

## **Stop 20 – The Legacy of Spain**

How did the tiny Iberian nation of Spain spread its culture, religion, law, and language over so much of the Americas? It took a deliberate combination of cross and sword. On the frontier, Spanish institutions were spread by establishing towns, presidios, and missions. The union of church and state in Spain made it possible for both to achieve their goals. The Spanish crown supported the work of the missionaries because successful missions expanded colonial territory. Missionaries depended on royal funding and authority to establish missions which spread the Christian Faith.

After the Christopher Columbus voyages, beginning in 1492, the Spanish Crown was driven to expand its empire. The desire for lands rich in gold, silver, and other resources was strong. The desire to spread Spanish culture was just as strong. Today, San Antonio Missions and Texas are not under Spanish control.

What is the true Spanish legacy in San Antonio? Evidence of the rich tapestry of Spanish culture surrounds you. Look for streets, neighborhoods, and businesses with Spanish names. English is the primary language but listen for Spanish voices. Spanish words are integrated into everyday use; vanilla, cafeteria, canyon, and tobacco, are just a few. Peaches, figs, pomegranates, and wheat are a few of the foods brought by the Spanish. Almost all of the three dozen major rivers in Texas have Spanish names: Medina, Colorado, Guadalupe, Rio Grande. A large percentage of the San Antonio community still practices Catholicism, brought by the Spanish. Was Spain successful in influencing the development of Texas and the Americas? You decide.