

SIXTH STREET: RENEWAL & PRESERVATION

by

Nicole Elizabeth Sutton, B.A.

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Council of
Texas State University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
with a Major in History
December 2022

Committee Members:

Jason Mellard, Chair

Thomas Alter

Ruby Oram

COPYRIGHT

by

Nicole Elizabeth Sutton

2022

FAIR USE AND AUTHOR'S PERMISSION STATEMENT

Fair Use

This work is protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States (Public Law 94-553, section 107). Consistent with fair use as defined in the Copyright Laws, brief quotations from this material are allowed with proper acknowledgement. Use of this material for financial gain without the author's express written permission is not allowed.

Duplication Permission

As the copyright holder of this work I, Nicole Elizabeth Sutton, authorize duplication of this work, in whole or in part, for educational or scholarly purposes only.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Bill and Cindy Sutton, for instilling the importance of education. To my fiancé, Tristan Child, for continual support and motivation throughout my graduate experience. To my brothers, Will and Bob Sutton, for being my role models.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I would like to acknowledge my fiancé, Tristan Child, for encouraging me to continue on my graduate school journey, and ensuring that I ate dinner every night for two and a half years. Thank you for your love, support, and listening to the summary of every book and article I read. You are amazing, thoughtful, and keep me laughing every day.

To my parents, Bill and Cindy Sutton, thank you for instilling a love of education into our family and a love of Austin and music culture. To my brothers, Will and Bob, you are my role models. My family's successes in life inspire me to always work harder and love more, and I appreciate all of you every single day. To the Child family, thank you for your understanding and encouraging me to work.

To my best friend, Alex Castillo, thank you for your tutoring in sixteenth century English history, your patience, and your friendship. It means the world to me.

I would like to thank my committee for their help and enlightened ideas which shaped my thesis. This project would not have been possible without the help of Dr. Mellard, who has instilled a love of Texas music history that will last forever. Dr. Oram, who has made me think of places, spaces, and objects in an entirely new light. Thank you Dr. Alter for offering help and being a part of this project.

A special thank you is necessary to Dr. De la Puente and Roberta Ruiz, who have helped me tremendously by keeping me on track and ensuring I have everything turned in on time throughout my graduate school experience.

Thank you to Dr. Helgeson for teaching and showing me what good writing looks like in his “General Research Seminar” class. I will not forget the difference between active and passive voice because of you. I must also acknowledge all of the amazing professors who taught me a diverse range of subjects and perspectives of history, including Dr. Brown, Dr. Mann, Dr. Dedek, Dr. Murphy, and Dr. Nichols. Last, but not least, thank you to all the Paradise workers and patrons who helped inspire this project and the long lasting friendships.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	viii
CHAPTERS	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Overview of Chapters.....	1
Review of Literature.....	2
Methodology, Approach, and Limitations.....	5
II. SIXTH STREET’S DEVELOPMENT.....	7
A Short History of Sixth Street.....	7
Urban Renewal of Sixth Street.....	15
Sixth Street’s Preservation Movement.....	22
III. LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL.....	28
Music Journalism.....	28
Music Associations.....	29
South by Southwest.....	31
IV. SIXTH STREET WORKERS.....	36
V. CONCLUSION: SELLING COOL	41
REFERENCES.....	42

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
AusPop	Austin Museum of Popular Culture
AWHQ	Armadillo World Headquarters
CBV	Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau
NMS	New Music Seminar
SXSW	South by Southwest
THC	Texas Historical Commission
WWII	World War II

I. INTRODUCTION

There is a collection of city blocks in Austin Texas which encapsulate a rich story of the city's development, known as East Sixth Street. In the late twentieth century, business owners developed this area into a series of bars, clubs, and venues which became a well-known tourist district. The introduction of the South by Southwest festival led to Sixth Street being associated with the city's live music scene and aided tourism growth. There are many individuals who shaped this space into the heart of Austin's cultural economy. Local community members did so in collaboration with city officials, businesses, and organizations to develop the economy and preserve Austin's history and culture. I intend to demonstrate how local community members shaped the cultural economy on Sixth Street through urban renewal, preservation projects, and the establishment of the South by Southwest festival.

Overview of Chapters

My first chapter, "Sixth Street's Development" begins with "A Short History of Sixth Street.." This chapter employs a top-down approach to the urban planning of the downtown corridor, and the development of businesses along Sixth Street. I focus on the origins of historic and relevant businesses, including types of entertainment, and the diversity of businesses and people in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Then I establish how changes led to a decline in businesses on Sixth Street as a center for economic activity in the city. This is included to demonstrate the continuity and change of businesses along Sixth Street. "Urban Renewal of Sixth Street" explores the urban renewal projects that led to the revitalization of Sixth Street in the mid twentieth century. I examine the benefits and consequences of urban renewal, the push and pull factors of

incoming businesses. “Sixth Street’s Preservation Movements” examines how the Austin community has managed to maintain its sense of history and culture due to the development of organizations and actions of individuals.

