



In Search of El dorado

A daily journal of my travels and adventures in my.....Search for Eldorado

Hello to Family & Friends

Sunday, February 21st 2021 Day 35

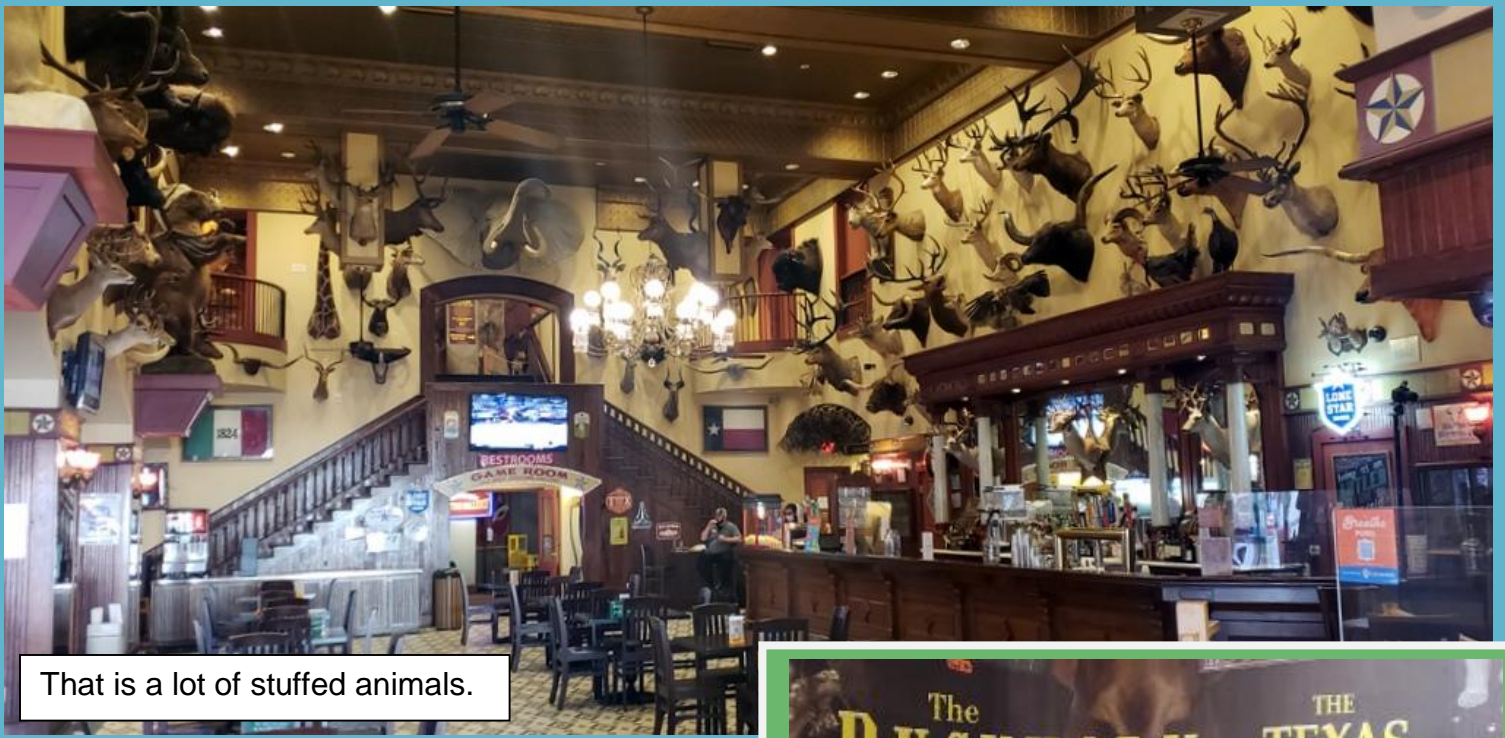


I took a drive past the Cracker Barrel but found that the parking lot was very wide open to the HEB lot and the street. I would have stuck out like a sore thumb if I had parked there, so I took a cruise through the Sam's lot. There was a security vehicle parked there, dark, but I did not want to take a chance. Third shift security is usually guys who wait until two a.m. to knock on your door. Next was what I thought was a light industrial area but turned out to be residential. I drove back past WalMart down some very empty roads, and then found a hospital. I don't usually like hospitals because most of the time they definitely have security, but there was another RV parked there with the slide open, so I gave it a try, and when I woke up I was still in the hospital lot. Surprise, surprise.

My first step to attack San Antonio is parking, which is still very confusing. Every lot owner has an APP, the city says free parking on the weekends but only has numbers on a map for locations, which is too small to read accurately and cannot be expanded. It's Sunday, the CofC is closed until tomorrow, I will park there again. As I am writing this I am still parked here so things went ok. I even had another car join me.

Second is to visit the Buckhorn Saloon and Museums. The streets are very narrow here making it difficult to get a decent picture of anything that is larger than normal.





That is a lot of stuffed animals.

Cherub Mirror



Originally commissioned for the Russian Royal Family in 1790, this elegant mirror and Lebanese cedar frame stands over seven feet tall. From the Forests of Lebanon came the cedar from which Italian artisans carved this

magnificent frame. Visitors to the Buckhorn Saloon can look into its beveled mirror and find themselves reflecting on over two centuries of history in this remarkable piece of craftsmanship. It has now found a permanent home and is prominently displayed in the Buckhorn Saloon and Museum.

