, and a private architectural firm, directed by the State Building Commission, analyzed the possibilities of the reconstruction. When, in 1977, the state bought ninety-four acres west of the park encompassing much of the townsite, reconstruction seemed imminent. The project was eventually rejected by the TPWD because it would destroy the archaeological site and there were insufficient data with which to reconstruct the town with a modicum of historical accuracy.¹³

¹³Park visitors in 1973 numbered 179,086 (Message of George A. Butler, chairman of the Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association, [1974?], Park Clippings, WSHPA); TPWD, “Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park. Conceptual Study,” June 1972, copy on file at TPWD. Quote from *Bryan-College Station (TX) Eagle*, 14 November 1976; TPWD, “Conceptual Study,” Section I.5.(4); *Houston Chronicle*, 27 February 1977; Information provided by Mr. Barry Hutcheson at TPWD.

The 1972 study also pointed out two specific problems that the park had developed since its 1970 reinauguration. The first was lack of unified management. Since the museum, Barrington, Independence Hall and the Auditorium were operated independently, and the state did not specify whose were the areas of administrative responsibility concerning each, the result was lack of coordination between Blinn College, the TPWD, and the Barrington Society in areas such as displays, activities, budget, and services. The second problem was the absence of an unified theme which harmonized all the features and attractions located in the park. Not only were visitors confused over the absence of a relationship between the park's different buildings, so was the National Register of Historic Places, which in 1975 rejected the nomination of the park as a national historic place in part on the same grounds (the other reason was because too much of it was a reconstruction). In 1976 these problems were partially solved when the Barrington Society ceased to operate the Jones home and relinquished its control to the TPWD. Still, the relationship between Blinn College and the TPWD was, and still is, conflictive because of the responsibilities overlap.¹⁴

Since the development of Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park had been so recent, and the state was spending most of the cigarette tax revenue in acquiring and developing new historic sites, during the early seventies the park received little funding to carry out additional improvements. Besides these insufficient monetary

¹⁴TPWD, "Conceptual Study," Sections I.5.(1) and III.6; According to the keeper of the National Register, the nomination was rejected because "the proposed district does not appear to have sufficient historical cohesiveness" since the buildings within the park did not possess "integrity of location, design, setting and association." (Letter of William J. Murtagh, keeper of the National Register of Historic Places, to Truett Latimer, Executive Director of the Texas State Historical Survey Committee, 13 November 1975, Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park File, Texas Historical Commission Archive, Austin, Texas.)

resources, TPWD was suffering from lack of professional personnel to take care of the increased demands of its historical parks. Consequently, implementation of the 1972 Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park development plan was delayed for so long that in 1977 the plan had to be revised.

The most important modifications of the new plan were the dropping of the reconstruction of the old town of Washington and the redesigning of the park's development to provide a balance between its interpretive and recreational characteristics, and between the preservation of the historic sites and their natural environment. The three major goals were now to organize the disparate buildings and features of the park into a whole; to foster their historical, educational, and recreational use; and to arrange the historical interpretation of the site in the following order of preference: the 1836 Declaration of Independence, the Republic of Texas, the social and economic history of Washington-on-the-Brazos as the capital of the Republic of Texas, and the historical significance of Anson Jones. The state appropriated \$200,000 out of the cigarette tax for the expansion program, which also included the restoration and expansion of the CCC amphitheatre and the construction of an interpretive center in the auditorium to display murals, texts, and audiovisual aids.¹⁵

Although the town of Washington was never reconstructed, since the late 1970s the park has regularly offered living history programs as part of TPWD's general effort to expand interpretation programs at all historic sites. For instance, amateur and college actors re-enact the signing of Declaration of Independence every

¹⁵TPWD, "Preservation Plan for Washington-on-the-Brazos," 17; *Brenham Banner Press*, 13 December 1978.

year, an actor portrays Anson Jones on his birthdate and hosts visitors at Barrington, wildlife and youth camps and workshops are organized, and in 1986 a film commemorating the Texas Sesquicentennial called “Independence” was shot in the park and became one of its permanent exhibits.¹⁶

Despite all these new attractions, the park failed again to attract a substantial number of visitors during the eighties. Attendance varied between 60,000 and 70,000 visitors every year, and it was estimated that a third of them only came for the March 2 Independence Day festivities and during the blooming of bluebonnets in the spring. These figures were significantly low, especially compared with the Alamo’s three million visitors a year, and the 1.1 million visitors annually at San Jacinto.¹⁷ The reduction of visitors coincided with a period of economic straits for TPWD due to the continuous reduction of revenue from the cigarette tax and the federal government. Since the agency still lacked enough personnel to carry out its projects in progress, a management crisis in historical parks seemed to be forthcoming.

