



# LAGRANADA



## April 2024

Founding Chapter

San Antonio, TX



..... [www.granaderos.org](http://www.granaderos.org) ..... editor: joe pérez .....



## Newest Bernardo de Gálvez Statue

A large bronze statue of Bernardo de Gálvez, along with an informational panel, were dedicated on March 26, 2024, at the beautiful Texas Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Plaza of Liberty in McAllen, Texas. The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) President General's Project for major commemorative initiatives funded the statue and panels in association with their America 250 program.

Mary Anthony Startz served as the consultant for the sculptor of the statue. She is the National Chair Specialty Research for the NSDAR as well as the Governor of the Houston Chapter of our order. We had members from our Houston Chapter, Laredo Chapter and San Antonio Chapter in attendance.

Thank you DAR!!



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## Next Meeting

Wednesday, April 3

La Fonda Restaurant

8633 Crownhill Blvd

Dinner: 6:30 Meeting 7:30

### Presenter:

Dr. John Reynolds

### Presentation:

The Seed of Texas:  
An Interactive Exploration  
Of Bexar County History

Dr. John Reynolds is a professor emeritus at U.T.S.A, where he has taught history since 1987. His expertise lies in the field of American politics during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, as well as quantitative methods and local history. He continues to teach courses on San Antonio history, from time to time.

He was the principal investigator for the "The Seed of Texas" website designed to commemorate San Antonio's Tricentennial. The interactive website explores various aspects of the city's past with particular attention to the diverse communities that have called it home over the past 12,000 years.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY APRIL BABIES

Apr 8

Jose González

Apr 10

Jorge Luis García Ruiz

Apr 15

Fidel Santos

Apr 16

Judy McKee

Apr 21

Alekzandr Skye

Apr 27

Dolores Beardsley

Apr 29

Luis Martinez

### Governor

José (Joe) González

### Deputy Governor

Elizabeth Pérez

### Treasurer

Manny Rodriguez

### Secretary

Janie Rodriguez

### Chaplain

Joe Weathersby

### Sergeant Major

Adam Dominguez



# Governor's Presentation to a DAR Chapter

Governor Joe González took advantage of another great opportunity to tell the story neglected by mainstream historians for too long. On 11 March 2024, San Antonio Founding Chapter



Governor José (Joe) L. González was honored to give a presentation to the Jacob's Well Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) from Wimberly, Texas. Our Governor extends his thanks to Regent Cheri Dawson, Vice-Regent Jeannine Inbody, Donna Hector (who initiated the invitation), and a highly engaged and receptive membership audience for a terrific experience. He stated, "Your energy and hospitality before, during, and at lunch afterwards is greatly appreciated. ¡Viva EEUU! ¡Viva España! ¡Viva Gálvez!"

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## Recent Articles on the Internet

### Essay contest for 4th graders

An essay contest in Pensacola, Florida, is for public, private, and home school students.

<https://news.gulfbreezenews.com/articles/galvez-essay-contest-open-to-fourth-graders/>

### Public Domain Portrait of Gálvez

The link below has probably the most famous portrait of Bernardo de Gálvez and states that it is in the public domain. It is a very good image.

<https://garystockbridge617.getarchive.net/amp/media/bernardo-de-galvez-f28d32>

# Order of Granaderos y Damas de Gálvez

Minutes for the meeting held March 6, 2024 at La Fonda Restaurant  
Submitted by Secretary Janie Rodriguez

Officers in Attendance: Governor Joe González, Deputy Governor Liz Perez, Chaplain Joe Weathersby, Treasurer Manny Rodriguez and Secretary Janie Rodriguez

Attendance: Sally Avila, Robert Garcia, Eric Negrón, Jimmy Peet, Susan Peet, Joe Perez, Jorge Luis Garcia Ruiz, Alex Zamora, Melissa Zamora.

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 p.m. by Governor Joe González. The Invocation was given by Chaplain Joe Weathersby. Alex Zamora led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Governor González recognized guests Susan Peet & Eric Negrón. The review of minutes was asked. Motion to accept was made by Manny Rodriguez, seconded by Joe Perez, motion carried.

