

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Yturri-Edmunds House
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 257 Yellowstone **NOT FOR PUBLICATION:** N/A
CITY OR TOWN: San Antonio **VICINITY:** N/A
STATE: Texas **CODE:** TX **COUNTY:** Bexar **CODE:** 029 **ZIP CODE:** 78210

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide x locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

11 June 1996
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

[Signature]
Signature of the Keeper
[Signature]

Date of Action

8-5-96

Entered in the
National Register

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: private

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: buildings

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	1	3 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	1	3 STRUCTURES
	0	1 OBJECTS
	2	7 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 2

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: DOMESTIC/single dwelling

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: OTHER: Vernacular triple-pen

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION STONE: Limestone
WALLS ADOBE
ROOF METAL
OTHER WOOD; GLASS

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-7).

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Yturri-Edmunds House
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DESCRIPTION

The Yturri-Edmunds House (A), a 1-story adobe house built about 1859, sits on 2/3 of an acre tract of land at the corner of Mission Road and Yellowstone Street in San Antonio. Part of the San Antonio Missions National Historic Park and the Mission Parkway Historic and Archeological District (NR 1975), the property includes a total of nine resources, two of which are considered Contributing. The Yturri-Edmunds House displays a triple-pen plan with a full length front porch, adobe walls, and a rear lean-to addition. The house is an example of vernacular architecture, its form driven by function and not architect-designed, using Spanish adobe construction. Architecturally, the Yturri-Edmunds House retains a high degree of its historic integrity with little in the way of modern alterations. A limestone-lined acequia (E) built about 1730 as part of the irrigation system for the nearby 18th century Spanish missions, runs east to west beneath the north end of the house towards the mill. The Yturri-Edmunds House and the acequia are the only remaining resources original to the property. Other buildings on the property include a reconstructed Mill (B), the Oge Carriage House (C), and the Postert House (D), all considered Noncontributing. Three structures, an arbor (F) and two small wooden bridges (G and H), and one object, a well (I), are also considered Noncontributing.

The property of the Yturri-Edmunds House lies in the southern portion of the city of San Antonio, part of the Mission Parkway Historic and Archeological District (NR 1975; NHP 1988). The district includes four historic Spanish Missions: Mission San José (NHS 1966), Mission Concepción (NHL 1970), Mission San Francisco de la Espada (NR 1972), and Mission San Juan Capistrano (NR 1972). The missions' related acequias, or irrigation ditches, and the San Antonio river also run through the district, with the river located just west of the Yturri-Edmunds property (Map-20).

The nominated property is bordered by Yellowstone Street to the south, Mission Road to the west, and Grove Avenue to the northwest (Map-21). The front of the house faces southeast, at an angle toward Yellowstone. The acequia (E), part of a larger irrigation system associated with Mission Concepción and now lined with limestone, runs northwest, underneath the house towards the mill (Photo 1). A series of concrete sidewalks edged with limestone connect the house with the property's other resources. The wood mill (B) sits behind the house to the northeast, on the north side of the acequia. Two small wooden bridges (G and H) cross over the acequia along walkways parallel to the front and rear elevations of the house (Photos 1 and 7). North of the mill is a stone and wood grape arbor (Photo 11). A stone well (I) covered with a wooden pavilion sits north of the house and east of the arbor (Photo 4). North of the well, a drive leading to Grove Avenue and a small parking area run up to the 2-story wooden Oge Carriage House with trellis (C) (Photos 5 and 10). A stone patio on the east side of the carriage house links it with the 1-story Postert House (D), on the northeast corner of the property (Photo 6).

The Yturri-Edmunds House (A) measures 30 feet x 50 feet with its principle elevation facing southeast. The limestone foundation supports 18" thick load-bearing adobe walls finished with lime plaster and whitewash on both the interior and exterior. The principle elevation features a porch with simple box columns that runs the

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full length of the linear plan (Photo 1). The plan is configured in a triple-pen arrangement six bays long with three exterior doors that lead to the porch (Photo 2). The porch roof soffit is constructed of pressed tin and the porch decking is wide tongue and groove planks. Three 6 over 6 double-hung windows are paired with each door on the principal elevation. Painted wood shutters border the sides of the front and side elevation windows and the front entry doors (Photos 1 and 9)

The roof is constructed of standing seam metal and forms a gable from north to south, which is broken to the west by a lean-to addition (Photo 8).

The interior plan consists of three main rooms (bedroom, parlor, and music room) with three secondary rooms (kitchen, dining room, and school room) to the west as a lean-to. All rooms are interconnected to each other by doorways with a slight level change between the main rooms and the lean-to addition (Map-22).

All interior walls are constructed of adobe block finished with lime plaster and whitewash. The ceilings of the three main rooms are plaster on wood lath while the ceilings in the lean-to rooms are painted wood panels. The bedroom, kitchen, and parlor each feature fireplaces with stone hearths flush with the floor. The flooring in the house is tongue and groove pine. All interior doors are four-panel solid wood.

The construction evolution of the Yturri-Edmunds House is not entirely clear, but visual clues found during recent restoration projects give a logical explanation. The north two-room section (parlor and music room) was probably built first. This section of the building is sited directly over the mill race acequia which may have carried the water that powered the on site Grist Mill (Map-21).

The one room bedroom to the south was probably the next room added. When the adobe block on the east wall was exposed, it showed that the south room walls actually butt up to the middle room (parlor) lateral walls, reinforcing this theory.

Finally, the three room lean-to was added to the rear or west side of the structure and the roof line extended to cover this new addition. It is important to note that the same building materials (adobe) were used, indicating the early construction date of the addition. The building is believed to have looked this way since before 1898.

Restoration work completed on the house took place after the San Antonio Conservation Society took possession of the property in 1961. Work included plaster repair, reconstruction of the porch (1960s), non-breathable plaster replaced with lime plaster on west and east elevations (1987), non-breathable plaster replaced with lime plaster on north and south elevations (1992), and modern paint stripped from all interior walls and re-coated with whitewash.

Very little evidence, other than an adobe wall, remained of the original mill when the San Antonio Conservation Society took possession of the property in 1961. Attempts to date the mill have been

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unsuccessful. When the San Antonio Conservation Society rebuilt the mill during 1964-65, decision makers assumed that it had not been a Hispanic mill. The rebuilt mill features a heavy vertical waterwheel that seems too big to have been driven by the lateral that runs by it (Photo 12). The Mission Parkway Historic and Archeological District counts the acequia system, the house, and the mill as Contributing resources, however, the reconstruction date of the mill, post dating the period of significance, renders it Noncontributing in this nomination. The Oge Carriage House and Postert House were moved to the site in 1965 and 1986 respectively, also rendering them Noncontributing.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- A** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.
- B** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST.
- C** PROPERTY EMBODIES THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION OR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER, OR POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUE, OR REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENTS LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION.
- D** PROPERTY HAS YIELDED, OR IS LIKELY TO YIELD, INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PREHISTORY OR HISTORY.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: ETHNIC HERITAGE/Hispanic; ARCHITECTURE

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: ca. 1730 - 1946

SIGNIFICANT DATES: ca. 1730 ca. 1859

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: unknown

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-8 through 8-17).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-18 through 9-19).

