



SAN ANTONIO
EXPRESS-NEWS

S.A. TRICENTENNIAL
1718-2018



TRICENTENNIAL
CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY

San Antonio International Film Festival: Tobin Center for the Performing Arts, safilm.com. This annual film fest includes a dynamic lineup of narrative, animation, documentary and experimental shorts and features, providing a platform for independent cinema and filmmakers in San Antonio. \$15. Wednesday-next Sunday.

THURSDAY

Corazon Cinema on Main Plaza: Main Plaza, 115 N. Main Ave., mainplaza.org. Movie series shown at Main Plaza beginning at dusk every Thursday in June, July and August. This week's edition will feature "The Lion King." Free. 8:30-10:30 p.m.

SATURDAY

Latin Roots Music and Food Festival: La Villita Maverick Plaza, 418 Villita St., 210-497-5559, aprisa2009.blogspot.com. Features various Latin cuisines, live performances, vendors and fun activities. Free and open to the public. 1-11 p.m. Aug. 4.

UPCOMING

Thirty Poems for the Tricentennial, A Poetic Legacy: Culture Commons Gallery, 115 Plaza de Armas, sanantonio-300.org. An exhibit of poetry and art commemorating the city's anniversary. Free. 6-9 p.m. Aug. 16.

TECHNOLOGY

TECHNOLOGY HELPED TRANSFORM THE CITY

Telegraph lines and railroads brought growth to San Antonio

FROM EXPRESS-NEWS ARCHIVES

San Antonio today is the seventh-largest city in the U.S., with tech incubators, code-up camps and military cybercommands putting it solidly on track toward embracing the digital future.

Times have changed since its sleepy-town days of the 19th century.

Then, cattle was king and the wonders of the modern world only moseyed their way into a city where walking was the dominant mode of long-distance travel.

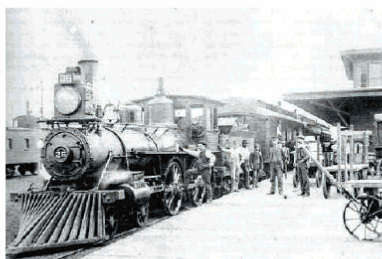
It wasn't until 1865 that telegraph lines were completed in San Antonio, nearly 10 years after the towns of Marshall, Henderson, Rusk, Crockett, Montgomery, Houston and Galveston.

The communications capability, run out of an office in the Menger Hotel, elevated the city's positioning as a hub of the cattle trade. Cattlemen from across South Texas filled downtown's now-historic hotels so they could communicate with their herd drovers and get the latest from the East Coast markets.

"They could get reports, they could get telegrams and find out what was going on with the market, what was going on with their herd," said Bruce



Looking north on Broadway from Houston Street, circa 1930. Trains brought in steel, brick and attractive stone that transformed the cityscape from one- and two-story adobe buildings to something more elegant and stately.



An International & Great Northern train at the station in San Antonio in 1891. The I&GN was wholly owned by the Missouri Pacific at this time. Rail service was a turning point for San Antonio.

half the city's population — turned out to greet that train, and the two days of pomp (there were marching bands and Chinese lanterns) featured the mayors of San Antonio, Austin and Galveston, the Texas governor and Texas railroad moguls.

City leaders had been burned by railroad investments that hadn't panned out, but when the Army left to be near Austin's rail service, they came to the table again.

What's now Fort Sam Houston sprung up — because the city promised the Army rail access.

Rail service was a turning point, Hemphill said, especially when a second, north-south service arrived in 1881. Rail service eventually reached San Antonio from California, making San Antonio the national crossroads it remains today.

Within 10 years, San Antonio's population soared to 53,000. Trains brought in steel, brick and attractive stone that transformed the cityscape from one- and two-story adobe buildings to something more elegant and stately. Pipes and pumps came in for a water system, tracks for streetcar service.

"So all of a sudden San Antonio goes from being this rural place on the edge of the prairie to being a modern city," Hemphill said. "Railroad just made that much of a difference."

Shackelford, Brown Foundation curator at the Witte Museum.

It was much the same with rail service.

San Antonio "was in fact the last major city in America, in the U.S.A. to obtain railroad service," said Hugh Hemphill, author of "The Railroads of San Antonio and South Central Texas."

By the time the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio-line chugged into the city in 1877, the Alamo City was more than ready to hear its whistle.

Some 8,000 people —

A longer version of this report by Lynn Brezozsky ran Feb. 11, 2015. Read it at ExpressNews.com.