In my second chapter, “Live Music Capital,” I examine how Sixth Street became associated with the music industry and how it harmonized with the city’s tourism strategies with a specific focus on how the South by Southwest music and film festival put Austin on the map internationally. Additionally, I examine the role of Austin journalists and the creation of the South by Southwest festival in Sixth Street’s urban renewal and how the rise of the music and film industry contributed to growth of Sixth Street businesses.

In my third chapter, “Sixth Street Workers” I use a bottom-up approach by examining Sixth Street workers’ experiences working in the retail, music, and tourism industry. Additionally, I examine how the centralization of businesses in close proximity created opportunities for businesses and individuals to collaborate, network, and provide employment opportunities.

The conclusion of this project, “Cultural Economy: Selling Cool,” begins with the story of Gerry Van King and how continual urban renewal has led to city growth, but at the expense of the city’s culture.

Review of Literature

Who developed Sixth Street? In the existing literature, Anthony Orum, William Scott Swearingen, Eliot Tretter, and Andrew Busch unfold the factors which developed the city and the consequences of those actions. Orum’s 1987 book *Power, Money, and the People: The Making of Modern Austin* demonstrates how Austin’s growth in the early

twentieth century came from wealthy urban entrepreneurs, federal New Deal infrastructure projects, and a strong vision of future developments and culture. He argues that non-local market entrepreneurs replaced local investors toward the end of the twentieth century and exceptional Texan leaders aided in the development. Orum discusses the concerns of segregation and the cognitive dissonance of locals between growth developed by outsiders and wanting to keep businesses local. He argues that the land available in and around Austin and liberal leaders in the mid 1970s were unique factors to the city's development.¹ In 2010, Swearingen's *Environmental City: People, Place, Politics, and the Meaning of Modern Austin* added to Orum's argument by examining the conflicts between economic development and quality of life of the city. Swearingen states that "The Growth Machine," including property, business, and bureaucratic groups, emerged in the 1970s and was at odds with the prominent local vision of a community that foregrounded culture and the natural environment. Similar to Orum's argument, Swearingen notes how national movements influenced local actions. Tretter's *Shadows of a Sunbelt City* argues that a "growth coalition" comprised of the University of Texas at Austin, local and state government, and local business, masked a history of significant conflict in which industrial and urban development negatively impacted underrepresented communities.² Tretter's work demonstrates the negative impact of economic growth and the process of gentrification in the context of a large "knowledge economy." Busch's *City in a Garden: Environmental Transformations and Racial Injustice in Twentieth-Century Austin, Texas* analyzes sustainable urban

¹ Anthony M. Orum, *Power, Money & the People: The Making of Modern Austin* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2002), x-xii.

² Eliot Tretter, *Shadows of a Sunbelt City: The Environment, Racism, and the Knowledge Economy in Austin* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2016), 2-3.

development and how Austin became a model for a balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability, but criticizes how this development led to poverty and gentrification.³ Austin's development arose from local and non-local entrepreneurs, backing from federal, state, and local government, and the vision of the local community to maintain a high quality of life in regard to environmental sustainability, and culture. They all argue that Austin has a communal vision of a city which has balance with politics, society, nature, and a high quality of life, but the community's growth has negatively impacted minorities in the city.

Beyond its initial development, how did Sixth Street become associated with the slogan "Live Music Capital of the World"? To answer this question, I examined the literature of Austin's music history. Musician and historian Barry Shank argues that the Austin music scene from the 1970s to 1980s was "a productive contestation between two forces: the fierce desire to remake oneself through musical practice, and the equally powerful struggle to affirm the value of that practice in the complexly structured late-capitalist marketplace."⁴ Similar to Austin's economic development, the music industry struggled to find a balance between economic growth and cultural preservation. Journalist Joe Nick Patoski ties the evolution of the local music industry to the development of the tech field in his book, *Austin to ATX: The Hippies, Pickers, Slackers & Geeks Who Transformed the Capital of Texas*.⁵ As it turns out, the founders of the *Austin Chronicle* developed the music industry in Austin by founding the South by Southwest Music Festival in 1987, which led to national and international recognition of Austin's music

³ Andrew M. Busch, *City in a Garden Environmental Transformations and Racial Justice in Twentieth-Century Austin, Texas* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 2-4.

⁴ Barry Shank, *Dissonant Identities: The Rock'n'roll Scene in Austin, Texas* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1994), x.

⁵ Joe Nick Patoski, *Austin to ATX: The Hippies, Pickers, Slackers, and Geeks Who Transformed the Capital of Texas* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2019), 232-233.

industry and film industry.

Despite this research, there is a perspective that is lacking in the existing narrative, which is how laborers aided in Sixth Street's development. The current scholarship on Austin's growth focuses on big business, government, and exceptional individuals, but fails to acknowledge how the working class supported and shaped the city, and specifically, the area of Austin's most lucrative tourism space, Sixth Street.

