

ETHNIC TOURISM DEVELOPMENT, PLACE IDENTITY,
AND PLACE IMAGE IN CENTRAL TEXAS COMMUNITIES

THESIS

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By

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, geographers and other social scientists have observed a renewed interest in ethnic heritage among North Americans, particularly those of European descent. While there is considerable debate regarding the causes, expressions, and implications of this resurgence in ethnic identity, it is clear that more and more people in the United States are exploring their own ethnic roots, as well as the diverse ethnic heritage of the nation. As a result, Americans are demanding more opportunities for “ethnic experiences.” This trend, coupled with the failing of many small-town economies as a result of deindustrialization and urbanization, is encouraging many communities to maintain their ethnic distinctiveness in an effort to attract tourists (Conzen 1990).

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the motivations, expectations, and mechanisms behind ethnic tourism development in communities in Central Texas and to identify and evaluate the impacts of ethnic tourism, particularly as it applies to the creation and modification of place identity. Interviews with tourism planners and community representatives, field observation, and the analysis of a variety of primary and secondary data sources provide the basis for this research. This exploration of the ethnic tourism development process and its costs and benefits will serve to inform other communities that may be considering their own plans for ethnic tourism development. While case

studies examining the development and impacts of ethnic tourism in American ethnic communities have previously been published (see Hoelscher 1998a and Danielson 1991), this study is believed to be the first comparative study of ethnic tourism development and its impacts as well as the first to focus on ethnic tourism in Central Texas.

Literature Review

The intent of this paper is to explore the relationship between ethnic tourism and place identity. Because both of these concepts are difficult to define and have been used in a variety of contexts within the existing literature, it is necessary to explain these terms and how they will be applied throughout this study before beginning the analysis.

Ethnic tourism defined

Scholars use the term “ethnic tourism” in a variety of ways. The most common usage is best summarized by Smith (1989, 4), who states:

Ethnic tourism is marketed to the public in terms of the ‘quaint’ customs of indigenous and often exotic peoples... Frequently, these tourist targets are far removed from the ‘beaten path’ and attract only a limited number of visitors motivated by curiosity and elite peer approval.

Additionally, Graburn (1989, 32) describes ethnic tourism as “a combination of Culture and Nature tourism,” or a way of “[approaching] Nature through Her people.” In this sense, some scholars use the term “ethnic tourism” synonymously with “indigenous tourism” (Amador 1997).

This anthropological definition of ethnic tourism dominates the current literature. (See also Adams 1997; Adams 1990; Anderson 1994; Klieger 1990; Sutherland 1996; Van den Berghe 1995; and Volkman 1990). However, a growing number of scholars have begun

to challenge this perspective and suggest that the designation of “ethnic tourism” can also be applied to travel undertaken to explore one’s own ethnic heritage (Moscardo and Pearce 1999). In recent years, broader definitions have been put forth that recognize the impacts of the mass immigration movements of the past century on modern-day tourist flows. As King (1994, 173-4) points out:

The other and less frequent use of the term ethnic tourism is where it applies to travel movements whose primary motivation is ethnic reunion... For ethnic reunion travellers, such motivation commonly derives from a sense of belonging to or identifying with a way of life that has been left behind... Ethnic tourism to ‘exotic’ destinations suggests the opposite, namely a pleasure derived from the juxtaposition of *contrasts*...

King’s and other studies regarding tourism for the purposes of ethnic reunion (see Thanopoulos and Wall 1988; Ostrowski 1991) have focused on immigrants’ and their descendants’ visitation of their ethnic homelands and do not address tourism to ethnic settlements outside the country of origin. However, a few scholars have recently begun to view tourism to American ethnic communities as a form of ethnic tourism. (See Hoelscher 1998a; Danielson 1991.) This approach to ethnic tourism will be employed in this thesis.

Place identity defined

Equally vague in the literature is the definition of “place identity.” It is a term whose meaning seems to be taken for granted – it is often used by scholars, but rarely explicitly defined.

Steele (1981, 184) suggests that a place identity is established when a setting “has some consistent themes to its form, materials, items, arrangements, and symbolism.”

Hough (1990, 180) conceives of place identity in terms of the “peculiar characteristics of

a location that tell us something about its physical and social environment,” the unique natural or cultural attributes that distinguish a place from all others. Garnham (1985) echoes Hough’s argument when he speaks of “place identity” as the definable and unique character of a place, using the term interchangeably with “spirit of place” and “Genius Loci.” Garnham has identified the major components of identity to be physical features and appearance, observable activities and functions, and meanings or symbols. Thus, there seems to be consensus that, as Barke and Harrop (1994) argue, “identity” is what a place is actually (objectively) like, and can be distinguished from “image,” which refers to how a place is perceived externally. However, it is important to note, as Massey (1997, 32) points out, that places are not restricted to “single, pregiven identities” because they are “constructed out of the juxtaposition, the intersection, the articulation, of multiple social relations.”

When exploring the relationship between place identity and tourism development, “image” is a crucial consideration. Deliberate image creation is often central to economic development strategies, such as tourism promotion (Pagano and Bowman 1995).

Sternberg (1997) explains the origin of tourist-oriented place images as follows:

Like other products, tourism products must be carefully composed to provide to consumers (tourists) evocative images... [Tourism] enterprises have to appeal to the tourist’s fond desires and imaginative associations. To do so they have to draw on myths, histories and fantasies, either ones associated with the locality or others taken from the universal cultural domain. (Sternberg 1997, 955)

Pagano and Bowman (1995) and Sternberg (1997) suggest that “image” refers not only to the subjective concept of a place held by the public but also to the character projected by a place to the public. This study focuses on the latter aspect of image,

specifically how ethnic tourism destinations are presented to the public for the purposes of attracting tourists.

Issues surrounding ethnic tourism development

The existing literature raises a number of issues that are germane to this study of ethnic tourism development in Central Texas. Tourism is increasingly being viewed as a way for rural ethnic communities to bolster declining economies. However, ethnic tourism development can also benefit communities by encouraging the protection of cultural resources (Gunn 1979), helping to justify and pay for the conservation of historic sites and buildings (WTO 1994), and conserving cultural heritage that might otherwise be lost as the result of general development (WTO 1994). Case studies demonstrate that asserting a community's heritage through the promotion of ethnic tourism can also be a source of community pride. For example, Danielson's (1991) case study of the effects of tourism to the annual St. Lucia festival held in Lindsborg, Kansas, demonstrated that the performance of ethnic traditions for visitors affirmed the town's cultural uniqueness and bolstered the community's sense of self-esteem.

Despite evidence that ethnic tourism development can be an important force in promoting a sense of community among residents and in asserting the individuality of some towns and cities, tourism scholars have also expressed concern that tourism development can also have the opposite effects on host communities. Because the manipulation of culture involved in selling places often involves a manipulation of history, tourism development can lead to tension and conflict. Because cultural resources can have different meanings and interpretations to different residents, tourism

development may encourage residents to disagree as to which events and objects are worthy of public display and how these events and objects should be presented (Philo and Kearns 1993). Furthermore, in order to be appealing to tourists, communities may try to create a familiar, attractive image and offer standardized accommodations and amenities that can be found in any number of host communities (Philo and Kearns 1993). Thus, “the practice of selling places may even generate sameness or blandness despite its appearance of bringing geographical difference into the fold of contemporary economic and political discourse” (Philo and Kearns 1993, 21).

Therefore, inherent in the development of ethnic tourism is the idea that in addition to promotion and advertising, the “product” (i.e., the place) must be adapted to be more desirable to the “market” (Hall 1997, Holcomb 1993). In communities where vestiges of ethnic identity are waning or have completely disappeared, there have been “strenuous efforts to reverse the trend by reinventing the signs and symbols of that [ethnic] presence” (Conzen 1990, 246). This reinvention of ethnicity raises concerns about how tourism development may compromise the “authenticity” of places for both visitors and residents.

For example, some places use cultural symbols as merely a “design theme” to attract commerce and tourism by creating the appearance of an “authentic” ethnic community where one no longer exists, if it ever did (Claiborne and Aidala 1974). Such conscious efforts to “ethnicize” the look and feel of a community can undermine the integrity of the ethnic landscape, resulting in the creation of “ersatz,” or synthetic, markers of ethnicity (Conzen 1990, 245).

The idea of what constitutes “authenticity” is hotly debated among scholars of tourism

and many agree that authenticity is in the eye of the beholder. However, as MacCannell (1976) argues, the search for “authentic” landscapes is a motivation for many tourists who seek to escape temporarily the “rootlessness” of contemporary life. Therefore, the use of contrived symbols to convey a sense of ethnic identity or presence within a community may serve to undermine a place’s appeal to some tourists. Alternatively, Hoelscher (1998a, 17) asserts that increasing suburbanization and the destruction of traditional place-based communities are generating a demand for ethnic places, regardless of whether they are “conspicuously constructed to impart an ethnic identity.”

The use of ethnic symbols does not necessarily imply constructed place identity. Rather, the ethnic place identity expressed in some communities may reflect what Herbert Gans (1979) refers to as “symbolic ethnicity.” Symbolic ethnicity transforms cultural patterns into symbols that are “clear and visible in meaning” and “easily expressed and felt” by later-generation ethnics without having to be incorporated into everyday behavior (Gans 1979, 9). Gans views the formation and adoption of symbolic ethnicities as a natural progression of the processes of assimilation and acculturation. Therefore, many places that employ ethnic symbols are reflecting the influence of modernity on the actual experiences of their ethnic residents.

Despite much research regarding the myriad costs and benefits of tourism development, the tourism literature has paid little attention to the effects of tourism on the identity of places. As Hall (1997, 69) states:

[T]he means by which *places* are created, and the authenticity they have for tourists and the people which make up those places, particularly in western cities and regions, has not drawn much attention within the mainstream tourism literature in recent years...

To further the understanding of the relationship between ethnic tourism and place identity, ethnic tourism development, its consequences for the creation and transformation of “places,” and its impacts on the host community are the focus of this research.

Methodology

This study addresses the relationships between ethnic tourism and place identity by focusing on three main research questions:

- ❑ **How and why do communities identify ethnic tourism development as an economic development strategy?**
- ❑ **How does ethnic tourism development affect the place identity and place image of host communities?**
- ❑ **Do the host communities display evidence of constructed or “ersatz” ethnic identity? If so, how is the use of contrived symbols justified by tourism planners and the community?**

The study area

This study evaluates three communities in Central Texas: Fredericksburg, Clifton, and West (Figure 1). These three communities share a host of commonalities that facilitate comparison. Each community was settled by “old-stock” European immigrants during the mid-1800s, and today each promotes its ethnic heritage as a tourism attraction: German heritage in Fredericksburg, Norwegian heritage in Clifton, and Czech heritage in West. I selected communities with varying ethnic backgrounds to provide a wider perspective which will account for differences in ethnic tourism development that may be the result of cultural influences.

Although Clifton and West are of comparable size (with estimated 1998 populations

Location of study communities

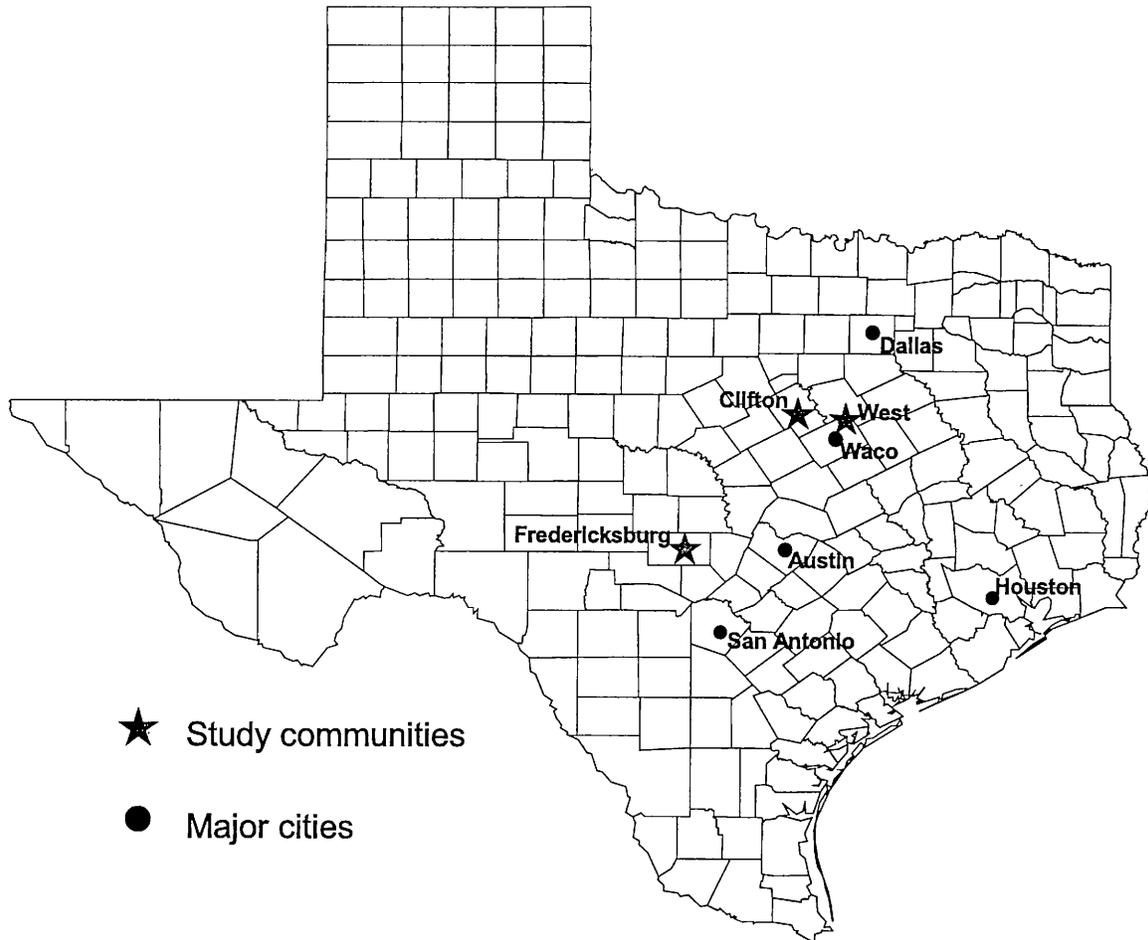


Figure 1

of 3577 and 2841, respectively), Fredericksburg is substantially larger with an estimated 1998 population of 8550 (Texas State Data Center 1998). Despite this difference in population size, Fredericksburg has been included in this study because its socioeconomic structure and ethnic settlement history are notably similar to that of the other study communities. Furthermore, it is probably the best-known and most successful example of ethnic tourism development in the state, with over one million tourists visiting annually. Additionally, I selected these three communities because they represent a continuum of tourism development. Fredericksburg has been a popular and well-developed tourist attraction for many years, while West represents a more seasonal tourism attraction, with visitation being driven primarily by its annual Czech heritage festival, West Fest, which has been attracting visitors for over twenty years. Clifton is in the earliest stages of tourism development, having only been promoting tourism since 1997, and represents a newly emerging ethnic tourism destination. By analyzing communities at different stages of tourism development, this research contributes to a broader overall understanding of the ethnic tourism development process.

Methods

This study employs a variety of methods, but relies primarily on qualitative, humanistic methodology. As Tuan (1976, 266) explains:

Humanistic geography achieves an understanding of the human world by studying the people's relations with nature, their geographical behavior as well as their feeling and ideas in regard to space and place.

I chose the humanistic perspective for this study because my research questions focus on the impacts of tourism development on communities' perception, presentation, and promotion of themselves. To analyze this relationship, one must understand the

motivations and expectations underlying tourism development, the ways in which a community perceived itself in the past, and how a community's perception of itself changes as a result of tourism development. Because this information is the product of "human perceptions, impressions, and emotional feelings about place" (Hardwick 1993, 8), it cannot be gathered using quantitative methods, but rather it must be provided by tourism planners and other residents themselves.

To this end, I gathered information regarding the tourism planning and development process and the expected and actual impacts of tourism on the study communities through interviews with tourism planners, representatives of the host ethnic groups, and other residents. I initially made contact with tourism planners, officers of organized ethnic organizations, and directors of historical societies via phone or email using contact information provided by each study community's website. The initial interviewees recommended additional informants, whom I subsequently contacted. The appendix lists the informants interviewed in each study community.

I asked informants to provide information regarding how and why tourism was identified as an economic development strategy, to identify positive and negative impacts of tourism on the community, to assess how well the place image projected to tourists represents both the host ethnic group and the community as a whole, and to describe how the look and feel of the community have been impacted as a result of tourism development. Because my intention is to provide an impressionistic account of the impacts of ethnic tourism on place identity and place image, with residents' opinions of tourism development a tangential consideration, I did not adopt stringent criteria for the selection of informants, although I did attempt to represent as many viewpoints as

possible. Thus, the informants' responses should not be interpreted as necessarily representative of the views of the community as a whole.

I obtained additional qualitative data regarding each community's tourism development process, settlement history, and the impacts of ethnic tourism by examining marketing and promotional materials, newspaper articles, and other secondary sources. Commemorative editions of local newspapers proved to be an extremely useful source for information about each community's perception of itself and visions of its future at various points in time. Each study community was founded during the mid-1800s, and local newspapers produced commemorative centennial editions well before large-scale ethnic tourism plans were implemented. By reflecting the communities' goals, values and expectations prior to tourism development, these editions allowed comparison with current marketing efforts and special editions to determine how the community's presentation and perception of itself has changed since the inception of ethnic tourism.

Field observation in each community determined the extent to which the cultural landscape currently displays visual evidence of the influence of the host ethnic group, as conveyed by architectural elements, symbols and motifs, naming conventions, landscape design, and other physical manifestations of ethnicity. I compared these observations with historical photographs and long-time residents' oral accounts to assess how ethnic tourism development has modified the place identity and place image of the study communities.

I also analyzed current promotional materials, such as brochures, visitor's guides, and billboards, to determine how the host ethnic group is portrayed to visitors, to determine the extent to which these materials promote amenities and attractions that do not reflect

the communities' ethnic heritage, and to identify the ethnic symbols and slogans employed to attract ethnic tourists.

Finally, I analyzed modern representations of ethnic heritage and culture (as they appear in tourism attractions, ethnic displays, promotional materials, and the cultural landscape) to reveal the extent to which each community displays vestiges of contrived or "ersatz" ethnicity. I compiled historical sketches for each community using a combination of primary sources, such as interview data and first-hand historical accounts, and secondary sources, such as newspaper articles, local histories compiled by residents, ethnic histories compiled by scholars, and theses produced by geographers and historians. I then evaluated modern representations of ethnic heritage and culture in light of the historical sketches to identify possible misrepresentations or misinterpretations of the host ethnic group and its culture and to determine how tourism development efforts might be disseminating or encouraging such misrepresentations.

