

“A Historic Preservation Force to be Reckoned With: The Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, San Antonio’s West Side, and the City’s Long Latinx History.”

### Historical Context

As Spanish and French colonial empires competed for power north of the Rio Grande during the eighteenth century, Spain encouraged settlement in that territory to counter French expansion westward from the Gulf of Mexico. This region became Coahuila and Texas, and the Spanish and French competed and worked with Indigenous societies like the Coahuiltecons, Caddo, and others as they settled in the region. The Spanish strategy included founding missions and presidios to strengthen their presence in Coahuila and Texas. A mission’s goal was to convert Indigenous peoples to Catholicism. Presidios served as forts that protected the missions from European rivals and Native communities who raided their developing villages.<sup>1</sup> Spaniards brought segregation to their settlements by establishing separate living quarters for Natives and Spaniards.<sup>2</sup> The governor of Coahuila and Texas, Martin de Alarcón, and Father Antonio de San Buenaventura y Olivares led the settlers of what would become San Antonio.<sup>3</sup>

Alarcón and Father Antonio brought people of mixed racial and ethnic heritage to establish San Antonio in 1718. The Spanish wanted to settle Coahuila and Texas with White Spaniards, but few wanted to relocate from Mexico’s interior to the remote northern region. Instead, the seventy-two colonists who made the trek from Coahuila were primarily of mixed Black, Spanish, and Indigenous heritage. They first built the Mission San Antonio de Valero and the Villa de Béxar presidio in 1718. By 1720, the residents constructed houses and other buildings around the mission and presidio. The first residents forged alliances with the nearby Coahuiltecons, which allowed San Antonians to maintain peace in the surrounding area.<sup>4</sup>

By the 1770s, the Spanish government established San Antonio as the capital of Texas. The Spanish census reported that most of the town’s population (60%) comprised of people with mulatto heritage (Spanish and African ancestry). Because mulattos remained there, they sustained the establishment, although neighboring Indigenous peoples raided San Antonio regularly. Due to the caste system that placed people of African descent at the bottom of society, some decided to shed their Black heritage in favor of mestizo or Spanish classification. In the following census, the heads of San Antonio households who were Black or Indigenous told the Spanish government that their children were Spaniards or mestizo. San Antonio’s early history shows how diverse communities built the capital and how people used fluid identities to reduce discrimination by moving up the caste system’s racial hierarchy.<sup>5</sup>

An emerging United States and a declining Spanish kingdom feuded over territorial disputes in the early 1800s. Black freedom movements erupted throughout the Western Hemisphere when free Blacks in the French colony of St. Dominique started the Haitian Revolution in 1791.

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<sup>1</sup> Martha Menchaca, *The Mexican American Experience in Texas: Citizenship, Segregation, and The Struggle for Equality* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2022), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Maria Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religión, and Gender in Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 99-100.

<sup>3</sup> Martha Menchaca, *The Mexican American Experience*, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 23.

Enslaved Black men and women had already escaped the United States for decades to acquire their freedom. The Haitian Revolution fueled some to find liberty elsewhere, including running to Spanish territory, which led to foreign policy conflicts around the San Antonio area.

Spain and the United States fought over runaway enslaved men and women when the U.S. bought the Louisiana territory from France in 1803. Spain argued that men and women gained independence once they settled in Texas. Spain's actions angered some U.S. leaders who argued that the nation should acquire Texas to hold onto enslaved men and women. The disputes led Spain to fortify its northern settlements like San Antonio, as it was the most substantial presence along the north of the U.S.-Spain border.<sup>6</sup>

Spain's disputes with the United States declined as Mexico gained independence in 1810, and San Antonio shifted from Spanish to Mexican control. The La Bahía presidio in San Antonio became a hotbed of revolutionary conflict between 1811 and 1813. U.S., Spanish, and Mexican constituencies wrestled for power during the independence movement until Spain reconquered Texas. Spanish commander Joaquín de Arredondo defeated Mexican revolutionaries who aligned with U.S. sympathizers to regain control of San Antonio in 1813. The coalition between Mexican rebels and U.S. supporters left an imprint in Texas for decades after Spain recognized Mexico's independence in 1821.<sup>7</sup>