The Passenger Pigeon

So the Buckhorn Saloon Museum portion is mostly stuffed animals. They are amazing, there are animals from all over the world, there are animals that no longer exist, like the Passenger Pigeons to the right, but I am not a big fan of taxidermy. I think you'll notice the photos I took are of the more interesting/strange/odd findings than just stuffed animals.

This is the first time I have seen a Passenger Pigeon. It is a beautiful bird and I can see why they hunted them down. It seems the Passenger Pigeon and the Bison were suffering the same fate around the same time, thankfully the Bison survived. Read on. I think you will find it as hard to believe, as I did, how many and how quickly they were eliminated.



Ectopistes migratorius, or the Passenger Pigeon, was once considered to be the most numerous bird on the planet. The migratory flights of the passenger pigeon were spectacular. The birds traveled in flocks so large, that they reportedly darkened the sky.

One flock sighting in southern Ontario in 1866 was described as being 1 mile wide, 300 miles long, and taking 14 hours to pass a single point—with number estimates in excess of 3.5 billion birds!!! That number, if accurate, would likely represent a large fraction of the entire population at the time.

In the latter part of the 1800s, the population of passenger pigeons began to drop due to deforestation of the pigeon's habitat and hunting on a massive scale. Professional hunters began to net, trap and kill hundreds and thousands of birds. The pigeons were killed for private consumption and sale on the market, sometimes for as little as fifty cents a dozen.

By the early 1890s, the passenger pigeon had all disappeared. Martha, believed to be the last remaining living passenger pigeon, died in 1914 at the Cincinnati Zoo. The species has since become extinct.

The one valuable result of the extinction of the passenger pigeon was that it aroused public interest in conservation laws and has perhaps saved numerous other species of migratory birds and wildlife.

These two passenger pigeons on display are believed to be the only pair left on earth.

Next up is the story of the Buckhorn Saloon

1881

Albert Friedrich, opens his own business, Albert's Buckhorn Saloon, on Dolorosa Street. The Buckhorn opens with a standing offer to all patrons - "Bring in your deer antlers, and you can trade them for a shot of whiskey or a beer." Albert's father, Wenzel Friedrich, provides handmade horn furniture for the saloon, and the world's most unique collection of horns and antlers begins.



This is just one of several areas filled with horns.

I am finding this doubly interesting right now since I am currently reading a biography of Theodore Roosevelt. I am only in the 1880's right now, so I'm looking forward to reading about his time in San Antonio. I could be standing in the exact same spot he was at one time in history.

1898

The Spanish-American war begins. President Teddy Roosevelt frequents the Buckhorn to recruit the Rough Riders. Albert's father, Wenzel Friedrich, presents Teddy with a horn chair made up of over 20 buffalo horns to thank him for his business. It is on display to this day along with President Roosevelt's field desk, which was used in the battle of San Juan Hill.

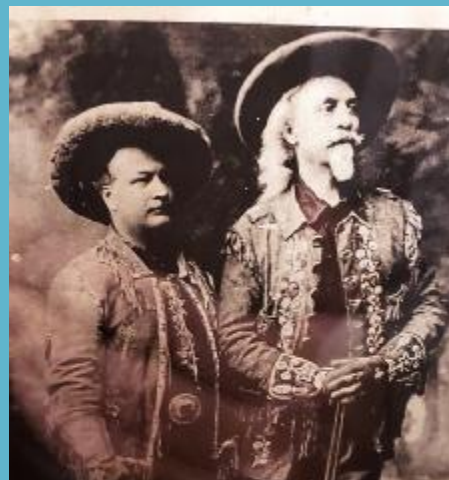
Teddy Roosevelt In San Antonio

1898 marked the fighting of the Spanish American war in Cuba. Leading the Volunteer Calvary was Teddy Roosevelt. In 1901 he became President of the United States after President McKinley was assassinated. "Teddy" was elected to office in 1904 and served as president until 1909. Roosevelt recruited soldiers for his calvary unit in San Antonio. His favorite local haunts were the Menger Hotel Bar and the Buckhorn Saloon.

Chair- The chair is completely created from the horns of the American Bison. The throne was made by Albert Friedrich when Roosevelt returned to San Antonio, Texas as the President of the United States.



Speaking of shooting Bison towards extinction



Winchester Model 1876 caliber 50-95
presented to Buffalo Bill Cody in
England by Queen Victoria while
on tour in the 1880s





This is not a mounted head you see too often.