Treasurer Manny Rodriguez gave a report for February 2024. The Savings Account Balance for the beginning of the month of February was \$6,191.04. This amount includes the following: Scholarship CD \$2,000.00, Scholarship general funds \$2,745.00, Non encumbered funds \$446.04 and 2025 National meeting CD \$1,000.00. Activity for the month was interest paid: \$0.78 and we received a donation of \$500.00. The end of month total for February in savings is \$6,691.82. The checking account balance as of February 1, 2023 was \$9,022.62. Activity for the month was as follows: We received 3 memberships totaling \$60.00, Shirt income of \$20.00, the sale of 2 blazones \$50.00, and bank interest of \$0.35. Outgoing funds were: reimbursement for fiesta medal payment: \$256.25, Purchase of 2 gift cards \$65.90, Fee for D&F rehearsal room \$35.00 and purchase of uniform buttons \$63.00. End of month balance for February is \$8,732.82 Motion to accept treasurer's report was made by Jimmy Peet and seconded by Joe Weathersby. Motion carried.



Governor Joe González announced this month's birthdays and "Happy Birthday" was led by Jimmy Peet and sung by all!

Old business: On February 17, 2024 the Drum and Fife Corps led by Officer Joe Perez and Soldier Manuel Rodriguez, had the honor of leading city officials and dignitaries of Laredo to the annual international bridge ceremony known as "The Abrazo" ceremony. Later that morning they participated in the GW parade. The Laredo chapter then hosted a luncheon for all participants. King William Parade application has been approved and we are now waiting on waivers and related documents.

Committee Reports: Scholarship: Deputy Governor Liz Perez reported that the winning recipient will read the shorter portion of his/her entry.

The drum and fife corps will begin rehearsal for April events.

New Business: The 2024 National meeting in Laredo will take place on October 31, 2024 to November 03, 2024. On March 26 there will be an unveiling of a statue of Galvez in McAllen to take place at the TXDAR Plaza of Liberty at the Veterans War Memorial of Texas. We received information that the Spanish sailing ship Juan Sebastian Elcano will be in New Orleans May 18 through May 22. The Elcano is a four-masted top sail schooner and is one of the oldest tall ships sailing today. Built in 1927, the Elcano was named after the Spanish explorer.

Program: Dr. Jorge Luis García Ruiz gave an interesting presentation on his book, Presidio, Soldados del Rey, published in 2023. It is the first volume of a series dedicated to the Spanish presidios established in New Spain that were part of the conquest and Christianization of North America. Books should be available in English by the end of this year or the start of 2025.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 by Governor Joe González.



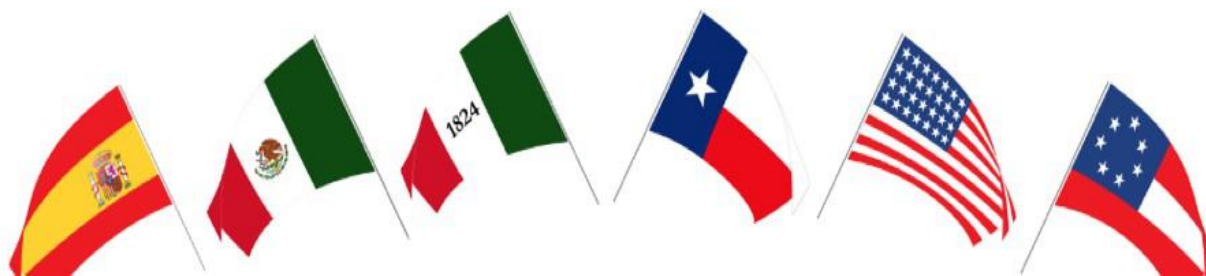
## Don't Forget to Buy Your Polo Shirts

Wearing the Granaderos y Damas de Gálvez polo shirt is an excellent way to show your pride in our organization in a fashionable way. They are available in men's cuts and women's cuts and can be purchased in red or white colors. Both colors look good.

The shirts are \$37 and are easily bought visiting the website link shown below. Not only will you look good in these shirts, but our chapter receives \$5 for each one sold. Prices can vary according to size.

[https://stores.inksoft.com/los\\_granaderos/shop/home](https://stores.inksoft.com/los_granaderos/shop/home)





# “LA GARITA”: SPANISH COLONIAL WATCH TOWER and POWDER HOUSE And “EL QUARTEL/CUARTEL” SPANISH BARRACKS Part II

By Rueben Pérez

In Part I, we discussed some of the events leading up to why *La Garita* and *El Cuartel* were built and the roles they played in our history. Unfortunately, things did not get better for the people or city of San Antonio de Béxar. In 1793, San Antonio de Valero (Alamo) was secularized and ceased to be used as a mission. The remaining missions were all secularized by 1824. Mission lands, houses, tools and animals were distributed to the Indians who had lived there, refugees from Los Adaes, and some local residents. By the start of the 1800s, Béxar (San Antonio) was the largest Spanish settlement in Texas with a population of 1,500 people and by 1824, the capital was moved out of San Antonio.