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: San Antonio Conservation Society

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Through its associations with Mission Concepción and the Hispanic community in Texas during the 19th century, the Yturri-Edmunds House (ca. 1859) serves as a link to the Spanish Colonial period and the Hispanic settlers of early Texas history. The period of significance dates from ca. 1730, the estimated date of the earliest Contributing resource, the acequia, part of the irrigation system of Mission Concepción, until 1946, the fifty-year cut-off date for eligibility. Manuel Yturri de Castillo, a prominent merchant who owned property in several locations around San Antonio, acquired agricultural property from Mission Concepción after the mission became secularized during the early 1820s. This land became the site of the current homestead, passed down through the family until 1961 when Yturri's granddaughter Ernestine Edmunds willed the property to the San Antonio Conservation Society. The Yturri-Edmunds House reflects the collective cultural heritage of these Hispanic citizens of San Antonio while also possessing architectural significance as representative of a style of domestic, vernacular architecture typical of the Hispanic period in Texas and the American Southwest. Few of these adobe houses remain in San Antonio and the Yturri-Edmunds House stands as the best preserved example. For its relation to the history of Hispanic settlement and the lives of Hispanic settlers, the property is nominated under National Register Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage at the local level of significance. For its representation of a type of construction once common but now rare in San Antonio, the property is nominated under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance.

Colonial Background

One of the mandates that the Spanish crown handed down to its colonizers of the New World was the conversion of native populations to Christianity and establishing communities under close supervision of the Church. Pursuant to this mandate, Franciscan missionaries established nine missions in Texas before 1700 with some thirty more established during the following century.¹ After founding the mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción (Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception) in an Indian village in Nacadoches County in 1716, they moved its location, along with other missions, to an area near the San Antonio River. The new Mission Concepción was officially reestablished at its new location in March 1731.

During the next decade, Mission Concepción became situated as a permanent settlement. In addition to the stone church, which is still existing, the mission's holdings included agricultural lands known as *labors* (177 acres per *labor*) situated outside of the mission compound, farmed by Indians.

¹Marion A. Habig, *The Alamo Chain of Missions: A History of San Antonio's Five Old Missions* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968), 17-24. The author, himself a Franciscan, takes the view that the mission experience was good for the Indians.

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At some point, it is unclear when, workers built a stone dam on a bend in the river north of the mission in what is now downtown San Antonio. From here workers then dug an irrigation ditch or *acequia* that ran south along what became South St. Mary's Street, along Mission Road on the east bank of the river. The ditch ran around and through the mission compound at Concepción, reconnecting with the river below the dam at Mission San José further to the south. This irrigation canal, which watered Mission Concepción lands, became known as the Pajalache Ditch, after the Paxalache Indians who presumably built it.

The *acequia* system and its tributaries (known as laterals) became a central feature in the agriculture of early San Antonio. The *acequia* associated with Mission Espada remains operable to this day. Conventional wisdom places the construction of the Concepción ditch about 1730, contemporaneous with the nearby San José *acequia* system. In any case, the Pajalache or Concepción ditch is reputed to be the oldest in the area.² At some point a lateral was extended from the Concepción ditch across one of the northernmost *labors*. This lateral also exists but is not operable. It is now lined with limestone and runs under the Yturri-Edmunds House toward the mill.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the Indian population at Concepción and other Texas missions began to decline.³ By 1794 the economic life of Mission Concepción and other local missions had deteriorated to a point where the mission fathers gave portions of the mission land to the Indians. By this time, land still in possession of Mission Concepción amounted to about 38 square miles, much of it unused because livestock had diminished and Indians to cultivate the fields were few.⁴

In 1812 villagers of nearby San Fernando de Béxar (the future San Antonio) received some of these mission lands, but full secularization of Mission Concepción did not occur until 1824. Meanwhile, in 1821 Mexico revolted against Spain and formed an independent republic. When Church authorities secularized Concepción in February 1821, the buildings, associated moveable property, and real estate went to the military chaplain in town who, as acting pastor of the church in San Fernando, represented the bishop of Monterrey.⁵

²William Corner, *San Antonio de Bexar: A Guide and History* (San Antonio: Bainbridge & Corner, 1890), 43.

³"About 1800, the missionaries left Texas, but ere that period there were no more Indians in the Missions, they having died off. And in a mutilated record belonging to [Mission] San José more than 1,200 deaths of Indians are noted down. The three tribes of Texas, Xaramenes, and Adaes Indians, are now extinct, thus this would go to prove that the sort of civilization introduced by the missionaries did not tend to increase their numbers." Entry for 3 October 1843. William Bollaert, *William Bollaert's Texas*, ed. by W. Eugene Hollon (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1956), 234.

⁴Andreas V. Reichstein, *Rise of the Lone Star: The Making of Texas*, trans. by Jeanne R. Willson (College Station: Texas A & M Press, 1989), 12-13. Unlike Habig, Reichstein views the mission experience as the ruination of Indian life and traditions.)

⁵Habig, 146. Dudley G. Wooten, ed., *A Comprehensive History of Texas, 1685 to 1897*, 2 vols. (Dallas: William G.

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During Mexico's war of independence, mission lands came under the ownership of the fledgling Mexican government. In 1824, as part of its new colonization policy, Mexico authorized distribution of mission lands to worthy citizens able to cultivate them.

Manuel Yturri de Castillo

Manuel Yturri de Castillo was allegedly born in Eguet in Guízcoa, a province in northernmost Spain, on the Bay of Biscay near the French border. As a youth Yturri evidently migrated to Mexico, where he found a position with the Urtiaga brothers, themselves from Spain, who established themselves in Mexico as well-known merchants. They sent Yturri to San Antonio as their representative and he eventually settled there, buying property in town not associated with the defunct missions, and marrying Maria Josefa Rodriguez on 20 August 1821.⁶

The Rodriguez family was among the settlers from the Canary Islands who arrived in the village of San Fernando de Béxar. They were the first civilian settlers not associated with the military or clergy, coming to San Antonio in 1731, even as the missions from eastern Texas were getting established nearby on the San Antonio River. The Spanish government had promised Canary Island settlers titles of ennoblement as an incentive to colonize Texas. At first these families, about 16 of them, settled at the head of San Pedro Creek but then moved closer to the center of town and west of the San Pedro River.⁷

A descendant of one of these families, and an ancestor of Maria Josefa Rodriguez, wrote in 1916 that the west side of the river was alleged to be the residence of the first families in San Antonio:

[T]he descendants of the Indians and Spanish soldiers settled on the east side of the river. On this side [the west side] were the descendants of the Canary Islanders. My recollection is that there was never a stone house [in contrast to the poorer adobe houses] on the east side of the

Scarff, 1898) 792, explains it this way: "In 1794 the decree of Don Pedro de Nava, commandant-general of Chihuahua, whose jurisdiction extended over part of Texas, secularized all the missions in the two provinces, placed their temporal affairs in the hands of the secular authorities, and directed the division of the lands in severalty among the inhabitants of these establishments. This decree was not carried out in Texas. It was not until 1822-23 that the missions at San Antonio became extinct, and it was as late as 1827 before the final distribution of mission lands was attempted to be made to the Indians . . . to whom they had originally been granted. In the troubled times that ensued upon the growth of the revolutionary spirit in the Mexican provinces, most of the *protés* of Catholic Spain were driven off or destroyed, the lands became vacant, the titles faded from recollection, and nearly all the missions' leagues were relocated and possessed by strangers and speculators."