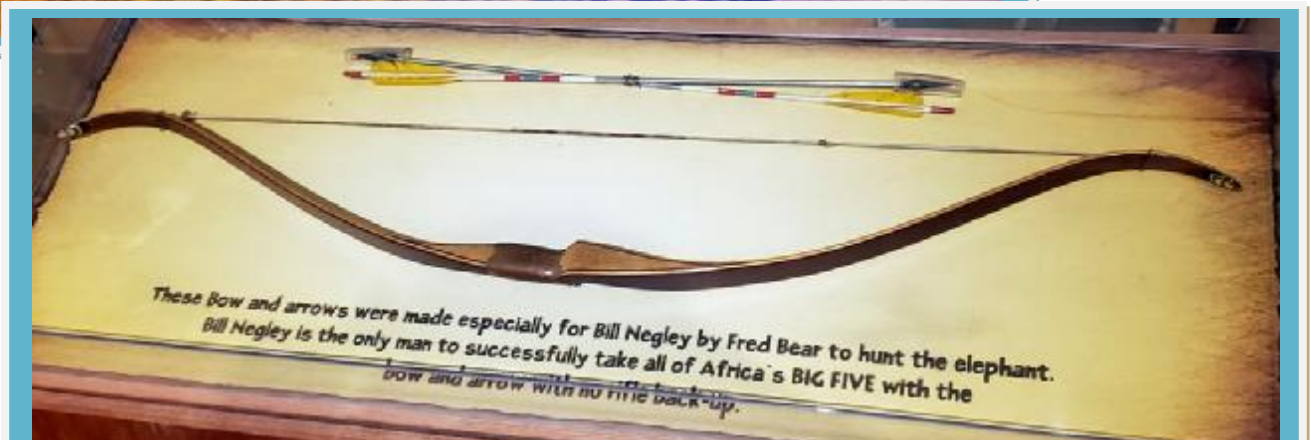
Below - I could not believe the length of the horn on that Black Rhino, it must be three feet long.



What do you think Tom S.? Bringing down an elephant with a bow & arrow

BILL NEGLEY

Mr. William Negley was a remarkable sportsman. He forged a legacy with a bow and arrow that none have been able to duplicate. Negley is the only person to have ever taken one each of Africa's Big Five game animals, Lion, Leopard, Rhino, Cape Buffalo, and Elephant, with the use of a bow and arrow.



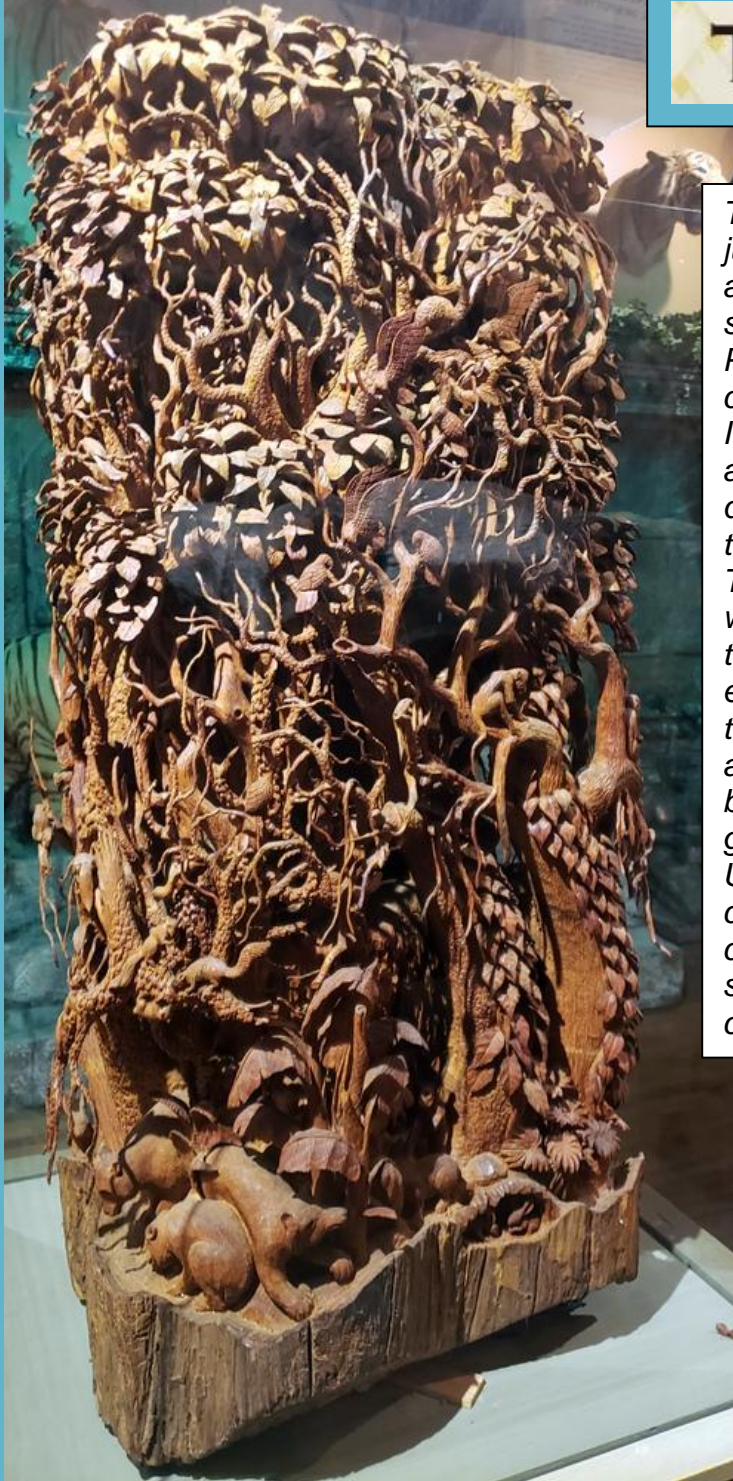
These Bow and arrows were made especially for Bill Negley by Fred Bear to hunt the elephant. Bill Negley is the only man to successfully take all of Africa's BIG FIVE with the bow and arrow with no rifle back-up.