Rare ambrotype of Gen. Twiggs  
surrender

San Antonio continued to suffer in the struggles for Mexican and Texan independence either locally or elsewhere, probably more than any other city in the country. A few of the important battles were: the Siege of Béxar, the Battle of the Alamo, Woll’s invasion, the Battle of Salado, the Battle of Concepcion, the Council House Fight, the Grass Fight, and the Mexican-American War. But one of the most intriguing bloodless incidents in San Antonio’s history was when Union Forces surrendered in San Antonio to the Texas Committee of Safety.

Texas officially seceded from the Union on March 2, 1861. Two weeks earlier, in San Antonio—**without a shot being fired**, General David E. Twiggs surrendered all Federal holdings in Texas to about 1,000 armed militia of the Committee of Safety on February 16, 1861.



The firing on Fort Sumter was later in April and accelerated the rush to war. Eventually, about 90,000 Texans served in the Civil War and the last battle of the Civil War was, you guessed it, the Battle of Palmetto Ranch in Texas (which actually occurred about a month after Lee surrendered to Grant).

**La Garita: Watch Tower, Powder House and El Cuartel- Spanish barracks:**

These Spanish Colonial structures were military structures built during 1807-1810. During their span of being used, **La Garita** was occupied by militaries of Spain, the Republic of Mexico, the Republic of Texas, United States and the Confederate States of America. Their existence extended into the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the buildings were demolished and their locations were lost and forgotten over time. **El Cuartel** was demolished during the Battle of the Alamo. Let's take a more detailed look of these Spanish Colonial structures.

To start, the term **GARITA** means "sentry box" or "Gate keeper box". The word ending "\_ita" is the diminutive form and indicates connotations of smallness or affection. The area it was on was often referred to Powder House Hill and was a Spanish land grant given by the King of Spain.

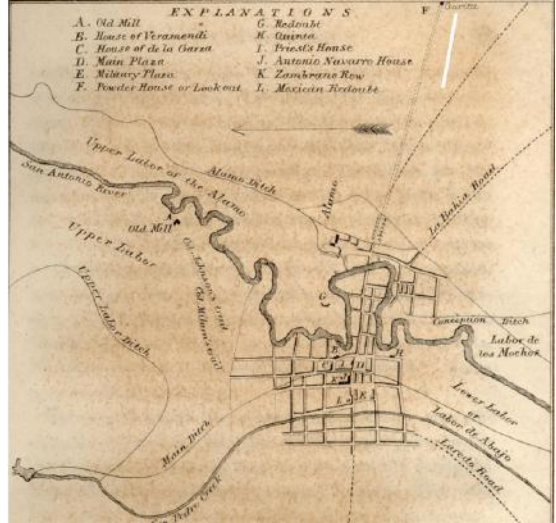


**La Garita: Watch Tower and Powder House**

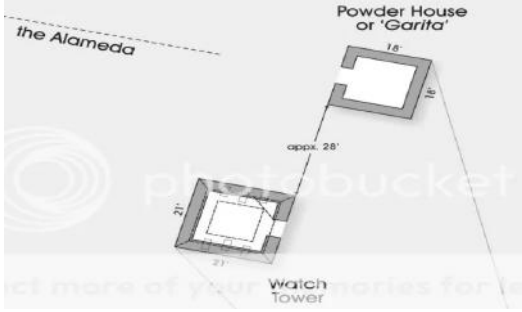
The drawing at left was drawn by Seth Eastman in 1848. Eastman was an artist, map maker, and illustrator for the U.S. Army. He painted and sketched

studies on Native Americans, architectural structures, and landscapes. Eastman was ordered to San Antonio twice and sketched several drawings throughout the city, including *La Garita*. This sketch is rare, perhaps the only one, showing *La Garita*. However, Eastman was not too impressed with the city when he characterized it as "a wretched place, full of desperate characters". Despite his remarks, we are thankful for this rare drawing.