Alarmed, in 1988 the Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association commissioned Texas A&M University to prepare a long-range plan suggesting alternative approaches to promoting public awareness of the park and increasing visitation. The plan evaluated park resources and carried out a marketing study. Its main recommendations reflected almost all the practices that today are standard in

¹⁶*Bryan-College Station (TX) Eagle*, 28 February 1983; “Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park,” <<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/washingt/Washington-on-the-Brazos/activity.html>>, February 1998.

¹⁷“Washington-on-the-Brazos fails as a tourist attraction,” *Dallas Times Herald*, 27 February 1983, 30 and 36A; *Houston Chronicle*, 28 February 1998.

historic preservation: to boost archeological research to improve the historical understanding of the park and as a way to attract visitors; to develop attractive and clear entry routes and provide better services; to rotate exhibits regularly in both the park and the museum; to promote access to the river; to explore the possible involvement of volunteer groups in park and museum activities; to conduct detailed marketing research so as to identify target audiences; and to adopt a regional plan to promote the park.¹⁸

Parks and Wildlife economic and management crisis delayed the implementation of the new long-range plan for five years. Finally, in 1993 Washington-on-the-Brazos State Park Association, TPWD, and Blinn College reached a commitment “to develop an interpretive plan that will be forward-looking, imaginative, and worthy of the history that took place at Washington.” This plan, which became part of the Entrepreneurial Budget System program, aimed to develop the park at various levels. On the interpretive level, the plan proposed flexible interpretations. It aimed at reaching the broadest possible audience by providing attractive information and activities to visitors of any age, ethnicity and cultural background. In other words, it recognized the variety of the park’s visitors and the obligation of satisfying their different interpretive needs. The novelties were to provide a better interpretation of the Washington Town site, to move Barrington to a location more related to its original context, to expand the living history programs, to coordinate museum and park exhibits, and to build an orientation center to introduce

¹⁸Center for Historic Resources. Texas A&M University, “A Planning Program for the Washington-on-the-Brazos Park Association,” May 1988, copy on file at TPWD, vi-vii, 66-67.

the visitor to the historic significance of the site and the amenities of the park. On the physical level, the plan recommended acquisition of new land, protection of the park from river erosion, and repair of any river-induced damage. Finally, on the management level, the park's three administrative entities formalized a working relationship, spelled out financial and management responsibilities, and agreed on fostering the public's involvement in the park and relationships with neighboring communities.¹⁹

These proposals were solidified in a 1994 master development plan which made some important modifications to the 1993 project. First of all, priority was given to the development of the cultural, interpretive, and physical resources of the park, thereby abandoning the development of natural resources. Second, the plan determined to improve the park's circulation, orientation, and information with a directional system and a high-tech exhibition in the visitor's center. Third, as a way to obtain increased revenue the park would expand its facilities by offering a conference center able to host small conventions and professional meetings. Finally, each major park building would focus on one interpretive period in order to unify the interpretive program. For instance, Independence Hall would explain the Declaration of Independence, the museum would tell the history of the Republic, and Barrington was going to be reinterpreted as a living history farm of the 1850s, complete with barns, slave quarters, livestock, and contemporarily costumed staff portraying farm life. TPWD, as part of the overall development of the park system, assigned \$6 million

¹⁹Quote from "Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park Planning Report," April 1993, copy on file at TPWD, 5, 8-21. Most of these suggestion were already proposed in the 1970s (TPWD, "Conceptual Study," section III.)

from the Texas Park Fund and from park bonds for the Washington-on-the-Brazos development plan, whose implementation is today underway. Its first phase, the opening of the visitor's center, recently occurred on March 2, 1998. The Barrington Living History Farm is scheduled to be opened in 1999.²⁰

The history of Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park is an excellent example of the history of preservation in Texas. Established during the 1910s by the popular pressure of patriotic citizens, it remained underdeveloped during the forty-year management of the Board of Control except for the construction of two structures, the first replica of Independence Hall and the auditorium, and the improvements carried out during the New Deal and centennial. Washington State Park was not appropriately funded until the late 1950s and early 1960s, when popular pressure in the form of private associations of concerned citizens demanded again the development of the park to meet its historical significance. The legislature could not fund it until the late 1960s, when TPWD's increased budget and new federal preservation grants provided the money. Since then the management and development of the park was done in a professional fashion.