TREE OF LIFE

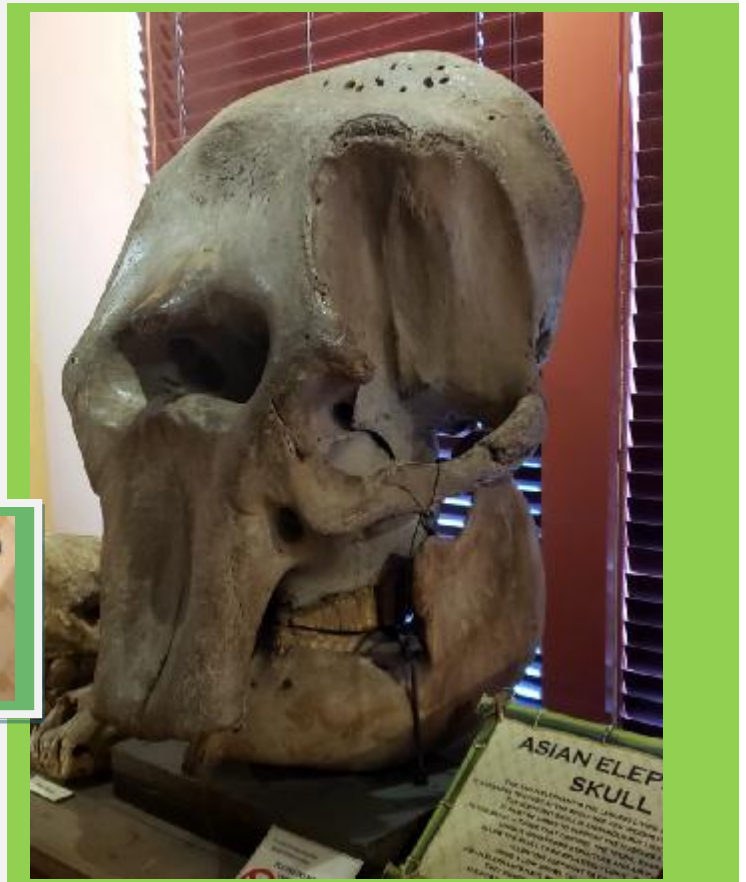
The "Tree of Life" depicts an ancient tree in the jungles of Thailand and all the animals that live in, around, and among its branches. It was carved out of a single piece of Teakwood by Master Artisan Kon Prayet. The journey to the tree's completion is as complex and remarkable as the artwork itself.

In 1999 Wesley Smith purchased a Teakwood trunk at a government auction in Chiangmai, Thailand. The quality was such that Smith wanted the Teakwood transformed into something exceptional and uniquely Thai. He spent the next three months searching Thai wood art markets for the work of an artist equal to the task. Finally, Smith found a carving that exceeded his expectations. The Merchant had scant information on the Karen Tribesman. Smith traveled far and wide across the country to a remote village on the Burmese border. He did not know if he was going on a wild goose chase, but Smith felt confident in his source.

Upon arriving at the village, Smith found the artist. He commissioned Prayet to conceptualize and execute the carving. The artisan worked eight to ten hours a day, seven days a week, for nearly eighteen months to complete the piece in front of you.



ASIAN ELEPHANT SKULL



THE ASIAN ELEPHANT IS THE LARGEST LIVING LAND ANIMAL. IT AVERAGES TEN FEET AT THE SHOULDER AND WEIGHS UP TO 11,000 POUNDS. THE ELEPHANT SKULL IS ENORMOUS BUT LIGHTWEIGHT. IT MUST BE LARGE TO SUPPORT THE MUSCLES ATTACHED TO THE SKULL — THOSE THAT CONTROL THE TRUNK, EARS, AND JAW, BUT ITS UNIQUE HONEYCOMB STRUCTURE AND AIR POCKETS ALLOW THE SKULL TO BE RELATIVELY LIGHT. THE AIR SPACES ALLOW THE ELEPHANT TO COMMUNICATE USING A LOW GROWL THAT CARRIES FOR MILES.

This huge whitetail fought to its death in 1990. It was found by the late Mr. W. C. Scott in NW Kansas. Notice a second buck's broken antler wrapped in the barbed wire. The vicious and extended battle caused the pair to be entangled in the barbed ranch fence which no doubt led to this one's demise. It seems the second deer was the lucky one and only lost an antler.



There were about 500 more stuffed animals throughout the museum, then they had a circus history section with PT Barnum, more Buffalo Bill and his western show, a funhouse type area, nothing worth a photo.

**WELCOME TO
THE TEXAS RANGER
MUSEUM**



Texas Rangers –The Beginning

In a sense, the history of the Texas Rangers is the history of Texas itself. In 1820, Stephen F. Austin, best known as the father of Texas, requested and received permission from the Mexican government for 300 families to enter the territory of Texas. By 1823, the need became apparent to create a force in order to provide the pioneers with protection from hostile elements.

On August 5, 1823, on the back of a proclamation issued by Land Commissioner Baron de Bastrop, Austin wrote that he would "...employ ten men...to act as rangers for the common defense...the wages I will give said ten men is fifteen dollars a month payable in property..."

