Archaeological Monitoring of Brick Paver Replacement at Milam Park (41BX922), San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Michelle Carpenter

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Available at: https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/ita/vol2020/iss1/142

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Archaeological Monitoring of Brick Paver Replacement at Milam Park (41BX922), San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

by

Michelle Carpenter

Texas Antiquities Permit No. 9484

REDACTED

Principal Investigator
Cynthia M. Munoz

Prepared for:
City of San Antonio
1901 S. Alamo
San Antonio, Texas 78204

Prepared by:
Center for Archaeological Research
The University of Texas at San Antonio
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San Antonio, Texas 78249-1644
Technical Report, No. 92

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Abstract:

On August 24-25, 2020 and September 3, 2020, the Center for Archaeological Research at The University of Texas at San Antonio conducted archaeological monitoring at Milam Park (41BX992) in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. The monitoring was performed in response to a request from the City of San Antonio for the repair and leveling of brick pavers in 20 locations as part of a park beautification project. At the municipal level, the project falls under the City of San Antonio Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634). Projects conducted on public lands are subject to the Texas Antiquities Code and require review by the Texas Historical Commission. The work was conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 9484. Cynthia Munoz served as Principal Investigator on the project, and Michelle Carpenter and José Zapata served as Project Archaeologists.

Excavations at the park consisted of the removal of damaged concrete pavers, the addition of sand for leveling, and the replacement of the pavers. Approximately 349.4 square meters (3,760.9 sq. ft.) were manually excavated. Excavations were contained to the layer of sand previously imported as a base for pavers. No cultural features or artifacts were encountered during monitoring. All records generated during this project were curated at the CAR in accordance with THC guidelines.
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Several individuals assisted and/or supported this project. We are grateful to Matthew Elverson of the City of San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation and Dr. Emily Dylla, THC Regional Archeologist for South Texas. Thank you to the crew from Jamail & Smith Construction for your patience and hard work. Dr. Kristina Solis of CAR assisted with monitoring. Cynthia Munoz served as the Principal Investigator. Thank you to Dr. Jessica Nowlin who processed the images, produced the maps, and edited this report.
Chapter 1: Introduction

On August 24-25, 2020 and September 3, 2020, in response to a request from the City of San Antonio (COSA), the University of Texas as San Antonio Center for Archaeological Research (UTSA-CAR) conducted archaeological monitoring at Milam Park (41BX992) in Bexar County, San Antonio, Texas. The project involved monitoring the removal and repair of sidewalk pavers throughout the park. At a municipal level, Milam Park falls under the COSA Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-630 to 35-634). The project also falls under the Texas Antiquities Code, and requires review by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The work was conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 9484. Because Milam Park was the location of the former City Cemetery (1848-approximately 1855) and there is a potential for the disturbance of human remains, the project falls under the Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 711 as amended. Cynthia Munoz served as Principal Investigator, and Michelle Carpenter and José Zapata served as Project Archaeologists.

The project consisted of the manual removal of sidewalk pavers from 20 locations on the property. No human remains, cultural features, or artifacts were found during monitoring. All records generated during this project were curated at the CAR in accordance with THC guidelines in accession file number 2308. As no material was recovered, this report follows the format suggested by the Short Report Content Guidelines of the Council of Texas Archaeologists (CTA 2020). There are four chapters. Chapter 1 consists of the introduction and a description of the project area. Chapter 2 presents a brief history of the site, discusses previous archaeology near the project area, and outlines the field and laboratory methods used during the project. Chapter 3 summarizes the results of the archaeological monitoring and Chapter 4 presents the CAR’s summary and recommendations.

Project Area

The Project Area is located on COSA owned Milam Park in downtown San Antonio. The park is bordered by West Houston Street on the north, North San Saba Street on the west, West Commerce Street on the south, and North Santa Rosa Street on the east (Figure 1-1). Twenty locations, approximately 349.4 square meters (3,760.9 sq. ft.), were manually excavated (Figure 1-2).
Figure 1-1. Milam Park Project Area.
Figure 1-2. Areas manually excavated (in red) at Milam Park.
Chapter 2: Project Setting and Methods

Given the limited scope of this project, this report does not include an environmental section or culture history. This chapter presents a concise history of Milam Park and a discussion of previous archaeological investigations. It concludes with field, laboratory, and curation methods.