During the 1970s and 1980s Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park suffered from lack of income provoked by the low visitation rate, felt the reduction of TPWD's economic resources, and it also was affected by the agency's management crisis. These problems, however, were not an obstacle for park managers to continue

²⁰Ray Bailey Architects, Inc., "Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park Master Plan," December 14, 1994, copy on file at TPWD, sections 1.2 and 3.3; Interview with Bill Dolman, 31 August 1998; *Houston Chronicle*, 28 February 1998; "Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park," 1997, pamphlet on file at TPWD.

improving its facilities and interpretive programs. Since the application of the EBS program in 1993, the park has been managing its facilities and economic resources independently; has coordinated the efforts of the different public, semipublic, and private organizations that operate in the park; has been promoted as a tourist destination within the Houston regional area; and, has carried out a thorough master plan to modernize and expand its attractions. When this development plan is finalized in 1999, the management of the Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Park will be one of the first serious tests for the future Texas Cultural Heritage Plan.

CONCLUSION

A CENTURY OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN TEXAS

After its first century of existence, it is necessary to analyze how the concept and the practice of historic preservation in Texas has evolved. The essential difference between the endeavors of the earliest preservationists and the enterprises of present day preservation organizations is that the work of the latter is not emotionally improvised, but carefully planned with years of preparation. In the course of attaining the current level of achievement, preservationists toiled through a century of trial and error. Their experiences are invaluable lessons for today's historians and preservationists, not only because they represent more than a century of knowledge related to their disciplines, but also because they show why historic preservation is considered to be such an important activity.

As in the case of Europe, historic preservation was born in Texas to glorify its national past. At the end of the nineteenth century groups of patriotic citizens began to consider that some buildings and sites deserved protection because their connection to a great person or event almost always related to the Texas War of Independence and the subsequent republic. It is not surprising that these first preservation ventures were the result of private initiatives, since during the nineteenth century the Texas government was focused on the territorial development and economic growth of the

state, hence historic preservation could never be among its priorities. The majority of the early preservationists were middle and upper-class women who considered it their duty to look after historic structures so as to use them to inspire patriotism in succeeding generations. This behavior coincided with two traditional feminine roles in Victorian society, housewife and teacher. Thanks to their educational backgrounds and to their financial security, these women had the inclination and free time to contribute to civic causes, which is what historic preservation was originally considered.

The most important of these pioneer organizations were the Daughters of the Republic of Texas and the Texas Historic and Landmarks Association. Since their main focus of interest was the glorious and heroic Anglo-American past of Texas and, to a minor extent, the Spanish colonial heritage, they concentrated their efforts only on locations directly related to these cultures, such as the city of San Antonio or the San Jacinto battlefield. These organizations were also limited because they relied exclusively on volunteer work and financing, and they depended excessively on the efforts of charismatic leaders such as Clara Driscoll and Adina de Zavala. As a result, neither organization developed a statewide preservation system even though they established local chapters in some cities and counties. Their major contributions were the salvaging of a small number of significant structures such as the Alamo and the Spanish Governor Palace, the management of some buildings such as the Alamo itself or the French Legation at Austin, and the erecting of markers in major historic sites. Although by the 1936 centennial the DRT and the THLA had yielded practically all their preservation potential, they continued being instrumental in fostering among the public and the state officials an attitude in favor of preserving the history of the state.

One proof of their success was that in the 1910s groups of concerned citizens influenced the legislature to create public parks out of other nationally significant Texas historic sites such as Washington-on-the-Brazos and the Fannin battlefield. Initially, the state purchased historic grounds without any criteria other than particular interests of powerful citizens and politicians. As a result, it gathered a collection of isolated sites with little relation to one another. The legislature assigned historical park administration to the Board of Control, the management agency for state properties. Since neither historians nor preservationists were represented on the board, it ignored the special characteristics of historic parks and maintained them as they would any other public land. Additionally, the legislature was unwilling to fund parks beyond their administrative necessities because their development was not considered an urgent need for the state. Thus, parks remained small and suffered deterioration for years, and the interpretive needs of visitors were ignored.