On August 10, 1823, since Texas was then a part of Mexico, Stephen F. Austin sought and obtained additional permission from the Mexican government to employ ten men from a group of volunteers to protect this new Texas frontier. Thus, the history of the Texas Rangers began with duties to "range" over wide areas so as to scout the movements of the renegade Indians. Some accounts say that the Rangers got their name from these ranging activities but when you look at the original writings of Austin, when he assembled the 10 men he called them Rangers.

These men, not soldier, not even militia, "ranged" the area of Austin's colony, protecting settlers from Indians. When no threat seemed evident, the men returned to their families and land. Despite Austin's plan to pay a group of Rangers, the defense effort continued primarily on a voluntary basis.

I was really looking forward to this Texas Ranger museum. Unfortunately, it started out with a lot of letter size, small print info placards under photos and of with items in a display case. Very disappointing.

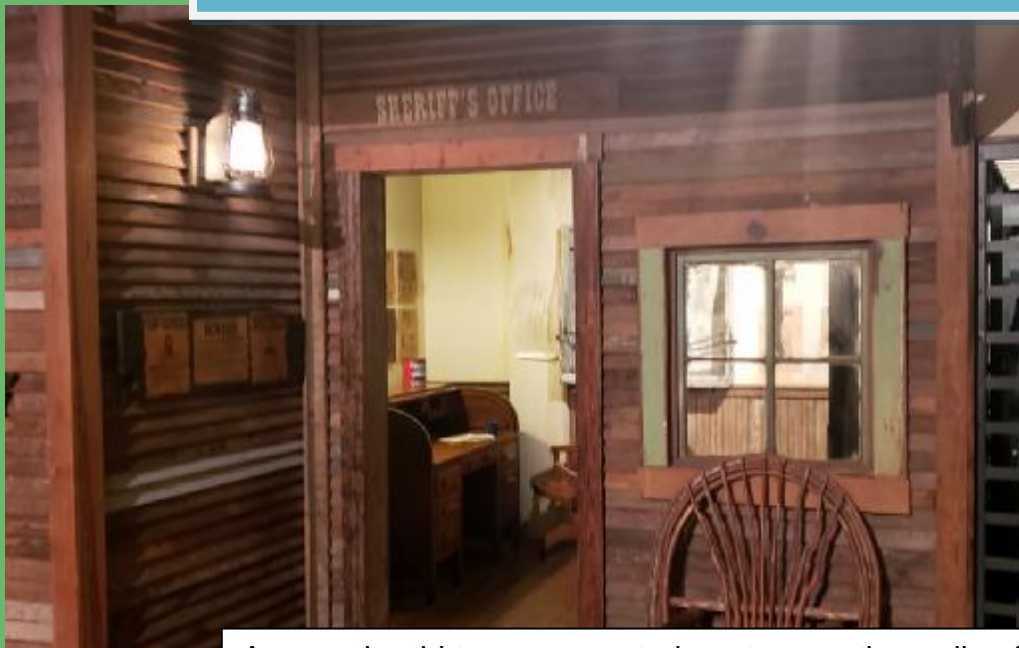


I believe I took a picture of the original headstone at Boot Hill in Tombstone, AZ

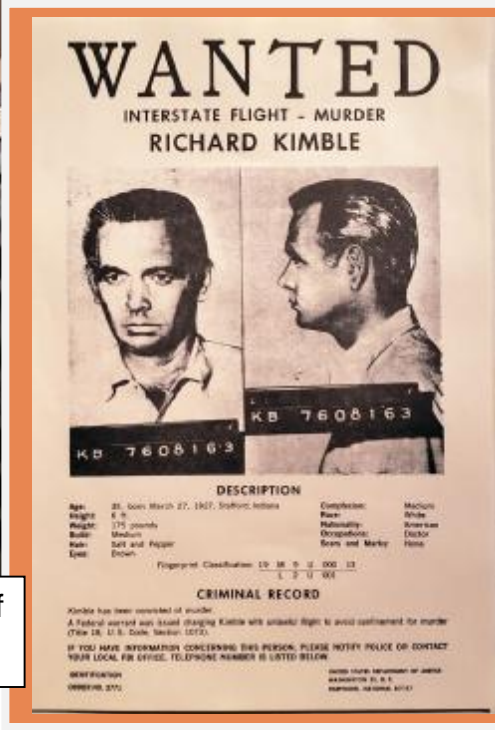




Then we got to some good stuff. Not really anything to do with the Texas Rangers, but a nicely built mock-up of an old western town.

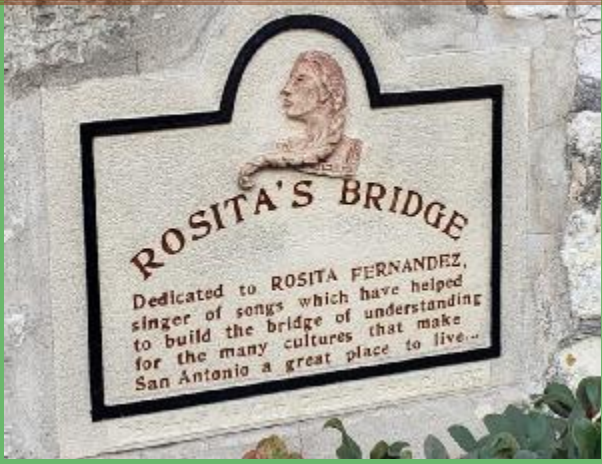


Among the thirty or so wanted posters on the walls of the sheriff's office, I felt this was the most interesting.