Methodology, Approach, and Limitations

The challenge has been to combine these perspectives along with the voices of local workers to gather a sense of how Sixth Street transformed into the center of the tourist economy and represented the city's population, values, and history. My methodology includes conducting oral interviews of people who worked for or owned businesses on Sixth Street between 1970 and 2000. This process has its own limitations including people misremembering, and some interviewees might succumb to gatekeeping, deciding which knowledge is accessible to whom. Additional primary sources include Austin business records, city economic reports, and government policies. For secondary sources I used articles from the *Austin Chronicle* and *Austin-American Statesman*, as well as the wider scholarship on the subject.

My approach is to examine Austin's history and development from the perspective of business owners, city officials, and laborers and their impact on social movements and city development on Sixth Street. I will focus on Sixth Street's business development and the laborers who ran the retail and service industry; the growth of the entertainment industry and the laborers who developed Austin's music and film industry; how local government and business worked together to create urban renewal and

historical preservation; and the community members impacted by changes on Sixth Street.

Sixth Street runs across the main part of downtown. It begins on the west side of town when it intersects Loop 1, colloquially known as Mopac, and ends stretching into the Eastside, dead ending at Calles Street. For the purpose of this research, I will focus on an area known as “Dirty Sixth,” which starts approximately at the intersection of Congress Avenue and ends at the intersection of Interstate 35. This region is the largest stretch of bars in the city and has seen the most change in terms of businesses along Sixth Street. Other areas of Sixth Street, such as the West end and the East side, did not develop as tourist centers until the end of the 1990s and after the millennium, respectively.

Why is Austin’s Sixth Street unique as an object of study? After all, there are many similar tourist spaces across the United States. While New Orleans’ Bourbon Street and Memphis’ Beale Street, for examples, both have rich music histories, these cities do not have the same factors of growth, nor are capitals of their states. Many, if not most, American cities have spaces that combine bar districts and tourism with urban renewal and preservation, such as Chicago’s Logan’s Square, New York’s East Village, and Pittsburgh’s South Side, but the music culture influence differentiates Sixth Street from these locations. The impact of politics and legislation, and its close tie with city development, sets this area apart from others in the United States.

II. SIXTH STREET'S DEVELOPMENT

A Short History of Sixth Street

In 1835, Jacob Harrell and his family set up a tent and later a split log stockade along the north bank of the Colorado River during a hunting expedition. He was visited by Mirabeau B. Lamar in 1837, recently elected as the first Vice President of the Republic of Texas, and requested a survey of the area for the placement of a new Texas capital city. Edward Bureson surveyed the region the following year, and a five man commission found four families living in the area known as Waterloo. The Texas Congress designated the settlement Austin, after Stephen F. Austin, and chose a 7,735 acre plot for the placement of a capitol building on top of hill north of the Colorado River.⁶ By 1839, Judge Edwin Waller laid out a street plan with two major axes, the Avenue, now known as Congress Avenue, and Pecan Street, now known as Sixth Street. The Waller Plan designated a fifteen square block grid with east-west streets named after local trees, and north-south streets named after Texas rivers. In 1845 the United States annexed Texas, and on February 19, 1846, Austin formally became the state's capital.⁷ In 1884, the east-west downtown streets names were replaced with numerical names, thus Pecan Street became Sixth Street.

The downtown location was ideal due to its relative location to the Colorado River, only six blocks south. Both Congress Avenue and Pecan Street were commercial centers with primarily retail businesses. The city grew exponentially in all cardinal directions. For example, there are only four districts within the Sanborn Fire Insurance

⁶ Hazlewood, Claudia. "Waterloo, TX (Travis County)," Handbook of Texas Online, accessed April 18, 2021, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/waterloo-tx-travis-county>.

⁷ "When Was Austin Founded?," City of austin - austin history center: When was Austin founded?, accessed May 9, 2021, <http://www.austinlibrary.com/ahc/faq1.htm>.

maps for Austin in 1877⁸; by 1885, eight districts⁹; by 1889, fifteen districts¹⁰; by 1894, twenty-one districts¹¹; by 1900 fifty-three districts¹²; and by 1921, ninety-seven districts¹³.

In 1877, Sixth Street had a selection of businesses including goods such as, cigars, clothing, dry goods, fruits, furniture, guns, harnesses, ice, liquor, shoes, seeds, and services, including a bank, barber shops, a hotel, laundry, a millinery, tailors, a photography gallery, billiards, and a saloon. The installation of the Texas Central Railway in 1871 aided in bringing a wider variety of business, goods, services, and people to the city. For example, Madam Saffroi, one of Austin's prominent restaurant owners, rented the building at 316 East Sixth, remodeled it and reopened it as the "St. Charles Hotel and Restaurant" and Austin's first ice cream store.¹⁴ The Carrington building, located at 522 East 6th, was a grocery store from 1873 to 1907, run by E. H. Carrington, a former slave, and well known as a leader in the Black community. His son-in-law, Louis D. Lyons continued to operate the business into the 1920s. The reception hall on the second floor, known as Lyons Hall, was used for meetings for the Black community.