The first organization that valued historic heritage beyond its glorious and patriotic side was the San Antonio Conservation Society, founded in 1924. On the surface SACS resembled the DRT and THLA, for it was (and still is) a volunteer organization of amateurs with an overwhelming female membership, and its scope of action was limited to the San Antonio area. The similarities end here, for the philosophy of SACS was absolutely different and well ahead of its time. First, its preservation emphasis shifted from emotional patriotism and monumentality to intellectual and educational purposes. SACS salvaged historic buildings for intrinsic values such as having artistic merit or being the example of a period or a style. Second, SACS was never interested in the preservation of isolated historic landmarks of

statewide significance, but in the conservation of San Antonio as an historical, natural, aesthetical, and cultural whole. This approach, stated from the very creation of the society, anticipated by more than forty years the concepts of historic district and heritage region. Due to their work in preserving historic structures and their promotion of community activities such as “One Night in Old San Antonio,” SACS has been one of the main forces responsible not only for keeping alive the original social and aesthetic atmosphere of San Antonio, but also for making the city internationally known for its beauty and cultural heritage.

During the Depression, the state began to modify its attitude towards its historic heritage. This change was initially motivated by the federal government through the highly creative New Deal work relief agencies. The great innovation of the New Deal programs was to use the skills of technical and intellectual workers in order to help states to restore, document, and preserve their historic sites and records, thus foreseeing by thirty years the professionalization of these activities. This change in the preservation philosophy is exemplified in that uniquely Texas experience, the Centennial Celebration of 1936. Although celebration of the triumphant story of Texas independence was the main purpose of monuments, markers, reconstructions, and restorations, during the centennial other historic structures and sites (the Spanish missions and presidios for example) were preserved and documented because of their importance beyond the events of the Texas War of Independence and Republic. Furthermore, centennial preservation efforts were not only directed toward places of statewide significance. Except for exceptional projects such as the San Jacinto monument and investments in significant sites such as the Alamo and Washington-on-

the-Brazos, most of the funding was, in fact, destined to preservation projects of regional or local significance.

The unexpected sources of money provided by the New Deal agencies and the centennial projects permitted Texas to carry out for the first time a statewide development program for its historical parks and sites. The results are impressive even today because of the amount of work done in so little time. Still, more could have been done. For instance, only state-owned properties fell within the scope of New Deal and centennial projects, thus leaving private historic properties aside. Moreover, historic interest was almost always focused on the Anglo-American and Spanish colonial heritage, thus ignoring other periods of Texas history. Another problem was that some of the centennial programs were done hurriedly and carelessly because of political pressure. For instance, there was little concern for the accuracy of the replicas of historic structures because they were built only to be tourist attractions. The main shortcoming of the New Deal and centennial preservation efforts, however, was that they were temporary. The New Deal agencies only aimed to provide relief jobs in any useful field, while the centennial only aspired to honor Texas during a single year. Therefore, no permanent preservation solutions were implemented. When the centennial ended and the war interrupted the flow of federal money, preservation activities stalled and the work done in previous years rapidly deteriorated due to lack of maintenance.

Despite this squandered opportunity, the New Deal and centennial experiences not only increased public interest in historic preservation, but also provided preservationists a path that they could follow in the future: the creation of state

agencies with exclusive competencies in the subject; the development of a unified and statewide set of directions and goals; and the investment of sufficient and regular amounts of public money to support the high costs of the projects.

When the war ended, the state began to work on the first objective, the creation of state agencies. In 1949 the legislature took a logical step, transferring management of historical parks from the Board of Control to the State Parks Board, a state agency exclusively devoted to parks. The legislature had been assigning to the State Parks Board the management of almost all historical parks created since the 1930s, thus the transfer legally confirmed a situation that existed *de facto*. Since the State Parks Board could only act on state-owned properties, another agency was required to promote the preservation of the historic heritage not in the hands of the state. Hence, in 1953, their creation of the Texas State Historical Survey Committee, which later became the state's official preservation agency.

Besides creating these agencies, during the early fifties the state did little else to achieve the other two essential goals stated above; to draw up a statewide historic preservation plan and to obtain regular funding for its implementation. The situation radically changed when in the late fifties tourism became a highly profitable activity in Texas. The legislature immediately realized that it should improve the condition of historical parks and sites because they had an enormous potential to attract more visitors. For this reason, between 1957 and 1962 the State Parks Board prepared the first long-range plan to develop a statewide system of historical parks, which was included in the official State of Texas Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. This project for the first time considered historical parks as preservation tools and

established a clear site acquisition policy, the system had to have at least one park that represented each of the most significant topics and chronological periods of Texas history. The TSHSC, for its part, created during these years an organization of volunteer units in the counties in order to carry out the state's first official preservation program, the RAMPS program, which began in 1962.