It was going on one o'clock so I stepped up to the bar to see what the famous Buckhorn Saloon had on the menu; they're not serving food today. So I ordered two fingers of rot gut (Bailey's on the rocks), and for \$7.50 that's what I got, two fingers in a plastic cup. Oh so memorable. I used the River Walk to get back to the RV and make myself some lunch. I used the River Walk again to make my way to the San Fernando Mission.



A riverside sculpture at the steps leading to the Briscoe Art Museum. They are closed today and tomorrow, so I have it scheduled for Tuesday.

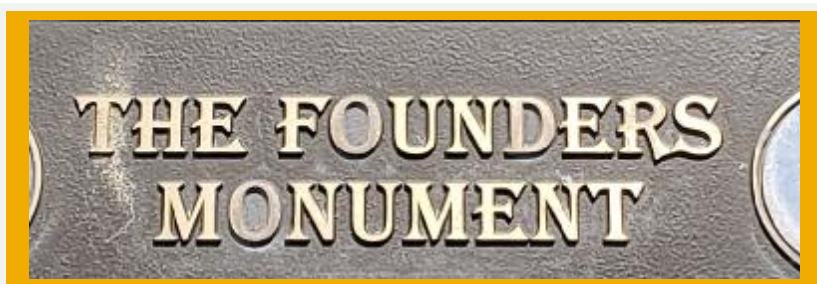


I am enjoying the River Walk with all of its twists and turns, variety of concrete, stone and brick, the colors, the design in the walkway to the left is the eight pointed star, the shape of most presidios when they were built.

I can just imagine the challenge designers faced back in 1990 when the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed and the River Walk had to be made wheelchair accessible. Take note of the ramp below.



The Paris tradition called Love Lock Bridge has traveled to San Antonio. Why buy a ring when you can buy a lock, add your initials and those of the one you love, and ceremoniously toss the key off the bridge.





This one is hard to read, but it is also described in the plaques below. This was new information to me.



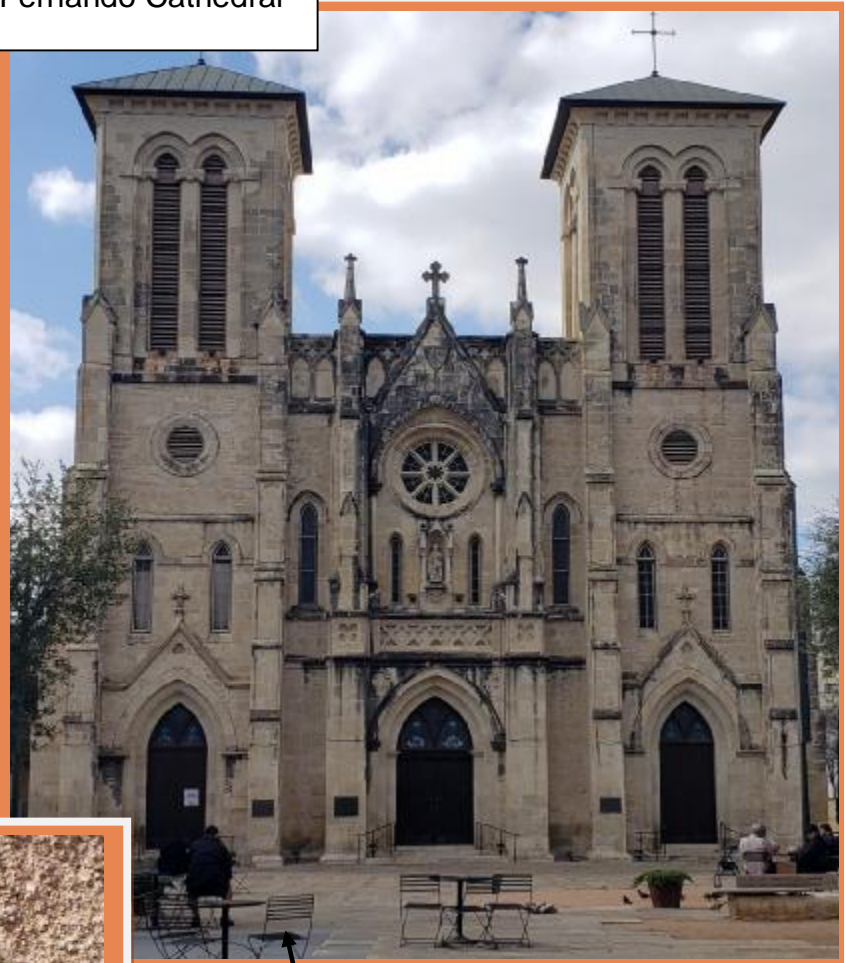
THE CANARY ISLANDERS

EARLIEST CIVILIAN COLONISTS OF SAN ANTONIO, THIS NUCLEUS OF PIONEERS FROM THE CANARY ISLANDS FORMED THE FIRST ORGANIZED CIVIL GOVERNMENT IN TEXAS AND FOUNDED THE VILLAGE OF SAN FERNANDO DE BEXAR IN 1731.