In 1885, the area continued to have a vast array of dry goods, groceries, drug stores, a selection of retailers, and an increase in general stores, saloons, second hand

⁸ Sanborn Map Company, Austin, Travis County, Texas, 1877, New York City: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co, 1885 http://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/austin_1877_1.jpg

⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Austin, Travis County, Texas, 1885, New York City: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co, 1885 http://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/austin_1885_1.jpg

¹⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Austin, TX, Travis County, Texas, 1889, New York City: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co, 1885 http://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/austin_1889_1.jpg

¹¹ Sanborn Map Company, Austin, Travis County, Texas, 1894, New York City: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co, 1894 http://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/austin_1894_1.jpg

¹² Sanborn Map Company, Austin, Travis County, Texas, 1900, New York City: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co, 1900 http://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/austin_1900_1k.jpg

¹³ Sanborn Map Company, Austin, Travis County, Texas, 1921, New York City: Sanborn Map & Publishing Co, 1921 http://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/sanborn/austin_1921_1.jpg

¹⁴ Williams, Joe R, and Mary D Landon. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory -Nomination Form- Sixth St Historic District Austin ." Austin: Texas Historical Commission, December 30, 1975.

shops, and carriage shops, most notably M. Paggi's Carriage shop located at 419-421 East Sixth.¹⁵ Michael Paggi bought ice machinery in Europe, ran the Austin Ice Company, and a soda water and syrup manufacturing company at Pecan Street and Brazos.¹⁶ The night life was mostly likely improved by the installation of gas street lamps in 1874, and a street car line in 1875, and the creation of ice facilities.

By 1889, businesses were increasingly diversified and specialized across the downtown area.¹⁷ There was a rise of saloons, photo galleries, second hand shops, and lumber mills and cotton gins. Many general stores and grocers developed into restaurants, clothing stores, and shops specific to saddles and carriages. Some of the notable historical buildings include the Hannig Building, the Bremond Building, and the Driskill Hotel. Joseph W. Hannig constructed the Hannig Building at 206 East Sixth in 1874. He and his wife, Susannah, formerly Mrs. Almaron Dickinson, a survivor of the battle at the Alamo, owned this property from 1874 to 1877. Morley Brothers Drug Store leased the building from 1877 to 1905, until they moved across the street to 209 East Sixth.¹⁸ John Bremond Jr. built the Bremond Building at 127-33 East Sixth and used it as a dry goods store in 1872. Later the business became the first business in Texas to sell roasted ground coffee.¹⁹ The Driskill Hotel, at the corner of 6th and Brazos Street, is a prominent historic building on Sixth Street, established in 1886 by the cattle baron Jesse Driskill, but it was sold in 1888 due to financial loss.²⁰ The Driskill is one of the most iconic historical buildings on East Sixth Street.

¹⁵ Sanborn Map Company, Austin, TX, 1885

¹⁶ Williams and Landon. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory -Nomination Form- Sixth St Historic District Austin .", December 30, 1975.

¹⁷ Sanborn Map Company, Austin, TX, 1885

¹⁸ Williams and Landon. "Sixth St Historic District Austin ."

¹⁹ Williams and Landon. "Sixth St Historic District Austin ."

²⁰ Williams and Landon. "Sixth St Historic District Austin ."

Sixth Street demonstrated Austin's diverse population in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The National Register of Historic Places describes the area as "A biracial character ...several businesses on the north side of the 400 and 500 blocks were operated by [B]lacks and catered to the [B]lack community."²¹ The 1889 maps shows ethnic dwellings and tenements as "negro" and "Mexican" demonstrating the increasingly racialized concept of space. The ethnic enclaves developed along the edges of downtown, the Black neighborhoods on the east side of the city, while Mexican enclaves arose on the West side of downtown.

The built environment changed over time due to the arrival of railroads, the oil industry, and rapid population increase. Industries such as cotton, oil, gas, railroads, and water facilities are prominently displayed in all of the maps over time. The introduction of the moon towers in 1894 most likely aided the night life of Austin.²² Also, the creation of a hydroelectric dam in 1893 brought more power to the city, until it collapsed on April 7th, 1900, which led to the death of 18 people and the destruction of 100 houses.²³

The late nineteenth century saw a development of a red light district around Fourth Street and Lavaca Street, now known as the Warehouse district. Vice districts were a growing concern of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, including Austin's "Guytown", a designation coined by the *Austin American Statesman* in 1880.²⁴ Historian David Humphrey argues that red light districts developed around

²¹ Williams and Landon. "Sixth St Historic District Austin ."

²² Megan Garber, "Tower of Light: When Electricity Was New, People Used It to Mimic the Moon," *The Atlantic* (Atlantic Media Company, March 6, 2013), <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2013/03/tower-of-light-when-electricity-was-new-people-used-it-to-mimic-the-moon/273445/>.