The money to carry out these development plans came from several sources. The TSHSC obtained increased funding from the legislature thanks to some influential members. Even so, the committee financed its initial activities mostly with volunteer contributions raised by the Texas Historical Foundation. On the other hand, in 1963 the legislature merged the State Parks Board with the Game and Fish Commission so as to utilize the larger revenue of the latter to fund development of the historical park system and create a new agency that could apply for federal grants.

Texas's boost to preservation in the early 1960s coincided with the effort of the federal government to create a national preservation policy. To avoid the systematic destruction of historic and archeological sites provoked by accelerated urban growth since the end of World War II, the federal government in 1962 established the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to assist states in developing their historical parks systems, and in 1966 passed the National Historic Preservation Act to establish a national preservation program to be carried out by the individual states. The act also created a grant program to help states finance their preservation programs, and a National Register of Historic Places to declare National Historic Landmarks the most outstanding historic items of each state. Although the legislature appointed only the TSHSC to administer the National Historic Preservation Act in Texas, both the

TSHSC and the TPWD received federal grants, which became an essential funding source for the future activities of both agencies.

The National Historic Preservation Act produced three major consequences in Texas. First, it definitely fostered professionalism in preservation because state agencies were obliged to employ specialists in the field in order to receive federal money. Second, the act originated the concept of historic district, which considered it equally important to preserve historic structures and the context in which they made sense. Finally, and most importantly, the act institutionalized and made permanent the preservation system that the state had been spontaneously building. From then on, the TPWD would be the manager of historical parks, whereas the TSHSC would promote historic preservation in the rest of the state.

Another important advancement of the sixties was emergence of the archeological heritage of Texas from an unjustified disregard. The creation of the Office of the State Archeologist and the Texas Antiquities Commission, and the passing of the Texas Antiquities Code placed archeology on a par with historic constructions by making the preservation of archeological resources an official state policy. Although only public lands were affected by the antiquities code, the law created a legal obligation to review all construction projects to be undertaken on public lands, which has prevented the destruction of innumerable archeological resources ever since.

Armed in the sixties with sound legal foundations and a clear set of objectives, both the TSHSC and the TPWD realized their own preservation goals during the following years. The work of the TSHSC, reorganized and renamed Texas Historical

Commission in 1973, was more successful than that of the TPWD because it required less staff and money. The main achievements of the THC were the salvaging of countless historic sites through the county historical commissions, the implementation of a statewide marker program, the continuous nomination of Texas properties to the National Register of Historic Places, the publication of preservation literature, the management of three historical properties, and the administration, along with the Texas Antiquities Commission, of a statewide archeological program. All these accomplishments made the THC a recognized leader in preservation throughout the nation and a model for other states.

The TPWD, for its part, had also carried out a significant amount of work. Since the early 1970s, it has acquired and developed new historical parks and sites, and modernized the old ones. In addition, TPWD made compulsory the preparation by each park of a development master plan, and between the 1970s and the 1990s the agency implemented almost all of them. The progress of these plans was so slow because of insufficient professional staff and monetary resources. These problems forced TPWD to interrupt the acquisition of new sites in 1988, and by 1994 the entire park system suffered a financial and management crisis. TPWD learned a lesson, and to get out of the crisis it developed a new management and financial system for the parks, the Entrepreneurial Budget System. Rather than expecting governmental entities to bear the financial burden of preservation indefinitely, TPWD now aimed to manage its parks as private businesses. The economic objective was to make the historical park system self-sufficient by the year 2000, whereas the management objectives are to

improve park services, to augment visitation, and to obtain increased support from volunteers.

Due in part to the busy preservation agenda of both TPWD and THC, the state created a new preservation agency, the State Preservation Board, to undertake the restoration project of a very demanding building, the state capitol. From 1983 to 1997, the State Preservation Board successfully restored the capitol to its original 1888 design and, at the same time, effectively managed the edifice, despite the building's two contradictory uses as a government office and a tourist attraction. After fifteen years of excellent work, the continuation of the State Preservation Board as a separate management and preservation agency for the capitol seems to be assured.