FOLLOWING A SEA AND LAND VOYAGE OF OVER A YEAR, THESE WEARY TRAVELERS ARRIVED AT THE PRESIDIO (FORT) OF SAN ANTONIO EARLY ON MARCH 9, 1731. TOTALING 56 PERSONS, THEY HAD EMIGRATED TO TEXAS FROM THE SPANISH CANARY ISLANDS NEAR AFRICA, BY ORDER OF KING PHILIP V.

ON JULY 2 THEY BEGAN TO LAY OUT A VILLA (VILLAGE), CHOOSING A SITE ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE PLAZA DE LAS YSLAS (PRESENT MAIN PLAZA) FOR THE CHURCH AND A SITE ON THE EAST SIDE FOR THE CASA REAL (GOVERNMENT BUILDING). ON JULY 19 THE CAPTAIN OF THE PRESIDIO, JUAN ANTONIO DE ALMAZAN, READ TO THE ISLANDERS THE DECREE OF THE VICEROY NAMING THEM AND THEIR DESCENDANTS "HIJOS DALGO"—PERSONS OF NOBILITY.

San Fernando Cathedral



SAN ANTONIO DE PADUA
FOR WHOM THE CITY
OF SAN ANTONIO IS NAMED
PRESENTED TO THE CITY BY
ORDER OF THE ALHAMBRA
AUGUST 14, 1955



Later on you will see some photos of the SAGA, a video and light show projected on the front of the Cathedral. I was sitting in this chair for the show.

I entered the side door of the church and had my temp taken before finding a seat in the last row. A cleric was at the lectern making announcements and I thought the mass was done, people would leave, and I would be able to take some photos. There was a long, long moment of silence, than the church bells began to chime the hour, two o'clock. Suddenly the music started, everyone stood, and the priest and altar boys started down the center aisle. Whoops. I did not want to spend the next hour in church, so after the priest passed me by, I beat a hasty retreat back out the side door.

THE REMAINS OF THE
ALAMO HEROES ARE
ENTOMBED IN THE
CHAPEL AT THE
LEFT-HAND SIDE OF
THE ENTRANCE TO
THIS CATHEDRAL.

VISITORS WELCOME

TO COMMEMORATE
THE TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE LAYING OF THE CORNER STONE
OF
SAN FERNANDO CATHEDRAL
FIRST PLACE OF WORSHIP FOR TEXANS. BUILT
THROUGH THE GENEROSITY AND ZEAL OF THE
CANARY ISLANDERS, FOUNDERS OF SAN ANTONIO
DEDICATED MAY 11, 1938

Here is another architectural gem of a county courthouse. Later on the river cruise the guide states this is the oldest county courthouse still in use in Texas. I think I would dispute that. This one was built in 1896 and a couple others we have seen, like Victoria I think, were built in 1892.



Bexar County Commissioners Court

Of Bexar County

Bexar County Plaza

This beautiful area, known as Plaza de las Islas, once served as home to Canary Island settlers. In 1731 the sixteen original families established the Villa de San Fernando and the first Spanish civil settlement in this region under the rule of the King of Spain. Bexar County redeveloped the plaza in front of the courthouse during the Main Plaza redevelopment project in 2008.

Bexar County Courthouse

Designed in the Romanesque style by Architect J. Riley Gordon, construction of the courthouse began in 1892 and was completed in 1896. It is the seat of the county government and houses the Bexar County Commissioners Court, District and County Courts and the Bexar County Archives. After four expansions it is the largest historic county courthouse in Texas.

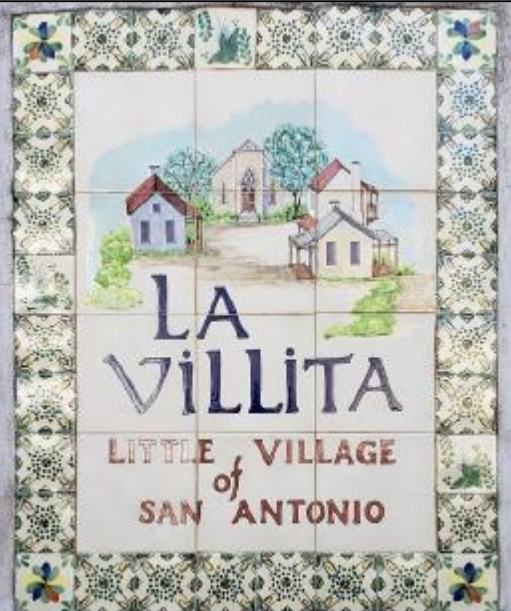
Lady Justice Fountain

The fountain was originally installed in the east courtyard of the courthouse when it first opened. In 1927 the courtyard was enclosed and the fountain moved to a nearby park owned by the City. The fountain was damaged and lost for a time. Thirty years later she was found and the Hidalgo Foundation commissioned San Antonio artist Gilbert E. Barrera to restore the fountain and recreate Lady Justice. Rededicated in December 2008, she once again serves as a symbol of justice and a tribute to the Bexar County legal community.



I walked over to the Casa Ortiz for a tour, but found out you have to make a reservation and pay online. I checked it out and the first dates available are Tuesday and Wednesday. I will have to see if that fits into my schedule.

Back to the River Walk and then up into the historic area below.