Quantitative data, including census records, business listings, and economic indicators, supplements the data gathered using qualitative methods. I examined ancestry data from the census to assess how well the apparently homogeneous place identity fostered and promoted by ethnic tourism reflects the actual demographics of each host community. Analysis of historical trends in business names and types appearing in community and telephone directories demonstrates the extent to which ethnic tourism has encouraged the establishment of ethnic businesses as well as the ethnicization of the names of non-ethnic businesses, both of which contribute to a more ethnic place identity. For the purposes of this study, ethnic businesses are defined as those having a tangible connection to the host ethnic group and include businesses such as German bakeries, Czech restaurants, and

Norwegian import shops. Nonethnic businesses are those which do not have obvious linkages to the host ethnic group and include businesses such as service stations, supermarkets, restaurants which do not specialize in the cuisine of the host ethnic group, and antique stores other than those specializing in imports from the country of origin of the host ethnic group. I also analyzed trends in the naming of businesses to incorporate ethnic surnames that reflect owners' membership in the host ethnic group to determine whether business owners would be more likely to advertise their ancestry as a result of ethnic tourism development.

While one interpretation of humanistic geography holds that the human geographer "does not need theories of his own, because he is concerned with the theories expressed in the actions of the individual being investigated" (Guelke 1974, 198), the methodology employed in this study is more closely aligned with the interpretation proposed by Smith (1981), which "admits exploratory hypotheses, generalizations and explanatory theory" (Johnston 1983). In Smith's methodology, data are gathered through participant observation. From observations and experiences gained "transactionally" come analytical constructs and understandings of behavior from which the researcher can move toward generalizations based on "comparative analysis of the ostensibly unique" (Smith 1981, 297; Johnston 1983).

Thus, I compared the qualitative and quantitative data generated for each unique study community. From this comparison, I drew preliminary generalities regarding ethnic tourism development and its impacts on the place identity and place image of Central Texas communities. The data comparison also provided insight into the nature of the relationship between place identity and place image for ethnic tourism host communities.

From my findings, I identified a number of questions that merit further inquiry. The answers to these questions, combined with and building upon my preliminary findings, will contribute to the development of a theoretical understanding of ethnic tourism and its impacts on the places which serve as host communities.

CHAPTER 2

FREDERICKSBURG: “TAKE A TRIP TO THE OLD WORLD”

The city of Fredericksburg is today perhaps the best-known and most successful example of ethnic tourism development in Texas. This Hill Country community of 8,500 residents is currently hosting over one million visitors, and tourism generates more than \$2 million in sales tax revenue each year (Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce 1999; Texas Department of Economic Development 1998).

Although the city’s founders could not have anticipated Fredericksburg’s current status as a major tourism attraction, they originally laid out the city with an eye toward meeting the needs of visitors. The last stagecoach stop between San Antonio and El Paso, Fredericksburg hosted visitors as early as 1848 (Jordan 1961). In a show of Texan hospitality and German *Gemuetlichkeit* (friendship), the descendants of the earliest settlers named the city’s streets so that, travelling west on Main Street from the center of town (or in the direction from San Antonio), the first letters of the names of the cross streets spell “All Welcome.” Heading east on Main Street from the center of town, the first letters of the names of the cross streets spell “Come Back” (Edwards 1994). While the unusually wide Main Street was designed to allow ox-drawn carts to easily navigate U-turns, it now provides numerous parking spaces for tourists, in addition to accommodating substantial volumes of vehicular traffic.

Although visitors have long played an important role in the city's economy, tourism in Fredericksburg during the mid- to late twentieth century was not deliberately planned and developed until recently. Tourism evolved gradually as greater numbers of visitors began discovering the area's many environmental and cultural attractions, including peach orchards, Enchanted Rock, deer hunting, wildflowers, and, most recently, the city's German-American heritage.

Settlement history of Fredericksburg

A group of immigrants from the northern and western states of Germany founded Fredericksburg in 1846. As they had with many European immigrant groups who came to America during the mid-nineteenth century, overpopulation and a lack of employment opportunities at home motivated the German immigrants to come to Texas, seeking economic opportunities, social betterment, political freedom, and adventure in the New World (Jordan 1961).

A German emigration company called the *Mainzer Adelsverein* facilitated immigration to Texas, motivated by the possibility of economic and political gain in America as well as philanthropic urges (Jordan 1961). The *Adelsverein* chose the Republic of Texas as a suitable site for German settlement for a number of practical reasons: They sought a physical environment suitable for German people; an area that was sparsely populated and thus could be easily converted to a German colony; a site not already under the control of a powerful nation; and available, cheap land (Jordan 1961). The company bought a tract of land from the Fisher-Miller grant, a very isolated tract which lay

between the Llano and Colorado rivers and extended “an infinite distance to the west” (Jordan 1961, 11).

When the first group of settlers arrived in Galveston, they realized that the Fisher-Miller grant was far too remote for immediate settlement. The immigrants decided to form a string of settlements from their camp at Indianola (then called Carlshaven) to the Llano River, which bordered the grant (Jordan 1961). Fredericksburg’s “sister city,” New Braunfels, was the first settlement to be formed. However, there was not enough land available to provide the 160- and 320-acre holdings promised to the immigrants, so each settler received a half-acre town lot and 10 acres of farmland (Biesele 1930). When John O. Meusebach arrived in 1845, he realized the need to establish a new settlement to provide land for additional immigrants.

In August of 1845, Meusebach led an expedition to select another location en route to the Fisher-Miller lands. His party found a site a few miles north of the Pedernales River where the land was fertile and timber was plentiful, and they purchased 10,000 acres (Biesele 1930). Fredericksburg’s first citizens left New Braunfels on April 23, 1846, arriving on May 8. As in New Braunfels, each settler received a half-acre town lot and a 10-acre farmstead (Jordan 1961). Since the *Adelsverein* had never seen the land it had purchased from the Fisher-Miller grant, the Germans were surprised to learn that their promised land was rugged hill country with only small areas of arable soil, isolated from civilization, and inhabited by hostile tribes of Native Americans (Jordan 1961).

Because the physical environment was radically different from that in Germany, the settlers were forced to adapt to Texas’s climate, soils, flora, and fauna (Jordan 1961). The adoption of new farming practices, the cultivation of different crops, and even the

development of the city of Fredericksburg itself all reflected the adaptation of German culture to life on the Texas frontier. As Jordan (1961, 77) wrote, “As originally laid out, Fredericksburg was a curious blend of a German and an American town.” The first town plan, laid out in 1846, called for very wide streets, unheard of in Germany, and a large, European-style central square, both of which suggested that the planners envisioned a fairly large town (Jordan 1961). Although the planners intended that the central square, or *Marktplatz*, would serve as the city’s business district, business establishments instead sprung up along the length of Main Street (Jordan 1961). Planners also originally expected that the town lots would serve as the primary residences of farmers who would travel to their farm plots each day; however, the settlers soon realized that the harsh physical environment was better served by widely spaced, scattered farmsteads (Jordan 1961). This realization led to the development of a uniquely Fredericksburg invention, the Sunday House (*Fredericksburg Standard*, 1 May 1946). Sunday Houses were small, usually one-room houses where the farmers would stay from Saturday until Monday morning so the family could attend church in town on Sunday.

In spite of several serious epidemics during those first years, Fredericksburg continued to grow. Fort Martin Scott was established in 1848, providing protection against the Comanches, and the opening of the main road between San Antonio and El Paso, along which Fredericksburg was the last stagecoach stop, stimulated business (Jordan 1961; Loeffler 1999). By 1850, Fredericksburg had become the seventh largest town in Texas with 1235 inhabitants, of whom 913 were foreign-born (U. S. Census Bureau 1850). The period between 1850 and 1860 marked the end of German immigration to Texas, owing to increasing trouble with the Comanches and friction between the German and Anglo

settlers over the issue of slavery (Jordan 1961). Furthermore, the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 essentially stopped all overseas migration to the United States.

Despite the stemming of the influx of German settlers, Fredericksburg remained “one of the most thoroughly Germanized portions of the United States,” owing to the town’s geographical isolation and as well as the self-imposed social isolation of its German population (Jordan 1961, 122). The German settlers, being generally better educated and more conservative than their Anglo neighbors, tended to segregate themselves during the early years of settlement (Lich 1981). Because this segregation led to profound feelings of isolation, the early German Texans turned to their old customs for comfort, becoming even more “German” than they had been in Germany (Lich 1981). With the outbreak of World War I, however, suspicion and distrust of German-Americans and a ban on the use of the German language in schools and in public encouraged the Germans’ assimilation into “American” society (Lich 1981). The paving of Highway 87 in the 1930s, which facilitated transportation between Fredericksburg and San Antonio, further fostered assimilation (Jordan 1961). Prior to the highway improvement, Fredericksburg’s remote location in western Texas had kept the predominantly German community well isolated from the influence of outsiders.

Despite the Germans’ eventual assimilation into the larger American culture, their years of isolation allowed them to preserve “the majority of German traditions in Texas” (Kammlah 1999). Fredericksburg today retains its distinctly German flavor, which in recent years has become an increasingly important tourism attraction for the community and region.

The evolution of tourism in Fredericksburg

Many communities deliberately turn to ethnic tourism development as a way to revitalize declining economies or replace businesses that have closed or relocated. However, ethnic tourism development in Fredericksburg was not a conscious effort, but rather a “natural progression” that evolved from residents’ gradual realization of the economic potential of tourism (Kammlah 1999).

At the time of Fredericksburg’s centennial celebration in 1946, the community did not anticipate how important tourism would be to its future economic development. The special centennial edition of the *Fredericksburg Standard* reported that the establishment of soil conservation cooperatives, the encouragement of small industry, rural school consolidation, the creation of a freshwater lake in Gillespie County, and the construction of a recreation center with a swimming pool would be the cornerstones of the area’s progress (*Fredericksburg Standard*, 1 May 1946).

During the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, Fredericksburg increasingly found itself in the public eye and in the press as a result of the Hill Country’s popularity as a retreat for Texas politicians, notably Gillespie County native Lyndon Baines Johnson who maintained his “Summer White House” in the area (*Fredericksburg Standard*, 28 April 1971; Kammlah 1999). In addition, the Hill Country had long been a popular tourism destination and the location of second homes belonging to a number of influential families who would bring their children to the many summer camps in nearby Kerrville (Kammlah 1999). One such family, the Montgomery family of Dallas, sparked Fredericksburg’s restoration efforts by funding the restoration of the old Gillespie County Courthouse (now the Pioneer Memorial Library) (Kammlah 1999). Residents eventually

began to find ways to take advantage of the slowly increasing numbers of visitors and interest in the city's restoration efforts.

By the early 1970s, the community was just beginning to recognize tourism as a force shaping Fredericksburg's economy and future development. In the "Progress" section of the 125th anniversary edition of the *Fredericksburg Standard*, a review of the city's growth and progress over the previous twenty-five years gave only passing mention to the rise of tourism in its final paragraph:

Fredericksburg has become a tourist center, being located most center in the state on north-south and east-west major highways. Today it has a population of 5326, while Gillespie County's is 10,277. (*Fredericksburg Standard*, 28 April 1971)

While "insiders" might have been slow to recognize the possibilities tourism could offer the community, a number of outside entrepreneurs from metropolitan areas such as Houston and Dallas began to open retail businesses to capitalize upon Fredericksburg's appeal:

The local Fredericksburgers, when faced with those kind of decisions maybe in the mid-'60s or late '50s, would probably have not gone to the bank and taken out those loans to create those shops and gone for that kind of a niche market. It was the outsiders who did it. (Camfield 1999)

Camfield feels an inherent cultural apprehension about economic risk-taking might have been responsible for the locals' reluctance to become involved in the early development of tourism in Fredericksburg. "There was a lot of skepticism from the locals, but everyone benefited from the success," he added.

By the early 1980s, Fredericksburg's civic leaders began to recognize tourism's potential for bolstering the city's economy. At this time, they decided to begin actively promoting tourism. Formal tourism development efforts began with the passage of an

ordinance to collect a hotel-motel tax and the creation of a Convention and Visitors Bureau to promote overnight stays. During these early stages of tourism development, visitors came to Fredericksburg to experience the spring wildflowers, peach orchards, outdoor recreation, and hunting opportunities. As Chamber of Commerce Director and life-long Fredericksburg resident Joe Kammlah explained, “It just so happened that there were Germans in the Hill Country, but [the visitors] were here for the Hill Country and not necessarily for the German influence.” However, over the past five years the number of visitors coming to Fredericksburg to experience its German heritage has increased. A 1996 survey revealed that 19% of tourists cited the German culture and charm of the city as their reason for visiting. Only shopping (25%) and historic buildings and sites (20%) were more frequently cited as tourism attractions (Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce 1996).

Most development and promotion of tourism in Fredericksburg today results from the efforts of local residents and business owners, rather than from top-down efforts of entities such as the Chamber of Commerce. However, the planning of some larger events is often a cooperative effort involving the Chamber of Commerce as well as the City of Fredericksburg, fundraising groups, and other community organizations. For example, the Pedernales Creative Arts Alliance sponsors the annual Oktoberfest, which has generated thousands of dollars for Market Square’s restoration, as well as other civic improvements. The city supports the festival by providing police assistance, staff time and infrastructure free of charge while the Chamber of Commerce assists in promotion (Loeffler 1999). While local German organizations, such as the German Heritage Foundation, do not take an active role in tourism planning, they are reportedly “very

supportive” of the area’s ethnic tourism and assist with certain aspects of tourism development (Kammlah 1999). For example, members volunteered to make German-language signs to hang outside businesses for the city’s 150th anniversary. They also help with the development of interpretive materials and act as contacts for people wanting to learn about or promote some aspect of German heritage (Kammlah 1999).

Although Fredericksburg’s planners do not actively dictate the types of businesses it will allow in the city through zoning laws and similar restrictions, they have enacted sign and landscape ordinances that are intended to preserve the quaint, vernacular look of the community. Kammlah explained that the idea is not to dictate the appearance of buildings, but to protect the city’s historic, German-Texan ambience. He feels that these ordinances not only create a more aesthetic atmosphere for tourists, but also preserve the German sense of tidiness and order that characterized the early days of settlement in Fredericksburg (Kammlah 1999).

Despite occasionally inconveniencing residents and business owners, the restrictions have been successful in maintaining the historic look and feel of Fredericksburg. While the charm and quaintness of some ethnic communities is compromised by intrusions of modern fast food establishments and mini-marts, Fredericksburg’s ordinances have allowed residents and visitors to benefit from these businesses without disrupting the character of the city. For example, McDonald’s, faced with the choice of conforming to the landscape regulation or relocating its proposed franchise, designed a restaurant in the dominant Fredericksburg style, complete with limestone façade and covered front porch (Figure 2), while the local Wal-Mart agreed to landscape its parking lot with trees.



Figure 2. Fredericksburg's McDonald's

Community residents have reportedly registered few complaints regarding the ordinances (Kammlah 1999). Two informants reported that some community members feel the sign ordinance was not well conceived, and as a result, implementation has focused on size and height issues rather than resulting in a unified stylistic profile for the city's signage, as originally intended (Camfield 1999; Wieser 1999). Furthermore, the city did not enforce the ordinance for eight to ten years after its adoption, leading to a number of violations and a push for enforcement by a number of local residents. However, a number of residents are reported to perceive current enforcement efforts as a "little heavy-handed" so there has been some recent backlash from citizens (Camfield 1999). This animosity has centered on the personalities involved with the enforcement rather than negativity toward tourism development (Camfield 1999). Tourism planners have nonetheless deemed the ordinances sufficiently successful to lead to preliminary

discussion regarding the possibility of attempting to enact similar controls in a four- to five-mile radius around the city to keep the entrance to Fredericksburg free of “visual pollution” (Camfield 1999).

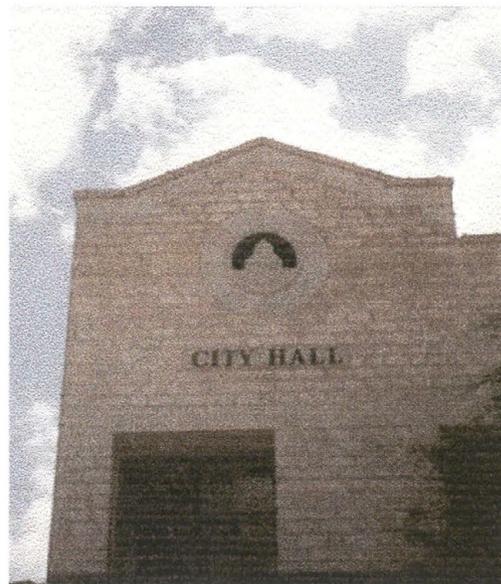
The Historical Review Board is another important factor in preserving Fredericksburg’s vernacular Texan-German “look.” Residents must consult this panel, composed of local architects and city planners, before any changes can be made to the façades of buildings within the city’s historic district. While there are a few steadfast rules and the board does have some limited enforcement powers, the board’s intent is not to tell people what they should do with their buildings. Rather, the board was formed to provide guidance to help construction and restoration projects be more historically correct (Kammlah 1999). In fact, one informant reported that a number of citizens feel the Historical Review Board “does not have enough teeth” when it comes to enforcement, and they would like to see fines or other penalties incurred by residents who do not comply with the board’s guidelines (Camfield 1999).

Other community concerns related to tourism development are relatively minor. Crowding and parking shortages along Main Street, particularly on event weekends, are reportedly the source of most of the complaints lodged by local residents (Loeffler 1999; Camfield 1999; Wieser 1999). The proactive approach of the city and local tourism industry toward fostering community support for tourism may be at least partially responsible for the overall lack of opposition to tourism development. In 1998, tourism in Fredericksburg generated over \$2 million in sales tax revenue for the community (Loeffler 1999). One cent of the city’s sales tax goes toward reducing local property taxes, and because their tax bills state by how much the sales tax has reduced their

property taxes, taxpayers are reminded of this positive effect of tourism each year (Loeffler 1999). Periodically, the Chamber of Commerce and other entities remind residents of the less tangible benefits tourism provides for the community, such as a wider selection of restaurants, expanded city services, the arrival of large retail chains such as Walmart and H.E.B., and cultural restoration and preservation projects (Loeffler 1999; Kammlah 1999).

Impacts of ethnic tourism on place identity

Fredericksburg's German heritage continues to be deeply ingrained in its place identity (Figures 3-4). An examination of historical photographs of the city and interviews with long-time residents reveals that Fredericksburg's promotion of its German heritage as a tourism attraction has not had a dramatic impact on the look and



Figures 3 and 4. The use of the silhouette of the Vereins Kirche (left) in the city of Fredericksburg's seal (right) reflects the importance of the city's German heritage to its place identity.