San Antonio remained the capital of Texas after Mexico's independence in 1821, but Texas merged with Coahuila to form a single state, Coahuila and Texas. The Mexican federal government wanted to encourage immigration to Texas as the 3,000 residents paled compared to the 42,000 inhabitants in Coahuila. Legislators backed Mexican migration and immigration to the north by providing land grants to newcomers. Stephen Austin became the most prominent American immigrant by creating alliances with San Antonio's merchant families. He partnered with the Navarro, Veramendi, Ruiz, Arciniega, Flores, Padilla, Seguín, and Músquiz families to advance American interests in Texas. They worked together to allow slavery in Texas and Coahuila with a law that would gradually end enslavement.<sup>8</sup>

After the War of Texas Independence and the United States annexed the Texas Republic in 1845, the political power of ethnic Mexicans declined in San Antonio, Texas, and the United States throughout the nineteenth century. Mexicans organized celebrations applauding their heritage in San Antonio's downtown and the West Side plaza, beginning in the 1870s. They celebrated holidays, and Mexican San Antonians opened *tienditas* (small businesses) in public spaces, forging *mercados* (marketplaces) in different neighborhoods. Elite Mexican families like the Seguín's, Navarro's, Ruiz's, and others lost influence when Whites from the East Coast migrated to San Antonio during Reconstruction (1865-1877). Historian Richard A. Garcia describes, "These conditions formed the intellectual and cultural atmosphere that permeated Mexican consciousness in the West Side. The city segregated the Mexicans but employed them, loved

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 24-25.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 42-43.

their culture but disliked them.” The West Side’s Latinx history continued well beyond the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

With many of San Antonio’s ethnic Mexican community living in the West Side, they sought to make the best of their circumstances in the early twentieth century. The Mexican Revolution (1910-1917) led many Mexicana/os to search for peace in the United States. They settled in cities like San Antonio and made the barrios their home. Mexicana/os and Mexican Americans built tiny “shotgun homes” known as *casitas* to live with their families on the West Side. Often, *casitas* housed mothers, fathers, and their children in one bedroom. Although small, the *casitas* allowed ethnic Mexicans to form support networks with their relatives and the community.<sup>10</sup> For example, many in the West Side remember Emilia Sánchez for opening her home to those in need. They called her house *La Casa de Misericordia* (the House of Mercy) because of Sánchez’s hospitality.<sup>11</sup>

Some found stability in the West Side, but a historic flood in 1921 disrupted the lives of hundreds of ethnic Mexicans. On September 9, 1921, historic heavy rains descended on San Antonio, inundating many neighborhoods throughout the city and causing severe damage to the West Side. Although the deaths from the flood are indeterminate, the U.S. Geological Survey estimates that 224 San Antonians lost their lives. Most were ethnic Mexicans who lived in the West Side. The excessive rains caused the dried-up streams of the San Antonio River and the San Pedro Creek to reemerge in the barrio where Mexicana/os and Mexican Americans settled. Ethnic Mexicans utilized mutual aid societies (organizations for the public good) like *Cruz Azul* (the Blue Cross) to provide medical relief to their community. Cruz Azul delivered health care, social services, clothes, and essential assistance to the West Side until November. Because of the legacy of segregation and discrimination against ethnic Mexicans since the 1840s, the 1921 flood revealed how these unequal systems affected barrio residents.<sup>12</sup>

The financial crisis that devastated the U.S. economy in 1929 ushered in a new era of laws that could help the most vulnerable, including the West Side. The Great Depression of the 1930s caused many to lose their jobs and homes. In 1937, the U.S. Congress passed the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act of 1937, which created the United States Housing Authority (USHA) and provided \$500 million for affordable housing projects.<sup>13</sup> The USHA approved the nation’s first affordable housing plans in the West Side. Developers quickly planned and built a housing complex within four years. They inaugurated the Alazán Apache Courts in 1941, exclusively reserved for ethnic Mexicans because of segregation housing covenants. The Courts comprised

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<sup>9</sup> Richard A. Garcia, *Rise of the Mexican American Middle Class: San Antonio, 1929-1941* (College Station, Texas: Texas A& M University Press, 1991), 20-21, 24.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Webner, “Esperanza center plans rehab of ‘casitas’ to preserve old-style West Side housing,” *San Antonio Heron* (San Antonio, Texas), March 4, 2021, accessed on August 22, 2023. <https://saheron.com/rinconcito-esperanza-rehab-casitas-westside-tirz/>

<sup>11</sup> Kelly Katie, “Emilia Sánchez (1911-1999),” Museo Del Westside, accessed on August 22, 2023. <https://www.museodelwestside.org/women-activism/emilia-sanchez>.