History of Milam Park (41BX992)

In April 1848, the COSA City Council created a four-acre public cemetery on the property that is now Milam Park. The cemetery was part of an eight-acre plot also containing the second San Fernando Campo Santo (established in 1808) and the Catholic Cemetery, both located immediately north of Milam Park on what is now the Children’s Hospital of San Antonio (CCJMB A:135-136; Figures 2-1 and 2-2). The need for a new cemetery was based on the impossibility of burying remains at the Campo Santo without disinterring previous burials (CCJMB A:133). Four acres were intended for public use and four for Catholic burials (CESB 1:10-11). For an in-depth review of the cemeteries see McKenzie et al. (2020).

Figure 2-1. François Giraud Survey of the Catholic Cemetery and City Cemetery, March 22, 1848 (north is up; CESB 1:10).
The remains of Colonel Benjamin Milam, a hero of the Texas Revolution, were exhumed from the Court Yard of the Veramendi Palace, where he was killed by a Mexican sniper, and relocated to the center of the old City Cemetery in December 1849 (Barr 1990:50; Western Texan 1848:2). The project area was used as a public cemetery until May 1853 when the City began selling plots in the City Cemetery complex on East Commerce Street (CCJMB B203-04; Pfeiffer 2000). The property was renamed Milam Square in 1884 in honor of Milam (Heusinger 1951; Tennis 1995a). A monument marking Milam’s grave, erected by the Texas Centennial Commission in 1879, was moved to the west end of the park during a 1938 park beautification project (Tennis 1995a).

### Previous Archaeological Investigations

According to the Texas Archaeological Sites Atlas, 42 archaeological sites are recorded within a 500 m radius of Milam Park (THC 2020; Figure 2-3). See Table 2-1 for a list of the sites with time period, brief descriptions, and National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility recommendations.
Figure 2-3. Archaeological sites within a 500-meter radius of Milam Park.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trinomial</th>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>NRHP Eligibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41BX7</td>
<td>San Fernando Cathedral</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>18th century Cathedral</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX179</td>
<td>Casa del Capitan, Presidio de Béxar</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Spanish Colonial, 18th century, and later structure and artifacts</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX302</td>
<td>Navarro House</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Mid-19th century structures</td>
<td>Eligible, SAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX508</td>
<td>Menger Soap Works</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Mid-19th to mid-20th century structural remains</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX600</td>
<td>Steves and Sons, George Vaughn Complex</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>1907-1913 commercial structures, historic artifacts</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinomial</td>
<td>Site Name</td>
<td>Time Period</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>NRHP Eligibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX604</td>
<td>Steves Sash and South, Steves Lumber Yard</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>1907-1913 commercial structures, historic artifacts</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX611</td>
<td>Marx House, Peter Marx House</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Residential structure, mid to late-19th century artifacts</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX612</td>
<td>Callaghan, Navarro House</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Residential structure, mid to late-19th century artifacts</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX613</td>
<td>Navarro, Leal House</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Residential structure, mid to late-19th century artifacts</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX615</td>
<td>Anton Reicher Shop</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>ca. 1889 commercial structure, historic artifacts</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX616</td>
<td>Anton Reicher House</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>1889 residential structures, historic artifacts</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX620</td>
<td>Alazan Acequia</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Late 19th century irrigation ditch, Late-19th to early 20th century artifacts</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX795</td>
<td>Ruiz Property</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>ca. 1734-1950 residential/commercial structural remains, historic artifacts</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX992</td>
<td>Milam Square</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Cemetery and artifacts</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX1598</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Historic and Spanish Colonial period midden areas, St. Joseph's Orphanage (1800s), possible colonial wall (Presidio)</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX1967</td>
<td>Santa Rosa Privy</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Late Statehood (1865-1900), Modern (1901-present), yellow brick-lined privy</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinomial</td>
<td>Site Name</td>
<td>Time Period</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>NRHP Eligibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2088</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Prehistoric and Historic</td>
<td>Prehistoric burned rock midden, structural remains and trash pits (dating between Spanish Colonial to Early-20th century)</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2092</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Domestic debris scatter</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2194</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Structural remains, privy/trash pit, artifacts</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2195</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Structural remains</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2196</td>
<td>A. Androlli Saloon and Residence</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Trash pit and artifacts</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2197</td>
<td>Gebhart Chile Powder Company Warehouse</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Structural remains</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2198</td>
<td>Hotel Rex</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Structural remains</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2247</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Structural remains, artifacts</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2248</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Structural remains</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2251</td>
<td>Courthouse Pit</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Early to Mid-19th century artifact pit</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2252</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Structural remains</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2253</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Structural remains, artifact concentration</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2254</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Well, artifacts</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2255</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Prehistoric and Historic</td>
<td>Prehistoric artifact scatters, historic structural remains and artifact scatters</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2256</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Prehistoric and Historic</td>
<td>Privy/trash pit, Native American ceramics, Spanish Colonial artifacts</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2257</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Spanish Colonial-Historic occupation site</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2258</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Colonial structural remains, historic artifact concentration</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2259</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Structural remains</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2345</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Possible acequia/irrigation ditch</td>
<td>Undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41BX2346</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Structural remains</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two investigations, one performed by the CAR from 1992 to 1994, which recorded the park as archaeological site 41BX992 (Tennis 1995a, Tennis 1995b), and one conducted in 2013 by Atkins North America, Inc. (Nichols 2013) have been completed at the park. Pape-Dawson Engineers is currently conducting exploratory investigations and monitoring mechanical excavations of the sidewalks and streets bordering the park. The CAR completed a two-phase survey of Milam Park in advance of park renovations (Tennis 1995a, Tennis 1995b). Phase I entailed the monitoring of three excavated trenches in an attempt to determine the exact location of the grave of Colonel Benjamin Milam. The burial was exposed near the center of the park, 1.1 m (3.5 ft.) below ground surface (Tennis 1995a). After his remains were exhumed and analyzed, they were reinterred in the western portion of the park at the base of the Milam Park monument. The remains, a Caucasian male, age 40-49, were determined to be Milam based on skeletal indicators, such as height, handedness, and pathologies (Tennis 1995a). A second burial was discovered in April 1994 while completing Phase II of the project (Tennis 1995b). During the mechanical excavation of an electrical trench on the south side of the park, human bone was observed in the trench wall, 0.5 m (18 in.) below the ground surface. CAR archaeologists exhumed the burial and remnants of the associated coffin. The burial and bone screened from the trench backdirt were analyzed at the Smithsonian Institution. The analysis indicated that the remains were a Hispanic/Caucasian male between the ages of 30 and 34 with no pathologies.