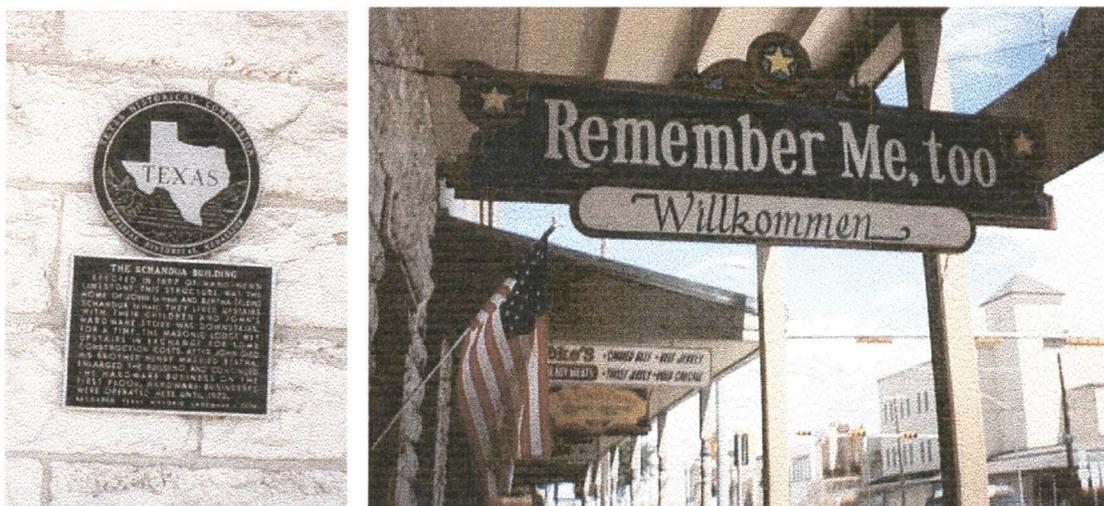
feel of the community. As Kammlah observed, “Main Street doesn’t look any different probably than it did 30 or 40 years ago, with exception that there are a heck of a lot more people in town now.” Paul Camfield, director of the Gillespie County Historical Society, reported that the city’s architecture has not been modified, but rather the buildings have been “enhanced and cleaned up” to create an “attractive,” “kept” appearance:

If you looked at Main Street 1965 in a photograph and looked at 1995, you’re going to see more cars, definitely, in the picture and you’re going to see more decorative [elements]; it’s painted, it’s got awnings, it’s got signs... What [visitors] see on Main Street is pretty authentic; they’re not misled. No one has created artificial *fachwerk* or anything. The stone buildings are the [original] stone buildings. (Camfield 1999)

While the juxtaposition of the antique and modern along Main Street may appear to be a creation of tourism planners intended to appeal to heritage tourists, Fredericksburg’s architecture has long featured a unique blend of past and present. The centennial edition of the *Fredericksburg Standard* reported:

Thus have many of the original buildings been torn away to give place to more modern structures far less picturesque, leaving Fredericksburg still a unique town, however, in which the old and the new are quaintly blended. (*Fredericksburg Standard*, 1 May 1946)

Today this marriage of past and present is evidenced not by the demolition of older buildings and new construction, but by the many historic buildings which now house modern businesses (Figures 5-6). Although the architecture of Fredericksburg’s commercial buildings has not changed much, the types of businesses operating within them has shifted dramatically. In the 1940s, businesses such as service stations, automobile sales and service establishments, and farm equipment retailers dominated Fredericksburg’s business mix (Camfield 1999). An analysis of Fredericksburg businesses over the past thirty-five years demonstrates that businesses geared toward



Figures 5 and 6. In Fredericksburg today, it is common to see modern businesses housed in historic buildings. The historic Schandua building (left) once housed a family-run hardware store, but today contains a number of tourist-oriented businesses such as this gift shop (right), which reflects the city's German-Texan heritage.

tourists, including restaurants, lodging facilities, and antique stores, are becoming more and more prevalent (Figure 7), while informants reported that other types of businesses, such as family-owned grocery and dry goods stores, have decreased in number (Stork 1999; Camfield 1999).

The most striking evidence of this trend is the extraordinary growth in bed and breakfast lodging establishments. In 1965 and 1978, the city directory listed eight and nine lodging establishments respectively, none of which were bed and breakfasts. In 1999, the Chamber of Commerce's website boasts of 350 bed-and-breakfast establishments operating in Fredericksburg, although the city directory lists only nine (Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce 1999). Consequently, Figure 7 does not reflect this dramatic growth in such establishments as the graph includes only those businesses

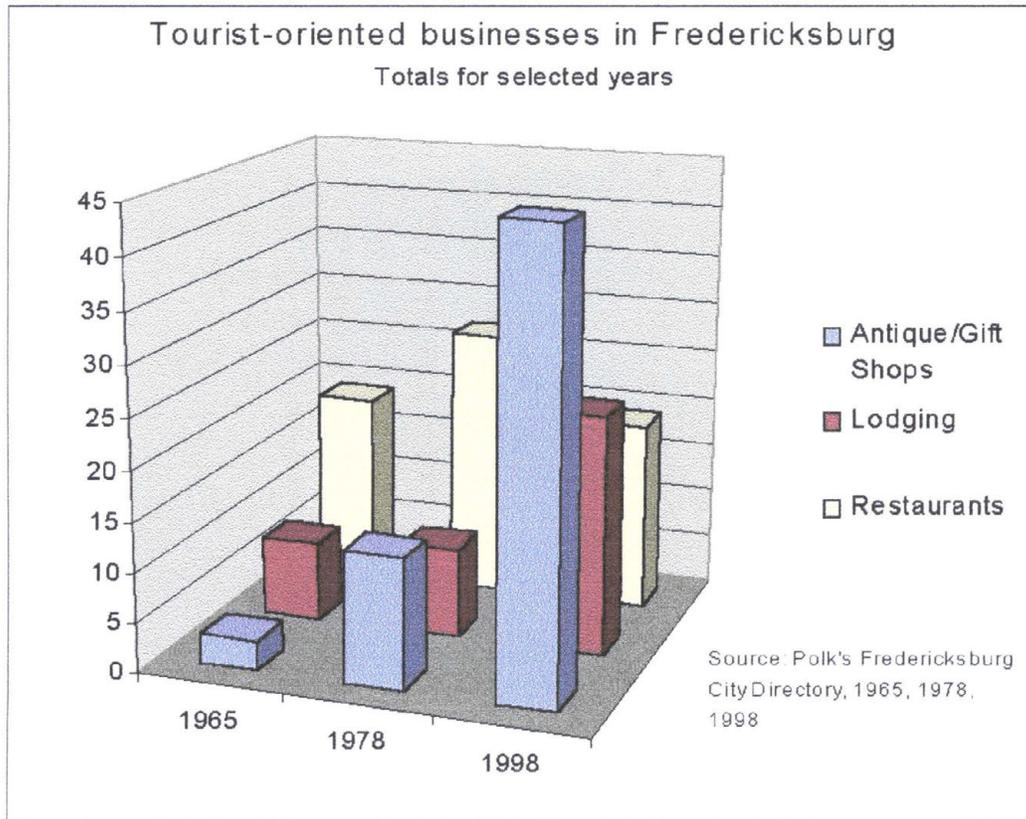


Figure 7

listed in the city directory in order to facilitate comparison with business listings from previous years.

Although their absolute numbers have clearly increased, tourist-oriented businesses today compose a similar percentage of the city's total number of business as they did prior to deliberate tourism development efforts (Table 1). As Table 1 demonstrates, while the proportion of antique and gift shops listed in the Fredericksburg city directory has steadily increased, the percentage of lodging facilities has remained essentially the same and the proportion of restaurants and bakeries has actually fallen.

Table 1: Tourist-oriented business listings as a percentage of all business listings for Fredericksburg

	1965		1978		1998	
	Count	% total	Count	% total	Count	% total
Total businesses listed	315		400		746	
All tourist-oriented businesses	30	10%	49	12%	92	12%
Antique/Gift Shops	3	1%	13	3%	45	6%
Restaurants/Bakeries	19	6%	27	7%	19	3%
Lodging	8	3%	9	2%	24	3%

However, the relative stability of the percentages of tourist businesses in Fredericksburg since 1965 belies the growing importance of tourism to the city's economy. The Texas Department of Economic Development reported that between 1990 and 1997, tourism-related spending, payroll, employment, and state and local tax revenues for Gillespie County all increased by approximately 200% (Texas Department of Tourism Development 1998). In fact, tourism is such an integral part of Fredericksburg's economy that the Chamber of Commerce's home page lists tourism as the community's only industry (Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce 1999).

A second analysis of city directory listings was conducted that included only those businesses located on Main Street (Table 2).

Table 2: Tourist-oriented businesses as a percentage of all businesses on Fredericksburg's Main Street

	1965		1978		1998	
	Count	% total	Count	% total	Count	% total
Total Main Street businesses	193		227		229	
All tourist-oriented businesses	17	9%	39	17%	68	30%
Antique/Gift Shops	2	1%	21	9%	45	20%
Restaurants/Bakeries	11	2%	15	1%	15	3%
Lodging	4	6%	3	7%	8	7%

The intention of this analysis was to determine whether tourist-oriented businesses compose a higher percentage of the total businesses along Main Street than they do for the city as a whole, thus giving residents and visitors alike the impression that Fredericksburg has a higher proportion of tourist businesses than actually exists.

As Table 2 demonstrates, the growth in the percentage of tourist-oriented businesses along Main Street has outpaced the growth in the percentage of tourist-oriented businesses within the entire city. Tourist-oriented businesses today compose 30% of the businesses on Main Street, while comprising only 12% of all Fredericksburg businesses. The dramatic growth in antique and gift shops is responsible for most of the growth in tourist-oriented businesses along Main Street since the percentages of eating and lodging establishments have remained fairly stable. It should also be noted that all forty-five of the gift and antique shops listed in the Fredericksburg city directory are located along Main Street.

While tourism has substantially affected the business mix along Main Street, the impacts of tourism on the business climate of the community are also being felt beyond Fredericksburg's commercial districts. Since its founding, agriculture has been the economic base of Gillespie County. Today, however, declines in agriculture have led many ranchers to turn to tourism as a means of supplementing their incomes. A number of them are now converting their ranches to bed and breakfasts and recreational resorts. Some landowners have gone so far as to sell their ranches, which have been subdivided into "ranchettes" for newcomers (Camfield 1999).

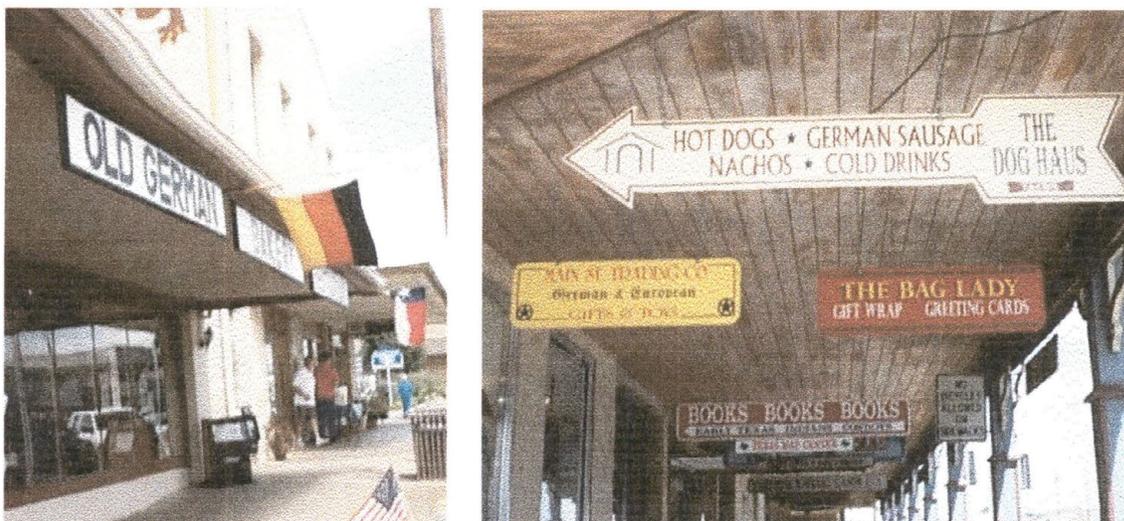
While Fredericksburg has seen declines in agriculture, petroleum-based businesses, and other types of small business ventures over the past fifty years, tourism has facilitated

the re-establishment of some types of businesses that were once eliminated from Fredericksburg's business mix. Jordan observed in 1961 that, although Gillespie County had featured both a brewery and a winery during previous decades, these businesses had since closed their doors. In recent years, Fredericksburg has seen the opening of the Fredericksburg Brewery as well as the founding of a number of small wineries in the surrounding area, all of which have become popular tourism attractions.

Tourism and the place image of Fredericksburg

The image of Fredericksburg as a German-American community is not simply a creation of tourism planners and enterprising residents hoping to boost the city's appeal as a tourism attraction. As early as 1940 – well before conscious efforts to promote tourism – a statewide travel guide described Fredericksburg as retaining “an Old World flavor in architecture and in the tenacious devotion of the inhabitants to the German culture and folkways of its founders” (Texas State Highway Commission 1940).

In 1961, Jordan observed that most aspects of the cultural geography of Fredericksburg represented a blend of German and American influences. Evidence of this hybrid German-American – or more specifically, German-Texan – heritage persists in the cultural landscape today (Figures 8 and 9). Yet while the German-Texan heritage has endured, it has not remained unchanged. Prior to tourism development, celebrations of ethnicity were primarily private and kept inside the German community. However, after the “eyes of the world” turned toward Fredericksburg in the 1960s, the community began to cultivate more outward displays of German heritage (Camfield 1999).



Figures 8 and 9. Businesses along Main Street provide tangible evidence of Fredericksburg's German-American and German-Texan heritage. The Old German Bakery (left) flies the American, German, and Texas flags. One small section of Main Street (right) includes a stand featuring German sausage, Tex-Mex nachos, and American hot dogs; a German and European gift shop; and a store specializing in Texas books and maps.

Today, festivals are the most popular ethnic tourism attractions in Fredericksburg (Kammlah 1999). The 1970s saw the inception of tourist-oriented events such as the annual Kristkindl Markt and the Christmas Candlelight Tour of Homes (Cornell 1995), which joined more traditional, long-standing annual celebrations such as the Saengerfest (singing festival), Schuetzenfest (shooting festival), and Easter Fires Pageant. In the mid-1980s, the Pedernales Creative Arts Alliance founded one of the city's most popular festivals, the annual Oktoberfest. This festival provides the most compelling evidence of how the image of Fredericksburg has been modified in response to tourism development.

The establishment of Fredericksburg's annual Oktoberfest celebration (Figure 10), a traditionally Bavarian custom, is interesting because the vast majority of the Germans who settled in Gillespie County were from the northern and western states of Germany, rather than Bavaria (Jordan 1961). Residents interviewed justified the adoption of this



Figure 10. A photo from an early Oktoberfest celebration in Fredericksburg. Note the felt hats and lederhosen, attire more typical of Bavarians than the Germans who initially settled in Fredericksburg. Courtesy of the Gillespie County Historical Society.

tradition, despite its lack of historical relevance to the community, on the basis that it presents an image that visitors can readily identify as being “German”:

If you ask Americans what’s German, the first thing they’ll say is Oktoberfest. They’re not going to holler ‘Easter Fires’ like we have. They’re not going to holler ‘Schuetzenfests’ like we have... Oktoberfest is totally alien to anything that happened here, but it’s what other Americans perceive as German. (Wieser 1999)

Wieser reported that he is unaware of any concerns among residents that the Bavarian imagery and traditions associated with Oktoberfest are misrepresenting the community’s heritage. Camfield stated that he has heard that some residents are concerned about misrepresentation of the area’s heritage, but that “I don’t know if there’s even much of

that because I don't know too many people who are actually disappointed in Fredericksburg based on what they see." Residents and planners interviewed reported that tourists do not seem to be particularly concerned about issues of historical inaccuracy either. As Kammlah explained, "The vast majority of Germans here did not come from Bavaria and did not wear *liederhosen*... but then some Americans don't care just as long as [the city's] got a German theme."

More recently developed festivals, such as the Christmas Candlelight Tour of Homes and the *Kristkindl Markt*, also incorporate the Bavarian theme. Articles in travel magazines describe these festivals as "old-timey Texas-Bavarian" (Cornell 1995, 36) or as having "a Bavarian flavor" (Cornell 1995, 34). While the newer festivals project an image of Fredericksburg that is not historically rooted, ethnic tourism development has ensured the survival of other traditional celebrations which preserve aspects of the area's heritage. "On the ethnic side, there have been things we have tried to keep alive... and there are more truer, ethnic-type events [surviving as a result of tourism development]," Kammlah stated, citing the persistence of the *Scheutzenbund* (shooting clubs) and *Saengerbund* (singing clubs) and their associated annual festivals.

The presentation of Bavarian-influenced, more stereotypically "German" symbols is not limited only to the *Oktoberfest* and other annual celebrations. A number of businesses in Fredericksburg employ Bavarian imagery in their signage and advertising (Figures 11 and 12). Perhaps the most prominent example is Friedhelm's *Bavarian Inn* (Figure 13). This Bavarian-themed restaurant and bed-and-breakfast is located just one block outside the historic district and is thus outside the jurisdiction of the Historical Review Board. Its chartreuse and melon façade, complete with onion domes, contrasts sharply with the



Figures 11 and 12. Altdorf's Biergarten and Opa's Smoked Meats are two examples of Fredericksburg businesses that employ Bavarian symbols.