<sup>12</sup> Char Miller, *West Side Rising: How San Antonio’s 1921 Flood Devastated a City and Sparked a Latino Environmental Justice Movement* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2021), 1-2, 7, 33.

<sup>13</sup> “75h Anniversary of the Wagner-Steagall Housing Act of 1937,” FDR Library, Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, accessed on August 23, 2023, <https://www.fdrlibrary.org/housing#:~:text=President%20Roosevelt%20signed%20the%20Wagner,housing%20projects%20across%20the%20country>.

1,180 units, which housed 5,000 West Side residents. The affordable housing project allowed San Antonians, especially those who suffered from the 1921 flood, to have homes with plumbing and running water for the first time.<sup>14</sup>

Throughout the 1940s, Mexican Americans increasingly advocated for dismantling segregation in the United States, including in San Antonio, when the community elected integrationist Henry Gonzalez in 1953 to the city council.<sup>15</sup> Beyond electoral politics, others pioneered spaces in radio and television broadcasting for Latina/os throughout the city. San Antonio journalist for the *La Prensa* (The Press) newspaper, Raoul A. Cortez, had a new vision as the public began listening to the radio. In the early 1940s, he negotiated with the San Antonio radio station KMAC to run Spanish programming. Because there were regulations barring “foreign” language media, Cortez had to secure an exemption to open a radio station. Cortez argued that having a Spanish broadcasting center would allow Latina/os to support the World War II effort. The media mogul succeeded and opened the first radio station owned by a Latino in San Antonio in 1946 (KCOR-AM), paving the way for the community to expand Latina/o media.<sup>16</sup>

Cortez, his supporters, and the San Antonio community planned radio programming and even created the first Spanish television channel in the United States during the 1950s. Cortez hired radio professional Manuel Bernal to conceive advertisements, songs, and productions for KCOR-AM. Bernal’s works became a staple in San Antonio households. Latina/os from the West Side eagerly waited for Bernal’s voice to diffuse from their radios. By 1955, KCOR-AM transitioned into television broadcasting when Cortez founded the KCOR-TV Channel 41. The channel production became the first Latina/o television station in the United States. Lalo Astol, a seasoned actor who settled in San Antonio, was the architect behind the channel’s episodes. He oversaw the founding of shows like *Teatro KCOR* and *Teatro Motorola*, which resonated with Latina/os. Cortez aired movies and shows produced in Mexico to offer ethnic Mexicans visual representations of media in Mexico.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, Cortez had to sell KCOR because his programming utilized expensive Ultra High Frequency technology. He sold everything to the Spanish International Network in 1961, which became the critically acclaimed Univision.<sup>18</sup>

While San Antonio and the West Side created the first Latina/o radio and television broadcasting operation, the Civil Rights Movement, Chicana/o Movement, and Second Wave Feminism swept the United States and San Antonio between the 1950s and 1970s. The Civil Rights Movement attempted to undo segregation and discrimination against historically marginalized communities.

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<sup>14</sup> Rj Marquez and Valeria Gomez, “‘Corazon of Mexican-American San Antonio’: How Alazan Apache Courts shaped West Side: Alazan Apache Courts were first public housing complex approved by U.S. government in 1938,” *KSAT News*, (San Antonio, Texas), published September 20, 2020, at 9:07 AM, Updated: September 8, 2021 at 1:21 PM, accessed on August 23, 2023, <https://www.ksat.com/news/local/2020/09/30/corazon-of-mexican-american-san-antonio-how-alazan-apache-courts-shaped-west-side/>.

<sup>15</sup> Aaron E. Sánchez, Ruben A. Arellano, and Nyddia Hannah, “The Latina and Latino History of Southern Methodist University,” *SMU Scholar Student Research* (Fall 2011), 9.

<sup>16</sup> “San Antonio Public Library Celebrates Cortez Branch Library 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary,” My SAPL, San Antonio Public Library, last updated September 16, 2022, accessed on August 24, 2023, <https://guides.mysapl.org/c.php?g=1132430&p=8299338>.

<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth C. Ramírez, “Astol, Leonardo García [Lalo] (1906-1994), TSHA online, Texas State Historical Association, December 8, 2015, Updated June 8, 2016, accessed on August 29, 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Sehila Mota Casper, “From Theory to Practice: Contextualizing Latino Conservation Practices,” (master’s thesis: Savannah College of Art and Design, 2014), 72-73.