⁶Frederick C. Chabot, *With the Makers of San Antonio* (San Antonio: Artes Graficas, 1937), 223-224. J.M. Rodriguez, *Rodriguez Memoirs of Early Texas* (San Antonio: 1913), 2d ed. Standard Printing Co., 1961, p. 64. Bexar County Archives, Probate Records, Manuel Yturri [de] Castillo, Book B-Red, March 1843.

⁷Bollaert, 235-236.

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river, except the Alamo and its buildings. Most of the Canary Islanders who lived on this side too great pride in preventing any inter-marriage with mixed races and when one did mix he lost his caste with the rest.⁸

That Manuel Yturri de Castillo married into this community suggests that he himself obtained financial and social success. Indeed, even before his marriage to Maria Josefa, he built a house on property he purchased on the west bank of the San Antonio River. In 1823 Yturri petitioned the town administration for land formerly owned by the now defunct Mission Concepción. The property he received was described in the deed in terms of irrigation rights. In December 1823, the city administrator or *ayuntamiento* granted him three *dulas* of water for irrigation along with the accompanying land. The official description of the land was "property composed of three *suertes* [sections] of land in the forest of hackberry trees." The property was bordered on the east by the road from Mission San Juan, on the north by the road that led from Mission Concepción, on the west by the San José road, and on the south by the San Antonio River ford at a place known as Cuchares. This placed the property in the southern portion of the mission *labor*.⁹

In March 1824 Yturri petitioned for additional property, this time for 300 *dulas* of water, representing three *suertes*, each a hundred *varas* wide in the northern portion of the Mission Concepción *labor*.¹⁰ This land was bordered on the north by a sluice gate through which flowed a tributary of the old Pajalache ditch.¹¹ The land was bordered on the east by the San Juan road, on the south by land belonging to Erasmo Seguin, and on the west by the Mission Concepción road. Today the boundaries are, roughly, the Southern Pacific Railroad on the north, Presa Street on the east, Highland Avenue on the south, and Mission Road on the west.¹²

⁸Rodriguez, 37-38.

⁹San Antonio Conservation Society (hereinafter cited as SACS), Yturri-Edmunds file, unofficial translation from the Bexar County Archives, Grant of Land and Water to Manuel Yturri [de] Castillo, Ref. MR 33 PC, 1923.

¹⁰One *vara* = ca. 33.33 inches in Texas. In other parts of Latin America and the Southwest a *vara* would vary between 31 and 34 inches.

¹¹I. Wayne Cox, "Archival Research for Camp Roosevelt Tourist Camp," Center for Archaeological Research, University of Texas at San Antonio, 1991, p. 9. The auto touring camp described in the above archaeological report was on a portion of the mission land once belonging to Yturri. See also Bexar County Archives, County Survey Book A-9:64, showing surveys of the Yturri Property in 1863 and 1867.

¹²SACS, Yturri-Edmunds file, Grant of Land and Water to Manuel Yturri [de] Castillo, 1824, trans. by Bert Holcome, Bexar County Deed Records, vol. 2:380-382, 1824.

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When Yturri purchased land associated with the former Mission Concepción there was no mention of any building except the stone granary in the mission compound, which he bought in 1824. Although how and when is unknown, an adobe house and mill came to be associated with the Yturri property on the upper reaches of the old mission *labors*, also the location of the Pajalache lateral.¹³ Some estimates have placed the mill back as far as 1729, an improbable date because it comes earlier than even the mission settlements of which it allegedly was a part.

Spanish mills associated with the missions and early colonization were constructed with smaller, horizontal water wheels situated beneath the floor. A flume directed water onto the wheel, causing it to rotate. The rotating wheel drove a horizontal grindstone located on the floor above by means of a spindle to which both wheel and grindstone were attached. The design, although clever and resourceful, was simple enough not to require great technical expertise or special equipment.

The size of the waterwheel on the rebuilt mill at the Yturri-Edmunds property makes it unlikely, however, that it could have been powered by the existing lateral. To complicate matters, an archaeologist familiar with the Yturri property remarked in a letter that "the [Concepción] acequia [that runs near the mill] is the original mission waterway and follows Mission Road on the east side. This would place it in the street or in the front yard of the house-mill site.¹⁴ Since the river is generally lower I do not feel that the mill *as it exists* could have possibly been powered from this source."¹⁵ When the San Antonio Conservation Society began to restore the mill in 1964, workers excavated a portion of the mill around the rear of it, facing Mission Road, in hopes of discovering the original location of the water wheel but were unsuccessful. The absence of any knowledge about the location of the original waterwheel adds to the difficulty in assigning a role to the *acequia* in powering the mill.¹⁶

As with the mill, the age of the house is also unclear. It almost certainly was not built before the 1840s. A more probable time would be 1859 or sometime later.¹⁷ In any event, when Manuel Yturri de

¹³Because the mill has been fully reconstructed, it is not considered a Contributing property. It is included here, however, to answer, a number of questions and because it relates to the house and Pajalache lateral.

¹⁴The lateral runs under the house and across the back yard to the mill.

¹⁵Wayne Cox, archaeologist, University of Texas at San Antonio, letter to Paula Piper, San Antonio Conservation Society, 10 Nov. 1993. Emphasis added.

¹⁶Annual Report to the San Antonio Conservation Society, 1964-1965, Mary V. Green, 1 June 1965.

¹⁷"The house by tradition has been dated to 1824, the year in which the land was granted by the Mexican government to Manuel Yturri Castillo. This writer, however, would not date the house earlier than the 1840s and more probably it was erected in the 1850s." From Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory, Yturri-Edmunds House, survey by John C. Gardner, Jr., Director Bexar County Architecture Survey, March 1969 (Recorded solely on HABS Inventory forms, no drawings or HABS

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Castillo signed his will in 1842, he mentioned neither house nor mill in connection with his agricultural property on the former Concepción *labors*. He did still own the former mission land when he died in 1843, however, as well as other lots and houses in town. All of this he bequeathed to his widow, Maria Josefa. Yturri was also survived by two children, Manuel, age four; and Vicenta, age one.

After Yturri's death, Maria Josefa remarried in 1847, this time to Thomas Whitehead, an Englishman who rose to some prominence in the community. Whitehead's training seems to have been as a mason. According to some accounts, by the time of his marriage to Maria Josefa, Whitehead had become a city councilman and judge.¹⁸ Maria Josefa died in 1849 after only two years of marriage. Guardianship of her children and the estate fell to her father, Mariano Rodriguez. Thereafter he and Whitehead embarked on a series of lawsuits contesting the management of the Yturri estate.

The cause of this dispute appears to have been Mariano Rodriguez's handling of his financial affairs and using income from his daughter's estate to pay for them. In 1854, for example, the court ordered Rodriguez to pay \$1,773 in legal fees from income received from the estate. The next year Rodriguez sought permission to sell portions of the Concepción *labors*, six sections of which Maria Josefa had claimed in 1829. In the wake of these transactions, Whitehead alleged in court that Rodriguez had mismanaged Maria Josefa's estate. Whitehead seems to have won the case, for in 1856 he was paying taxes on the property. There was still no mention, however, of a house or mill on any of the Yturri lands once belonging to Mission Concepción.

Immediately after litigation on this particular issue ended between Rodriguez and Whitehead, the latter began to make improvements on his newly acquired property, which he held in trust for Manuel and Vicenta. One such improvement was repair on a part of the Concepción irrigation ditch that ran through the Yturri estate. Repair of the ditch suggests that the mill may have been under construction at the same time.