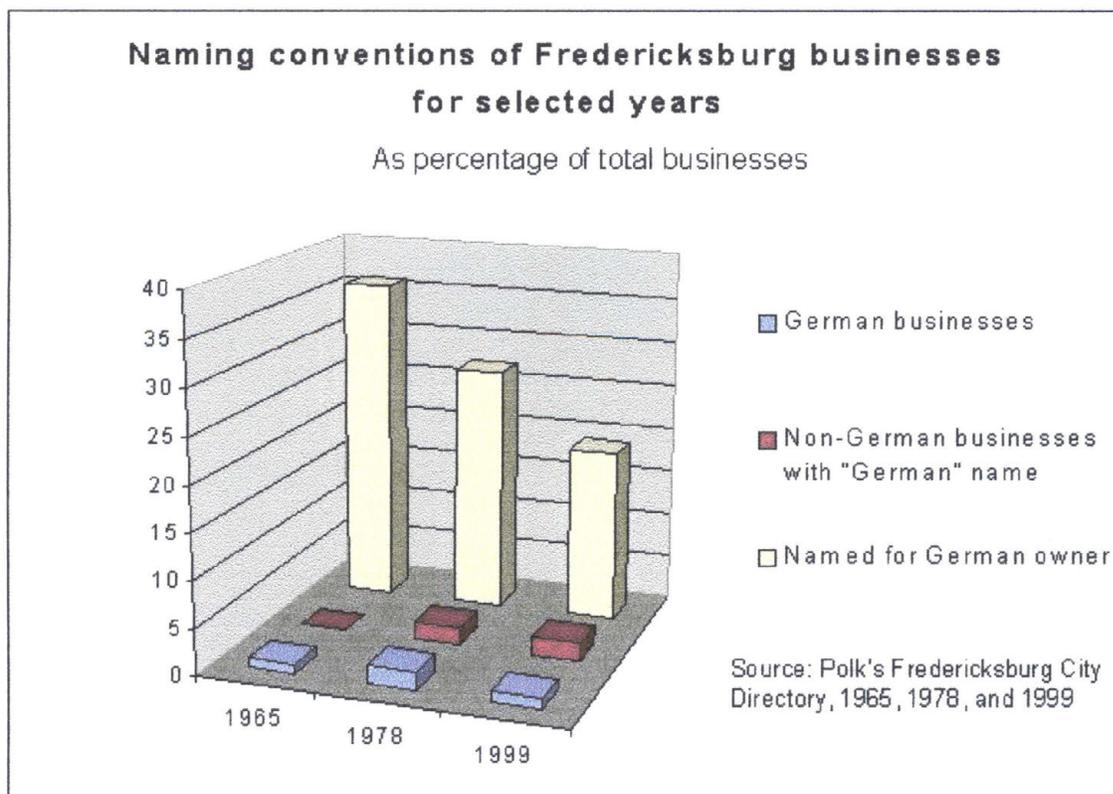
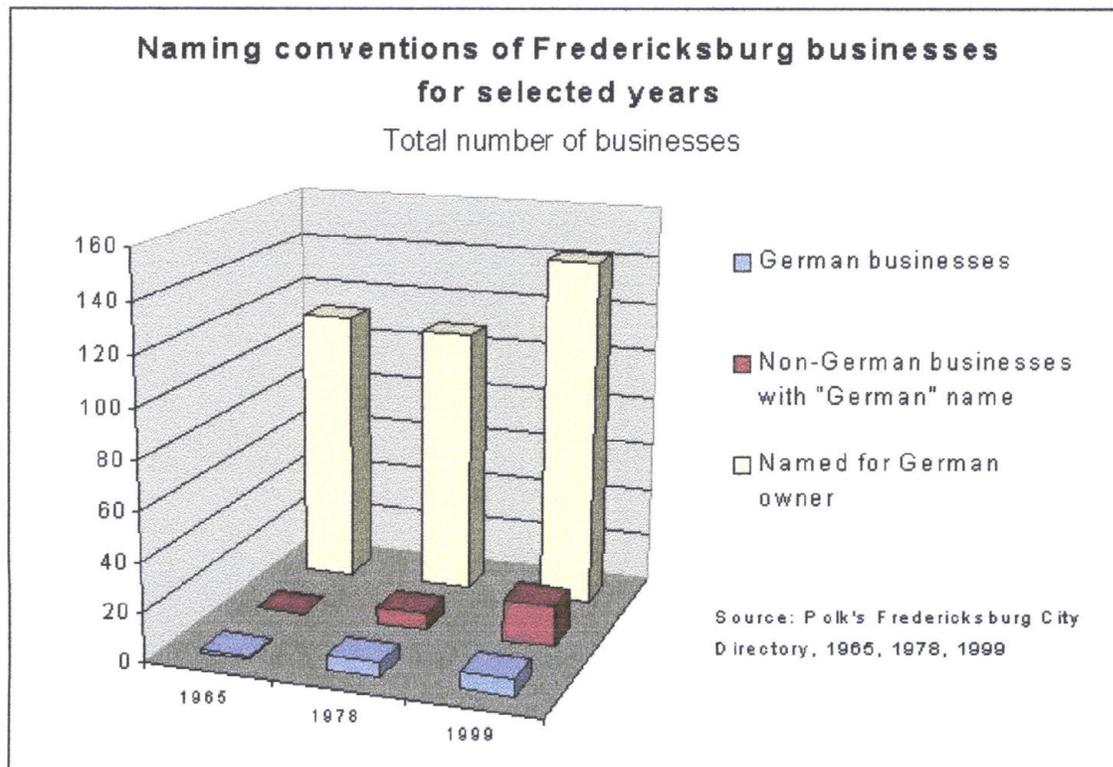


Figure 13. Friedhelm's Bavarian Inn

earthy tones of the limestone that dominates the facades of most of the buildings along Main Street. While the owner of the restaurant is ethnically Bavarian and – in the estimation of Kammlah, who has traveled in Bavaria – the restaurant is typical of Bavarian architecture, the establishment is a “perfect example” of the type of historically incongruous construction the city’s sign and landscape ordinances are intended to discourage (Kammlah 1999). Yet, despite being the “talk of the town,” residents reportedly tolerate this divergence from the city’s dominant vernacular German-Texan theme since the restaurant boasts “one of the best traditions of schnitzel” in the area (Kammlah 1999).

While a handful of other businesses display Bavarian images, the overt use of “ersatz” ethnic themes and symbols with little or no historical relevance to the community is relatively scarce in Fredericksburg. An analysis of all businesses listed in the Fredericksburg city directories in 1965, 1978, and 1998 reveals that the absolute number of German businesses, non-German businesses employing ethnicized names, and business names incorporating German surnames have all increased since the deliberate development of tourism. The growth in these business types and naming conventions gives the impression that business owners may be “jumping on the bandwagon” of tourism by adopting ethnicized names (Figure 14). However, when the number of businesses in each category is considered as a percentage of the total number of businesses listed in the directory (Figure 15), it is apparent that these trends are more likely the result of an overall increase in the number of businesses in the community.

Mark Wieser was the first business owner in Fredericksburg to employ an “ethnicized” name for a non-German business when he opened his fruit stand, Das Peach



Figures 14 and 15.

Haus, in 1969. Wieser explained that he wanted a name that would reflect his German ancestry while at the same time setting his business apart from others in the area. He claims the combination of German and English words was not intended to reflect a hybrid German-Texan heritage, but rather to convey his German heritage in a manner that would be easily understood by non-German speakers.

While individual businesses may occasionally employ contrived or historically inaccurate images in hopes of attracting tourists, Fredericksburg's tourism planners are wary of excessive commodification or any form of misrepresentation of the area's German culture. They report a commitment to preserving and promoting the city's vernacular "German-Texan heritage," rather than trying to remake the city in the image of a stereotypically German town. "We think there's a danger in us becoming a theme park for Germans," Kammlah stated, adding that he does not want to see Fredericksburg follow the example of other communities that have constructed a German ethnic identity where few residents claim German ancestry.

Kammlah also reported that, because the very name "Fredericksburg" evokes the city's German heritage, the Chamber of Commerce does not promote the German theme as heavily as some other communities do. While some German words and phrases are used in promotional copy to convey a sense of "Old World charm," they are carefully chosen so as not to overwhelm or confuse visitors who do not understand the German language (Kammlah 1999). A common slogan is "Take a trip to the Old World," while the word *Gemuetlichkeit*, meaning friendship or pleasant feelings, reappears throughout visitor guides and other materials (Kammlah 1999). An unexpected advantage of incorporating German terms in the city's promotion is that it has reconnected the

community with some German words that have not been used for years (Kammlah 1999). Two informants expressed concern that the cultural environment – as well as visitors’ ethnic tourism experience – could begin to suffer somewhat as fewer and fewer residents use the German language in their daily lives (Kammlah 1999; Wieser 1999).

Reflecting tourism planners’ commitment to presenting a historically rooted image of Fredericksburg, the promotional materials produced by the Chamber of Commerce do not focus solely on the city’s German heritage, but reflect its varied mixture of cultures and amenities. Because Fredericksburg attracts such a large volume of tourists each year, the city is not involved in cooperative regional advertising as are other Central Texas communities, one of which will be explored later in this thesis. Therefore, there is only one citywide promotional brochure produced by the Chamber of Commerce: the Fredericksburg, Texas Visitor Guide. The city’s German heritage is the dominant theme of the brochure’s text and is featured on its cover and in six of its nine photographs. Yet the Visitor Guide also recognizes the city’s Mexican, American and Texan heritage and promotes area attractions which are not tied to the German culture, including shopping, dining, outdoor recreation, and the Nimitz Museum.

The strong emphasis on Fredericksburg’s “German-ness” in promotional materials reflects the dominance of German ancestry that persists among Fredericksburg’s residents today. In the 1990 census, nearly 58% of Fredericksburg’s residents claimed German ancestry (U.S. Census Bureau 1990). This relatively high proportion of German ancestry within the city’s population may contribute to the general attitude of acceptance for the emphasis on the city’s German culture in promotional efforts. Despite the dominance of German ancestry among residents, the community’s cultural and ethnic diversity is

clearly valued, as comments reprinted in the sesquicentennial edition of the *Fredericksburg Standard-Radio Post* reveal. When the newspaper asked area residents to report what they feel to be the greatest things about Fredericksburg, the most common responses focused on the community's German heritage and/or its blend of German, Texan, "American," and, in some cases, Hispanic culture. For example, Mrs. Rudy Wendel cited both of these aspects of life in Fredericksburg when she replied, "It's unique because German, my native language, is still spoken, yet [the community] embraces various cultures" (*Fredericksburg Standard-Radio Post*, 24 April 1996).

While representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and the Gillespie County Historical Society reported that they are making efforts to incorporate other ethnic groups into their activities, the groups reportedly have not expressed a strong interest in participating (Kammlah 1999; Camfield 1999). For example, Fredericksburg has a rich African-American history, but only about 1% of the community is African-American, making it difficult for the community to preserve and promote that heritage (Kammlah 1999). The same is true for the Hispanic community, although the local Hispanic church has its own small festivals and last year's citywide Weinachten Christmas festival included a Hispanic Christmas exhibition (Kammlah 1999). Perhaps even more significant in maintaining Fredericksburg's image as a homogeneous German community despite its cultural diversity are the expectations of visitors. As Kammlah explained: "People who come to Fredericksburg aren't expecting a *fiesta*, they're expecting a *Fest*. It's not by design, it's just the way it is."

Despite tourism planners' desire to provide a more comprehensive, inclusive, and historically accurate portrait of Fredericksburg, the promotional materials they have

developed reflect some degree of contrivance and flattening of the area's heritage, likely owing to visitors' expectations. For example, the Visitor Guide includes a photo of a stereotypical "German," outfitted in felt hat and *liederhosen*. Furthermore, as Camfield points out, the emphasis on the immigration history also serves to somewhat flatten the area's heritage. He feels that since the growth and development of Gillespie County have long been driven by agriculture, promotional materials should play up the area's agricultural roots:

I think that's more attractive than people think... It's not just about the immigration and getting off a ship from Germany... the immigration story is very interesting, but after a certain amount of years, they were just here – living, working, raising their families, continuing to assimilate – and that's the real story of the county. . . The biggest thing that I'm lobbying for... is to pay more homage to the real people who made this county because they totally get overlooked in everything. (Camfield 1999)

Camfield added that he is pleased to report that city planners are looking to form a cultural tourism sub-committee to investigate the possibility of developing a brochure, slide presentation, or video to more accurately depict Fredericksburg's heritage: "I think [cultural tourists] will respond to some other images besides just the Oktoberfest..." (Camfield 1999).

While tourism planners are trying to depict the area's heritage in a comprehensive, historically accurate, and inclusive manner, some residents, such as local businessman and Fredericksburg native Mark Wieser, feel the community should further emphasize the German theme, even if it means adopting cultural markers that are recognizable to visitors, but not rooted in Fredericksburg's ethnic history. Contrary to Kammlah's and Camfield's visions of Fredericksburg's future as an ethnic tourism attraction, Wieser points to other communities which have capitalized upon their German heritage –

including the community of Lebanon, Washington, which constructed a German image despite having no history of German settlement – as examples of how tourism in Fredericksburg should be developed. In the examples cited, Wieser reported that the communities remodeled buildings, added flower boxes to façades, and promoted the establishment of German shops, restaurants, and festivals. "We're missing the boat on all of that in Fredericksburg," he stated and added that the community is "making no effort at all" to create a German image for the city. According to Wieser, most German residents are not interested in ethnic tourism development and instead are involved in other community events, such as the predominantly Western-themed Night in Old Fredericksburg festival. This lack of interest may be attributed to the fact that, because Fredericksburg is infused with German culture, residents of German ancestry take their ethnic heritage for granted and view it as commonplace: "They just marvel that someone from out of town could admire [the city's heritage]" (Wieser 1999). Wieser said he is not at all concerned that "Bavarianizing" the community might commoditize the German culture or make the city seem like a "theme park." Rather, he feels that ensuring the economic viability of the community outweighs any possible risks to its culture and heritage.

Summary and conclusion

The physical and social isolation of the German inhabitants of Fredericksburg that began during the mid-1800s and lasted until the turn of the century fostered the preservation of the area's German culture. Today, Fredericksburg's German heritage is becoming an increasingly popular tourism attraction. With the exception of a shift toward

service and tourist-oriented businesses within the community, tourism development has not led to dramatic modification of the city's place identity. However, the image of Fredericksburg has become increasingly "Bavarianized," owing to the expectations of visitors who associate Bavarian traditions and symbols with "German" culture. While tourism planners and other civic leaders are attempting to portray the cultural diversity and history of the community more accurately and more inclusively in their tourism promotion efforts, some residents feel the city should further emphasize Fredericksburg's German heritage to sustain tourist flows.

Because "outsiders" initiated Fredericksburg's tourism development and because one informant reported that most German residents are not involved in ethnic tourism development efforts, it would appear that the use of constructed symbols of ethnic identity in Fredericksburg represents a commodification of the community's German heritage for the purposes of tourism development. However, since a majority of Fredericksburg's residents report German ancestry, it is conceivable that the use of constructed symbols of ethnic identity instead represents a shift toward "symbolic" ethnic identity on the part of the city's German population. Further research regarding the ethnic identity of Fredericksburg residents is necessary to clarify this issue.

CHAPTER THREE

WEST: "CZECH HERITAGE CAPITAL OF TEXAS"

The city of West, Texas, a predominantly Czech-American community in northern McLennan County, provides an interesting case study of ethnic tourism development. Chapter Two demonstrated that Fredericksburg's mix of varied tourism attractions has sustained a thriving tourism industry year-round. In contrast, West has built a successful and profitable tourism industry on a single seasonal attraction: Westfest, the community's annual celebration of Czech culture and heritage. West is also distinguished by the fact that, unlike the communities of Fredericksburg and Clifton (which will be explored in Chapter Four), it has no plans or goals for future tourism development.

Historical sketch

The Czech homeland has been described as "a crossroads, lying in paths of invasion from east to west and north to south" (*The Czech Texans* 1972, 3). Under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian empire from 1620 until 1918, "the Czechs were treated as a conquered people, their traditional customs, language, and literature subject to severe government restrictions" (*The Czech Texans* 1972, 3). This political, economic and social oppression led many Czechs to seek better lives in the New World during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

While a handful of Czechs arrived in Texas during the 1830s and 1840s, organized Czech immigration to Texas began in November 1851 (*The Czech Texans* 1972). Arriving in Galveston in 1852, a group of 16 families formed the first Czech settlement in the state at Cat Spring, a predominantly German community in Austin County, about 100 miles northwest of Galveston (Skrabanek 1988; *The Czech Texans* 1972). After acclimating to their new surroundings, the Czechs began to spread out, settling first in adjoining counties then successively to others, but always remaining primarily within the blackland prairie where good farmland could be had at reasonable prices (Skrabanek 1988). According to Machann and Mendl (1991, xix), “[m]ost of the 250 Texas Czech communities that had been settled by the early twentieth century lay within the two comparatively fertile blackland prairie soil regions of the state.”

Chain migration was an important factor in bringing additional Czech settlers to the state. Family members wrote home, extolling the virtues of life in Texas and encouraging their relatives to join them. In addition, prominent figures in Texas’ growing Czech community, such as the Reverend Josef Arnošt Bergmann, the “father” of Czech immigration to Texas, and Josef Lesikar, wrote letters and articles further urging immigration to Texas (*The Czech Texans* 1972; Machann and Mendl 1991). These efforts proved very successful. The 1990 census revealed that nearly 200,000 Texans claim Czech or Czechoslovakian ancestry, and evidence of Czech settlement can be found in many parts of the state, stretching from the Panhandle far into east Texas (U.S. Census Bureau 1990; *The Czech Texans* 1972).

Scholars have described the early Czech Texans, those who settled during the period between 1860 and 1920, as “atypical of the Czech-American population in general during

the same period of time” (Machann and Mendl 1991, xxvi). For example, the Czech Texan population was predominantly Roman Catholic while Czech Americans as a whole were more likely to be Freethinkers (Machann and Mendl 1991). More important to the survival of the Czech-Texan heritage, the Texas Czechs were more rural than their counterparts in other states, affording them relative isolation from the modernizing and assimilating influences common to urban environments (Machann and Mendl 1991). As one Czech-American journalist wrote in 1924:

When the inevitable moment finally comes and the last Czech completely disappears in the American melting pot made up of all the nations of the world, I predict that the last Czech-American ‘Mohican’ will be from Texas.

You in the North worry yourselves silly over our third generation, which is slipping away from us and disappearing into cast-iron, 100-percent Americanism faster than camphor into air. We in Texas are not upset about this. (Dongres 1991, 123-4)

While Czechs did not originally found the community of West, it eventually became “one of the more important Czech towns” in Texas (Machann and Mendl 1983). When the Katy Railroad was laid between Hillsboro and Waco in the fall of 1881, the tracks crossed land owned by Thomas West. West sold portions of his property adjacent to the railroad to entrepreneurs and soon a train depot and other businesses were established in the area (West Home Page 1999). Among those purchasing land were a number of Czech immigrants who came to the area to farm its rich soils. The railroad brought prosperity to the area and, by 1892, West was organized into a town, having become the center of commerce for the surrounding farmland (West Home Page 1999). By this time, West had a population of approximately 1,000 residents and “resembled other Texas towns settled and developed by Anglo Protestants” (Machann and Mendl 1983, 220).

