

American Canal Society Canal Index

CANAL Paseo del Rio, San Antonio		STATUS Successful canalized river park.		ACS
STATE/PROVINCE: Texas				HAER
COUNTIES: In San Antonio				
LOCATION (Endpoints of Canal):				
TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS:				
HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:				
<p>San Antonio's PASEO DEL RIO, or River Walk, has been used by canal enthusiasts as the very model of one kind of urban canal park. A 3/4 mi. oxbow of the San Antonio River runs through the city center near the Alamo, in a world by itself well below the streets which cross it. A cut has been made across the oxbow, flood gates (cleverly disguised as ornamental arches) have been constructed to protect the bow from floods, and the whole provided with an exciting maze of paths, arch bridges and mysterious stairways to the surface. Restaurants and quiet places line the river and water taxis and paddleboats glide by. The atmosphere is mind-boggling, especially for a canal park fanatic, and is complete with the almost total absence of protective railings - a sign of sanity in this overly protective era. According to the Paseo del Rio Association, few people fall in</p>		<p>(the water is only a couple of feet deep) and those have usually over-imbibed and have a desire to go swimming. Most of the stonework is WPA work from the depression, with care and imagination hard to duplicate these days. Here one can wine and dine, or just relax on a quiet bench late into the night, an amenity for the visitors which makes other cities positively inhospitable in comparison.</p> <p>This valuable park which gives San Antonio its personality was not an accident but the result of fights, hard work and plenty of money, starting with the San Antonio Conservation Society, which was formed in the 1920's to prevent the river from being concreted and used as a sewer! For further information contact the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 1628, San Antonio TX 78296. San Antonio is also the home of the Texas Museum of Transportation, nearby in Hemis Fair Plaza, open daily 10-6.</p>		
<p>From THE AMERICAN CANAL GUIDE Part 3, pp.14-15 (1979)</p>				
<p>NAMES & ADDRESSES OF GROUPS CONCERNED WITH CANALS PRESERVATION/RESTORATION:</p> <p>San Antonio Conservation Society, 511 Villita E., San Antonio TX 78205 Paseo del Rio Association, 519 River Walk, San Antonio, TX 78205</p>				
<p>BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY:</p> <p>"History of the San Antonio River and its Development" mimeographed summary provided by the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce; and other material furnished by the above organizations.</p> <p>See also AMERICAN CANALS 19:8 (November 1976)</p>				
<p>UNPUBLISHED RECORDS, PHOTOS, DRAWINGS (CEHR, HAER, IABS, Local or Regional Historical Societies, Libraries, etc.):</p>				
<p>EXISTING OR RECOMMENDED LANDMARK STATUS (CEHR, National Register, etc.):</p> <p>Although navigated only by excursion boats and paddle boats in a park setting, this park has been used as an example for historic canal park proposals, as in Richmond VA and Indianapolis.</p>				
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<p>R E T U R N T O : CANAL INDEX COMMITTEE, c/o P.H.STOTT, HAINES ROAD, MOUNT KISCO, NY 10549</p>				