²³ Nicole L Elmer and About the author Nicole L Elmer , "The Dam That Broke: Some Prehistory That Helps Explains How BFL Came to Exist," Biodiversity Center (University of Texas, August 20, 2020), <https://biodiversity.utexas.edu/news/entry/the-dam-that-broke>.

The taming the periodic flooding over the river was a consistent impediment to downtown development until the mid-twentieth century/hydroelectric projects of the New Deal.

²⁴ Richard Zelade, *Guytown by Gaslight: A History of Vice in Austin's First Ward*. Charleston, SC: The History Press,

downtown districts, railway stations, and army forts in the 1860s-1870s, which brought in an influx of male laborers. The city of Austin solely focused on the centralization of brothels, not elimination, due to the economic value it created for property owners renting to prostitutes. For example, Humphrey states “nor could the protesters have been encouraged by the example of the mayor, who himself was renting property in the city to prostitutes.”²⁵ Adding to Humphrey’s argument, Richard Zelade addresses how drug addiction, especially morphine, played a part in the development of the vice districts and brothels. He further shed light on the development of vice districts in Austin and how resident complaints compelled owners of bars, gambling, and prostitution houses to remain in certain sectors of the city, but that health was a major factor leading to regulations.

In 1933, the repeal of prohibition led to a development of bars and liquor stores on Sixth Street, with over 26 liquor stores within a two mile area.²⁶ Most notable among these new establishment was Sixth Street’s Twin liquors, opened by twin brothers Theodore and Arthur Jabour.²⁷ They were the descendants of Cater Joseph, who started the Lebanese immigration to Austin in the 1880s and owned a confectionery business on Congress Avenue.²⁸ Joseph’s brother, Issac Joseph, ran a produce store on East Sixth, as well as several other Lebanese and Syrian families. According to the National Register of Historic places and the historical markers on Sixth Street, the 1940s saw many businesses

2014)

²⁵ David Humphrey, “Prostitution and Public Policy in Austin, Texas, 1870-1915.” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 86. no. 4 (April 1983): 516. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30236944>

²⁶Unknown, “About Twin Liquors,” Twin Liquors (Twin Liquors), accessed October 26, 2022, <https://twinliquors.com/pages/about-twin-liquors>.

²⁷ Craig Hillis. Phone Interview by Nicole Sutton. July 1, 2022.

²⁸ Michael Corcoran, *Austin Music Is a Scene Not a Sound* (Forth Worth, TX: TCU Press, proposed 2024).

there owned by Black, Lebanese, Jewish, German, Chinese, and Mexican American citizens.²⁹

The entertainment industry grew in the early twentieth century with the introduction of theaters, but due to the Jim Crow laws and laws of segregation, not everyone was welcome. The Paramount Theater was built in 1915 in the Neoclassical Revival style at 713 Congress Avenue, only a block away from Sixth Street.³⁰ Black people were not allowed in the Paramount until integration in 1963.³¹ J. J. Hegman opened the Ritz Theater at 320 E. Sixth Street in 1929, which brought the first “talkies” to the city. Everett Givens ran the Lyric Theater, which opened at in the same decade at 419 E. Sixth Street. The theater catered to the Black community.³² Givens, “the Bronze Mayor of Austin,” was a prominent African-American physician and dentist who later founded a Black business association in Austin called Argos.³³ In 1931, “the famous Bessie Smith played at the [Lyric] theater, but it had been renamed the Dunbar Theater.”³⁴ Entertainment around Sixth Street continued to grow throughout the twentieth century due to the street’s central location.

Despite a steady growth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Sixth Street’s commercial importance began to decline after WWII due to the development of Interstate-35, shopping centers outside of the downtown area, and the increase of disreputable businesses and illegal activities on Sixth Street. These factors pushed

²⁹ Williams and Landon. “Sixth St Historic District Austin .”

³⁰ Joseph A Orbock, “Paramount Theatre,” TSHA (Texas State Historical Association, June 3, 2015), <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/paramount-theatre>.

³¹ Fri. Jordan Buckley, “The Desegregation of Austin’s Movie Theatres,” A history of the stand-in movement - Screens (The Austin Chronicle, December 14, 2015), <https://www.austinchronicle.com/screens/2015-12-04/the-desegregation-of-austins-movie-theatres/>.

³² Corcoran, *Austin Music Is a Scene Not a Sound*.

³³ William E Montgomery, “Austin Argos,” TSHA, November 1, 1994, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/austin-argos>.

³⁴ Michael Corcoran, *Austin Music Is a Scene Not a Sound*.

economic activity off Sixth Street and into other areas of the city and led to many vacant buildings. By the end of the 1950s, Interstate 35 divided the city into east and west regions and hardened the divisions between ethnic enclaves. It enabled people to travel to other Texas cities faster and for Austin community members to move faster from the north and south areas. This quicker transportation route enabled patrons to shop in areas outside of the downtown area. In 1963, the Hancock Center, located on 41st Street, opened with the first Sears store in Austin, drawing crowds to the north-central shopping center and away from downtown.³⁵ Furthermore, the opening of Highland Mall off Airport Road in 1971, led to a decline of the Hancock Center and pushed patrons farther north. These commercial areas provided new goods and services which were not available on Sixth Street.