By the turn of the century, West's population had doubled, and the Anglos' cultural dominance had begun to crumble. West's Czech population grew rapidly while the Anglo Protestant population remained stable (Machann and Mendl 1983). The new railroad made West more accessible to immigrants, and increasing numbers of Czechs, both Catholic and Protestant, left their isolated, self-sufficient farming villages to live in the city of West. The Czechs' cultural propensity for having large families further facilitated their eventual numerical dominance within the community, and the Czechs became the dominant culture in West by the 1920s (West Home Page 1999).

The growing Czech presence in West was also evident in the business community. The establishment of a number of local Czech businesses, such as Nemecek's Meat Market and Joseph Janek's saloon, demonstrated the growing commercial activity of the Czechs (Machann and Mendl 1983). As Joseph Kopecky of Hallettsville stated in 1931:

The Czech people are industrious and thrifty, and it is a recognized fact that wherever they settle in large numbers, they build up the community. This has been true in the instances of West [and other Czech communities in Texas]. (Hudson and Maresh 1934, 30)

However, according to the prevailing Anglo view, once securely established in the city the Czechs reverted to their isolationist ideals, retarding West's growth rather than building up the community (Machann and Mendl 1983). Thus, West became a "'self-contained' community that would never grow beyond its size at the peak of the 'boom' years; a population of about 3,000" (Machann and Mendl 1983, 221).

The outmigration of many young rural Czechs seeking education and employment opportunities in urban areas during the first and second World Wars contributed to the eventual demise of a number of important Czech settlements, which today are nothing

more than ghost towns (*The Czech Texans* 1972). However, West has managed to sustain its economic viability as well as its Czech flavor:

Many of the descendants of the original settlers continue to farm the lands and run the businesses still today. You can still hear Czech spoken by some of the older folks around town. (West Home Page 1999).

West's preservation and celebration of its Czech heritage has increasingly become the focus of attention over the past 23 years. The community's annual Westfest is not only an important outlet for the expression of residents' Czech identity but an important means of improving the quality of life in West through the benefits of ethnic tourism.

Development of ethnic tourism in West

Ethnic tourism in West began in 1976 when a group of local residents came up with the idea of organizing a polka party for the community (B. Murry 1999). They developed Westfest, as the festival came to be called, as a community celebration of West's Czech heritage and to "have some fun" (B. Murry 1999). As the mayoral proclamation of the first Westfest stated:

... Westfest offers an opportunity for total participation of organizations and residents of the Community to participate in an activity for the preservation of Community Character and preservation of the Czech Heritage of the Community. (*The West News*, 2 September 1976)

The festival's organizers had "no idea" the event would be such a success (B. Murry 1999). The first Westfest attracted an estimated 40,000 persons (*The West News*, 9 September 1976), and subsequent celebrations have continued to attract about the same number of attendees (Westfest brochure 1999). The success of the event has brought attention to the community's Czech culture and helped to distinguish West from other

small towns in Texas (B. Murry 1999). As a result, increased visitation and interest in West's ethnic heritage have assured the continuation of Westfest as an annual event.

Although organizers did not develop Westfest with the intention of stimulating the community's economy, tourism focusing on the festival has since become an integral part of West's economy. As one resident explained, "If it wasn't for the tourists, really, this town would sort of go downhill" (Thompson 1999). Tourist flows associated with the festival have encouraged the establishment of a number of businesses, many of which are tourist-oriented and Czech-related (B. Murry 1999).

The community's increasing reliance on tourism may be attributed not only to the success of Westfest, but also to the fact that the establishment of the festival 23 years ago nearly coincided with the closure of one of the community's major employers:

West is a bedroom community; it has no industry. We used to have the Burlington Cotton Mill over here years back, but it's been closed, I guess, twenty-five or so years. So that was the only industry basically, other than the [chicken and egg] farms, hospitals, and schools. (E. Slovak 1999)

Because of the lack of industry in West, tourism provides a much-needed infusion of outside capital. As one resident explained:

I always said that's kind of like foreign money. We circulate [our money] in town, but that doesn't make us prosperous. If we get the "foreign money" or highway money, that helps our industry. (E. Slovak 1999)

Westfest, Inc. was formed as a non-profit organization, with proceeds from the event earmarked for "community development and beautification pertaining to the culture, heritage and needs of the community" (*The West News*, 20 May 1976). Thus, the festival's success has also facilitated a number of civic improvement projects:

Westfest is the money tree for many things in West, from financing local clubs in our schools, repaving our streets, building our Depot museum, and I could go on and on. (B. Murry 1999)

Tourism's important role in West's economy has likely contributed to residents' positive attitude toward tourism development. All of the West residents interviewed reported that the community is very supportive of tourism and that they are unaware of any criticisms regarding increased tourist traffic (B. Murry 1999; Janek 1999; E. Slovak 1999; M. Slovak 1999; Thompson 1999).

Despite the overwhelming success of Westfest and the importance of the event as a means of maintaining the community's economy, the city of West has no official directives for tourism development and no plans for future tourism development (B. Murry 1999). Westfest continues to be a grassroots community affair, organized and staffed by hundreds of volunteers. As Barry Murry, of the West Chamber of Commerce and Westfest, Inc., reported:

The motivation is the same for all of us: We love Westfest. It's the greatest party of the year for us. We invite everyone to come and hang out with us on Labor Day weekend to have some fun. It is not about the money [although] a few business people have built great businesses in the shadow of Westfest's success. (B. Murry 1999)

Because there are no plans to further develop tourism in West, it is likely that the city will continue to function primarily as a seasonal tourism attraction, with visitation centering on Labor Day weekend when Westfest is held. However, large numbers of short-term visitors stop at Czech-oriented businesses along Interstate 35 throughout the year. Perhaps the most popular stop for these passersby is the Czech Stop, a combination of a gas station, convenience store and Czech bakery (Figure 16). The Czech Stop attracts so many travelers that one resident described its parking lot as reminiscent of an "anthill" (E. Slovak 1999). Despite the crowding at these roadside establishments, a representative of Westfest reported that the city's resources are adequate to accommodate existing and



Figure 16. The Czech Stop and Little Czech Bakery complex is located just off Interstate 35 and is a popular stop for tourists picking up kolaches. This photo was taken around 8:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning in June. Note that every parking spot is occupied.

future tourist flows (B. Murry 1999). Participation in Westfest has hovered around the 40,000-person mark since the festival's inception, and current facilities are reported to be sufficient to accommodate 45,000 visitors (Murry 1999).

Ethnic tourism and the place identity of West

The establishment of Westfest has had an unmistakable impact on the community of West. Westfest was the community's first large-scale external display of Czech culture. As Barry Murry explained, "Although many of the people of West are direct descendants of Czech immigrants, before 1976 you never really saw the Czech culture outside the home." While encouraging residents to rediscover and publicly assert their Czech heritage, the festival also led to the recognition that the community's heritage has an economic value:

After the success of Westfest, Czech-related businesses started popping up. The owners were Chamber of Commerce directors and members... After seeing the

success that Westfest made with promoting the Czech culture, other local business people joined in and opened shops and bakeries. (B. Murry 1999)

An analysis of West businesses reveals a dramatic increase in the number of tourist-oriented businesses since Westfest began highlighting the community's Czech heritage (Figure 17). While the total number of bakeries, restaurants, and gift and antique stores remained fairly stable from 1965-1978, between 1978 and 1999 this total increased by 18 businesses, including nine antique and/or gift shops and six restaurants. In spite of the growth in other types of visitor services, West continues to have only one lodging facility

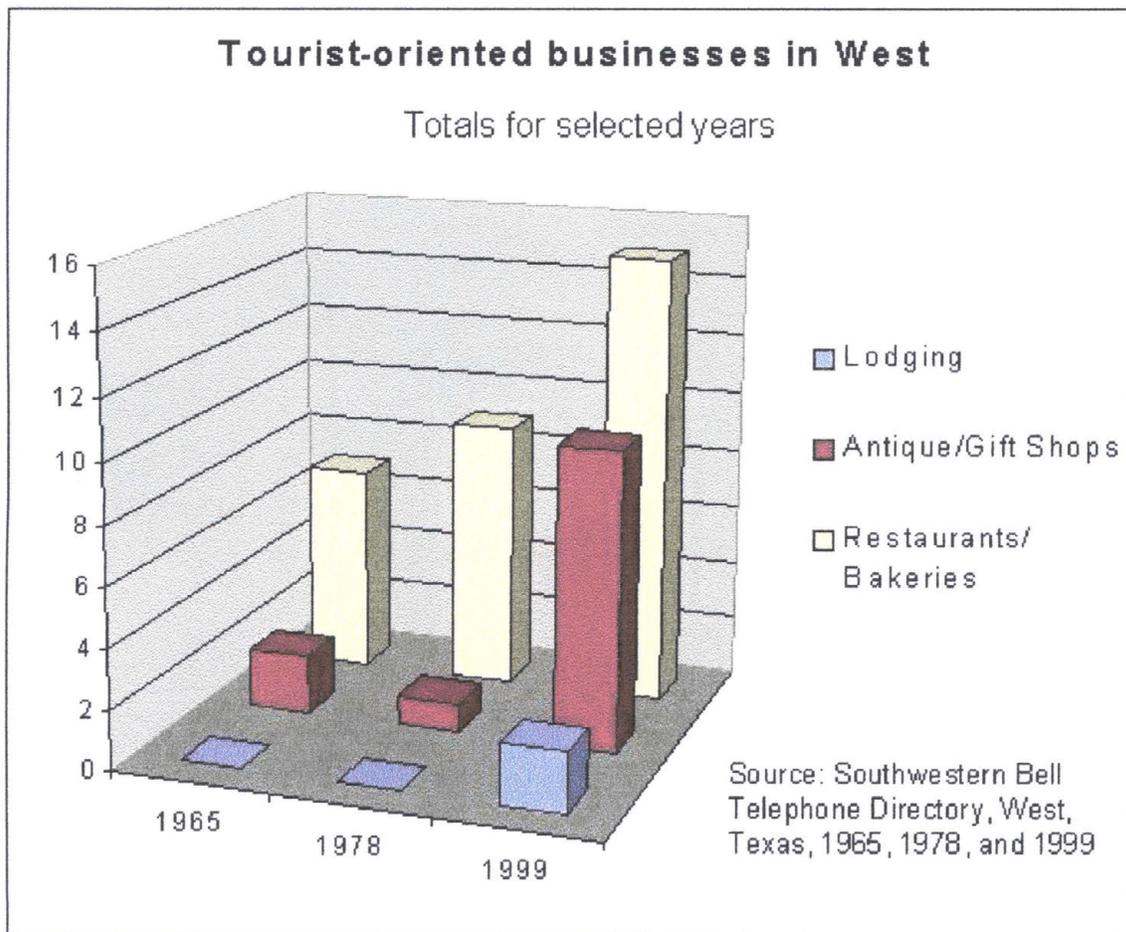


Figure 17

with eight guest rooms, the Zachary Davis Bed and Breakfast, reflecting West's continued status as a "touring," rather than overnight, destination (Gunn 1979).

As Figure 17 demonstrates, the increase in antique and gift shops is the most dramatic example of the growth in tourist-oriented businesses in West. Prior to Westfest, tourists reportedly stopped in West only to pick up kolaches, a type of Czech pastry (M. Slovak 1999). While kolaches remain a popular attraction, today many travelers visit the community to browse its various antique and Czech import shops (B. Murry 1999).

The growth of tourist-oriented business, such as antique and import shops, has been accompanied by decreases in other types of businesses within the community. A notable example is the decline in small, family-owned grocery stores, many of which were owned and operated by Czechs. The West telephone directory listed four Czech-owned grocery stores operating in 1965. By 1978, that figure had dropped to two, and in 1999 only Nemecek's Meat Market endures. Today, buildings which formerly housed grocery stores house a variety of businesses – including antique shops, bakeries, and bars – many of which cater to tourists (M. Slovak 1999).

While the types of businesses operating in West have changed, informants reported that, aside from owners' "sprucing up the fronts" of buildings and generally "upgrading the town," the overall appearance of the community has not changed much in response to tourism (M. Slovak 1999, E. Slovak 1999, B. Murry 1999). However, examination of historic photographs taken prior to the establishment of Westfest revealed that this "sprucing up" has dramatically altered the appearance of a number of commercial buildings, creating a noticeably more "Czech" atmosphere along parts of Main Street.

One can observe the impacts of tourism by comparing the north and south halves of Main Street as they appear today. Businesses on the north half of Main Street include a number of businesses that cater to or would likely be of interest to tourists, including Picha's Czech-American Cafe, Sulak's Cafe, Kolacek's Kolache Kitchen, and Nemecek's Meat Market. The businesses located on the south half of Main Street primarily serve local residents and include a video rental store, thrift shop, fabric store, and appliance retailer. The façades of the buildings occupying each half of the street reflect their different clienteles. The businesses on the north half of the street clearly convey a "Czech" image (Figure 18). Most businesses sport window boxes or containers of colorful flowers and welcome signs in the Czech language (Figure 19). Kolacek's Kolache Kitchen and Sulak's Cafe (Figure 20) have peaked roofs with wooden shingles that were not part of the buildings' original architecture, but have been added since tourism to West began (E. Slovak 1999, M. Slovak 1999).



Figure 18. Profile of businesses located on the northern half of West's Main Street.



Figures 19 and 20. Tourist-oriented businesses on northern Main Street employ Czech welcome signs and decorative façades to convey a “Czech” image to tourists.

In contrast, symbols of Czech identity are largely absent from businesses on the southern half of Main Street (Figure 21). Some containers for flowers are present, but most sit unused. With the exception of the displays and signage outside Maggie’s Fabric Patch (Figure 22) – a shop which specializes in Czech fabrics and costumes and is owned and operated by an active member of the Czech community – and a business named for its Czech owners (Figure 23), no evidence of West’s Czech heritage is apparent.



Figure 21. Profile of businesses along the southern end of West’s Main Street.



Figures 22 and 23. Signs at Maggie's Fabric Patch (left) and an appliance store named for its Czech owners (right) provide the only evidence of West's Czech heritage along the southern half of Main Street.

While tourism is leading some business owners to modify their buildings to convey a more Czech image, others are responding to the growing interest in West's heritage by attempting to restore their buildings to their original appearances (E. Slovak 1999). In recent years, a number of buildings have been sandblasted to reveal their original finishes, uncovering signs that had long since been painted over in the process (Figure 24).



Figure 24. An original supermarket sign revealed by recent restoration efforts in West.

Tourism is also facilitating other forms of restoration. For example, Westfest, Inc. used profits from Westfest to repurchase West's former railroad depot building and return it to downtown West (Discover West brochure 1999). The depot has been restored and now houses a visitor information center and display of the community's history.

Ethnic tourism and the place image of West

As discussed in the preceding historical sketch, the Czechs have been the dominant ethnic group in West since the 1920s. Today, 43% of West residents claim Czech ancestry (Figure 25). Thus, West's image as a Czech community is rooted in local history and not a merely construction for the purposes of attracting tourists.

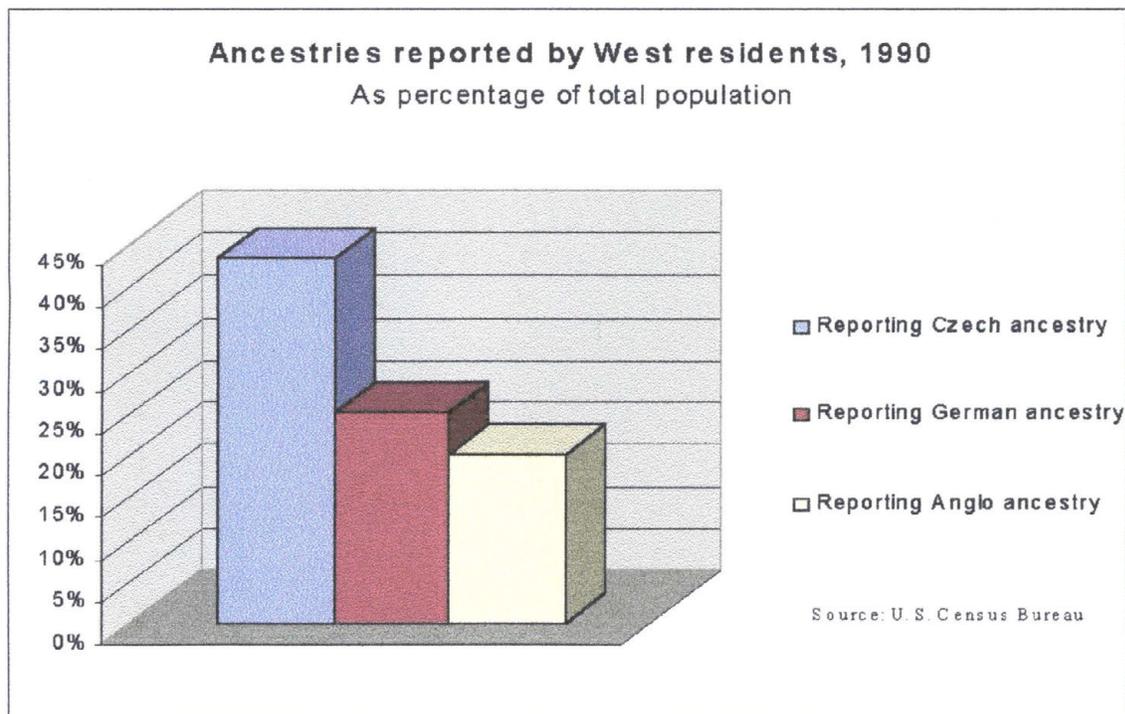


Figure 25

Because there is no formal program of tourism development in West, there are few promotional materials produced for the community. The two brochures available from the Chamber of Commerce are the Discover West – Czech Point of Central Texas brochure and the Westfest brochure. Analysis revealed that the portrayal of West in these materials suggests an ethnically homogeneous community and largely neglects the ethnic diversity that has played an important role in the development of the city. Anglo-Americans originally settled West, with Czechs and Germans arriving later. As Figure 25 illustrates, all of these cultures continue to represent substantial proportions of city's population: One-quarter of West's current population claims German heritage while one-fifth claims Anglo ancestry. Despite their historical relevance and considerable presence within the community today, the Anglo and German aspects of West's heritage are downplayed in promotional materials, although this is unsurprising in the Westfest brochure, which focuses exclusively on the festival. Ethnic groups other than the Czechs are only briefly mentioned in the Discover West brochure:

