

San Antonio Missions



THE SAN ANTONIO
RIVER VALLEY

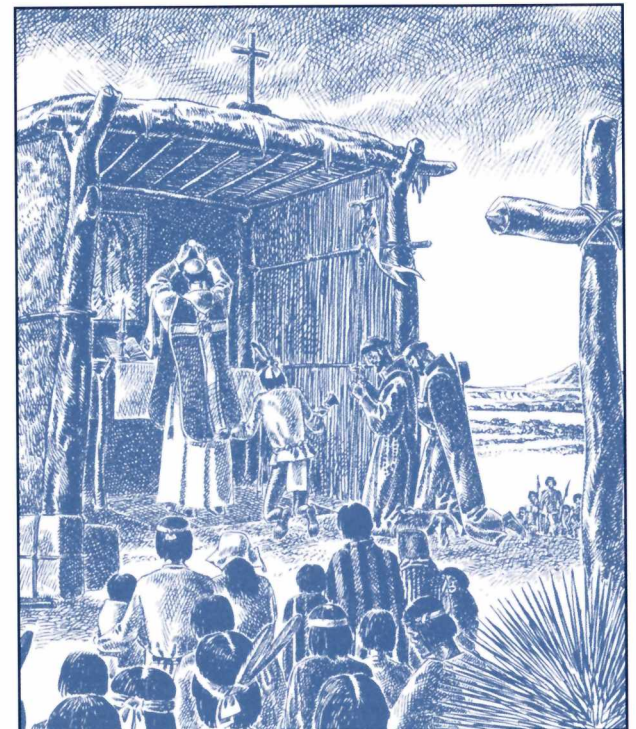
A GUIDE TO THE
VISITOR CENTER MAP



A 1764 map of the San Antonio River Valley.

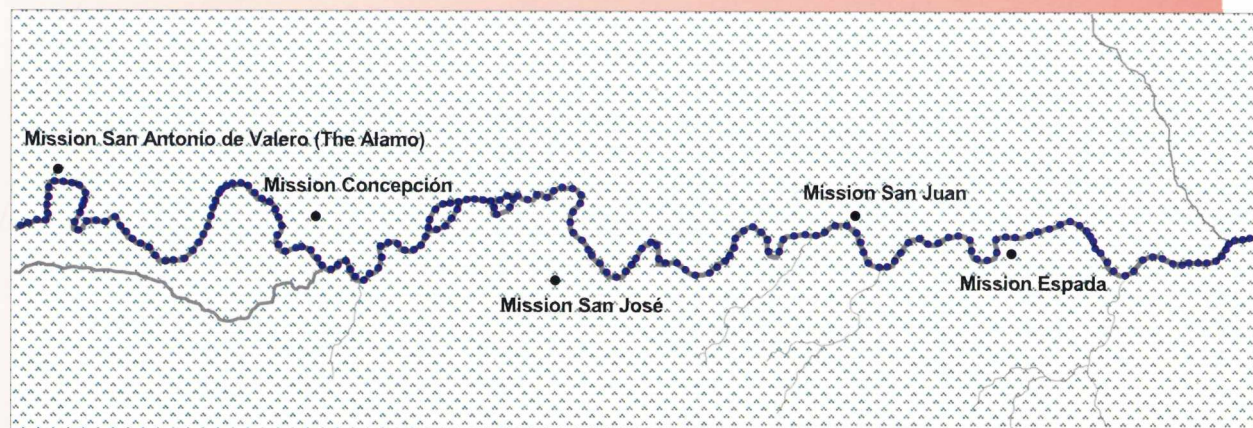


The three dimensional map in the park's visitor center museum presents a five-minute light and sound program on the history of the San Antonio River Valley. This guide is designed to assist visitors who may have difficulties hearing the audio portion of the program. The illustrations in this booklet match the lighting sequences on the map, enabling you to follow along with the text of the program. If you need further assistance, please contact a park ranger.





he land was lush along the river. Trees covered the banks. Animals, birds, and fish were plentiful. Native peoples had long lived in this rich environment