The movement secured the passage of monumental laws like the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and other significant legislation that attempted to tackle such issues. Although there was no singular Chicana/o Movement, people ditched the term Mexican American for Chicana/o to acknowledge Mexican's Indigenous roots. Chicana/os called out nativism against their community by arguing that they were natives of North America and not immigrants, ushering in calls for land redistribution, founding a third party, fighting against police brutality, and other endeavors.<sup>19</sup> Women, including Chicanas, led the Second Wave Feminism movement, which called out the sexism they experienced during these campaigns and in the workforce. They also called for the passage of bills addressing gender discrimination to provide an equitable environment in all aspects of society.<sup>20</sup> The three movements influenced Latina/os, especially Latinas, to found the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center in San Antonio.

Chicanas, Latinas, female activists, and members of organizations like LULAC, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), and other groups sought to create an organization devoted to social justice in the late 1980s. President Ronald Reagan's conservative policies created roadblocks for the movement for equity in the United States, the Western Hemisphere, and throughout the globe. Latinas in San Antonio wanted to be a part of an organization that fought against imperialism, sexism, homophobia, discrimination, classism, and the destruction of the environment. Graciela Sánchez, a West Side native, partnered with like-minded people and found an opportunity to repurpose a nonprofit, the Interchange Network, into their vision. Sánchez and the visionaries created the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center in 1987. They named their organization *Esperanza* (hope) because it provided optimism and leaned into San Antonio's Latina/o history. Although they didn't have a meeting space initially, the organization paid a \$1 annual fee to use a Catholic mission's facilities. The center had many objectives, including historic preservation endeavors in the West Side.<sup>21</sup>

The Esperanza Peace and Justice Center overcame challenges at the turn of the twenty-first century. The Catholic Mission evicted the nonprofit from its space as the organization grew suspicious of Esperanza's LGBTQ+ activism. As a result, the nonprofit tapped into its membership list to organize an incredibly successful fundraiser to buy its own building for greater autonomy. Their campaign allowed them to purchase a 9,500-square-foot building on 992 San Pedro Avenue in 1993.<sup>22</sup> They continued calling on their membership network, leading to the complete payment of the structure in 1997. However, the City of San Antonio quickly turned to defund Esperanza by arguing that the center was "too political," cutting them from local grant funding. The nonprofit won a federal lawsuit against the City of San Antonio in 2001, demonstrating that the municipality used race and ethnicity to discriminate against a public arts group. These successes paved the way for Esperanza to plan multiple public history campaigns to preserve the West Side and San Antonio's Latinx history.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Martha Menchaca, *The Mexican American Experience in Texas*, 3.

<sup>20</sup> Kevin M. Kruse and Julian Zelizer, *Fault Lines: A History of the United States Since 1974* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2019), 66-68.

<sup>21</sup> Sara DeTurk, *Activism, Alliance Building, and the Esperanza Peace and Justice Center* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014), 8-9.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

<sup>23</sup> "Esperanza Peace and Justice Center," *givemn*. Give Minnesota, accessed on August 24, 2023, <https://www.givemn.org/organization/esperanzacenter>.

## Community Efforts

Throughout the first decade of the 2000s, Esperanza purchased historic properties in the West Side to promote the barrio's history and significance to San Antonio. The first structure they purchased was Emilia Sánchez's historic home, *La Casa de Misericordia*, in 2002. Esperanza renamed Sánchez's house *La Casa de Cuentos* (The House of Stories). West Side and greater San Antonio residents visited this structure to hear oral histories of San Antonio history and attend workshops, presentations, and other cultural programming. Five years later, in 2007, the nonprofit bought Ruben's Ice House on the corner of South Colorado and Guadalupe Street.<sup>24</sup> The former storefront sat next to the *Casa de Cuentos* and served refreshing beverages to West Side residents. Esperanza purchased the property so San Antonians could reminisce about their families who used to gather there daily.<sup>25</sup> In 2009, the organization earned a Community Development Block Grant to maintain the *Casa de Cuentos* and revitalize a *Casita* in the backyard. The *Casita* provides visitors a glimpse of a West Side resident's life during the 1920s. These historic structures made up the *Rinconcito de Esperanza* (The Little Corner of Hope), and community members continue to use the space to preserve San Antonio's Latinx history.<sup>26</sup>