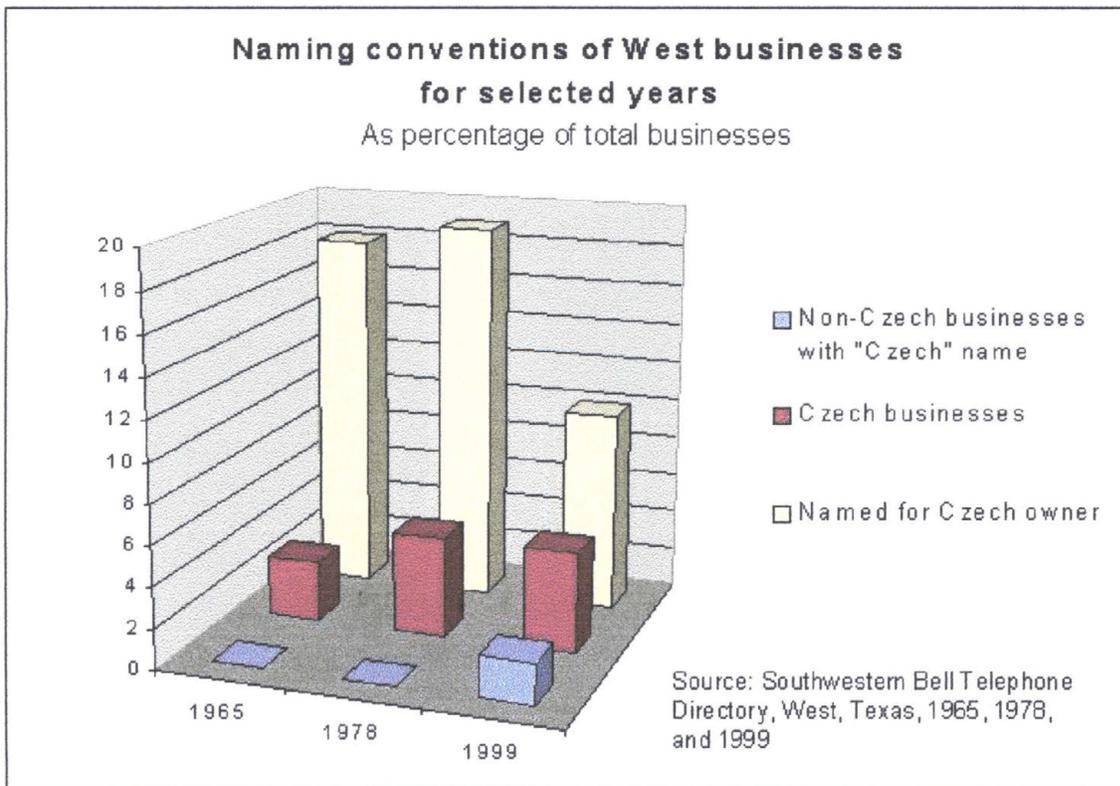
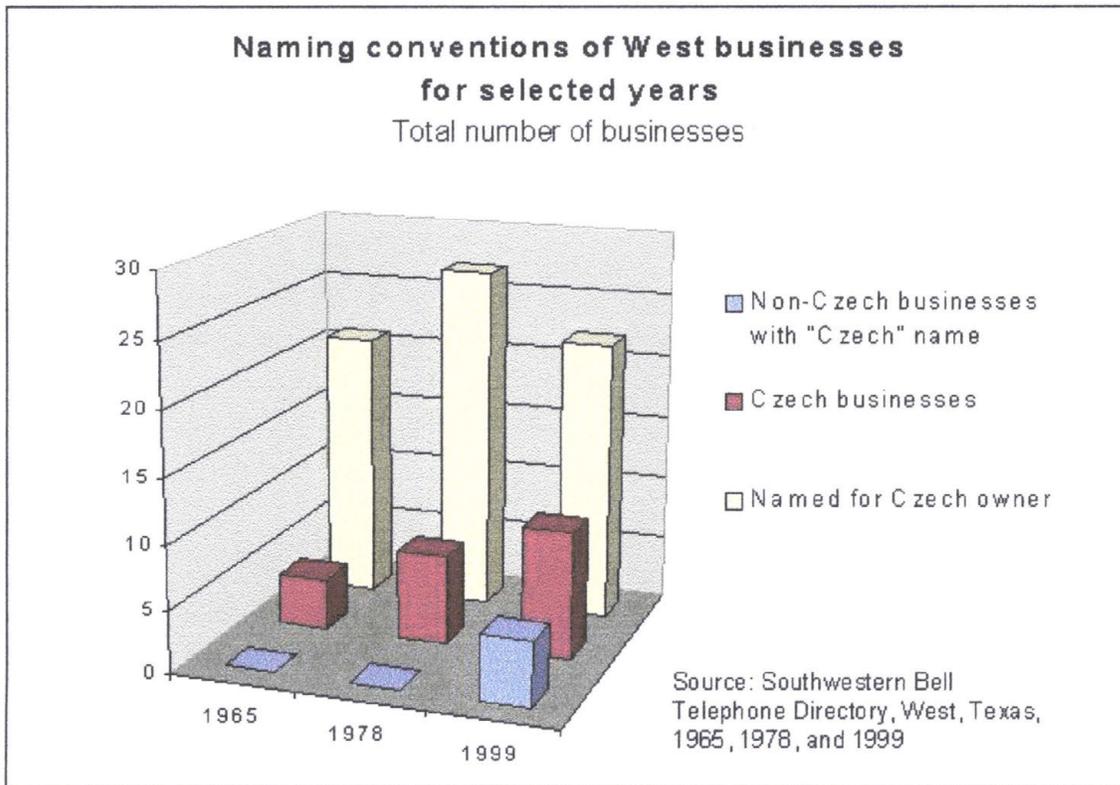
Between 1850 and 1860 Anglo-American settlers formed a small farming community called Bold Springs. After the Civil War they were joined by others, including Czech and German immigrants, searching for land and new homes. (Discover West brochure 1999)

Barry Murry, a resident who is involved with both Westfest and the West Chamber of Commerce, acknowledged that the contributions of other ethnic groups are downplayed: "I'd guess that most people don't realize that the German culture has played an important part in the history of West also" (B. Murry 1999). However, the lack of attention given West's German heritage in promotional materials may be attributed in part to the fact that few traces of the German culture remain. For example, the only evidence belying West's

German heritage on Main Street is an historical marker commemorating the Groppe building, erected by a German businessman in 1892 and distinguished as the business district's first brick building. This lack of visible evidence of West's German heritage, coupled with the palpable Czech presence in the community, may contribute to the promotion of the city's Czech heritage over its German heritage.

Both the Westfest and Discover West brochures contain numerous photos depicting people outfitted in traditional Czech costumes. While this is not the typical attire donned by West residents on a daily basis, Czech residents interviewed reported that the images used to promote tourism accurately reflect the community's Czech heritage, although the depiction may be somewhat superficial (M. Slovak 1999, Janek 1999). While there is clearly a discrepancy between the realities of daily life in West and the perpetually festive atmosphere portrayed in brochures, the brochures nonetheless set fairly reasonable expectations for tourists since most tourism is associated with Westfest, when such costumes and festivities are abundant.

The use of Czech images and symbols as a means of attracting tourists is not limited to printed materials. As previously mentioned, many businesses display Czech signs and symbols. However, the majority of these businesses are Czech-related businesses, such as import stores or bakeries. As Figure 26 illustrates, few businesses appear to be employing Czech names solely to attract tourists. Presently, only five non-ethnic businesses are using ethnicized names, and the use of Czech surnames has actually decreased despite overall growth in the number of businesses operating in West. The analysis of these naming conventions as a percentage of the city's total businesses reveals a similar trend (Figure 27).



Figures 25 and 26.

A final way in which West's Czech heritage is conveyed to visitors is through the use of slogans, many of which feature clever word play. Phrases such as "Czech Point of Central Texas" and "Czech Us Out" appear in brochures and on billboards along Interstate 35 (Figure 28).

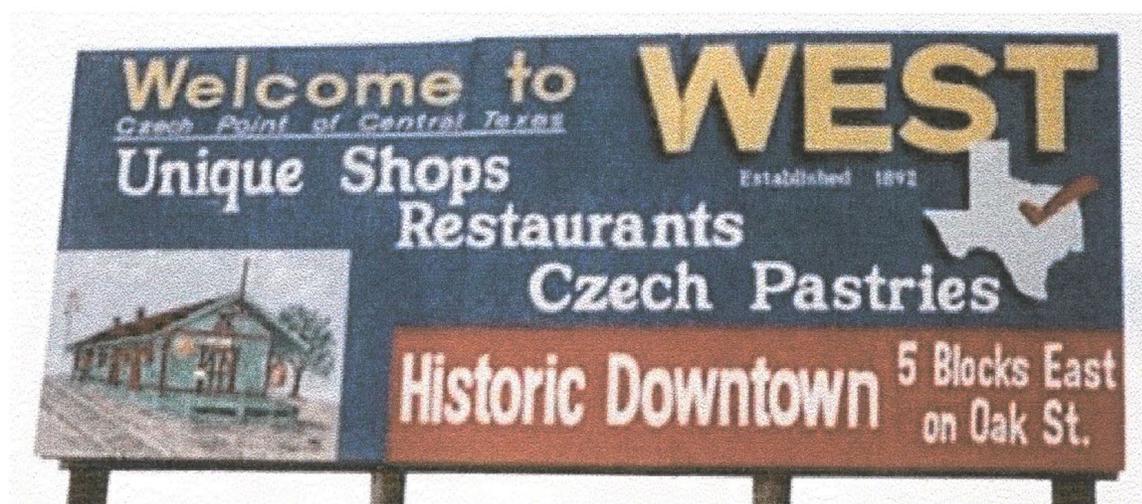


Figure X. Billboard at the entrance to West off Interstate 35. Note the checkmark on West's location on the outline of Texas and the use of the phrase "Czech Point of Central Texas."

Despite the emphasis on Czech culture in tourism promotion efforts, the residents interviewed reported that there is no feeling within the community that other aspects of West's ethnic heritage are being overlooked as a result of tourism development. Rather, residents of different ethnic backgrounds are reportedly supportive of tourism (M. Slovak 1999). All take part in the celebration and all reap the economic benefits of Westfest.

Summary and conclusion

Although Czechs were not the first to settle the area that would be incorporated into the city of West, the Czech culture has been dominant within the community since the

early 1920s. While in past years Anglo settlers accused the Czechs of stagnating the community's growth, it is the Czech culture that is maintaining West's economic viability today.

Since 1976, West has hosted Westfest, a community celebration of its Czech heritage. The annual event has become so popular with visitors that tourism is now an integral part of West's economy. Tourism in West remains seasonal, centered on the Westfest celebration, and the community has no plans for additional tourism development. West residents are overwhelmingly supportive of tourism, likely owing to the economic benefits it bestows upon the community and the fact that its seasonality minimizes negative impacts.

Evidence of contrived ethnicity is currently limited to a few non-ethnic businesses adopting "Czech" names and the modification of existing buildings to convey a more "Czech" image. Thus, residents interviewed report – and analysis suggests – that the place image of West presented to visitors accurately and effectively reflects the community's place identity.

CHAPTER 4

CLIFTON: “THE NORWEGIAN CAPITAL OF TEXAS”

Unlike the other communities examined previously in this study, tourism in Clifton did not gradually evolve in response to increasing numbers of ethnic and heritage tourists. The community is intentionally trying to develop its Norwegian ethnic heritage into a tourism product in an effort to boost the city’s economy. Since tourism development in Clifton has been under way for just over two years now, it is premature to attempt to analyze the impacts of ethnic tourism. Rather, this chapter will examine preliminary, potential, and expected effects of tourism development on the place identity and place image of the community.

Historical sketch

The actual number of Norwegian immigrants to America was relatively small compared to the droves of immigrants arriving from other parts of Europe. However, Norwegian migration to America took on titanic proportions during the late 19th and early 20th centuries: Only Ireland saw a higher percentage of its total population emigrate to the United States (Semningsen 1978). Improving economic conditions in Norway could not offset the financial burdens imposed on families by a nationwide decrease in child mortality (Semningsen 1978). With only three to four percent of Norway’s land area

suitable for cultivation, the increasing population pressure led many Norwegians to feel that they had no choice but to seek their futures elsewhere if they wanted to maintain their rural lifestyles (Blegen 1969; Semmingsen 1978). Under these circumstances, the promise of the expanses of cheap land to be had in America was well received.

Although the first Norwegian settlements in America were founded in 1825, the first permanent Norwegian colony in Texas was not founded until 1845 with the arrival of a group of immigrants led by Johan Reiersen, an outspoken liberal newspaper editor and champion of reform for Norway's stifling social system (*The Norwegian Texans* 1985; Blegen 1955). In 1854, after a series of malaria epidemics struck the early settlements that had been established in the northeastern portion of the state, a number of the Norwegians relocated to Bosque County where the soil was fertile, the climate was believed to be more healthful, and the physical landscape reminded them of their homeland (Waerenskjold 1955; Pierson 1947). Here they established what would become the largest and most persistent of the Norwegian colonies in Texas.

Although among the earliest of the area's settlers, the Norwegians were not the first pioneers to arrive in Bosque County. The county's first permanent white settlers began to arrive in 1850 and included a small number of prominent families from the eastern United States (Poole 1954). While these early Anglo pioneers made their homes in the Bosque River valley, the Norwegians chose homesteads in the hills which allowed them easy access to timber and reminded them somewhat of their homeland. This spatial segregation from their neighbors also served to reinforce the Norwegians' social segregation. The first Norwegian settlers in America had hoped to hold on to their traditional lifestyles and values, in essence creating a new Norway in America

(Semmingen 1978). In the early days of settlement, they used the Norwegian language exclusively, retained their Norwegian customs, and socialized and married within their ethnic group. In the Bosque County settlements, “self-segregation was advocated and proudly practiced” (Pierson 1947, 95), and the insular society they created for themselves made them the subject of much criticism from their neighbors.

Aside from the arrival of the remaining families from the earlier settlements in northeast Texas in 1868, Norwegian migration to Bosque County was slow from 1857-1869, owing to the Norwegians’ opposition to slavery and secession (Poole 1954). After the American Civil War’s end, Norwegians from other parts of Texas and as far away as Norway resumed their migration to the Bosque settlements. However, the Norwegians were not alone in this new wave of migration. A substantial number of Germans, many of them relocating from Washington County, also began to settle in the area after the Civil War, and by 1936, one-third of the population of Bosque County was estimated to be of German extraction (Radde 1976).

In contrast, Norwegian migration to Bosque County, or any other settlements in Texas, never attained any great dimension, despite the settlers’ efforts to encourage additional Norwegian migration to the state. Although the country as a whole saw a huge influx of Norwegians during the early part of the twentieth century, they settled primarily in the Midwest (Allen and Turner 1987), and the Norwegian population of Texas remained comparatively modest, peaking at 1,784 Norwegian-born residents in 1910 (U.S. Census Bureau 1910). After 1910, several national trends contributed to the curbing of Norwegian immigration to America, and the foreign-born Norwegian population of Texas was affected in much the same manner as the Norwegian population of the United

States as a whole. World War I, the adoption of immigration quotas for immigration, and World War II all contributed to a decline in migration from Europe (Semmingen 1978).

By the 1920s, the processes of Americanization and acculturation had taken hold despite the Norwegians' efforts to preserve their cultural identity. In the Bosque County settlements, the transition to using English in church services was complete, and intermarriage between the Norwegians and other ethnic groups had eased most of the tension experienced in earlier years. As a result, "amalgamation, racial mixture, and religious toleration were the ruling principles" (Pierson 1947, 96). The assimilation of the Norwegian community into the larger society in Bosque County, coupled with the outmigration of many young Norwegians who sought educational and employment opportunities in the city, caused many to begin to lose touch with their heritage.

The urbanization of the Norwegian Texans marked the beginning of the immigrants' gradual adaptation to the larger American society, the transition from being Norwegian to becoming Norwegian-American. By the 1940s, the majority of incoming Norwegian immigrants were no longer farmers, but urban dwellers seeking business and professional opportunities. As a result, Bosque County lost its position as the primary focus of Norwegian immigration by 1940, having been supplanted by urban centers such as Galveston, Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth, and San Antonio (U. S. Census Bureau 1940).

Despite the thorough assimilation of Norwegian Texans in urban areas of the state, the Norwegian presence in Bosque County remains palpable. Despite the fact that Bosque County is home to less than one percent of the state's total Norwegian population, Bosque County has the highest percentage – over five percent – of residents claiming Norwegian ancestry in the state (U.S. Census Bureau 1990). Clifton, the largest city in

Bosque County, has an even greater concentration of Norwegians, with nine percent of its population claiming Norwegian ancestry. In 1997, community leaders in Clifton began to develop tourism centering on the area's Norwegian heritage in hopes of enhancing the city's economy.

The evolution of ethnic tourism in Clifton

When confronted by the need to develop a plan for revitalizing Clifton's economy, city leaders found themselves faced with a number of constraints which severely limited the amount and types of additional industry Clifton could attract and support. Tourism planners report that the city has virtually no available land, little available housing, and a very limited budget for recruiting new businesses (Sheffield 1998; Neelley 1998).

Because of the relatively minimal cost and infrastructure required, community leaders identified the expansion of tourism as a viable strategy for Clifton's economic development (Sheffield 1998). In addition to bolstering the economy of the area, this strategy was seen as a way to fill the void left by the closure of the Texas Safari Wildlife Park, which had previously attracted thousands of visitors to the Clifton area each year (Sheffield 1998).

With a lack of leadership and interest leading to the dissolution of the short-lived Bosque County Tourism Commission established in 1992, Clifton's Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Program have assumed the responsibility of organizing the city's tourism planning and promotion. While attending a number of workshops on tourism development, tourism planners were repeatedly encouraged to focus on their city's most unique feature. And so, in 1997, the organizations decided that the best

strategy for developing tourism would be to concentrate on the city's rich Norwegian heritage. Later that year, the Chamber of Commerce kicked off the city's tourism development efforts by successfully petitioning the Texas State Legislature to declare Clifton "The Norwegian Capital of Texas" (*The Clifton Record*, 10 December 1997).

In addition to the obvious economic boost tourism development could potentially give the community, Clifton's tourism planners have identified several intangible benefits ethnic tourism is expected to provide. The promotion of the area's Norwegian heritage is seen as a way to foster community pride, educate residents about Clifton's history and culture, and create a sense of community among local residents (Neelley 1998). Clifton's designation and promotion as the "Norwegian Capital of Texas" has attracted the attention of larger entities, such as the Norwegian Consulate in Houston, that are arranging to bring Norwegian performers and events to the city, thus enhancing its cultural environment (Sheffield 1998). Plus, the arrival of increasing numbers of foreign visitors gives residents opportunities for cultural exchange (Gloff 1998).