Disreputable businesses, crime, drug dealing and use, and prostitution further pushed people away from shopping along Sixth Street. The most common crimes on Sixth Street in the 1950s-1970s tended to be burglaries and drug dealings. A 1953 newspaper article describes a slew of burglaries of pharmacies along Sixth Street.³⁶ *Austin-American Statesman* journalist, Dan Grover, describes East Sixth as “Dream Street”, and explains that “A few months ago you could buy a stick of marijuana on almost any corner any day, but now if you need a reefer kick you have to go to the far

³⁵ Jalaane Levi-Garza and Louis Pauls, “Out of the Ordinary: The History of Hancock Center,” OUT OF THE ORDINARY: THE HISTORY OF HANCOCK CENTER | Hancock Neighborhood Association, September 24, 2011, <https://www.hancockna.org/www/node/25>.

³⁶ “Crime Joins Austinites, Goes on Holiday, Too.”. 1953 *The Austin Statesman* (1921-1973), Sep 08. <https://libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/crime-joins-austinites-goes-on-holiday-too/docview/1559360632/se-2>.

East Side [of Sixth Street].”³⁷ As middle class shopping decreased and working-class businesses increased, there was a marginal rise in criminal activity.

The National Register of Historic Places nomination form in 1975 describes the area as “A skid-row atmosphere fostered in the 1950's and 1960's by the multiplying number of pawn shops, loan companies and bars in the district.”³⁸ Dan Grover, describes East Sixth Street businesses in 1953 as “The barber college, the vegetable markets, the pawn shops, the auto parts places, the small groceries, the chili joints, the shine stands-along with the gin mills, the juke joints, the beer taverns and the wine spots.”³⁹ Many of these businesses were owned and patronized by people of color. Businesses deemed disreputable, such as pawn shops and pornography stores and theaters, pushed many patrons away from shopping and spending leisure time on Sixth Street. Some community members deemed pawn shops as sleazy businesses because of misconceptions about stolen merchandise and prejudice towards people who needed fast cash. This is more of a change of perspective of the community rather than a change of businesses since second hand shops were established in the late nineteenth century.

Pornography theaters, erotic bookstores, and massage parlors started showing up in the 1970s. For example, in 1970, the Ritz Theater became a pornography theater, and the Yank Theater popped up at 222 East Sixth Street. Local journalist Michael Corcoran describes how the area changed as “Transvestite streetwalkers strolled in front of the dirty peep shows, as “The Street of Dreams” had become Sleaze Central.”⁴⁰ Additionally, erotic bookstores were common, such as Mr. Peepers in the 200 block of Sixth Street.

³⁷ Grover, Dan. 1953. "On Dream Street." *The Austin Statesman* (1921-1973), Jul 22. <https://libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/on-dream-street/docview/1559346711/se-2>.

³⁸ Williams and Landon. "Sixth St Historic District Austin."

³⁹ Grover. 1953. "On Dream Street."

⁴⁰ Corcoran, *Austin Music Is a Scene Not a Sound*.

The Austin Police Department cracked down on crime on Sixth Street from 1973-1974, which drove away customers and eventually some of the businesses, especially near residential areas.⁴¹ Massage parlors, such as the Sun Massage Parlor, in the 500 block, did not receive the same treatment as the erotic bookstores. Manager Vickie Hansen stated in a 1976 article “Everybody has been super nice; it’s been like a big family.”⁴² She claimed that her biggest issue, aside from police harassment, was a couple of prostitutes attempting to curb her business.⁴³ Despite the growth in disreputable businesses, the colloquial term “Dirty Sixth” did not come into use until the 1980s. The centralized area downtown offered an array of businesses to a diverse population of owners and patrons from the late nineteenth century to the mid twentieth century. From the 1950s-1970s, the introduction of disreputable businesses, an increase in crime, new shopping areas, and a new transportation route pushed patrons away from the area.

Urban Renewal of Sixth Street

In an effort to change the trajectory of downtown’s economic center, city officials collaborated with local business owners to promote urban renewal and historic preservation. Urban renewal is the process of reshaping public and private property for the purpose of modernization and in the hope of increasing economic gains. A combination of federal, state, and local funding led to urban renewal across the city of Austin. The city’s focus of renewing Sixth Street led to increased capital for local businesses and development of a tourism industry, which is marketed off of Austin’s cultural economy. On the other hand, urban renewal projects have led to decreased

⁴¹ Michael B. Smith "Which way for 6th Street?: Nobody but the police seems to mind the sex book shops.". 1976 *The Austin American Statesman* (1973-1980), Nov 07.