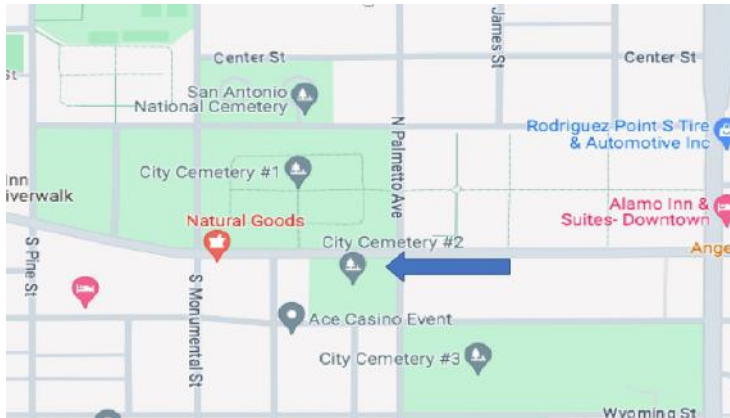
Historical documents evidenced the existence of *La Garita* as follows: In 1828, Frenchman Jean-Louis wrote "On as hill situated to the East of Alamo de Bexar there's an abandoned powder magazine called **La Garita**". Travis, commander of the Alamo, wrote: "... and Col. Bonham got in today, by coming between the **Powder House** and the enemy's encampment". And from Memoirs by Antonio Menchaca regarding Lieutenant Colonel Antonio Cordero's return to San Antonio prior to 1811, he remarked: "He straightened Main Street, ... built a bridge and *Powder House*, also straightened Flores Street.



Left: The map used by Colonel Milam shows *La Garita* in the upper right corner indicated by a white line pointing to it. Elevated on a hill, it would not have been seen approaching it from either south or southeast, and the view would encompass downtown San Antonio.



So, where are the *Garita* and Powder House? In early days, the street leading out from the Alamo was lined with Cottonwood trees and was called Alameda Street and today is known as Commerce Street. In recent years, the base of a wall, along with artifacts were found after archeological digs at City Cemetery No. 2, located at 1400 E. Commerce and N. Palmetto Avenue.



The City Cemeteries started in 1884 and includes San Antonio National Cemetery, which was later moved to Fort Sam Houston Cemetery. *La Garita* was destroyed and, within 50 years, thirty one cemeteries had been established on Powder House Hill. The arrow to the left points to *La Garita* where remains and artifacts have been found.

Many San Antonians, such as General John Bullis, Clara Driscoll, Texas Ranger Rip Ford, Lt. George Kelly, John Lane Sinclair, who wrote "The Eyes of Texas", and many other historical people are buried at City Cemeteries.

### ***La Garita: Watch Tower and Powder House Historical Significance:***

*La Segunda Compañía Volante de San Carlos de Parras*, a company of 100 Spanish lancers, arrived in San Antonio de Bexar in 1803 to boost the existing local garrison. They reinforced the Alamo walls, added battlement, a guard house, a jail, and a large entry. Both the construction of a Colonial Spanish structure consisting of a lookout tower and powder house (*La Garita*), and (*El Cuartel*) barracks is thought to having been built by the same company of soldiers, *La Segunda Compañía Volante de San Carlos de Parras*, dating around 1807 to 1810. Manuel Antonio Cordero Y Bustamante (1753-1823) was governor of Coahuila and acting governor of Texas (1805-1810). He is noted for his military background and building defenses throughout the Southwest. He ordered the construction of the Powder House in San Antonio.

As to its function, the three-story Watch Tower was an observation post in order have a panoramic view to observe hostile forces such as: Indians, foreign troops, unauthorized expeditions, and to give alerts. This time period was trying times for possible invasions, especially from its new neighbor, the United States.

The Powder House also had an interesting function such as storing gun powder, especially to keep it away from the population in a safe and secure structure. Interestingly, it was also a powder mill and produced gun powder, made by using charcoal, bat guano, saltpeter, and Sulphur. During the Confederacy, the Powder House Mill was the South's second largest supplier of gunpowder. Young boys and men, over the fighting age, worked at the mill. Two mill workers died on June 27<sup>th</sup> of 1863.

Other interesting tidbits relate that Mexican General Joaquin Ramirez Sesma rested his troops at the *Garita* before attacking the Alamo. Another report by August Beisenbach (City Clerk) witnessed the exhuming of the remains of Alamo defenders whose bodies were burned on Alameda Street. He saw their remains transferred to Powder House Hill and to Oddfellows Cemetery in 1856, as evidenced by a historical marker.