Beyond the West Side, the nonprofit was at the forefront of the movement to prevent the demolition of the historic Univision broadcasting building in the early 2010s. During the 1970s, the Spanish International Network (SIN) continued to plan programming at the KCOR building in San Antonio. In 1987, SIN changed its name to Univision and increased in popularity, becoming a staple in Latinx households throughout the United States and Puerto Rico.<sup>27</sup> Although the historic KCOR/Univision building had historical significance, Greystar Real Estate Partners (Greystar) proposed razing the abandoned building in March 2013 to build a 350-unit residential complex. The Esperanza Peace and Justice Center was part of the Westside Preservation Alliance, a collective of organizations devoted to preserving San Antonio's Latinx history to stop the demolition of historic structures. San Antonio's Historic and Design Review Commission (SAHDRC) and San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation voted in favor of tearing down the historic structure in September 2013.<sup>28</sup>

SAHDRC and Greystar's decision to demolish the Univision building led to increased Westside Preservation Alliance activism, resulting in the arrests of coalition members. SAHDRC, Greystar, and Univision (still the proprietor) agreed to preserve the steel broadcasting tower to appease the Westside Preservation Alliance, arguing that the radio broadcasting antenna had more historical significance than the building. The centrist proposal did not dissuade the Westside Preservation Alliance. They acquired a restraining order between September and

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<sup>24</sup> "Rinconcito de Esperanza," Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, accessed on August 25, 2023, <https://esperanzacenter.org/our-spaces/rinconcito-de-esperanza/>.

<sup>25</sup> Rachel Huron, "A Place Where Everyone Knows Your Name: The Backstory of a Historic Ice House," The Story of Texas, Bullock Museum, April 11, 2019, accessed on August 25, 2023, <https://www.thestoryoftexas.com/discover/texas-story-project/the-backstory-of-a-historic-ice-house>.

<sup>26</sup> "Rinconcito de Esperanza"

<sup>27</sup> "Nuestra Historia en Univision San Antonio: Univision San Antonio fue la primer cadena en español del país. Conoce su historia," Univision, May 20, 2015, accessed on August 25, 2023, <https://www.univision.com/san-antonio/nuestra-historia-en-univision-san-antonio>.

<sup>28</sup> Sehila Mota Casper, *From Theory to Practice*, 70, 73.



October 2013, which provided time to strategize against the demolition. However, a district judge suspended the legal proceeding, allowing developers to tear down the Univision building on November 5, 2013.

Eight activists put their bodies on the line by going inside the demolition site in November. Professor Emeritus of History at St. Mary's University and one of the pioneering scholars of Chicana history, Dr. Antonia Castañeda, entered the construction location that faithful day. She described the collective's act of protest:

We are going to preserve and persevere in one way or another. Me going around and other people going around. Eventually three or four of us stayed because the people doing the demolition and the development and subsequently the police wanted us to leave. They didn't want to arrest us in public. Everybody knowing. And so instead we did what we do. And so somebody brought a table, and somebody brought a tablecloth. Somebody brought little platitos and then they brought tacos. Graciela and Itza Carvajal and I sat and had our tacos, and Cafecito, and had our little platica. And there's a police wandering around saying, "Please leave, please leave, won't you leave?". . . Nope. If we're going to leave, you're going to have to arrest us."<sup>29</sup>

Because Dr. Castañeda and others remained in the facility, San Antonio police officers arrested the preservationists as workers leveled the first Latino broadcasting station in the United States. The Agave Apartments remain on site today, and an enormous communications tower oversees the housing complex, revealing a fragment of what used to be there.<sup>30</sup>

Esperanza, the Westside Preservation Alliance, and West Side residents have recently prevented the demolition of The Alázan Apache Courts, resulting in the complex's redevelopment. In 2017, the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) proposed tearing down the Alazán-Apache Courts to build a mixed-income development (a combination of affordable and higher-income housing). Because the Courts are eighty-year-old units, they require significant infrastructure modifications. However, concerned West Side Residents, Esperanza, and the Westside Preservation Alliance viewed the proposal as an opportunity to displace Latinx community members.<sup>31</sup> Mexican American Civil Rights Institute Executive Director Dr. Sarah Zenaida Gould also voices concerns about gentrification in the West Side. "On the one hand, there's ongoing concern about gentrification in the West Side, about rising property values, which are

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<sup>29</sup> Antonia Irene Castañeda, interview by Jennifer Moran and Jonathan Angulo, July 14, 2023, transcript and recording, San Antonio West Side Oral History Project, Latinos in Heritage Conservation. Interview in possession of Latinos in Heritage Conservation.

