



The History of the Riverwalk

LINK: <https://www.sanantonioreverwalk.com/history-of-the-riverwalk/>

The downtown loop of the famed San Antonio Riverwalk, or Paseo del Rio, is a 2 1/2 mile stretch of beautifully landscaped waterfront that features many of San Antonio's most spectacular hotels, restaurants, night clubs, bars, shopping centers and businesses. It is one of the most dynamic tourist attractions in the entire state of Texas, pouring nearly \$800 million a year into the local economy. While it is an amazing and romantic place to visit, that wasn't always true.

In the beginning, Spanish Explorers used the waterway to supply water to their missions. Mission San Antonio de Valero, also known as The Alamo, was the first to benefit from it. The river flooded its banks many times. In September 1921 the worst flood in its history killed over fifty people and caused millions of dollars in damage to the city.

City planners struggled over what to do while large debates rang among the people.

One man, an architect named Robert H. H. Hugman proposed a plan that would turn the area into a beautiful urban park with apartments, dining, shopping, boat rides and walk ways lit with old-fashioned street lamps. He wanted it to be just as if one were walking in Venice, Italy. After convincing city officials and business leaders of the financial benefits of his plan, the dream became a reality and the riverwalk was eventually sculpted into the masterpiece you see today.



Mr. Robert H. H. Hugman

Later, in the 1930's, many efforts were made to clean and beautify the river by groups like the San Antonio Advertising Club, Daughters of the American Revolution San Antonio chapter, and the San Antonio Real Estate Board. Hugman worked many years with the city to construct the plans for the riverwalk, however, despite their best efforts it would be years before the riverwalk could be called a success due to low business volumes and a high level of crime. The 1960's, on the other hand, was a great time for improvement and growth. Paseo Del Rio Association was established in 1969 to promote the continuous improvement and development of the riverwalk.

Today, the people of San Antonio continue to preserve its history and beauty and develop its economic resources. It truly is one of the greatest vacation destinations in the United States.



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