Sound effects: babbling water, birds chirping
Segment length: 15 seconds



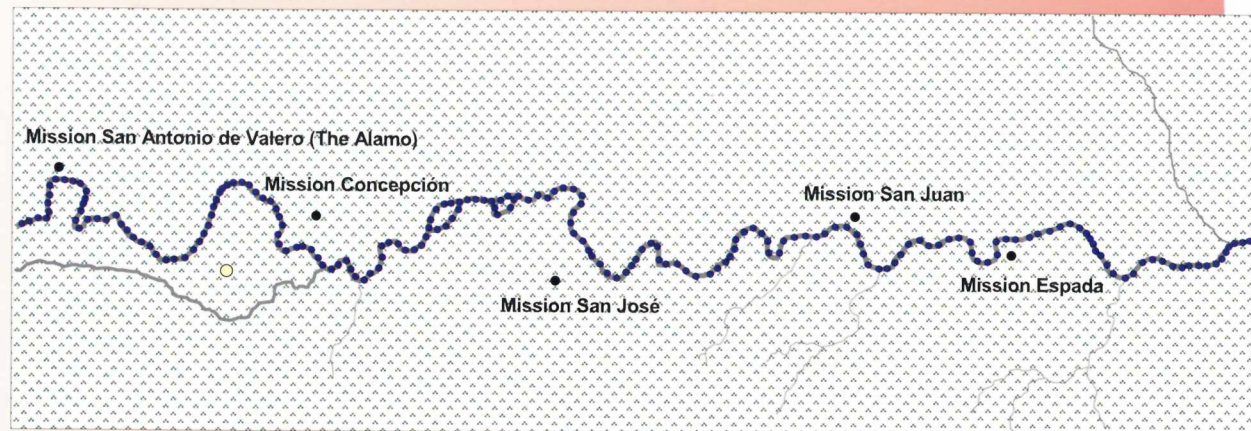
n 1691, Father Damián Massanet, in an expedition led by Don Domingo de Terán, saw “many fish... great number of wild turkeys,” and, “so many buffaloes that the horses stampeded and forty head ran away.” Massanet named the river San Antonio de Padua.



Sound effects: rumbling of buffaloes, horses whinnying and running
Segment length: 25 seconds



In 1709 Father Isidro Espinosa described a spring at San Pedro Creek. He and his party, not knowing his countrymen had named the river, also called the river San Antonio de Padua.



Sound effects: babbling water, muffled voices of a large group of people
Segment length: 15 seconds



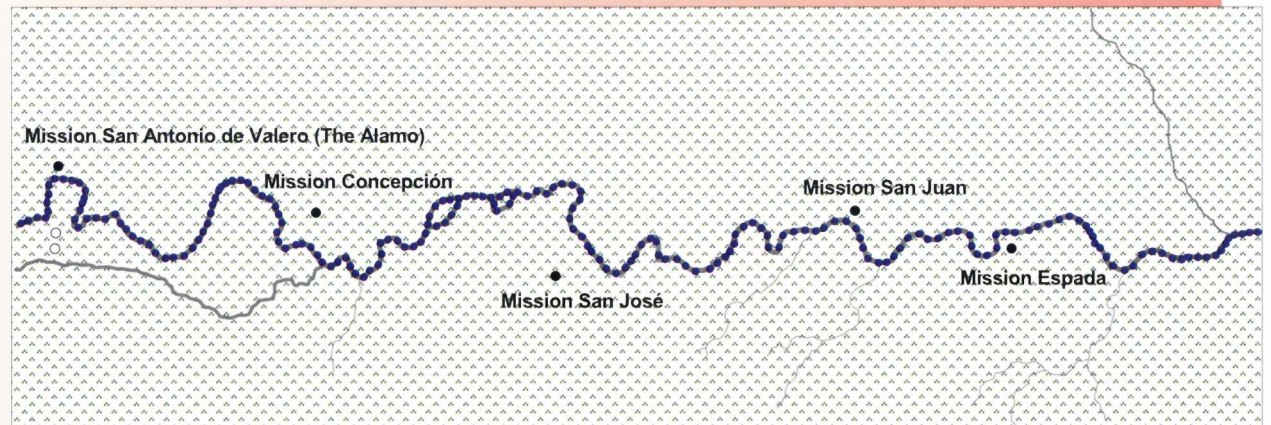
On April 25, 1718, Captain General Don Martín del Alarcón, Governor of Coahuila and Texas, led a group of seventy-two soldiers, priests, and settlers to the San Pedro Springs.



