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For Immediate Release

HEMISFAIR '68

The deep spring-fed San Antonio de Padua River winds slowly over a limestone bed through midtown San Antonio into the heart of HemisFair '68.

Satellite channels of the river allow fair visitors to arrive by gondola. Visitors may then discover on foot and by monorail or skyride the entire 92.5-acre spread of the fair grounds, which are, incredibly, all within downtown San Antonio. The fair's open for business April 6 to October 6.

When bulldozers worked last spring on the site, about 100 yards of the Acequia Madre or Mother Ditch were uncovered. This was a high stone aqueduct, once 6 miles long, for irrigating fields and gardens of the Mission San Antonio de Valero. The mission's chapel is now the famous Alamo, only a few blocks from the fair grounds.

The Alamo, on which construction began about 1744, is the most revered of the five great Spanish missions in San Antonio, although the Mission San Jose is the most visually impressive. A visitor may spot all five missions at once from the revolving restaurant and observation decks atop the 622-foot-high Tower of the Americas, the HemisFair's most rococo engineering feat.

The Acequia Madre runs under the tower and has been expanded into an 8-foot-deep lagoon where it meets the Spanish Pavilion. Spain was the first of 30 nations to reserve space at the fair. When told about the uncovering of the Mother Ditch, built by Spanish priests more than 200 years ago, the Spanish embassy ordered, "Save it!"

(more)

At 622 feet, the Tower of the Americas is the tallest observation tower in the Western Hemisphere, 22 feet higher than Seattle's Space Needle and 67 feet higher than the Washington Monument. Approximately \$156 million were spent for the buildings and the transport facilities. A skyride and a mini-monorail scoot visitors right into some of the displays and pavilions. \$156 million well spent!

It sounds like Texas braggadocio to recite the physical facts about this \$156 million project. Yet the theme of the fair is a quiet and thoughtful one, "The Confluence of Civilizations in the Americas." The name intends to suggest the best of the cultures of the Western Hemisphere combined with their legacies from the Old World.

One of the announced aims of HemisFair is to put to rest some of the false legends about Texas and its people. The Texas Pavilion, particularly, will follow a theme unusual for readers of Texas folklore. A \$10 million structure, this pavilion will be a permanent museum called The Texas Institute of Cultures. R. Henderson Shuffler, a University of Texas historian, is director and with a staff of antiquarians, archaeologists, artists, photographers, and other specialists, has assembled impressive evidence of the contributions of the 26 ethnic groups creating today's Texas civilization. Sections of the massive stone walls on which Indian artists painted thousands of years ago have been taken from caves in the Rio Grande, Devil and Pecos Rivers, where streams were scheduled to be raised by an international dam at Del Rio.

Dr. Shuffler believes the evidence in the pavilion will help erase the myths which picture "early Texans as a bunch of hell-roaring bumpkins in buckskins...and the idea of the typical modern Texan as a wheeler-dealer who fell in a barrel of oil and came up smelling like a millionaire. It is about time to tell the truth about Texans, early and late. The truth happens to be

just as fascinating and tremendously more self-respecting than the myth..."

The Texas Pavilion shows how in 1836 Texas was one of several Mexican states to revolt against the Mexican dictator, Santa Anna. It also shows how Texas, the only state successful in its revolt, became a republic which endured until 1845. Texas then joined the United States, selling some of its territory around Santa Fe and present day Denver to the U. S. for \$12 million. The first vice president of the Republic of Texas was a sophisticated doctor from Mexico, Dr. Lorenzo Justianiano de Zavala. Sam Houston was a published poet who made beautifully-phrased speeches during his long years in the U.S. Senate, where he often championed unpopular liberal causes. Davy Crockett too, was a published poet. Some of his verse is shown at the Texas Pavilion, and his letters to his children are particularly good. Davy arrived in Texas wearing a stove pipe hat and a frock coat, not, TV matinees to the contrary, in buckskins and squirrel pelt cap.

The pavilion's displays inform visitors that many early leaders of Texas were graduates of Ivy League colleges, Samuel Maverick of San Antonio, for example, is listed erroneously in some reference books as "a Texas cow thief." One of his descendents, Maury Maverick stated: "My great grandfather was careless about branding his stock, or rather his ranch manager was. So unbranded cows came to be called mavericks. My great grandfather was a Yale man. Yale men may steal a few bonds, but they never steal cattle."

HemisFair, while highlighting the stories of the groups who formed Texas, will give examples of outstanding personalities, such as German Prince Karl of Solms-Braunfels, head of the Society of Noblemen, who founded the charming town of New Braunfels near San Antonio. Baron Ottfried von Meusebach who founded a colony at Fredericksburg (near the LBJ ranch), made an enduring peace treaty with the Indians. The baron and his wife, the

former Countess of Tyrol, became simply Mr. and Mrs. Meusebach.

Texas has more Negro home and landowners than any other state. The Texas Pavilion will tell of many Negro contributions, starting with William Goyens, a runaway slave who became the richest man in east Texas and the close friend of Sam Houston.

The very city of San Antonio is a kind of museum of the confluence of Old World and New World cultures. By the middle of the eighteenth century San Antonio was a town of stone cathedrals when many east coast cities were still raising log cabins.

From 1720 to about 1794, San Antonio was a citadel of progress and religion.

Now in 1968, it has become the inspiration for a unique fair -- HemisFair '68.

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February 21, 1968

WORLDFAIR68 INFO