<https://libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/which-way-6th-street/docview/1671681536/se-2>.

⁴² Smith "Which way for 6th Street?: Nobody but the police seems to mind the sex book shops.".

⁴³ Smith "Which way for 6th Street?:"

diversity on Sixth Street and gentrification. Community members debate whether urban renewal is a sign of progress or rather an erasure of the community's history.

Across the United States, between 1949 and 1974, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provided grants and loans to cities seeking modernization. The city of Austin developed a "Master Plan" urban renewal project in 1959, which continues into the twenty-first century.⁴⁴ On July 23, 1962 the first meeting for the Austin Urban Renewal Agency took place, and for the next decade focused on housing for lower income households.⁴⁵ By the mid 1970s, reduced funding from the federal urban renewal program led to a downsizing of the agency and creation of the Community Development Act. Lyndon B. Johnson played a major role in Austin's urban renewal. For example, as a Texas congressman in 1938, he secured \$450,000 in federal money to create low-cost public housing in Austin.⁴⁶ As President of the United States and a part of his Great Society reforms he provided federal funding to Austin in an effort for urban renewal from the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965. By September 1, 1987, the state enacted the Texas Urban Renewal Law, which states the purposes of urban renewal as public health and safety, the reduction of crime, and elimination of slums.⁴⁷

Local entrepreneurs' collaboration with city government aided in the urban renewal project and led to economic development on Sixth Street. Throughout the 1970s entrepreneurs started to develop a series of new businesses, bringing in a new demographic to the area. New music venues, bars, restaurants, and clubs, together with a

⁴⁴ "Urban Renewal Board," Urban Renewal Board | AustinTexas.gov, accessed August 16, 2022, <https://www.austintexas.gov/content/urban-renewal-board>.

⁴⁵ "Austin's History: Urban Renewal," Austin Public Library, accessed August 16, 2022, <https://austin.bibliocommons.com/list/share/603054998/1442465287>.

⁴⁶ Orum, *Power, Money & the People*, 132.

⁴⁷ Local Government Code Title 12. Planning and Development Subtitle A. Municipal Planning and Development (1987). <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/SOTWDocs/LG/htm/LG.374.htm>

lowered drinking age, enticed a younger population to the downtown area. Businesses began to congregate in the area due to the reasonably priced rents, closure of businesses on the edges of the city leading to a need for new social areas, and a mutual benefit of businesses to be near each other to attract foot traffic. The continual urban renewal projects of East Sixth Street led to increased business in Austin.

Austin's live music scene took off in the 1970s with a growing number of venues, musicians, and music patrons. As one iconic venue shut down, the musicians and patrons moved to another space. For example, the Vulcan Gas Company, originally an actual gas company, became a venue by the same name from 1967-1970 on Congress Avenue. A new and much larger venue opened in its absence on the south side of downtown, known the Armadillo World Headquarters (AWHQ). Eddie Wilson, one of the eight original investors of the AWHQ called it the "Noah's ark for the hippie world."⁴⁸ Though the venue was popular, the business revenue was weak. Wilson left management of the AWHQ and began a new business off Sixth Street and Sabine, a cafe called the Raw Deal, in 1977. "East Sixth Street was seedy and run-down in the late seventies" describes Wilson in his memoir, but "the rent was cheap, only \$125 per month."⁴⁹ In 1981, the AWHQ officially shut down after eleven years in business, and the building was subsequently demolished. The AWHQ helped to build Austin's counterculture and created conditions for other venues to flourish.

The most prominent pull factors which brought patrons back to Sixth Street included a crop of new businesses offering food and drinks, live music, and entertainment. In particular, the opening of Old Pecan Street Cafe, Jim Franklin's The Ritz, Antone's,

⁴⁸ Edwin O. Wilson, Jesse Sublett, and Dave Marsh, *Armadillo World Headquarters* (Austin, TX: TSSI Publishing, 2019), 359.

⁴⁹ Wilson, Sublett, and Marsh, *Armadillo World Headquarters*, 359.

Steamboat 1874, and Esther's Follies brought populations to Sixth Street in the 1970s. Additionally, the temporary change of the Texas drinking age to 18 years old in 1973 led to more bar patrons, especially the college student population. These factors, along with a general population increase in the city led to increased economic activity on Sixth Street.