In conjunction with improvements that Whitehead seems to have undertaken at and near the Pajalache ditch, he also built a dam in May 1858 across the San Antonio River, evidently to divert water into the ditch. A man named Rhodes, however, found that Whitehead's dam caused unwanted flooding to his own and other properties in the vicinity of the river. He sued Whitehead in the district court of Bexar County on 30 August 1858 but lost the case in October. The Texas supreme court heard the case in 1863 and reversed the decision

survey number recorded).

¹⁸The U.S. Census of 1850 gave Whitehead's occupation as a stone mason. See Katherine Cruse, "History of the Yturri-Edmunds House and Mill," San Antonio Conservation Society, 1985, p. 4.

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of the lower court in favor of Rhodes. The absence of a dam to divert water into the Pajalache ditch made use of the ditch moot and it was abandoned in 1869.¹⁹

Meanwhile in 1859 a bill from C. Pordin's lumber yard in Austin attests to Whitehead's purchase of five window and two door frames, support beams, 1,740 feet of roofing and 1,250 feet of flooring. Just what the construction materials were for remains unclear, but Whitehead reported to the probate court in Bexar County in 1860 that he planned to build a mill and make other improvements in the Yturri *labor* just south of town, which would account for the dam he built on the San Antonio River. Extant records, however, are silent about whether Whitehead carried out his intentions. The Mission Parkway Historic and Archeological District nomination states that when Yturri acquired the land from Mission Concepción it included the old granary associated with the mission. Some time before the 1860s, when Yturri's daughter Vicenta and her husband Ernest B. Edmunds took possession of the house, the granary was enlarged into a "spacious home." This could account for the rear lean-to addition on the house and the construction materials purchased by Whitehead in 1859.

Ernest and Vicenta Edmunds

In 1860 Manuel was about 21 and Vicenta was about 18 years old. That year Manuel married in San Antonio after having attended a private school in Galveston. His sister had attended the Ursuline Academy in New Orleans. After she returned to San Antonio, Vicenta married Ernest B. Edmunds who arrived in San Antonio from New Orleans in 1860 and worked with a colleague as a merchant. They were married in Mission Concepción on 5 August 1861.

Two years later, in 1863, Manuel and Vicenta divided their inheritance. Manuel was evidently uninterested in the Concepción portion of the estate and Vicenta took possession of two stores and lots on the south side of Commerce Street, and a house on the southwest corner of Commerce and Yturri Streets. In addition, she received about 100 acres from her father's *labors* on the former property of Mission Concepción.²⁰

For the next several years the property Vicenta inherited from her father's estate became a source of income. Again and again the record shows sales of real estate, starting with the house at the corner of

¹⁹Corner, *San Antonio de Bexar*, 43, 160; See also Charles L. Robards and A.M. Jackson, *Reports of Cases Argued and Decided in the Supreme Court of the State of Texas, During the Latter Part of Tyler Session, 1863; Austin Session, 1863; Galveston, Tyler and Austin Sessions, 1864; and Galveston Session, 1865*, vol. 27 (Austin: Joseph Walker, State Printer: 1867), 304-317 (also known as *The Texas Reports*).

²⁰Bexar County Probate Records; Cruse, 6.

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Yturri-Edmunds House
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Commerce and Yturri, which she sold in 1869. By 1873 she and her husband had sold portions of her inheritance valued at almost \$40,000.²¹

Ernest Edmunds died in April 1874. His efforts as a farmer, for that is how he listed himself in the 1870 census, seemed to have been in vain, for in the end he and Vicenta had sold all but 30 of the original 100 acres that had been her inheritance. The death of Edmunds left Vicenta with three children: Josephine, 14; Edgar, 12; and Ernestine, 10. Three other children died.²²

Ernestine Edmunds

The year 1877 found Mrs. Edmunds teaching at the Flores Street School in San Antonio.²³ There is a story, perhaps apocryphal, that in 1890 Vicenta Edmunds rented the granary at Mission San José where she taught children as a volunteer.²⁴ In any case, by the turn of the century Vicenta's daughter Ernestine well established as a public school teacher and had first taught at the Morrill Chapel School, a rustic, one-room building that a philanthropic farmer and his wife constructed in 1894 on donated land. Later the school became part of the Harlandale School District. Ernestine Edmunds taught there from September 1900 to September 1910.²⁵

Ernestine's devotion to her teaching made her a minor celebrity in San Antonio. After 18 months each at Wetmore School and St. Hedwig's School (a Polish school in Bexar County), Miss Edmunds worked for the federal government from 1917 to 1920 as a social worker. Thereafter, she attended North Texas State Teachers' College in Denton for two years but returned to teach at Alamo Heights Elementary School. When she was not teaching classes, Miss Edmunds earned credits at Our Lady of Lake for her bachelor's degree in sociology. Through much of her early teaching career Miss Edmunds attended classes and worked toward her master's degree, although it is unclear if she ever received it. During most of her career she taught first grade but in her final years with the school she worked as a children's librarian.²⁶

²¹Deed Records, Bexar County; Cruse, 6.

²²U.S. Census, Bexar County, 1900.

²³City Directory, San Antonio, 1877; Cruse, 7.

²⁴Frances Donecker, "Pioneer Women in Education: Ernestine Edmunds," San Antonio Conservation Society, 1944. Unpublished paper.

²⁵Ernestine Edmunds personnel file, Alamo Heights Independent School District.

²⁶Ibid.

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Yturri-Edmunds House
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Miss Edmunds had many admirers. Her personnel file, for example, contains fond letters from former students. One of them comments on her teaching "the philosophy of American citizenship."²⁷ Indeed, patriotic values and devotion to God and country seem to have been among the most pronounced features of Miss Edmunds's teaching. It was for these qualities that Freedoms Foundation in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, awarded her its George Washington Medal in 1951.²⁸

Throughout her career Miss Edmunds continued to live at the adobe house on the former *labors* of Mission Concepción, on land purchased by her grandfather, Manuel Yturri de Castillo, from the Mexican government in 1824. Before her death in November 1961, she arranged to bequeath that land and the adobe house to the San Antonio Conservation Society.

The significance of the house as a historical artifact from Hispanic Texas during the nineteenth century is augmented by its architectural significance. The house is representative of many Hispanic houses that were built in Texas and the Southwest from Spanish colonial times to (in some cases) the late 19th century. The rooms of the floor plan are laid out in a triple-pen configuration with no common spaces (such as halls) to join them. The triple-pen plan is composed of a double-pen with a single-pen addition, which was added later. No documentation is available to pinpoint the dates of this addition or other changes to the house. The earliest available photograph of the house dates to 1898 showing the detailing of the full-length porch.

The popularity for the better part of 200 years for this kind of simple one-story house with thick masonry walls of adobe, low-pitched gabled roof, and full-length porch partly accounts for the difficulty in dating it. At the same time, the durability of this architectural style attests to its significance.

Adding further to the house's value as an architectural specimen is its rarity. There are in San Antonio only two other adobe houses similar to the Yturri-Edmunds House, one on South Pecos Street dating from 1873 and the Esquida/Downs/Dietrich House in La Villita dating from 1846. There are two non-adobe houses in San Antonio that have architectural forms reminiscent of the Yturri-Edmunds House, namely, the Navarro House on South Laredo Street dating from 1850 and a house on King William Street dating from 1868.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Freedoms Foundation awarded the medal in 1951 but Miss Edmunds received the award in San Antonio because travel difficulties forced her to abort her trip to Valley Forge. Her colleagues in the school district provided funds for her to make the trip in 1954. See letters between Kenneth D. Wells, executive vice-president of Freedoms Foundation, to Edward T. Robbins, superintendent of schools.