Sound effects: horses walking , muffled voices
Segment length: 15 seconds



On May 1, 1718, Franciscan missionary Antonio de San Buenaventura y Olivares founded the Mission of San Antonio de Valero along San Pedro Creek. On May 5, Governor Alarcón, in the name of the King of Spain, founded the villa and presidio of San Antonio de Béjar.

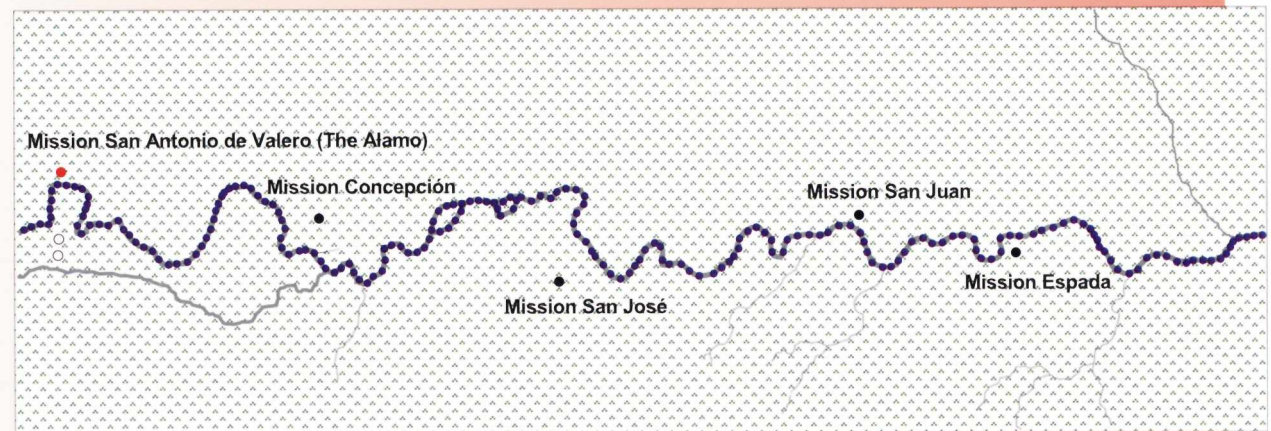


Sound effects: muffled voices, sounds of construction

Segment length: 25 seconds



One year later Father Olivares moved Mission San Antonio de Valero to the east side of the river.