In the early 1800s, the area became known as **Powder House Hill** and later **Dignowity Hill**. Members of the German shooting society would go down Alameda to conduct their “schuetzenfests” there. By 1901, the City Cemeteries were run by the Parks and Recreation Department. In 1922, the Department opened up San Jose Cemetery. Dignowity Hill is a historical Eastside neighborhood, with a rich legacy, established in the mid-1850s, just blocks away from downtown and originally designed to be an “exclusive residential suburb.” Over the years, it has gone through revitalizations.

### ***EL QUARTEL/EL CUARTEL SAN ANTONIO DE BÉXAR***



Photo by Rueben M.

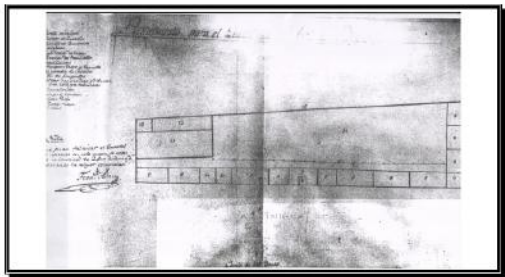
Deep in the heart of San Antonio is a rock wall and a pile of rocks. I noticed a historical plaque on the grounds of Marriot Plaza San Antonio Hotel while attending a meeting. Back in the corner of the parking lot is where I viewed the rocks and the wall’s remains. On the plaque, it noted: El Cuartel/El Cuartel built in 1810 and was where Captain Juan Bautista De Las Casas, on January 22, 1811, attempted to overthrow Spanish rule in Texas and on March 2, 1811 Juan Zambrano led a counter revolution to over throw Casas’s regime.

Interestingly, we can add these two conflicts and battles on our list of battles that occurred in San Antonio. Of more interest was the corresponding dates of El Cuartel being built in 1810 to *La Garita*, (Watch Tower and Powder House) and the *Quartel* being built approximately in the same time period of 1807 – 1810, and about the same period when the company of soldiers *La Segunda Compañía Volante de San Carlos de Parras* reinforced the Alamo walls and converted part of the barracks into a hospital.

The location of ***El Cuartel De San Antonio De Béxar***, the old Spanish fortress is in an area bounded by South Alamo Street, South Presa Street, Nueva Street, and Arciniega Street just south of La Villita. In present day terms, *El Cuartel* is also referenced as “*Cuartel*” translated to quarters, barracks, or headquarters. It was slated for demolition to make way for HemisFair ’68 (World’s Fair) and also in 1718 to coincide with the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of San Antonio. In 1965, Professor Richard G. Santos discovered the site and over a three-year study, published his thesis and documentation on the evidence of *El Cuartel*, thus making it an historical site.

The first recommendation to build the *Quartel* was in 1805. After the Louisiana Purchase the line of defense came down to two remaining presidios in Texas, San Antonio and La Bahia. By 1779, other presidios were outside of the province of Texas. Governor Manuel Antonio Cordero approved construction of a stockade, permanent quarters for the troops, and a fort. The Alamo de Parras Company was one of the additional troops garrisoned in San Antonio and later joined by companies of Nuevo León and Nuevo Santander. The soldiers or *soldados* brought their families to their new assignments, thus adding an acute need for additional housing. A community, or settlement nearby San Antonio de Valero (Alamo) developed and was known as “El Barrio del Álamo.” The commander of Alamo de Parras was not satisfied

with the poor conditions of the quarters at the old presidio on Plaza de Armas and moved the soldiers and families across the San Antonio River to the abandoned mission of San Antonio de Valero which already had rooms, a court yard, corrals, and a church. It offered better protections for the two hundred men, women, and children. By 1803, many members of *the Second Flying Company of San Carlos de Parras* who had initially lived in the Alamo compound moved to more desirable land, surrounding the Mission San Antonio de Valero and nearby *La Pueblo de Valero*. From 1795 until 1809, Pueblo de Valero (*La Villita*) had its own government and elected mayor, Don Vicente de Amador. By 1808, *La Villita* had a population of 153. Texas Governor Manuel Antonio Cordero Y Bustamante proposed to Commander General of the Interior Province of the East, Don Nemecio Salcedo, that he be allowed to construct adequate quarters for troops assigned to Béxar. In one of his correspondence, he states: "Only one of the oxen has been returned; and since the whereabouts of the others is not known, and as they are urgently needed to haul timber for the **construction of the barracks**, which I have been order to build,,,,,[Bexar July 16, 1806."