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Yturri-Edmunds House
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Despite the popularity and endurance of the Spanish colonial style and its expression in the San Antonio vernacular, examples throughout the Southwest have become rare. Adobe buildings that have been neglected for more than 25 years are usually beyond repair. During the last 30 years many of these buildings, particularly in New Mexico, have been abandoned in favor of more modern styles of houses. This process continues with urban renewal, the need for space for economically productive buildings, and denigration of tradition and historical continuity in the popular culture.²⁹

²⁹Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 132.

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Yturri-Edmunds House
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

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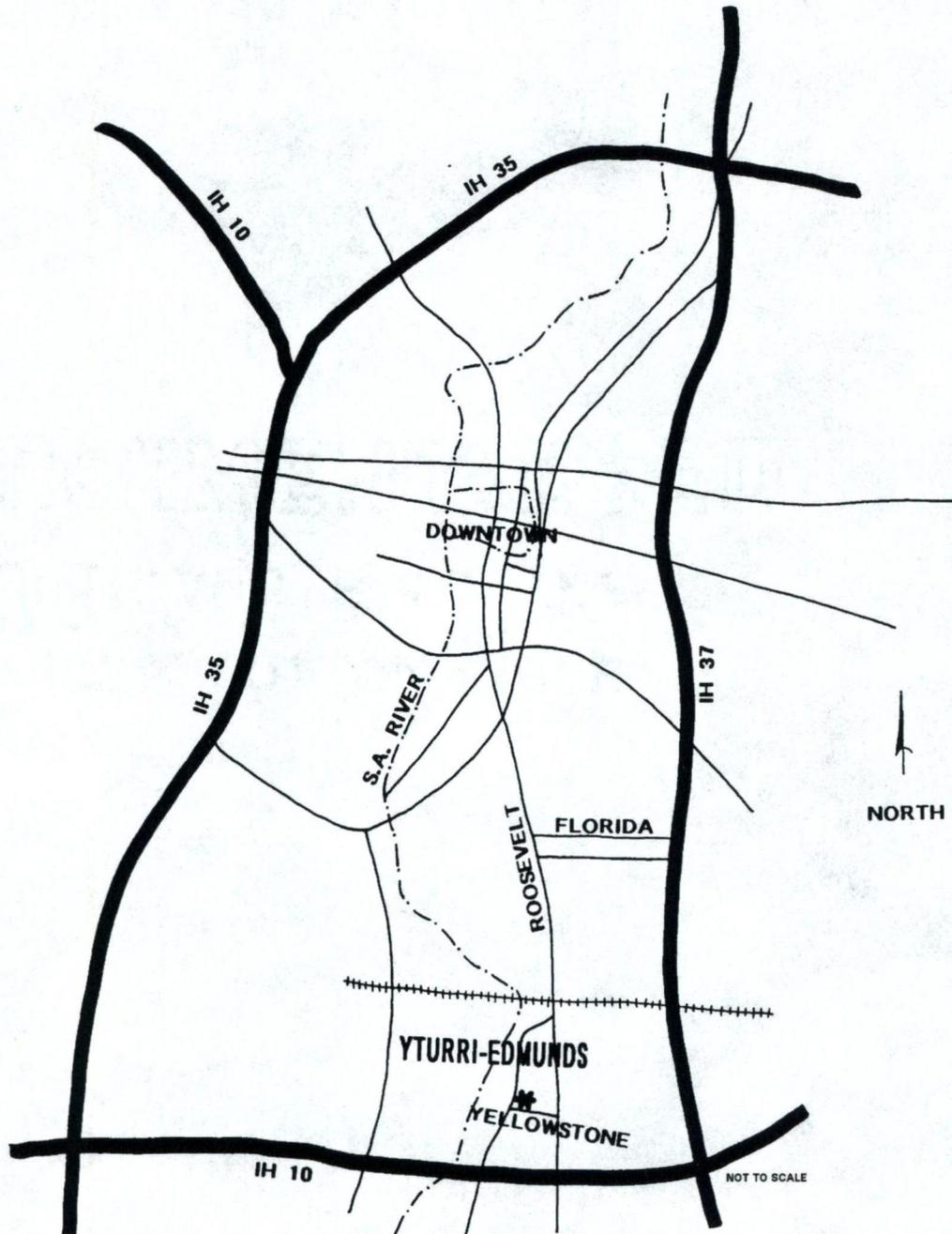
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Yturri-Edmunds House
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

City of San Antonio, showing location of Yturri-Edmunds House



SAN ANTONIO

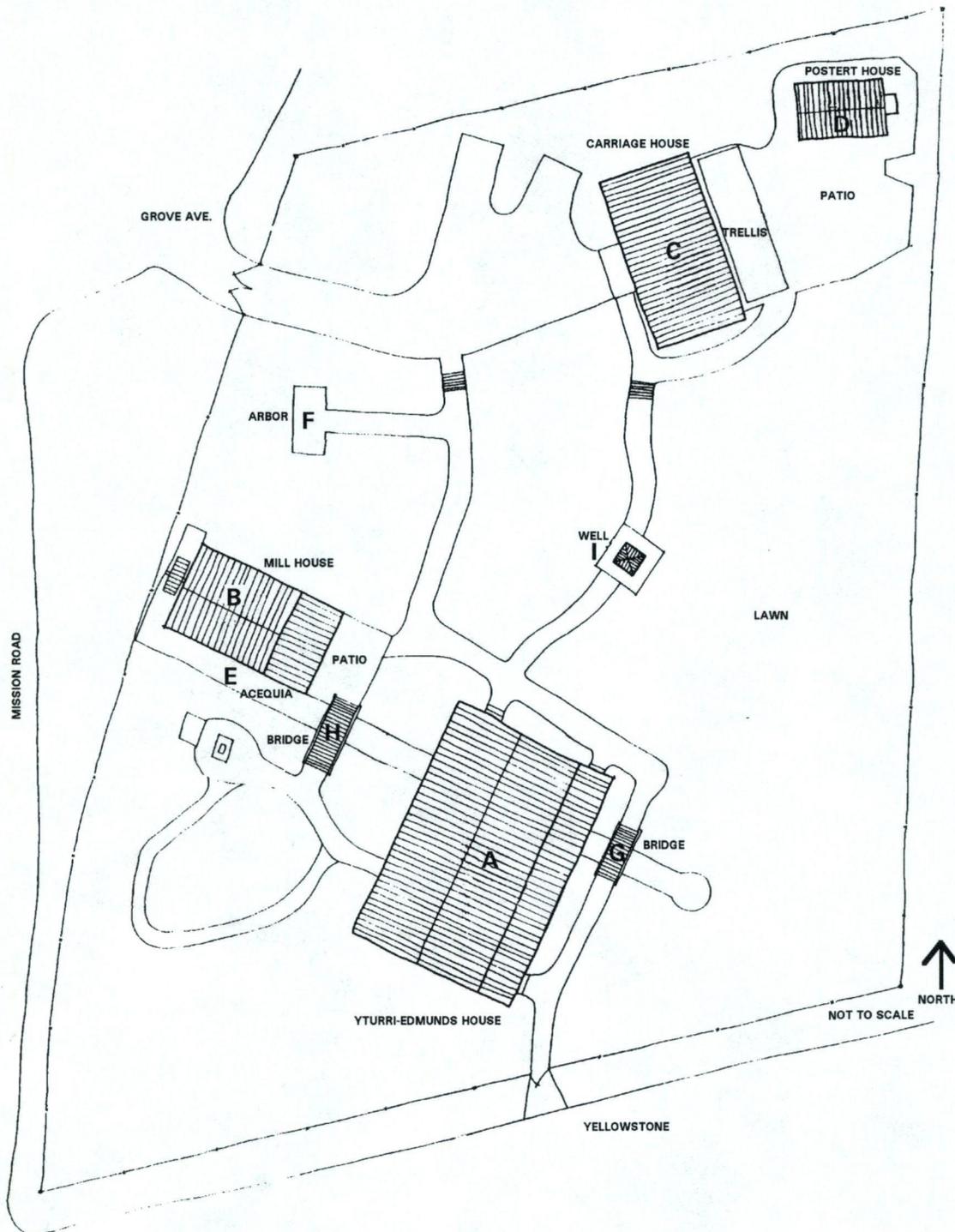
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Yturri-Edmunds House
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Yturri-Edmunds House Site Plan