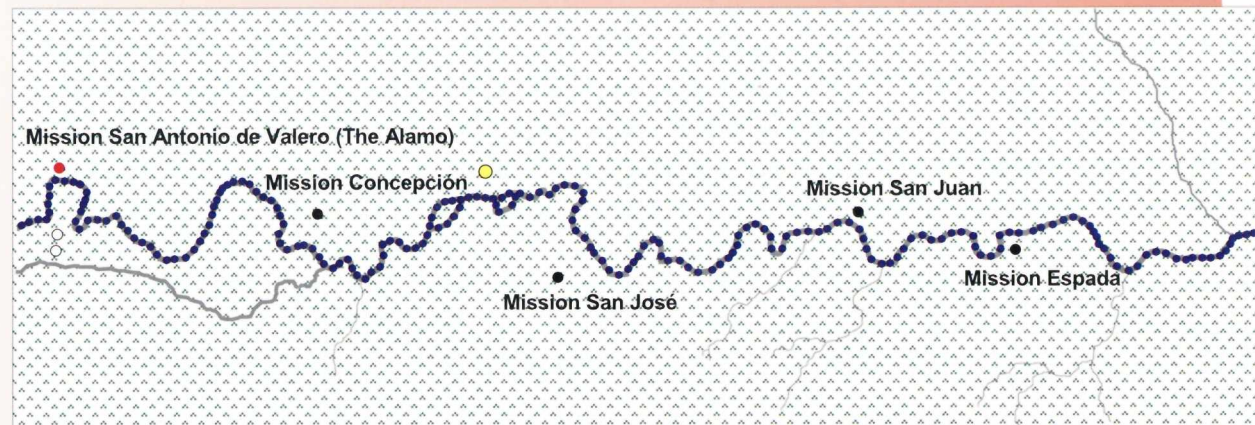


Sound effects: mission bell tolls

Segment length: 5 seconds



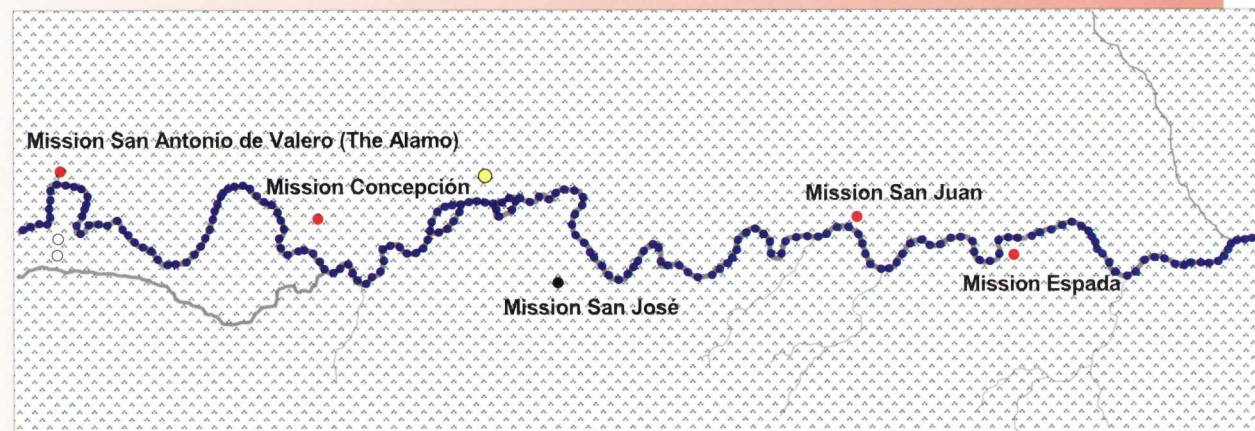
On February 23, 1720, Father Antonio Margil de Jesús founded Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo on the east bank of the river.



Sound effects: mission bell tolls
Segment length: 10 seconds



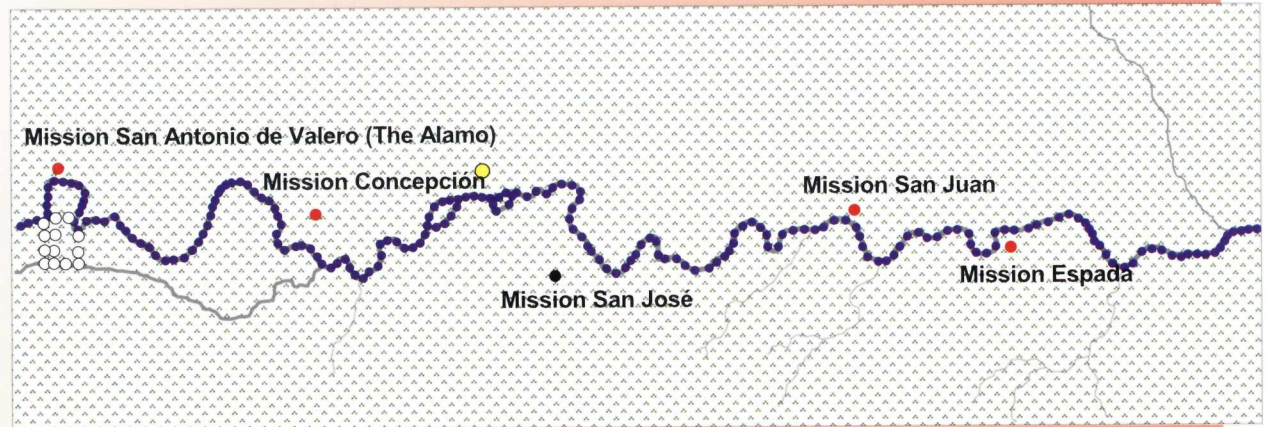
On March 5, 1731, Franciscan missionaries reestablished three missions from eastern Texas on the banks of the San Antonio River. The missions were Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña, Mission San Juan Capistrano, and Mission San Francisco de la Espada.