The planners foresee few risks associated with increased tourism development. One expected obstacle will be negotiating with private property owners to allow the installation of signage that would allow visitors to more easily locate and interpret important historic sites (Sheffield 1998). More importantly, the planners recognize the possibility that promoting the area's heritage as a tourist attraction could lead to its commercialization, but they demonstrate a strong commitment to preserving the integrity and authenticity of Clifton's Norwegian heritage (Sheffield 1998). Additional concerns that have been voiced by residents include trespassing by visitors who enter private property to view historic sites, a desire to restrict the growth of the Clifton area, and the

erection of interpretive signs and billboards along scenic viewsheds and on private property (Finstad 1998; Sheffield 1998).

Ethnic tourism and Clifton's place identity

When exploring the demographics of Clifton, it may appear that tourism planners are reinventing the city to deliberately make it seem more “Norwegian.” With only nine percent of the population claiming Norwegian ancestry and Germans outnumbering Norwegians by a ratio of more than 2:1 (Figure 29), Clifton would hardly seem to be a “Norwegian” community. However, Clifton and Bosque County continue to be home to the highest concentration of Texans of Norwegian ancestry, and the area also boasts the Bosque Memorial Museum, home of the largest collection of Norwegian artifacts in the South and Southwest. Furthermore, Clifton has long been distinguished by its Norwegian heritage. As early as 1952, the city was described as “the principal Norwegian-descent center of [the] state” (*Texas Almanac* 1952).

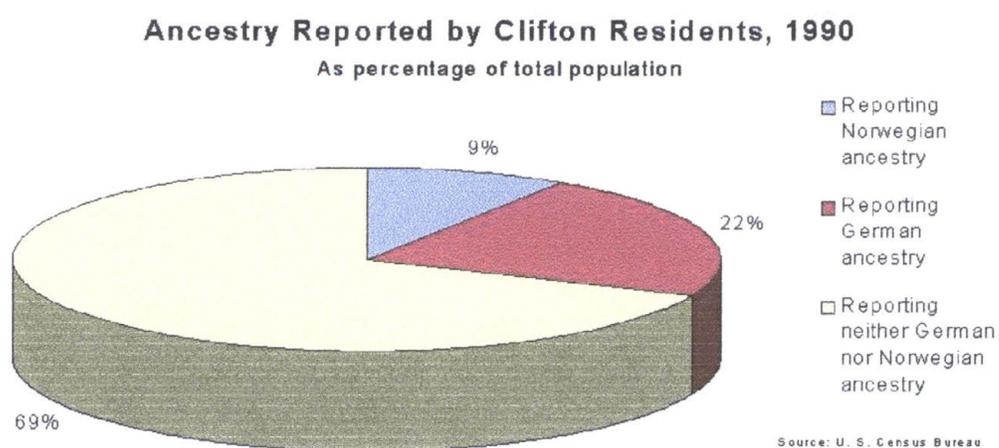


Figure 29

Tourism planners explained that the decision to promote Clifton's Norwegian heritage rather than its German heritage was driven primarily by the community's attributes. Many Norwegian attractions already existed in the area and required little additional development to accommodate tourists (Figure 30).

Attractions with Norwegian significance	Other Clifton attractions
Cleng Peerson Memorial Highway Norse Historic District Our Savior's Lutheran Church/Peerson gravesite St. Olaf's Lutheran Church (Old Rock Church) Bosque County Memorial Museum Norwegian homesteads Syttende Mai/Peerson's Birthday Celebration Smorgasbord Lutefisk Supper Nordic Nook coffee shop* Little Alamo craft village* Norwegian Country Christmas* Heritage Park (forthcoming)*	Texas Main Street Program Antique shops Clifton trade days Bosque County Conservatory of Fine Arts Parks and recreation facilities
	Other attractions within Bosque County
	Meridian State Park Lake Whitney Bosque Valley Golf Course
* Denotes attractions developed in conjunction with ethnic tourism promotion. Other attractions existed prior to tourism development efforts.	
Sources: Clifton Home Page 1998; Gloff 1998; Neelley 1998; Sheffield 1998	

Figure 30. Inventory of Clifton-area tourism attractions.

As Sheffield explained:

From the Norwegian heritage we have physical things that we can show and tour like the churches and the different homes, and we have a large contingency of Norwegians still here. Whereas if we were to promote the German side of [Clifton's heritage], we don't have anything to show and tell. (Sheffield 1998)

Another concern guiding the planners' decision was the fact that Texas already boasts a number of German communities that have become popular tourist attractions, including Fredericksburg (see Chapter 2) and New Braunfels (Sheffield 1998). Finally, the Norwegian culture had already proven attractive to visitors. The Norwegian community

in the Clifton area sponsors several hugely successful celebrations, such as the Smorgasbord and Lutefisk Supper, which have been drawing hundreds of visitors to the area annually for over 50 years (Finstad 1998; Werner 1998).

Since tourism development has been under way, other Norwegian heritage tourist attractions such as the Norwegian Country Christmas tour of homes, the forthcoming Heritage Park, and the Little Alamo craft village have been developed in hopes of attracting even more visitors. Despite the development of attractions in response to tourism planning, there has been little growth in some types of visitor amenities. As Figure 31 demonstrates, there has been no increase in the number of eating establishments in Clifton between 1995 and 1999 and limited growth in the number of lodging facilities available to visitors. In contrast, the number of antique and gift shops has increased dramatically, more than doubling the 1985 count and increasing sixfold from the 1995 total. The impressive growth in retail establishments, coupled with the comparatively modest growth in other amenities, reinforces Clifton's status as a "touring" attraction (Gunn 1979).

However, both tourism planners and residents recognize the need for more services to meet visitor demands if tourism in the area is to expand. They reported that developing more activities for tourists would encourage longer stays, while the addition of lodging facilities, restaurants, and some form of transportation for tourists would make longer stays possible, thus keeping visitors and their money in the community (Sheffield 1998, Finstad 1998).

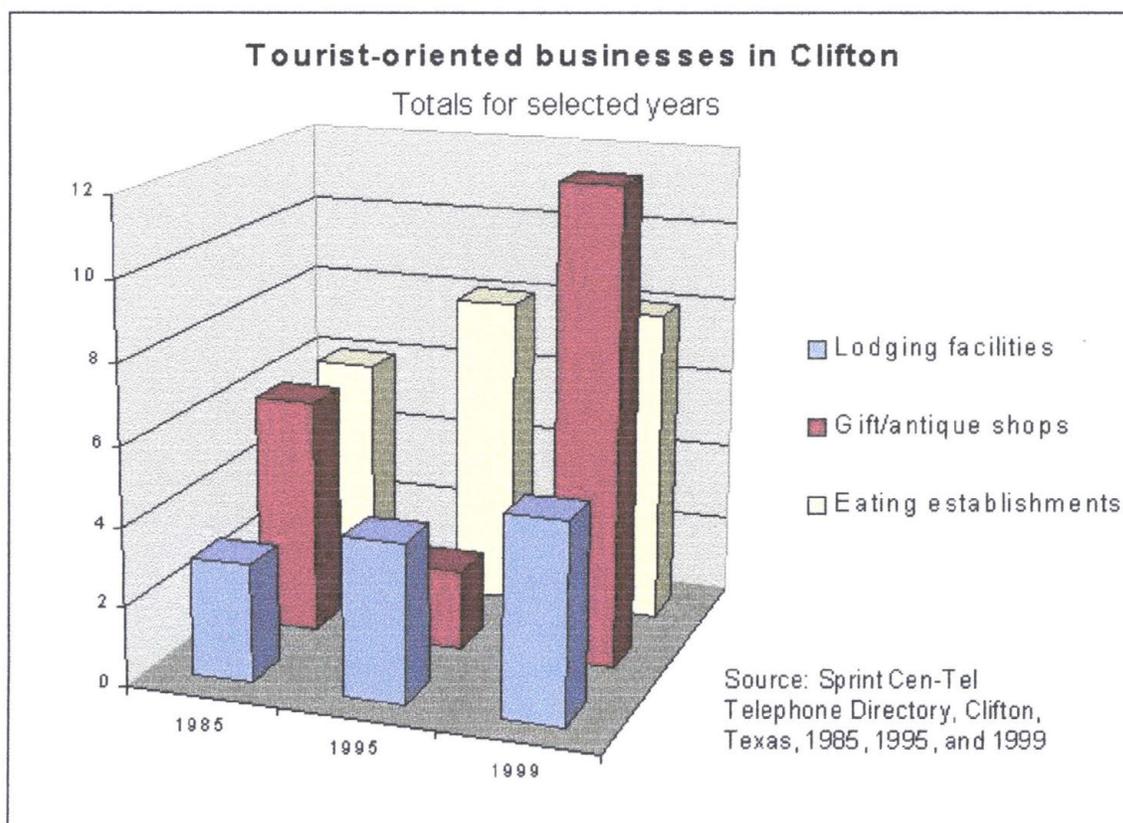


Figure 31

Ethnic tourism and the place image of Clifton

Clifton has no formal tourism planning process at this point, and thus no formal forum exists for community input and participation. However, tourism planners have made a concerted effort to include representatives of the Norwegian community in the development and implementation of tourism plans in an effort to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of depictions of Norwegian culture and heritage (Sheffield 1998; Finstad 1998). For example, tourism planners consult with members of the Bosque County Chapter of the Norwegian Society of Texas to provide and verify historical information for interpretive and promotional materials and recruit them to serve on committees to

plan events and attractions (Sheffield 1998). They also serve as tour guides for visiting groups and act as host and hostesses at special events such as the Norwegian Country Christmas home tour (Huse 1998). Until now, participation by members of the Norwegian community in tourism events has been on an individual, volunteer basis. However, Geneva Finstad, incoming president of the Bosque County chapter of the Norwegian Society of Texas, hopes that her organization will take a more active, formal role in tourism development in the future.

Representatives of the Norwegian community expressed a great deal of enthusiasm for the city's plans to promote its Norwegian heritage as a tourist attraction:

I think they're excited about [tourism development based on Clifton's ethnic heritage]. It has caused them to be so much more proud of their heritage and to want other people to know about it and share it. (Finstad 1998)

Surprisingly, the informants from the Bosque County Norwegian Society reported that there is no concern within the Norwegian community that their culture might be misrepresented by images presented as a result of tourism development. They attributed the Norwegian community's confidence in the tourism development plans to the close working relationship tourism planners have fostered with members of the Norwegian community. Even more surprising was the assertion by the Norwegian representatives that the Norwegian community did not expect to receive any direct benefits from ethnic tourism development aside from increased recognition of their heritage (Huse 1998; Finstad 1998). The spoils of tourism are expected to benefit the city as a whole, allowing the addition and expansion of services and facilities that will indirectly benefit Norwegian residents (Finstad 1998).

In contrast to the Norwegians' enthusiasm, some members of the community

reportedly feel the city's plans for ethnic tourism are overemphasizing the area's Norwegian heritage and overlooking the cultural contributions of other groups – particularly the Germans – who were among the early settlers (Torrence 1998; Finstad 1998). Chamber of Commerce President Joann Gloff, herself a descendant of Clifton's early German settlers, explained that the tourism plans are not meant to marginalize or exclude groups other than the Norwegians, but to capitalize upon the area's most unique attractions:

I think you have to go with what you have here and for a long time I felt we needed to do something Norwegian... I felt like it would add to our city and make us stand out. (Gloff 1998)

She added that the city is making an effort to incorporate its German heritage into tourism promotion, but on a relatively small scale. For example, the forthcoming Heritage Village will include displays and information regarding the German settlers, and in October the city adopted an Oktoberfest theme for its monthly Trade Days event. Additionally, representatives from the German community are being invited to participate in tourism planning committees in an effort to represent the full spectrum of residents' opinions.

Given that tourism development plans are focused on Clifton's Norwegian heritage, an analysis of current marketing and promotional materials reveals that the image of Clifton being presented to potential visitors is more culturally diverse than one might expect, reflecting tourism planners' commitment to representing other ethnic groups. The Chamber of Commerce presently has six different brochures available for visitors. All six make references to Clifton's Norwegian heritage attractions to varying degrees, yet each presents these attractions as one part of a larger mix that includes recreational

opportunities, the art community, shopping, and other activities.

Of the materials, only one brochure – entitled “Velkommen to Clifton: Norwegian Capital of Texas” and featuring a rendering of a troll on the cover – is dominated by the Norwegian theme. The pamphlet features a map of the Cleng Peerson Memorial Highway, dedicated in honor of the “Father of Norwegian Migration to America” who made his home and is buried in Bosque County, as well as the locations of various Norwegian heritage sites within the county. The final panels include a history of the founding of Clifton with a brief discussion of the Norwegians’ role in the city’s settlement and a list of attractions that includes three Norwegian heritage attractions and four other area attractions.

The Norwegian theme is also quite prominent, although not dominant, in the brochure “Clifton: A small, quiet town with a lot to offer.” While the cover of this brochure proclaims Clifton’s status as the “Norwegian Capital of Texas,” the art depicts a variety of leisure activities rather than focusing on the Norwegian theme. While the city’s Norwegian heritage provides the bulk of the text for sections on “Heritage” and “History” and half the listings in the “Events” section, this brochure gives equal time to discussions of the city’s recreational opportunities, art community, and shopping venues. While the Clifton, Texas Visitors Guide is simply a listing of local businesses and annual events, it should be noted that a yellow Post-It note featuring a cartoon of a Viking and the caption “Uff da!” (a Norwegian phrase roughly equivalent to “Oops!”) has been attached to alert the reader of updates to the business listing. While each of the remaining guides refers to Clifton’s Norwegian heritage somewhere within the text, the theme is less prominent, likely owing to the fact that the focus each of these guides is more regional,

encompassing the whole of Bosque County, North Central Texas, and Central Texas, respectively.

Interestingly, four of the six guides mentioned the area's German heritage as well as its Norwegian heritage, reflecting tourism planners' commitment to incorporating other aspects of the city's heritage into tourism planning and promotion. The two exceptions were the "Velkommen to Clifton Guide" and the NorTex Tourism Alliance North Central Texas Travel Guide. Neither omission is surprising considering the heavy Norwegian focus of the former and the wide array of geographically dispersed attractions listed in the latter.

The billboards that greet visitors entering Clifton also depict the community as being more than just a "Norwegian" place. Each of the three billboards highlights the Norwegian theme to differing degrees. One billboard (Figure 32a) is dominated by the Norwegian theme, reading "Velkommen to Clifton, Norwegian Capital of Texas" and mentioning nothing else besides the "historical downtown." A second billboard (Figure 32b) gives equal space to the "Velkommen til Clifton" message and an advertisement for the Bosque Memorial Museum (which, incidentally, contains the largest collection of Norwegian artifacts in the South and Southwest). A third billboard (Figure 32c) neglects the Norwegian theme altogether, focusing on the city's status as a participant in the state's Main Street program and referring generally to the community's "rich heritage."

While Chamber of Commerce-sponsored brochures and billboards greet visitors with a hearty "Velkommen," other examples of ethnic symbols being incorporated into the cultural landscape of Clifton as a result of tourism development are scarce at the present



Figures 32a, 32b, and 32c. Billboards at the entrances to Clifton.

time. As Table 3 demonstrates, ethnic tourism development in Clifton has had little effect on the naming conventions and symbols employed by businesses within the city.

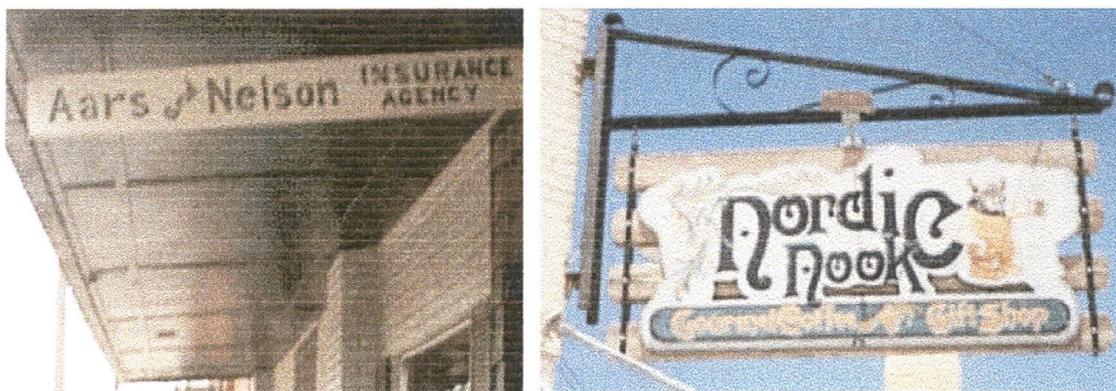
Table 3: Naming Conventions of Clifton Businesses for Selected Years

	1985		1995		1999	
	Count	% total	Count	% total	Count	% total
Businesses listed	214	100%	229	100%	206	100%
Named for Norwegian owner	8	4%	7	3%	12	6%
Norwegian businesses	1	<1%	1	<1%	2	1%
Non-Norwegian business with "Norwegian" name	0	0%	0%	0%	0	0%

Source: Sprint Cen-Tel Telephone Directory, Clifton, Texas, 1985, 1995, 1999

No existing businesses have consciously “ethnicized” their names in an effort to attract tourists and the number of businesses named for a Norwegian proprietor has risen only slightly. Even tourist-oriented businesses, frequently the first to employ ethnic symbols, have retained their original names and images, instead playing upon other characteristics of the community, such as its natural features.

Clifton’s Main Street’s profile is relatively nondescript and would look at home in any number of small Texas towns (Figure 33). Aside from the handful of businesses that are named for their Norwegian owners (Figure 34), there is little evidence of the city’s Norwegian heritage. However, one striking exception is the recent establishment of the Nordic Nook (Figure 35). Unlike other businesses on Main Street, this gift shop and coffeehouse has clearly adopted a Norwegian theme. Shirley Tillery, the shop’s proprietress, is a Norwegian-American recently transplanted from Minnesota.



Figures 33-35.

She opened the shop a year and a half ago because there were no Norwegian-themed business operating in the “Norwegian Capital of Texas.” The shop’s inventory balances the traditional and authentic with the kitschy, stereotypical, and symbolic. Authentic Scandinavian wares – such as *Selje* jewelry (the national jewelry of Norway), cooking supplies for making dishes such as *lefse* and *krumkake*, and samples of the traditional decorative art of *rosemaling*, handmade by Tillery herself – stand alongside stuffed toy trolls, Scandinavian fortune cookies, Viking-shaped pasta, and “Uff Da” hats and

suspenders (Fig. 36). While the coffee shop, with its homemade baked goods, provides the only outlet for Norwegian cuisine in the community, the featured coffee is a “Nordic Blend,” which actually comes from a roastery in Tyler. As Tillery explained, “The only thing Nordic about this coffee is that it was made by a Norwegian.” By effectively striking a balance between the authentic and the symbolic, the Nordic Nook has adeptly resolved the dilemma that is now facing the community as whole: how to balance the authentic with the symbolic in a way that will meet the needs of visitors while preserving the integrity of the community for residents.



