



SAN ANTONIO'S TRICENTENNIAL

The Alamo City's 300th birthday is well underway, but there's still plenty to experience during this once-in-a-lifetime happening.

By Julie Catalano
Photography courtesy of www.visitsanantonio.com

This year is the perfect time to learn the history of San Antonio — a long, complex and compelling tale that begins when the city was named before there was a city, when indigenous peoples like the Payaya Indians occupied the area for many thousands of years. Spanish explorers arrived on June 13, 1691 on the feast day of St. Anthony de Padua, naming both the area and the river in his honor. It was 27 more years, in 1718, before the first mission — what we now know as the Alamo — and the first presidio were established at San Pedro Creek, populated by Spanish friars and Spanish soldiers, respectively.

Although 1718 is celebrated as San Antonio's birth, there was no official city government until 56 Canary Islanders arrived in March of 1731 by royal decree of the King of Spain, establishing law and order with a municipal government and city hall. Ranches and farmland were tilled with the help of Spanish presidio soldiers and the Native Americans — a full century before the Battle of the Alamo.

That's the short version. Hundreds of Tricentennial-themed events, performances, lectures, exhibits, concerts, films and festivals will fill in the gaps with everything from solemn remembrances to celebrations of art, music and dance, led by the San Antonio Tricentennial Commission in partnership with area organizations and institutions.

WHERE TO START? RIGHT HERE: COMMEMORATIVE WEEK, MAY 1-6

Packing as much Tricentennial as possible into six days, this week explores history, education, arts and much more. Many of the events are free, but for ticket and time info, go to www.sanantonio300.org.



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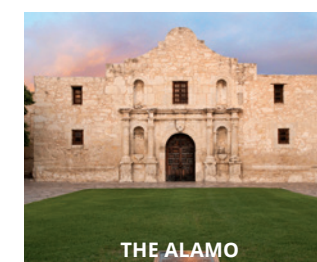
May 1. Day of Reflection. The week kicks off with interfaith services at places of worship across the city, headed by the Archdiocese of San Antonio and other religious leaders. A pilgrimage from Mission Concepción arrives at Main Plaza, followed by a musical performance, healing ceremony, lighting of the Eternal Flame and a candlelight vigil. Free.

May 2. History and Education. Thousands of San Antonio students will get a visit from historical performers touring area schools throughout the week to bring the city's history to life. Special exhibits will also be on display at libraries, college campuses and museums.

May 3. Founders Day. A Founders Day Ball is a gala ticketed event at the downtown Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. Concurrent activities that are free and open to the public will be held at UTSA main campus, Texas A&M San Antonio, Our Lady of the Lake University, St. Philip's College and Morgan's Wonderland.

May 4. Arts for All. Complimentary admission to museums, art venues, theaters and more, many of them offering Tricentennial-centric programming.

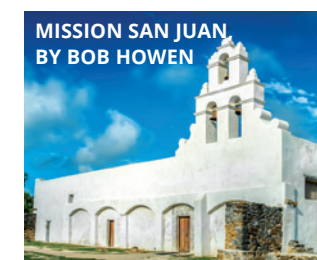
May 5. Legacy Day. Arts, entertainment, tours and celebrations pay tribute to the five San Antonio Missions — San Jose, Concepción, Espada, San Juan and the Alamo. The day ends with fireworks over every mission.



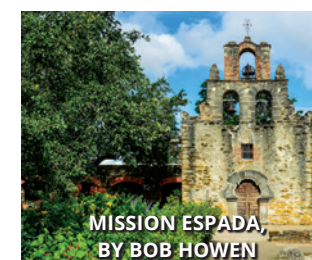
THE ALAMO



MISSION SAN JOSE



MISSION SAN JUAN
BY BOB HOWEN

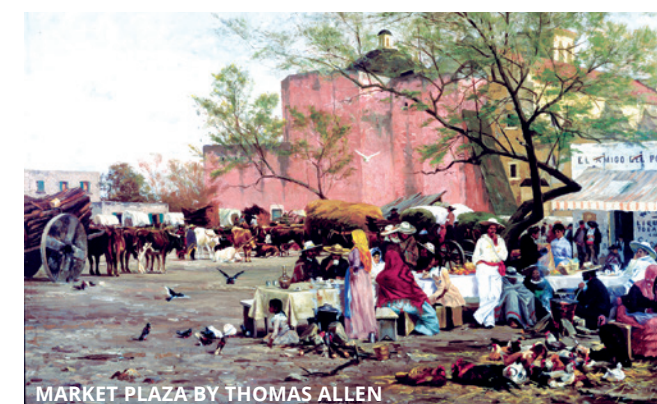


MISSION ESPADA,
BY BOB HOWEN

May 6. Military Appreciation. Designed to highlight the city's renowned military history, this day will focus on active duty military and Joint Base San Antonio.

MORE HIGHLIGHTS:

Two fascinating exhibitions at the Witte Museum bring to life a first-class (and fun) history lesson. Through July 1, *Gathering at the Waters: 12,000 Years of People* explores how the San Anto-



MARKET PLAZA BY THOMAS ALLEN



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nio River served as a life source through the ages. This is a companion exhibition to *Confluence and Culture: 300 Years of San Antonio History*, through January 6, 2019. www.wittemuseum.org

The San Antonio Museum of Art also does double duty with *San Antonio 1718: Art from Viceregal Mexico*, through May 13, that tells the story of San Antonio's first century through more than



100 artworks; and *Spain: 500 Years of Spanish Painting from the Museums of Madrid*, from June 22-September 16, featuring more than 40 masterpieces from major collections, many of which have never been on display in the U.S. www.samuseum.org

CRISTÓBAL DE VILLAPANDO (NEW SPAIN, 1645-1714), THE MYSTICAL CITY OF GOD, 1706

Confluence: Art at the Convention Center is an exhibition hosted by the City of San Antonio to showcase more than 20 new artworks by prominent local and regional artists at the newly expanded Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. Free.

One of the most exciting Tricentennial offerings will endure far into the future — the "T" Public Art Garden, an ambitious project that will reinvent four acres along the River Walk into a walkable space for visitors to connect with inspiring public art. Works by local and international artists will grace the area to create an artistic destination combining art, culture, people and place in the heart of downtown. This multiyear art initiative is planned for a late 2018 launch.

WANT MORE?

The official San Antonio Tricentennial SA300 app is available for download in both iOS and Android, with information on the latest events and celebrations for the city's milestone birthday. ♦

For a complete calendar of official Tricentennial events, visit www.sanantonio300.org.