Sound effects: mission bell tolls
Segment length: 25 seconds



On March 9, 1731, fifty-five Canary Islanders, including families and single men, arrived as settlers. On March 12, Captain Juan Antonio de Almazán, commander of the presidio, founded the Villa of San Fernando de Béjar as an official town with the rights of a voting community. The town was laid out according to the Spanish tradition, with a church and plaza in the center.

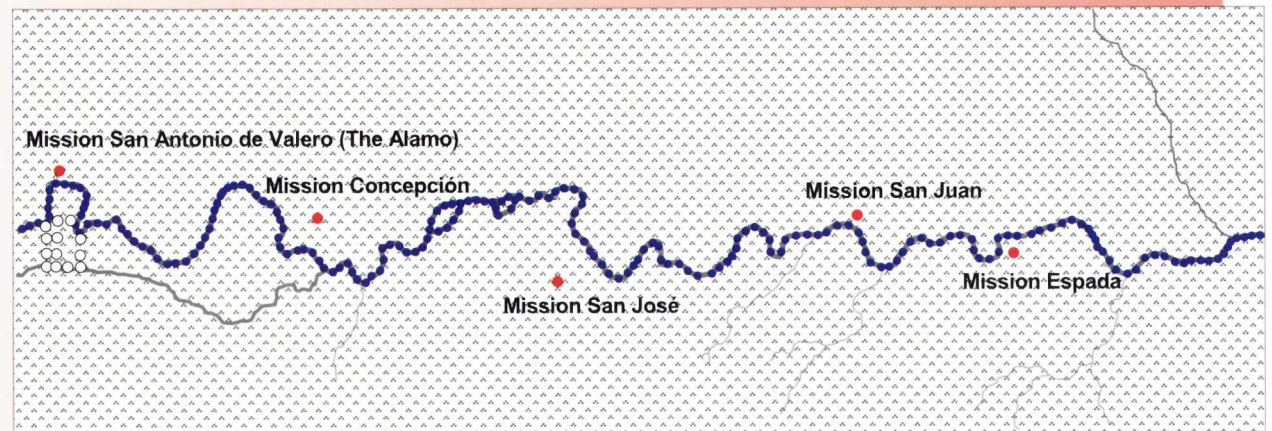


Sound effects: people speaking, muted sounds of church bells, chickens squawking, horse hooves, and construction