Copy of the original drawing of the Quarteles on file in the Texas General Land Office

### **SPECIFICATIONS OF EL QUARTEL:**

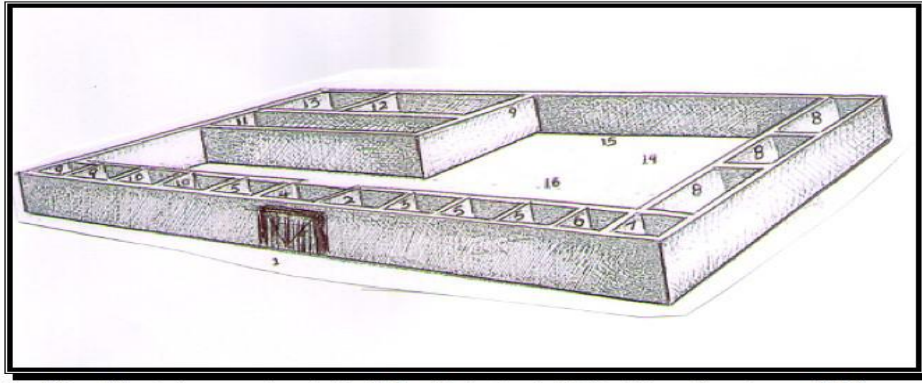
Attached to his proposal were the floor plans and specifications of the *Quartel de San Antonio de Béxar*. Second Lieutenant Don Francisco Adam, the Governor's military advisor, drew the plans on December 6, 1806.

Salcedo advised Cordero to enlarge the proposed structure for a larger force. In addition, he recommended the structure be made out of rock to ensure that it would be permanent and secured. Cordero finally issued the order to begin the construction four months later on, April 10, 1807. José Joaquín de Ugarte, commandant of Béxar presidio, requested the Governor to transfer two expert craftsmen to his command so he could comply with the orders. Several references referring to *El Quartel* are found in Bexar County Archives, this is only one as an example: Jose Ramon de Escovedo petitioned for a lot in La Villita on February 26, 1810. The lot is described: "... of 20 varas frontage and 50 depth on the east band of the San Antonio River bounded on the east by the **Quarteles of the auxiliary militia under construction**.

### **OLD SPANISH FORT:**

The *Quartel* was initially constructed by using stone, however, later in time it was finished in wood. Within the compound walls of the *Quartel* were officers and soldiers of the Spanish crown, equipment for the soldiers, supplies for the commissary, a calabozo (jail), stables, granary, space for arms and ammunition, and a common area.

Even *El Quartel* was not immune to the ravages of war. It witnessed the La Casas Revolution, the Zambrano Counter Revolution, the Battle of Medina, and finally succumbed prior to the Battle of the Alamo. On January 3, 1836 in correspondence to Major General Sam Houston, Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Texas, stated:



Rendition of Cuartel as reconstructed by Richard G. Santos, Archivist of Bexar County compiled from the original Francisco Adam's drawing and specifications

“I have ordered all the guns from the town into the Alamo and the fortification in the town be destroyed”, “... I had not sufficient force to occupy both positions. Hence, **El Cuartel/Cuartel** was destroyed prior to the fall of the Alamo. We know that General Santa Anna had encampments in *La Villita* and *Cuartel* area, so we may only assume the Cuartel was destroyed and the Alamo remained intact.



Photos by Rueben M. Perez

Reduced to just a pile of rocks and a partial wall in the heart of San Antonio, one can only imagine if they could tell the stories of the past. Let us save our landmarks and sacred battlefields, and buildings as reminders that bring us face to face with history and scenes that are sacred. As with so many things in life that have come and gone, we must never lose sight of those noble men and women who forged our history. **La Garita: Watch Tower, Powder House** and **El Cuartel/Cuartel** may fall into oblivion but we must never let them be forgotten.

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Primary Reference:

Pérez, Rueben M. Author, Kuykendall, Bonnie, Editor, ***The History of El Cuartel (El Cuartel)***, ***San Antonio de Béxar***, 2015, Privately Published.

Huddleston, Scott, *Site of historic 'powder house' found*, San Antonio Express News, Oct 21, 2016