



100 East Guenther
P.O. Box 839980
San Antonio, Texas 78283-9980
210-227-1373 voice
210-227-4323 fax
sara@sara-tx.org

News Release

For Immediate Release
January 14, 2010

For more information contact: Laura Waldrum
Community Relations Coordinator
(210) 302-4247
lwaldrum@sara-tx.org

SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY ARCHIVES RECEIVE IMPORTANT HISTORICAL DESIGNATION

SAN ANTONIO -- Since the Spanish established missions along the San Antonio River nearly 300 years ago, the river has played a crucial role in the history of each community in its reach. Since 1937, the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) has collected and maintained records recounting the history of the region's relationship with its rivers and creeks. Archivists who reviewed SARA's collection during a two year history project established that it contains vital historical information. The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has underscored the importance of the collection by awarding SARA a grant to help preserve these records through the prestigious "We the People" project.

The NEH "We the People" designation indicates that SARA's collection is of significant value to the understanding of American history and culture. The archives contains thousands of items of historical relevance including engineering plans for flood management infrastructure in Bexar and Karnes counties, aerial maps of San Antonio from 1955 to present, and 20th century appraisal photographs illustrating neighborhood conditions prior to the channelization of the Westside creeks.

In its entirety, SARA's archives hold information of value to researchers from an array of disciplines. They shed light on the political, economic, cultural, geographical, environmental, engineering, flood, and development history of Bexar, Wilson, Karnes, and Goliad counties. Much of this information can be found only within the River Authority's doors, and draws both national and international visitors. The grant funds awarded to SARA by the NEH will allow SARA to create a true working archive that can be easily accessed by researchers. The funds will also allow SARA to ensure that these documents are properly stored so that researchers can continue to access this information for many years to come.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Source expert Gerriane Schaad, curator of the Harvard Dumbarton Oaks Research Library Image Collections & Fieldwork Archives in Washington, D.C., is available for interview. Ms. Schaad was hired by SARA to assess the organization's holdings in 2007 and 2008 when she was Head Archivist at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Please contact Laura Waldrum at (210) 302-4247 or lwaldrum@sara-tx.org for Ms. Schaad's contact information.

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The San Antonio River Authority (SARA) was created by the 45th Texas Legislature on May 5, 1937 and reorganized in 1961 to plan, manage and implement water-related programs and projects within the San Antonio River Basin. The State of Texas empowered SARA to preserve, protect and manage the resources and the ecology of the San Antonio River and its tributaries. To learn more about the SARA visit our website at www.sara-tx.org.