Segment length: 30 seconds



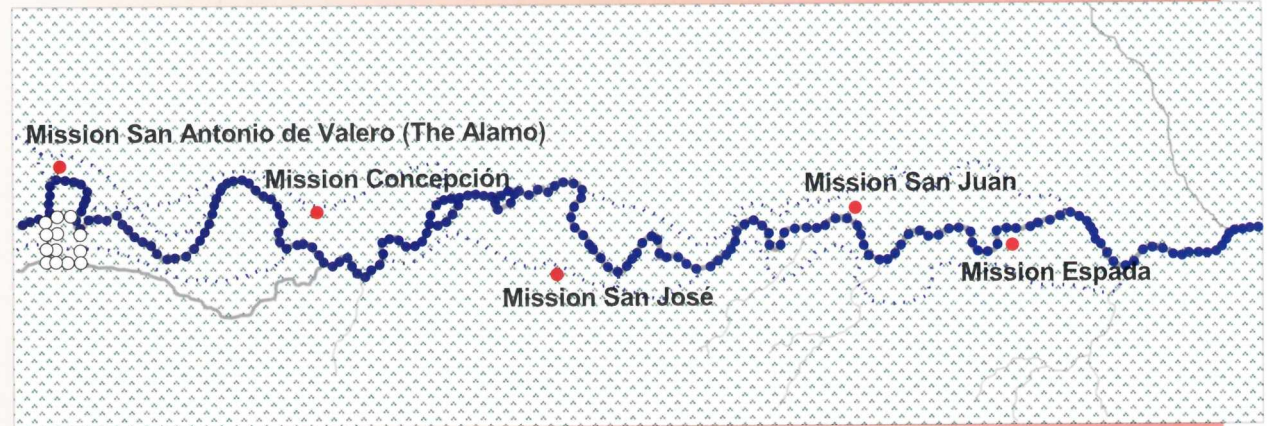
In 1739 a small pox and measles epidemic swept through the missions and the town. At Mission San José many people died and others ran away to escape the sickness. The next year, hoping higher ground would be free of disease, Father Núñez moved Mission San José to its present location.



Sound effects: mission bell tolls

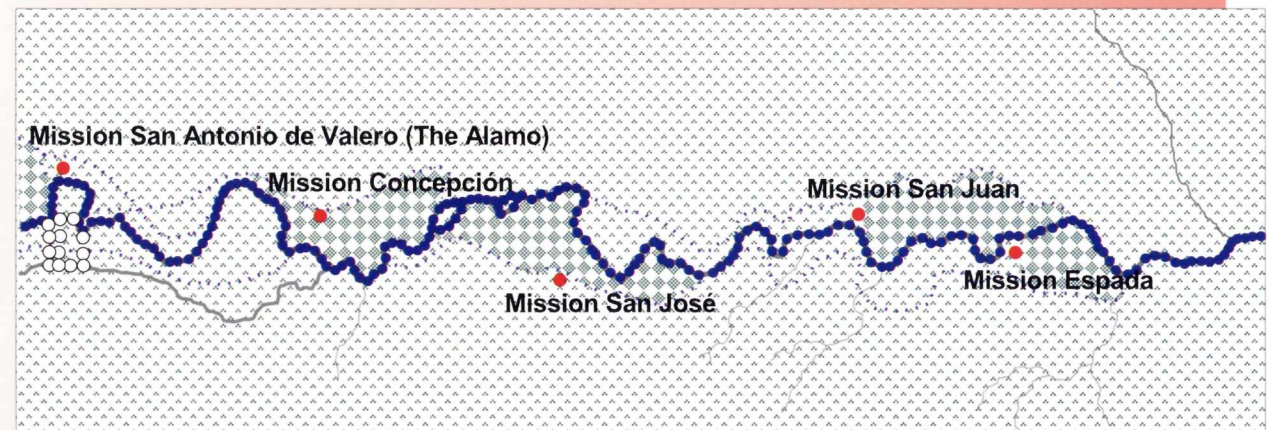
Segment length: 30 seconds

From the beginning of Spanish settlement, the people of the missions and the citizens of the town used the waters of the San Antonio River and the San Pedro Creek to irrigate their fields. They built an elaborate system of dams and ditches to divert and control the water.



Sound effects: babbling water
Segment length: 15 seconds

Especially for the missions these irrigated fields were the basis of prosperity and self-sufficiency. By 1824 the mission era had ended. The missions were secularized; the churches became parishes. Land was divided among the remaining residents, with the excess surveyed and distributed to others. Soldiers and their families lived in San Antonio de Valero which became known as the Alamo.