#305
 Title BUFFALO SOLDIERS
 Medium PHOTO ON ALUMINUM
 Artist STEVE SNYDER
 Ship? Y/N
 Date In: 1/29/21
 Due Out: 4/29/21
 River Art Group Price: \$149 -

The village is a lot of arts and crafts, galleries and restaurants. Maybe half were open. I bought an ice cream. Then I entered this gallery. I had a hard time walking away from this photo. It is just amazing. What a shot. How do you like this one Steve & Marcie?



This one is for Kali. Same photographer. Antelope Canyon.



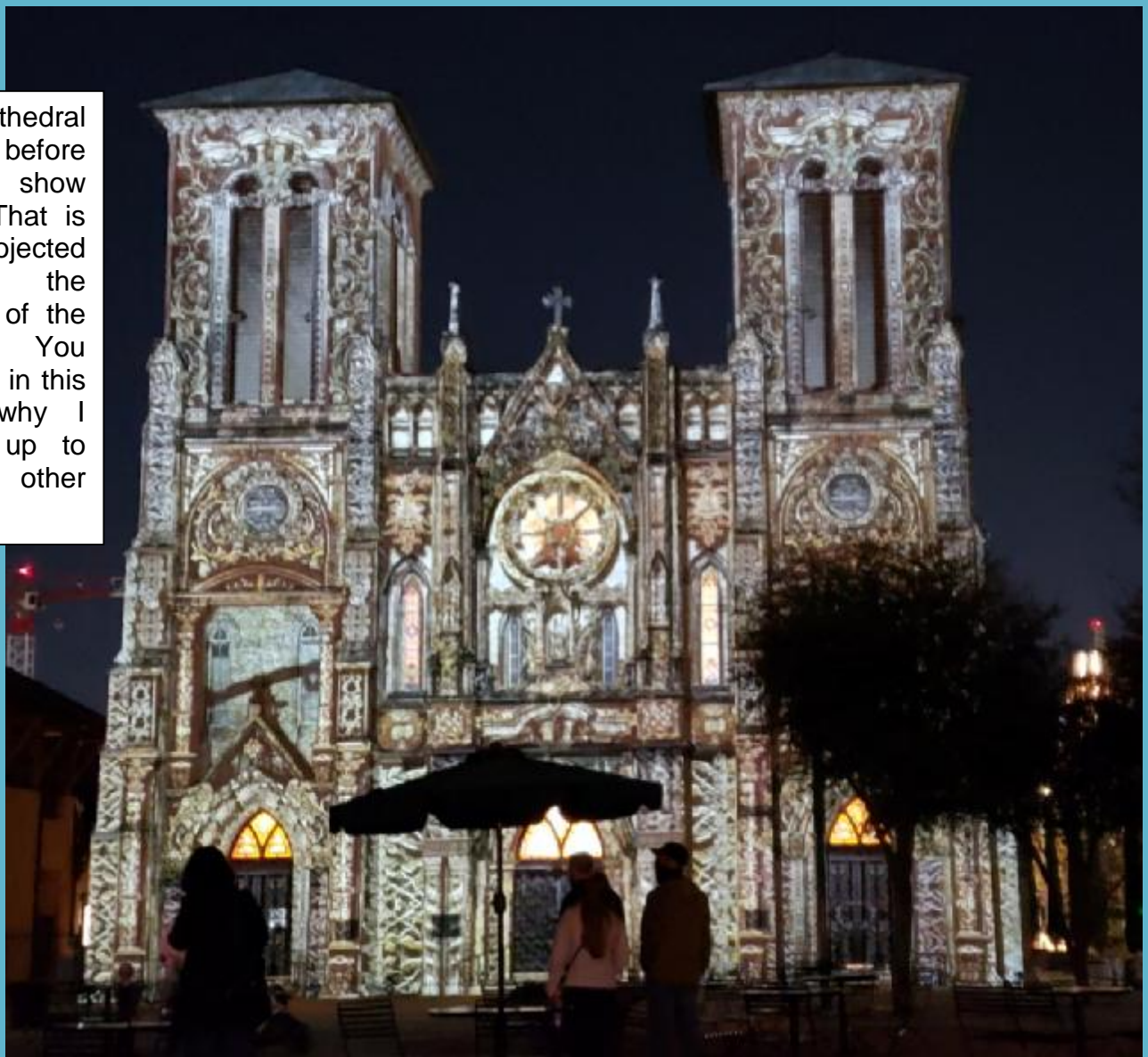
Above is a very nice fountain. Since I had gained an hour with not being able to visit the Casa Ortiz, I decided to go for a boat ride.





One of the river barges lit up for evening sightseeing.

The cathedral lit up before the show starts. That is light projected onto the surface of the building. You can see in this photo why I moved up to that other chair.





Now you can see I'm too close, I can no longer fit the entire building in on the screen.

The show lasts twenty-four minutes and is in constant motion. Music both old and new are used.





The show was good, well done visually and musically. My only problem is that you don't always know what they are depicting. I understood a lot of it just because of my museum visits the past month or so, but there was still a lot I didn't.



Looks like the carriage business is a little slow tonight, but I like the way they're lit up.

A good day in San Antonio. I did a lot of walking which felt good. I really like the River Walk and can understand why it is so memorable and the number one attraction

I did find the SAGA show on youtube and you can watch it at the link below. As mentioned it is 24 minutes long, but worth it if you can find the time.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JdazinSmRko>

I'm going to get high tomorrow, so watch out.

Until next time.....