Starting in the early eighties, some developments in preservation philosophy dramatically affected today's THC and TPWD activities. In the first place, historic interpretation became as important as physical preservation alone, thus obliging preservation agencies to modify and expand their interpretive interests and programs. For example, the THC developed projects related to previously ignored aspects of Texas history, such as women or military history. Moreover, both the THC and the TPWD are now more sensitive to satisfying the interpretive needs of the different segments of the population, especially ethnic minorities. Consequently, historic interpretation now deals with a variety of topics and serves a greater diversity of Texans than ever before. The encouragement of community and volunteer support has also been another recent tendency in historic preservation. For example, since 1984 the TPWD has been organizing groups of "friends" to assist in park management, and in 1983 THC created a statewide stewardship network of volunteer archeologists to assist

in identifying and protecting archeological sites. The contribution of these volunteers have saved both agencies great quantities of work and money.

The most important recent development in preservation philosophy has been the expansion of the concept of “historic district” into “heritage region.” This evolution started in the early eighties with the Main Street program, which aimed to preserve historic downtowns by recovering their original economic function. Preservationists later realized that an entire region was also a context wherein historic districts and structures make sense. Thus, in programs such as *Los Caminos del Río* the geographical scope of the preservation programs expanded. This project promoted the conservation of the distinctive historic, cultural, and natural environment of the lower Rio Grande region, exactly as the San Antonio Conservation Society had been doing in San Antonio for more than six decades. Besides preserving historic structures in small communities, these new heritage region projects had additional benefits: they revitalized economically depressed zones; they developed in the communities a new pride for their historic heritage; and they created high quality tourist destinations in areas of the state that do not usually attract visitors. Heritage tourism has become such an important issue that THC and TPWD are now working to become part of the state’s overall tourism program.

Another important consequence of these regional heritage programs was that they generated private-public partnerships and stable collaborations among state agencies. Since these new programs demanded even greater investments of work and money, preservation organizations needed to combine monetary resources and coordinate their personnel in order to carry them out. After working together on the

Old San Antonio Road and *Los Caminos del Río* programs, THC and TPWD realized their limitations, abandoned the differences that had separated them in the past, and decided to join efforts to achieve their common preservation objectives. On the one hand, THC could take advantage of TPWD's increased budget and experience as manager of historic sites. TPWD, for its part, could take advantage of THC's expertise as a preservation agency and utilize its specialized staff to work on historical parks. The result was the 1996 agreement between the two agencies, which is now in the process of becoming a law, consolidating the collaboration and determining the different functions that each agency is to perform.

The frequently suggested idea of establishing a preservation superagency in Texas by combining the existing state preservation agencies is now dated. Rather than creating such an artificial organization, THC and TPWD had united their efforts spontaneously. Thanks to this initiative not only a new organizational system has been developed, but both agencies have also agreed to prepare an innovative historic master plan, the Texas Cultural Heritage Plan, which they will present in 1999. Its objective is to coordinate under THC-TPWD guidance all private and public preservation initiatives during the next century in order to create the finest state historical park system in the United States, and to improve the quality of life of citizens by seeking excellence in preservation. If funding does not die out, this plan will be the most ambitious preservation endeavor ever carried out in Texas.

Although the future of historic preservation seems bright and exciting, optimism needs to be moderated. First, because Texas still ranks thirty-seventh in the nation in state funding for historic preservation, the lack of money could interrupt the

Texas Cultural Heritage Plan at any time. Consequently, state agencies need to work further in securing sufficient and continuous financing for this plan, both from public and private sources. Second, because there are still some awkward preservation situations that need to be corrected, the most important one being the continued alienation of the Alamo from state control. Its incorporation into the state park system is today more important than ever. Its interpretive possibilities would be better attended to under TPWD management and, since the Alamo is the most visited site in Texas, the revenue it produces could be extremely helpful in supporting the development the Texas Cultural Heritage Plan.

From the purchases of the San Jacinto battleground and the Alamo chapel in 1883 to the Texas Cultural Heritage Plan of 1998, the evolution of preservation in Texas reflects how our image of the past has changed. In the nineteenth century Texans needed to conserve physical remains of the past in order not to forget their national history; today these remains are our guarantee that industrialization and city growth will not destroy environments and landscapes that we cherish. In addition to strengthening our identity by connecting us with our ancestors, we have come to understand that historic ambiances provide charm, grace, and aesthetic pleasure to our everyday lives. The preservation of the historic heritage of Texas has been a venture that not only has conserved for our enjoyment, and that of future generations, one of the historically richest and most diverse areas of the United States, but has also contributed to the creation of a more human world in which to live.

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