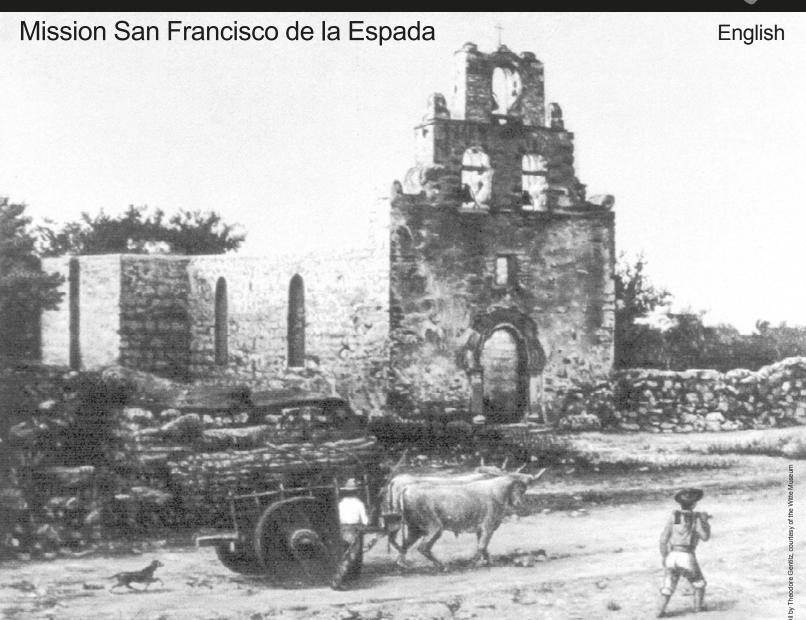
San Antonio Missions

National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior

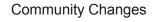
San Antonio Missions National Historical Park





After 250 years, Mission San Francisco de la Espada (Mission Saint Francis of the Sword) remarkably retains its unique features and solitary character – keepsakes from the mid-1700s. Espada's ongoing legacy lies in the blending of Spanish and American Indian lifeways on this sacred ground, creating a new people and culture. Though Spain lost its claim on the New World, its legendary presence remains. As you explore the site, look for the distinctive Spanish features of the church doorway, *espadaña* (belltower), brick archways, and flowing *acequias* (irrigation ditches).

First Mission in Texas	Espada's roots lie in east Texas, where Spain founded Mission San Francisco de los Texas in 1690. Along with several others, it served as a buffer against French encroachment from Loui- siana. Fevers, floods, fires, enemies, and limit-	ed supplies prompted several relocations of this early mission. On March 5, 1731, Mission San Francisco de la Espada was established along this bank of the San Antonio River.
Missions: Tools of Change	Imagine two diverse cultures – separated by language, values and faith – colliding and merging to create a unique mix. Spanish Franciscan missionaries pursued a	Many Coahuiltecans, staggered by famine, imported diseases, enemy tribes, and strange intruders, opted for protection and steady food supply of Mission Espada. Here they mastered Spanish life – and embraced Christianity.
	powerful vision for God and country. They aligned and trained the Coahuiltecan (kwa- weel-teken) hunting and gathering cultures to be servants of God and loyal, productive sub- jects of the Spanish monarchy.	By the mid-1700's, these mission walls echoed with the essence of a dynamic community: the blacksmith's ringing anvil, bellowing livestock, three pounding looms, the clatter of carpentry, and the scrape of the brick maker. Imagine
	Over a 50-year period, they earnestly taught the principles of farming, ranching, architecture, blacksmithing, loom weaving, spinning, and masonry. Espada was the only San Antonio mission where bricks and tiles were made. The Catholic faith and Spanish language became the foundation of the new culture.	peach orchards and vast fields of beans, corn, and melons beyond the walls, and within, the hum of chants, prayers, and instructional con- versations. Daily training and tasks were ac- complished to the timing of the mission bells "which clang out three times a daystartling in the still country air."



1794 Inventory

8 yokes of oxen 3 pounds of steel 1 cow and calf 98 pounds of lead 4 horses 2 cannons 3 mules 25 pounds of iron 1,150 sheep 875 pounds of wood 2 looms a few spinning wheels 1 pair shears per family

Remains to be Seen

Today the church serves as the heart of this small community; mission descendants continue to worship here. Franciscans, clothed in their simple brown habits, work in the convento. A community assistance organization In 1794, Espada began the process of secularization or the transformation to a church-based community. However, the mission was impoverished. Each of the remaining 15 families received land, but shared equipment and supplies.

In 1826, a band of Comanches raided the cornfields and killed the livestock. The same year, a kitchen fire destroyed most of the buildings; the chapel survived. Yet, people continued to make their home here.

operates on the site. The mute and fragile walls of today's Mission Espada stand as a testament to the enduring impact of the people who built and nurtured it.