Sound effects: grass being cut by hand
Segment length: 35 seconds

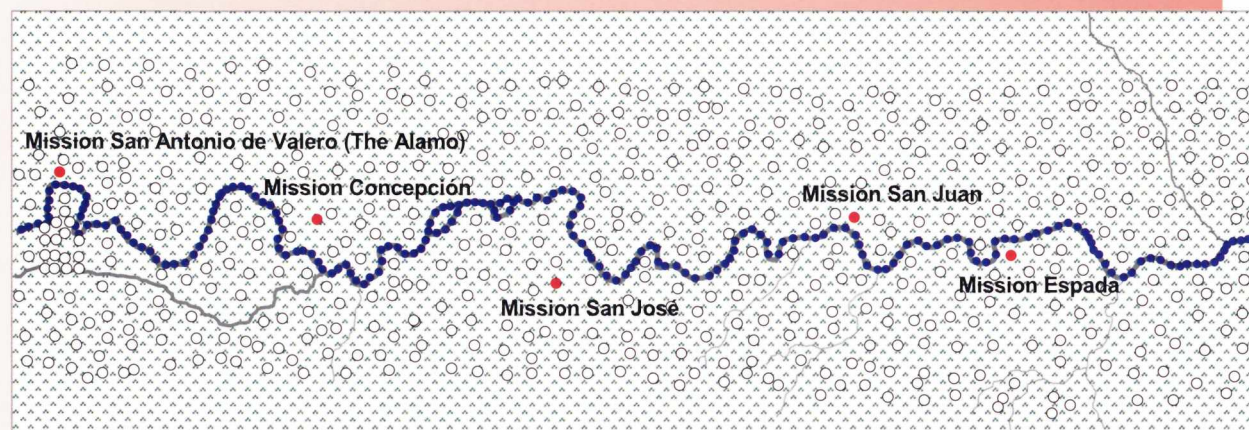
The nineteenth century brought rapid political change. San Antonio became part of the Republic of Mexico. The siege and battle of the Alamo occurred in 1836 and Texas became a republic. Texas joined the United States in 1845 and left the Union with Confederate States in 1861.



Sound effects: guitar music, battle sounds, banjo music

Segment length: 25 seconds

After the Civil War the city grew quickly. First north along the river; then south along the river.

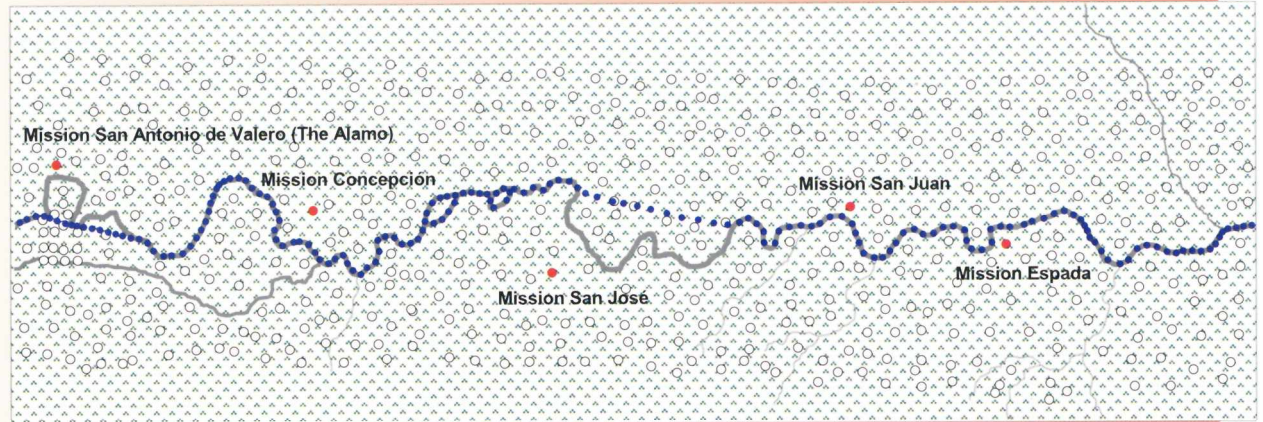


Sound effects: cattle drive

Segment length: 15 seconds



Today San Antonio is a metropolis, one of the largest cities in the United States. The San Antonio River has been dammed and channeled—its course changed to meet the needs of a modern city. But still the river flows through the center of San Antonio—central to its modern life—and to its history.



Sound effects: people walking, muffled voices
Segment length: 25 seconds

The Missions of San Antonio