<sup>30</sup> Sehila Mota Casper, *From Theory to Practice*, 79-80.

<sup>31</sup> RJ Marquez, "What's going on with the plans to redevelop Los Courts? KSAT Explain: An update on the plans to redevelop the Alazan Courts," *KSAT News* (San Antonio, Texas), January 20, 2023, updated on January 11, 2022, accessed on August 25, 2023, <https://www.ksat.com/news/local/2021/10/05/ksat-explains-the-ongoing-fight-to-preserve-los-courts/#:~:text=In%20early%202021%2C%20after%20a,Alazan%20Courts%20is%20still%20uncertain.>

hurting long-time property owners. . . “ Dr. Gould’s comments reveal West Side resident’s concerns of displacement and how economic development can hurt historic preservation.”<sup>32</sup>

The COVID-19 Pandemic and a leadership void in SAHA provided the West Side with the momentum to call for the equitable treatment of residents. As a result, SAHA has worked with residents and the Westside Preservation Alliance to save elements of the historic affordable housing complex. Their endeavors succeeded as developers will only demolish units sitting on a floodplain. In 2023, contractors announced that they would add heating and venting systems to 556 units and expand the space of 25% of apartments. The coalition of West Side residents and historic preservation groups like Esperanza ensured that the history of the Alazán Apache Courts remains to preserve San Antonio’s Latinx history.<sup>33</sup>

### Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, San Antonio’s Latinx History, and the West Side Today

The Esperanza Peace and Justice Center remains involved in protests, marches, city council meetings, and diversity, equity, and inclusion endeavors. The nonprofit continues to advance public history projects to preserve San Antonio’s Latinx history. Graciela Sánchez partners with staff to program an annual historic tour entitled *Paseo por el Westside* (Passage Through the West Side) to encourage the preservation of the neighborhood and inform the community about the barrio’s significance to San Antonio.<sup>34</sup>

Esperanza is currently repurposing Ruben’s Ice House to the *Museo del Westside* (The Museum of the West Side), where people can view materials of the barrio’s long history. Dr. Gould ended her oral history by sharing her thoughts on the significance of the *museo*, the weight of historic preservation, and how gentrification affects Latinx barrios broadly. “If we’re building a *museo*, if we’ve got this *casa de cuentos*, and all of a sudden our neighborhood has been displaced, what’s the point to having our institutions here, right? It’s for the people, so we need to make sure everybody stays.”<sup>35</sup> Esperanza and San Antonio’s historic preservationists have fought to conserve Latinx heritage. Although facing extensive pushback from the city of San Antonio and its institutions for decades, Esperanza has successfully preserved the *Rinconcito* as a historic district and the Alazán-Apache Courts in the West Side. The Esperanza Peace and Justice Center is one of the public history groups preserving sites essential to San Antonio’s long Latinx history.

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<sup>32</sup> Sarah Zenaida Gould, interview by Jennifer Moran and Jonathan Angulo, July 14, 2023, transcript and recording, San Antonio West Side Oral History Project, Latinos in Heritage Conservation. Interview in possession of Latinos in Heritage Conservation.

<sup>33</sup> John Paul Barajas, “Historic Alazan Apache Courts redesign set for February 2023: Construction expected to being in August,” *KSAT News* (San Antonio, Texas), January 20, 2023, accessed on August 25, 2023, <https://www.ksat.com/news/local/2023/01/21/historic-alazan-apache-courts-redesign-set-for-february-2023/>.

<sup>34</sup> Sara DeTurk, *Activism, Alliance Building*, 42; Michael Barajas, “Fight over decrepit Maldonado Building about honoring Westside Soul,” *San Antonio Current* (San Antonio; Texas) April 27, 2011, accessed on August 24, 2023. [https://www.sanantonio.gov/portals/0/Files/HistoricPreservation/NewsArticles/1312\\_Guadalupe.pdf](https://www.sanantonio.gov/portals/0/Files/HistoricPreservation/NewsArticles/1312_Guadalupe.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> Sarah Zenaida Gould, oral history.