In 2013, Atkins North America, Inc. completed archaeological monitoring for redevelopment of Milam Park that included an update of a pre-existing 0.2 acre playground. Although the project was over an area that was built up to protect any unmarked human burials, it resulted in the discovery of five possible grave markers (Nichols 2013). However, after further evaluation and three test pits in the vicinity of the possible...
markers, it was determined the “grave markers” were construction debris from past park renovations (Nichols 2013).

**Field, Laboratory, and Curation Methods**

The CAR conducted archaeological monitoring during the manual replacement, repair, and repositioning of sidewalk pavers at twenty locations in Milam Park. CAR staff completed a daily log of activities supported by photographs and a photographic log. All field notes, forms, and photographs were placed in labeled archival folders. Digital photographs were printed on acid-free paper. All records generated during the project were prepared in compliance with federal regulations 36 CFR Part 79 and THC requirements for State Held-in-Trust collections. No artifacts were recovered during this project. All project related materials, including the final report, are permanently stored at the CAR curation facility in accession file number 2308.
Chapter 3: Results of Field Investigations

On August 24-25, 2020 and September 3, 2020, CAR staff monitored the removal, repair, and replacement of sidewalk pavers from 20 locations at Milam Park (41BX992). The removal consisted of manually removing the pavers and correcting the substrate to achieve a level walking surface. Some locations required the removal of cement chunks that were preventing an even surface, while other areas required large additions of play sand to prevent shifting (Figures 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3). No human remains, cultural features, or artifacts were found during monitoring. Because all excavations were confined to previously introduced paver substrate, sediments from the project were not screened.

Figure 3-1. Removal of pavers on the west side of the Benjamin Milam monument.
Figure 3-2. Paver repair on the west end of the park facing San Saba Street.

Figure 3-3. Paver repair near the gazebo and playground.
Chapter 4: Summary and Recommendations

In response to a request from COSA, the CAR conducted archaeological monitoring of the repair and removal of sidewalk pavers at twenty locations in Milam Park in San Antonio, Texas. All excavations were confined to previously introduced paver substrate. No features or artifacts were noted. Due to the property’s prior use as the City Cemetery, the probability of encountering human remains is high. CAR recommends archaeological monitoring of any future work in the park.
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Texas Historical Commission (THC)

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