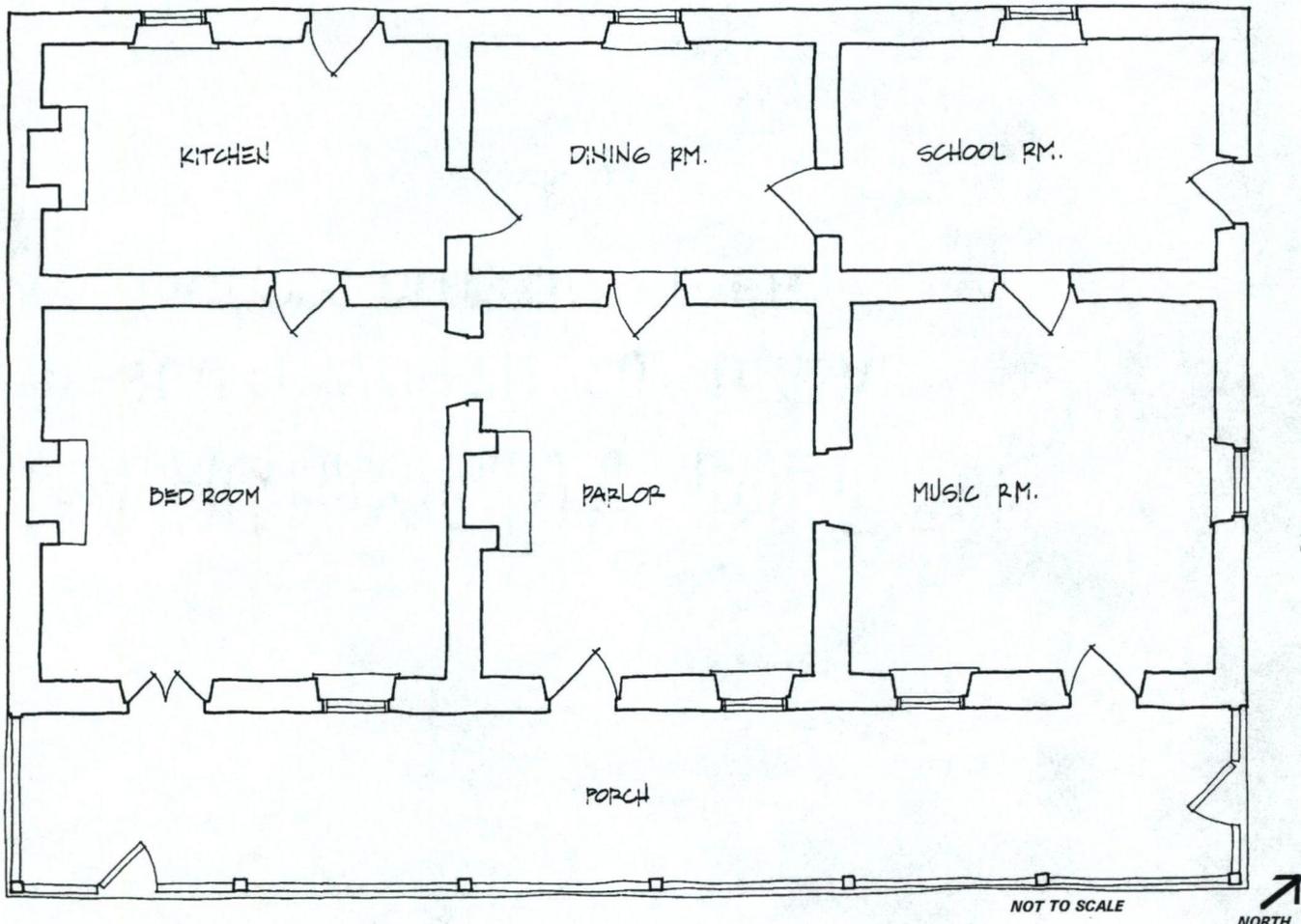
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Section MAP Page 22

Yturri-Edmunds House
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Yturri-Edmunds House Floor Plan



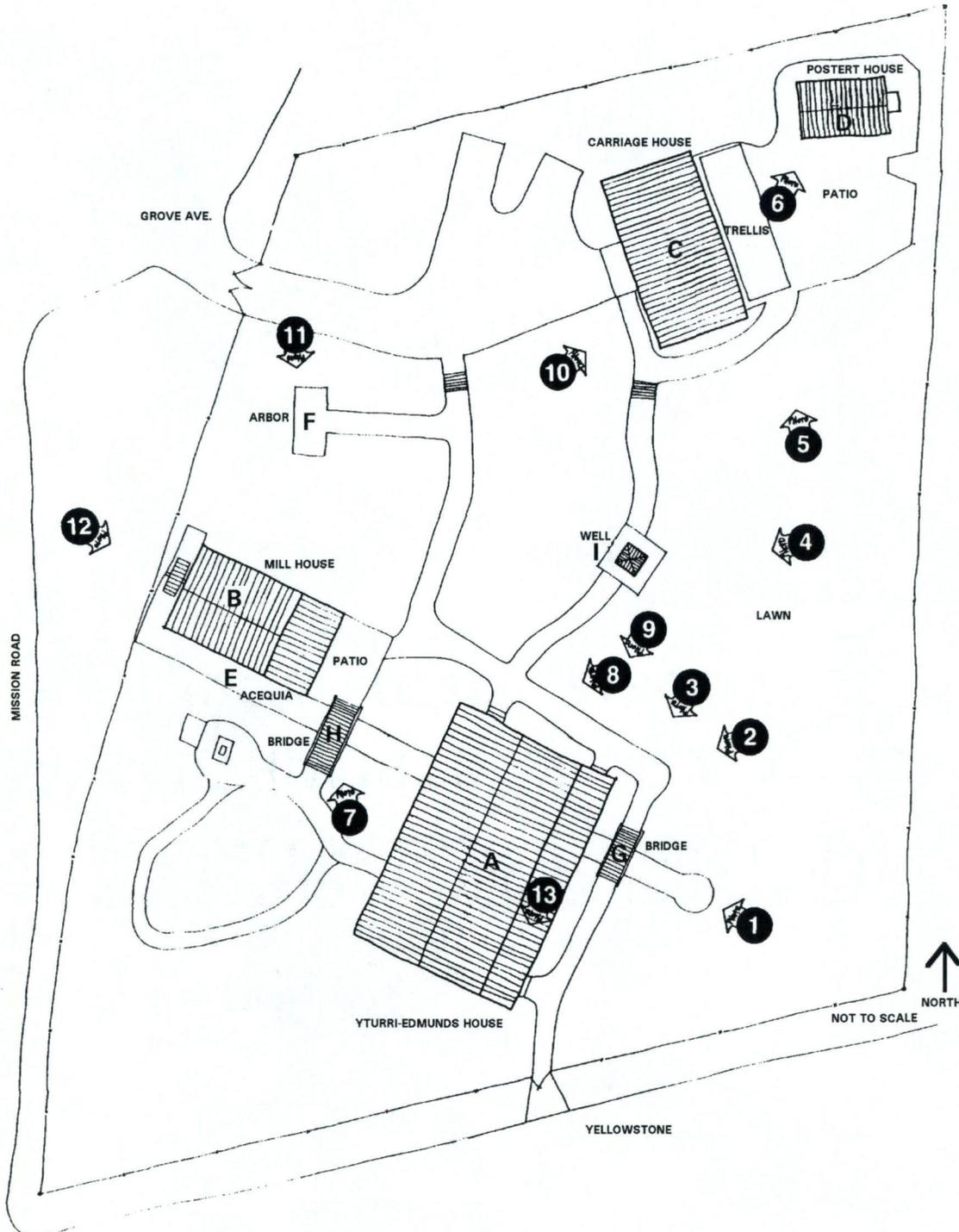
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Section MAP Page 23