Figure 36. Nordic Nook proprietress Shirley Tillery poses with some of her shop’s merchandise. Note the wooden items displaying the intricate art of *rosemaling* at Tillery’s left elbow and the plastic troll dolls on the top shelf.

Summary and conclusion

While the city of Clifton has a relatively small proportion of its population claiming Norwegian ancestry, the area has long been home to the highest concentration of Norwegians in Texas. In 1997, civic leaders decided to promote the city's Norwegian heritage as a tourism attraction in an effort to bolster the area's declining economy. To date, tourism development efforts have had little impact on the identity or image of the community. Because symbols of Clifton's Norwegian heritage have not yet been incorporated into the city's cultural landscape in response to tourism development, a visitor with no prior knowledge of Clifton's ethnic heritage would probably never guess he or she was in the "Norwegian Capital of Texas." However, tourism is only in its earliest stages in Clifton. While tourism planners report that no deliberate modifications will be made to create a more Norwegian look and feel along Main Street, only time will tell if Clifton will be pressured to adopt a more Scandinavian persona in order to meet visitor expectations.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The stated purpose of this thesis is to explore the motivations, expectations, and mechanisms behind ethnic tourism development in communities in Central Texas and to identify and evaluate the impacts of ethnic tourism, particularly as it applies to the creation and modification of place identity. This chapter discusses the results of this study in terms of the main research questions posed in Chapter One.

Furthermore, analysis of the existing literature pertaining to ethnic tourism suggests that this thesis is the first study to examine ethnic tourism development in Texas as well as the first to conduct a comparison of communities at different stages of ethnic tourism development. Therefore, the conclusions presented in this chapter, while preliminary, provide valuable insight into issues whose scope extends beyond the Central Texas region, including contributing to the understanding of the dynamic relationships between ethnic tourism, place identity, and place image. Finally, I pose a number of questions raised by this analysis that merit further investigation and research.

Ethnic tourism development in Central Texas

The first research question posed in this study is: How and why do communities identify ethnic tourism development as an economic development strategy? Comparison

of the case studies of Fredericksburg, West, and Clifton yields a number of commonalities which suggest the following preliminary assessment of the motivations and mechanisms underlying ethnic tourism development in Central Texas.

In all of the study communities, economic development is clearly the primary goal of ethnic tourism development, and ethnic tourism plays, or is expected to play, a dominant role in these cities' economies. As noted in Chapter 2, all types of tourism – of which ethnic tourism is becoming increasingly important – compose the only industry the Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce lists for the city, and sales and hotel-motel tax revenues generate substantial funds for the community. Despite being centered on a seasonal attraction, ethnic tourism in West has revived the city's economy, and profits from Westfest bankroll a variety of community improvement projects. Although the role ethnic tourism will play in Clifton is uncertain, as tourism development is only in its earliest stages, tourism planners expect that it will revitalize the city's economy. This is demonstrated by the fact that civic leaders are not considering any alternate plans for economic development (Sheffield 1998).

While their goals are the similar, the mechanisms by which each community has developed ethnic tourism differ. In Fredericksburg, ethnic tourism was built upon an already thriving tourism industry stemming from the community's restoration efforts and the area's varied natural, cultural, and recreational attractions. In West, the community celebration of Westfest unexpectedly proved attractive to tourists, prompting a number of residents to establish successful Czech businesses to capitalize upon the annual influx of visitors. Ethnic tourism in Clifton is being developed more intentionally than in

Fredericksburg or West, with tourism planners intentionally capitalizing upon the area's unique Norwegian heritage in an effort to attract visitors.

While some American communities, such as Solvang, California and Lebanon, Washington, have consciously constructed ethnic identities for themselves in order to attract tourists (Claiborne and Aidala 1974; Wieser 1999), each of the communities examined in this thesis has developed ethnic tourism around its existing ethnic heritage. With the exception of Clifton, in each case the ethnic heritage promoted by the community is that of the dominant ethnic group. While Clifton is unique because planners chose to promote city's status as home to the state's highest concentration of Norwegians rather than promoting its largest ethnic group, tourism development and marketing efforts nonetheless incorporate other aspects of the community's heritage. By developing tourism that reflects the true ethnic heritage and current demographics of their communities, planners in Fredericksburg, West, and Clifton have succeeded in fostering generally positive attitudes toward tourism development among residents, with few concerns about misrepresentation or exclusion.

Impacts of ethnic tourism on place identity and place image

The second research question addressed in this study is: How does ethnic tourism development affect the place identity and place image of host communities? As Holcomb (1993) and Hall (1997) have observed, when a community becomes aware that certain attributes are of particular interest to visitors, it may be compelled to emphasize these features in an attempt to further develop tourism. One way the communities examined in this study have been adapted to be more desirable to tourists is the establishment of tourist-oriented businesses such as restaurants, lodging facilities, gift and antique shops,

and restaurants. Philo and Kearns (1993) argue that many communities often try to appeal to tourists by offering standardized accommodations and amenities that create an atmosphere of sameness or blandness. However, the case studies presented in the preceding chapters suggest that this is not the case with ethnic tourism.

As Hoelscher (1998b, 373) observes, the basic commodity of ethnic tourism is the “exotic ‘otherness’” of the host community. In all of the communities studied in this thesis, most dining, lodging, and shopping establishments remain locally owned, and many reflect the distinctive ethnic character of their host communities by employing ethnic themes and symbols. In Fredericksburg, a larger city and better-established tourism attraction, franchises of national chains have begun to appear as well, threatening to intrude upon the city’s unique character with their familiarity. However, the city’s sign and landscape ordinances ensure that these businesses do not encroach upon the German-Texan ambience of the community. Thus, this study suggests that ethnic tourism development promotes the preservation of unique place identities rather than the homogenization of places that has been observed as a result of other types of tourism development.

One less obvious effect of ethnic tourism is its contribution to the preservation of the host communities themselves. While numerous small Texas towns were renovated in the 1960s and abandoned during the 1980s, Fredericksburg and West have remained economically viable and even boast increasing populations, owing in large part to the contributions of tourism. Although Fredericksburg already had a successful tourism industry prior to the development of ethnic tourism, one could argue that ethnic tourism has been a crucial force in preserving the city of West. As residents interviewed

explained, many of West's major employers had closed their doors by the time Westfest was inaugurated. Today, retail businesses established to capitalize upon tourist flows help fill the void left by the closures, and to paraphrase the comments of one informant, the economy of the community would dramatically decline without them. Furthermore, tourism planners in Clifton feel that ethnic tourism can overcome the constraints that have limited the development of other types of industry within the community, revitalizing the city's economy.

Because the tourism industry is better established in Fredericksburg than in West or Clifton, Fredericksburg is experiencing additional effects of ethnic tourism development that have not surfaced in the other two communities. For example, crowding and parking shortages are serious concerns for tourism planners in Fredericksburg, yet they do not pose a problem in West and Clifton. This example raises important issues regarding the potential of ethnic tourism – and tourism development in general – to become so successful as to lead to the degradation of the ambience of host communities and of the tourist experience itself. As one Fredericksburg tourism planner explained:

It could just be that, even though we keep the quaintness and the nice jobs and everything else, [continued tourism development] still may not work at any rate just because of the growth. Our population size now swells 3 or 4 times in a weekend, and at what point in time will people start saying, 'I just don't feel I'm in a relaxed atmosphere when I'm here'? (Kammlah 1999)

Furthermore, a number of nearby German towns are beginning to develop their own ethnic tourism industries in hopes of emulating Fredericksburg's success. These communities are drawing tourists away from Fredericksburg because they are off the beaten path and provide the sense of "mystery" that Fredericksburg has lost as a result of its popularity (Camfield 1999). While these issues are not a concern for Clifton or West

at this time, tourism planners in these and other communities considering ethnic tourism development should be aware of this potential effect of the growth and development of tourism in order to prevent or minimize negative impacts.

Finally, this study reveals that ethnic tourism development in each of the study communities has not led to the construction of ethnic place images; rather, each city built its place image upon its existing reputation as an ethnic community. However, in Fredericksburg, visitor expectations have led to some degree of “Bavarianization.” This mythic Bavarian place image does not reflect the ethnic heritage of the community, but visitors’ perceptions of what constitutes a “German” place. While the results of this thesis do not provide sufficient evidence to identify the mechanisms underlying the “Bavarianization” of Fredericksburg, this process will be the focus of future research.

Ethnic tourism and the construction of ethnic place identity

The third and final research question explored in this thesis is: Do the host communities display evidence of constructed or “ersatz” ethnic identity? If so, how is the use of contrived symbols justified by tourism planners and the community?

Evidence of constructed ethnic place identity is apparent in each of the communities examined in this study. The use of Bavarian symbols, German-language slogans, and the development of “German” festivals and celebrations to attract tourists to Fredericksburg all signify the construction of a more German place identity by tourism planners and local business owners. The deliberate renovation of buildings to give them a more “Czech” appearance and the growing tendency of business owners to “ethnicize” the names of nonethnic businesses exemplify the construction of ethnic place identity in West. In

Clifton, the use of Viking and troll imagery and the pervasiveness of the Norwegian theme in promotional materials reflect the community's efforts to portray itself as a more "Norwegian" place.

While it is evident that each of the study communities displays some degree of constructed place identity, I argue that these constructions are not evidence of "ersatz," or simulated, ethnic identity. In each case, the actors responsible for ethnic tourism development – tourism planners, business owners, and residents – are more often than not members of the host ethnic group. The use of readily recognized and often stereotypical ethnic symbols thus appears to be less indicative of the deliberate adoption of ethnic identity for the purposes of attracting tourists than of residents' formation and adoption of "symbolic ethnicities," which result from the natural progression of the processes of assimilation and acculturation (Gans 1979). For example, an interview with the owner of Das Peach Haus revealed that the "German" name of the fruit stand was not selected as a gimmick to appeal to tourists, but rather as a way for him to express his ethnic identity in a manner that would be clearly understood by potential customers.

Because place identities are subject to modification as a result of ethnic tourism development, one could argue that ethnic tourism threatens the authenticity of both the host community and the culture of the host ethnic group. However, one must also consider that the possible modification of place identity and local customs and traditions is often the lesser of two evils for communities faced with possible extinction as the result of economic decline. As Fredericksburg native and business owner Mark Wieser explained:

Every city goes through an evolutionary process. And you're either going to succeed in staying alive or you're going to lose people when they move on... You

need new blood; you need new ideas. There's nothing sacred about what we had when we grew up because everything changes... I'm not worried about destroying the culture or saving it just the way we had it. It needs to change to stay alive. (Wieser 1999)

Additional considerations

In addition to answering the main research questions posed at the outset of the study, my analysis of ethnic tourism development in Central Texas provides insight into a number of other issues. This study suggests that, at least in Central Texas, place images are developed from the unique features of the host communities (place identities), rather than merely being constructed for the purposes of attracting tourists. In each of these cases, the host communities are drawing upon local histories – the heritage and experiences of ethnic residents past and present – to develop their place images as ethnic tourism attractions. Therefore, it is clear that place identity, the characteristics of a place that distinguish it from others, has played an important role in delineating the place image that is presented.

The above discussion suggests that place identity influences the place image of ethnic tourism destinations in Central Texas. However, this study also proposes that the place images employed to attract visitors in turn impact the place identities of host communities. As Pagano and Bowman (1995, 46) point out, "...images of a city are not immutable; they evolve." Changing place identity may alter the image of a place, while perceptions of visitors and other outsiders based on the place images presented to them can lead to the modification of place identity. For example, ethnic tourism host communities are modified to be more desirable to visitors through the incorporation of ethnic symbols into the cultural landscape. In West, a number of tourist-oriented

businesses have added peaked roofs, wooden shingles, and window boxes to create a more “Czech” appearance, and in Fredericksburg, nearly every restaurant features at least a few German dishes on its menu (Kammlah 1999). Thus, the promotion of an ethnic place image can encourage residents to create a more ethnic place identity.

While the preceding discussion demonstrates the reciprocal relationship between place identity and place image, to understand this relationship fully one must also consider the critical role of visitor expectations. The adoption of Bavarian symbols in Fredericksburg exemplifies this concept.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the Germans who originally settled Fredericksburg came from the northern and western states of Germany (Jordan 1961). Their heritage has shaped the cultural landscape of the community, and Fredericksburg’s German-Texan flavor has been an important force in attracting tourists to the city. In the 1980s, when civic leaders began actively promoting ethnic tourism, they marketed Fredericksburg as a “German” place. Therefore, the place identity dictated the place image used to promote the community.

However, informants reported that the promotion of Fredericksburg as a “German” place led visitors to expect more of a “Bavarian” atmosphere, as many Americans associate Bavarian customs with German culture. Although residents and tourism planners recognize that the Bavarian culture was not originally part of Fredericksburg’s heritage, visitor expectations have encouraged the use of Bavarian symbols throughout the community, the creation of an annual Oktoberfest, and the establishment of a number of Bavarian-themed businesses. As more of Fredericksburg’s features become Bavarian

in flavor and Bavarian traditions such as Oktoberfest become part of the community's culture, the place identity of Fredericksburg is gradually becoming more Bavarian.

Ashworth and Voogd (1994) recognize that the needs, wishes, and demands of place consumers, combined with the resources of the place being promoted, contribute to the creation of images used in place marketing. However, they do not address the notion that changing place images impact the place identity (or "resources") of the host community in turn. Figure 37 depicts the dynamic relationship between place identity, place image, and visitor expectations suggested by this study.

Toward a semiotic of place identity and place image

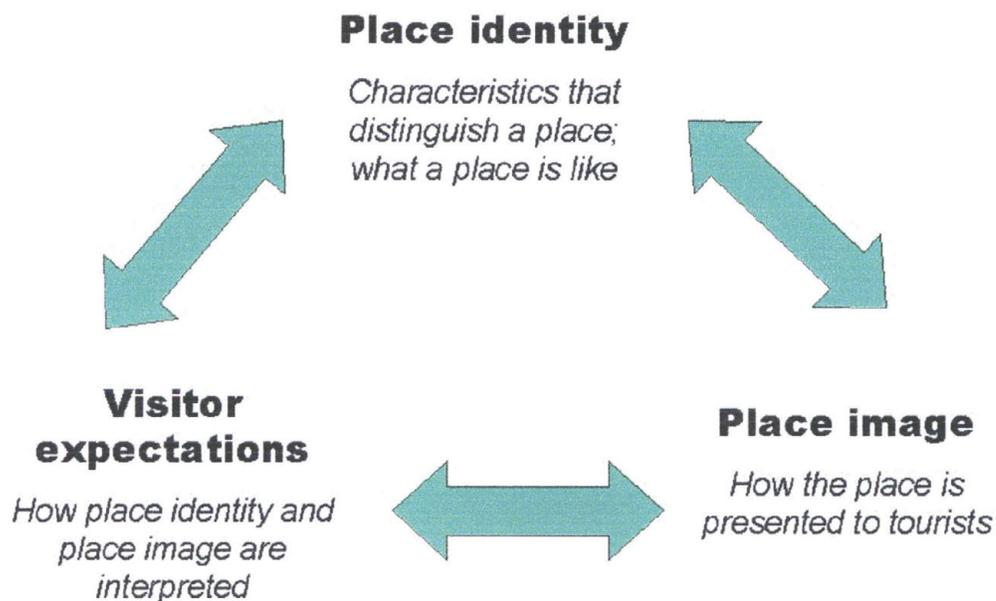


Figure 37

Questions for future study

Because the study of American ethnic communities as ethnic tourism destinations is a fairly recent trend in geography and related social sciences, the body of existing literature pertaining to this type of tourism development and its impacts is scant. Thus, while beginning to illuminate some of the issues surrounding ethnic tourism development, place identity, and place image, this study also raises a number of questions that merit further research.

One crucial consideration is the applicability of the findings obtained for communities in Central Texas to ethnic communities in other regions of the United States. Additional research should seek to determine whether the motivations, mechanisms, and impacts associated with ethnic tourism development in the study communities are similar to those of ethnic communities in other parts of the state and nation or whether they contribute to the unique regional character of Central Texas. Of particular interest is the extent to which communities in other parts of the country promote a vernacular version of their ethnic heritage. Anecdotal evidence suggests that, in other regions, ethnic tourism host communities are more apt to attempt to recreate the ambience of the country of origin of their dominant ethnic groups.

Another consideration warranting exploration is the impact of ethnic tourism on the ethnic identity of residents. As Alba (1991, 70) has pointed out:

Individuals may attach greater importance to ethnicities that are *visible* in the larger environment, feeling that there is more value in being perceived as members of these groups than in being seen as members of less visible, more assimilated groups.

Thus, in an American society whose members are becoming more and more ethnically mixed with each passing generation, ethnic tourism may be an important force in

determining the ethnic identification of residents of host communities by raising the profile of some ethnic groups. Furthermore, one might explore how residents of ethnic ancestries other than that being promoted for tourism respond to ethnic tourism development. Are they compelled to reassert their own ethnic heritage or do they instead opt to identify with the host ethnic group?

A final question raised by this thesis is that of ethnic tourism's role in the creation of mythic places. What mechanisms underlie the "Bavarianization" of Fredericksburg? Are there other examples of ethnic communities that have adopted mythic place images drawn from the universal cultural domain rather than their ethnic history in response to the demands and expectations of tourists? How does the adoption of mythic place identity and place image impact the ethnic identification of residents and their attachments to the host community? These important questions should be addressed in future research.

APPENDIX

INFORMANTS BY STUDY COMMUNITY

Clifton, Texas

Geneva Finstad	President-Elect, Norwegian Society of Texas, Bosque County Chapter
Joann Gloff	President, Clifton Chamber of Commerce
Larry Huse	President, Norwegian Society of Texas, Bosque County Chapter
Damaris Neelley	Director, Clifton Main Street Program
Trudy Sheffield	Executive Vice-President, Clifton Chamber of Commerce
Shirley Tillery	Owner, Nordic Nook
Elizabeth Torrence	Chair, Bosque County Historical Society
Doris Werner	Resident

Fredericksburg, Texas

Paul Camfield	Director, Gillespie County Historical Society
Joe Kammlah	Director, Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce
Ernie Loeffler	Director, Fredericksburg Convention and Visitors Bureau
Mark Wieser	Owner, Das Peach Haus
Evelyn Stork	Interpreter, Gillespie County Pioneer Museum

West, Texas

Jason Janek	Former resident (22 years)
Barry Murry	Associate Director, Westfest, Inc., and Member, West Chamber of Commerce
Rose Murry	President, West Chamber of Commerce
Eugene Slovak	Former President, West Chamber of Commerce
Martha Slovak	Resident
Josephine Thompson	Resident

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