Yturri-Edmunds House
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Yturri-Edmunds House Site Plan, showing camera angles and positions for photos



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Continuation Sheet

Section PHOTO Page 24

Yturri-Edmunds House
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

PHOTO INVENTORY

Yturri-Edmunds House
257 Yellowstone
San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

All photos taken by Ron Bauml, June 1994, except as noted
Negatives on file at the San Antonio Conservation Society Headquarters, 107 King William Street,
San Antonio, Texas 78204, except as noted
Camera angles in relation to properties shown on Map-23

- Photo 1 of 13 Yturri-Edmunds House, camera facing west. Acequia in foreground.
- Photo 2 of 13 Yturri-Edmunds House, camera facing southwest.
- Photo 3 of 13 Yturri-Edmunds House, camera facing south. (Buildings in background
are not included on this site.)
- Photo 4 of 13 Yturri-Edmunds House, Mill, and well, camera facing southwest.
- Photo 5 of 13 Oge Carriage House and Postert House, camera facing north.
- Photo 6 of 13 Postert House, camera facing north.
- Photo 7 of 13 Southeast corner of Mill, camera facing northeast.
- Photo 8 of 13 Yturri-Edmunds House and Mill, camera facing southwest.
- Photo 9 of 13 Yturri-Edmunds House, camera facing south.
- Photo 10 of 13 Oge Carriage House, camera facing north.
- Photo 11 of 13 Grape Arbor, camera facing south.
- Photo 12 of 13 Mill, camera facing east.
- Photo 13 of 13 Yturri-Edmunds House Porch, camera facing south.
Photographer unknown, date: 1898.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Yturri--Edmunds House
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Bexar

DATE RECEIVED: 7/01/96 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/16/96
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/01/96 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 8/15/96
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 96000870

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 8-6-96 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



YTURRI-EDMUNDS HOUSE
257 YELLOWSTONE
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 1 of 13



YTURRI-EDMUNDS HOUSE
257 YELLOWSTONE
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 2 of 13



1

YTURRI-EDMUNDS HOUSE
257 YELLOWSTONE
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 3 of 13



YTURRI-EDMUNDS HOUSE
257 YELLOWSTONE
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 4 of 13



YTURRI-EDMUNDS HOUSE
257 YELLOWSTONE
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 5 of 13



YTURRI-EDMUNDS HOUSE
257 YELLOWSTONE
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 6 of 13



YTURRI-EDMUNDS HOUSE
257 YELLOWSTONE
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 7 of 13



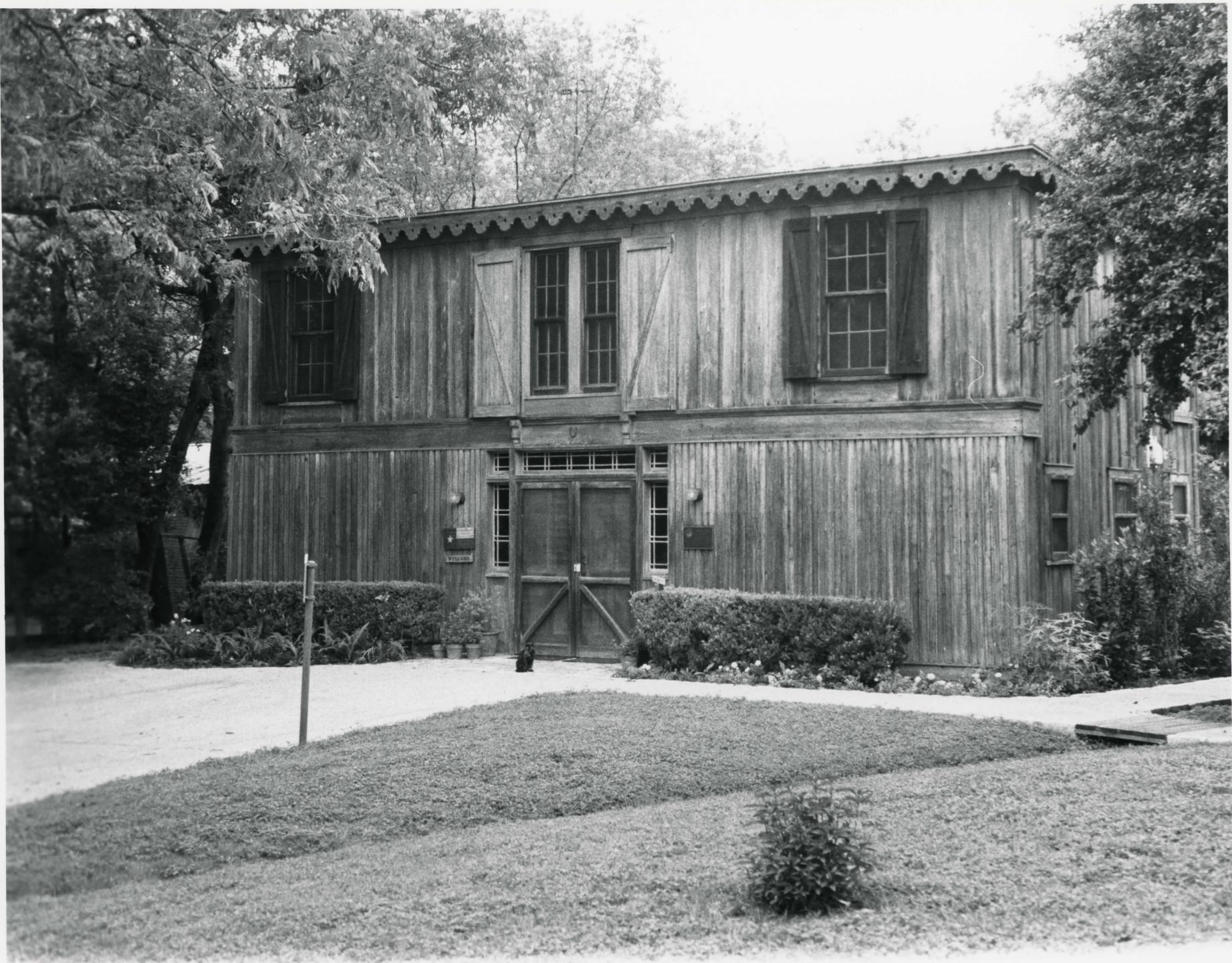
YTURRI-EDMUNDS HOUSE
257 YELLOWSTONE
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 8 of 13



YTURRI-EDMUNDS HOUSE
257 YELLOWSTONE
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 9 of 13



YTURRI-EDMUNDS HOUSE
257 YELLOWSTONE
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 10 of 13



YTURRI-EDMUNDS HOUSE
257 YELLOWSTONE
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 11 of 13



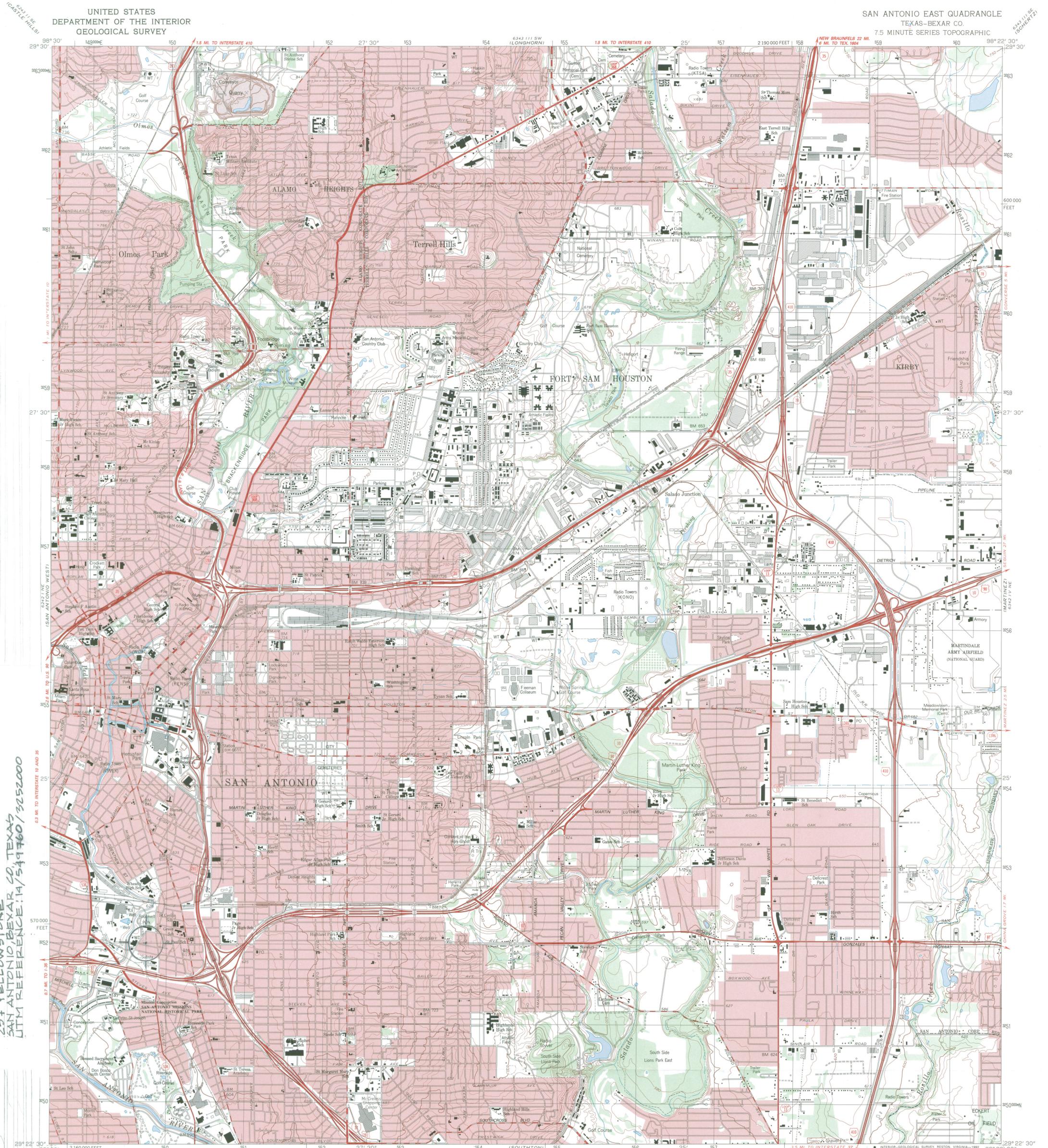
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257 YELLOWSTONE
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 12 of 13



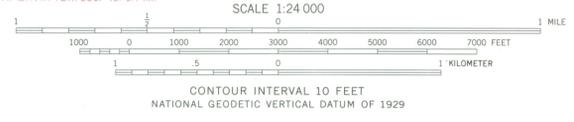
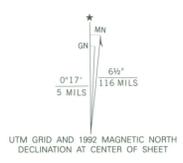
YTURRI-EDMUNDS HOUSE
257 YELLOWSTONE
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 13 of 13



TURRI-EDMONDS HOUSE
253 YELLOWSTONE
SAN ANTONIO BEXAR CO, TEXAS
UTM REFERENCE: 14/541760/3252000

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA and USCE
Compiled by Defense Mapping Agency from aerial photographs
taken 1952. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1986
and other source data. Field checked 1987. Map edited 1992
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and
10 000-foot grid ticks: Texas Coordinate System,
south central zone (Lambert Conformal Conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 14
The difference between NAD 27 and North American Datum of
1983 (NAD 83) for 7.5 minute intersections is given in USGS
Bulletin 1875. The NAD 83 is shown by dashed corner ticks
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the
National or State reservations shown on this map
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
	State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

2998-133

SAN ANTONIO EAST, TEX.
29098-D4-TF-024

1992

DMA 6342 IV NW-SERIES V882



TEXAS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

Memorandum

TO: Carol Shull, Keeper of the National Register
FROM: Mary Dillman, THC *Mary Dillman*
DATE: 12 June 1996
RE: Yturri-Edmunds House



The enclosed nomination of the Yturri-Edmunds House in San Antonio, Bexar County, is an individual nomination of a property already listed on the National Register as part of the Missions Parkway Historic and Archeological District, listed on October 6, 1975. The Missions Parkway nomination listed the house, mill, and related acequia as contributing resources, however this nomination excludes the mill since its reconstruction took place in the 1960s, post-dating the period of significance.

This nomination was prepared by consultants Karl Preuss and Ron Bauml on behalf of the San Antonio Conservation Society, who now owns the house. The nomination provides additional information about the property's association with the nearby Spanish missions, the family that owned the property, and the evolution of the house. Built ca. 1859, the house remains as one of the few surviving examples of Spanish colonial residences in San Antonio, retaining a high degree of its historic integrity. The nomination supports listing under Criterion A and C in the areas of Ethnic Heritage/Hispanic and Architecture at the local level of significance.