Michael Corcoran claims the opening of the Pecan Street Cafe in 1972 was the beginning of the major shift in the revitalization of Sixth Street businesses.⁵⁰ In 1968 the Gravers bought the condemned building at 314 E. Sixth Street for \$14,000, and four years later it opened as a fine dining restaurant.⁵¹ The placement of an upscale restaurant among what Corcoran calls "a red-light district" turned the tides for East Sixth Street.⁵²

Jim Franklin, the lead poster artist for the Armadillo World Headquarters, re-opened The Ritz Theater in 1974 as a live music venue, after the former pornography theater was shut down. As a part of what the newspapers were calling the "Renaissance of Sixth Street," the Ritz was a turning point for the area's urban renewal. Local music industry personality Joe Gracey states in a 1974 article that the "River City Inn, Pecan Street Cafe, Cotton Exchange, Alliance Wagon Yard, Vagabond Theater, and now the Ritz are all helping reshape what was once Austin's ritziest boulevard."⁵³ Additionally he discusses the city's plans to change the street's name back to Pecan Street and add a trolley. In an interview, Leea Mechling, Executive Director and Curator of the Austin Museum of Popular Culture (AusPop), deemed Jim Franklin's The Ritz as one of the most popular places to go on Sixth Street in the 1970s.⁵⁴ The business did not thrive for long, but it had lasting effects. Michael Corcoran explains that funding was challenging

⁵⁰ Michael Corcoran. Phone Interview by Nicole Sutton. September 11, 2022.

⁵¹ Corcoran, *Austin Music Is a Scene Not a Sound*.

⁵² Michael Corcoran, Interview.

⁵³ Joe Gracey, "Jim Franklin, Bill Livingood Manage: Ritz Opening Adds Class to Sixth Street.," *The Austin American Statesman*, October 19, 1974.

⁵⁴ Leea Mechling. Phone Interview by Nicole Sutton. June 30, 2022.

and “within four months Willie Nelson had to do a benefit” to help save the venue.⁵⁵ The re-launched Ritz brought in acts such as Weather Report, Dr. Bukka White, and Little Richard. Eagle Pennell and Maureen Gosling put together Austin’s first film festival called “Change the Reel”, which aired the pilot of *Austin City Limits*.⁵⁶ The business closed in 1975 and became the Center Stage Theater. In 1982, Michael Shelton and Shannon Sedwick bought the lease and turned the theater into a comedy club, known as Esther’s Follies, the longest running comedy show in Austin, and eventually moved to another location on East Sixth.⁵⁷ Though short lived, Jim Franklin’s version of the Ritz brought in new customers and a new atmosphere to the East Sixth Street.

In 1975, Clifford Antone opened Antone’s blues club at 141 E. Sixth Street, which became one of the city’s most iconic businesses. *Austin Chronicle* journalist Bill Bentley described the area as nefarious, but “Clifford Antone wasn’t trying to emulate the trappings of the latest New York disco or even imitate the rustic, cedar-walled standard decor of local nightspots when he opened his doors on July 15, 1975. His club would exist for but one purpose: to serve as Austin’s Home of the Blues.”⁵⁸ In an interview with W.C. Clark, the “Godfather of the Austin Blues,” Clark describes the places he preferred to play shows as the Sixth Street venues “Jazz, Antone’s and Steamboat.”⁵⁹ Leea Mechling labeled Antone’s as the number one most popular place on Sixth Street in the 1970s.⁶⁰ An exhaustive list of local and national blues musicians played in the venue

⁵⁵ Corcoran, *Austin Music Is a Scene Not a Sound*.

⁵⁶ Corcoran, *Austin Music Is a Scene Not a Sound*.

⁵⁷ “The Life and Times of the Alamo and the Ritz,” Screens - The Austin Chronicle (The Austin Chronicle, November 2, 2007), <https://www.austinchronicle.com/screens/2007-11-02/556452/>.

⁵⁸ Joe Nick Patoski American-Statesman, Staff. 1979. "Tonight's last call for Antone's blues." *The Austin American Statesman* (1973-1980), Feb 24. <https://libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/tonights-last-call-antones-blues/docview/2027727263/se-2>.

⁵⁹ W.C. Clark. In person Interview by Nicole Sutton. September 30, 2022.

⁶⁰ Leea Mechling, Interview.

before and after it relocated, such as B.B. King and Muddy Waters. The Sixth Street location of Antone's closed in 1979 due to city council's decision to build a parking garage, but the business relocated five times, and still remains a legendary space downtown for people who love the blues.

The music venue Steamboat 1874 opened at the corner of East Sixth Street and Trinity Street in 1977, and paved the way for a new score of music venues downtown. Sonny Neath owned a restaurant with a stage in north Austin called Steamboat, themed after Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Neath named the new venue Steamboat 1874 after the year the building was erected and continued the Steamboat, Colorado theme.⁶¹ The place was centrally located on East Sixth, and in ten interviews with people who worked along Sixth Street, it was described as one of the most popular places to see live music. In the late 1970s, Jim Lawson bought the business from Neath, and by 1983 Lawson sold it to Craig Hillis, the guitarist from the Lost Gonzo Band.⁶² During Hillis' time as a night club owner, a number of local and national acts played the stage including Stevie Ray Vaughan, Soulhat, and Christopher Cross. Hillis sold the business in 1996 and went on to run the Saxon Pub. When asked why he left, Hillis said

“In 1990, the 80s were over and I was getting sick and tired of the scene on Sixth. [People were] gothic looking and they looked like they fell face first into a tackle box. I like good old rock'n'roll. As a long-time resident of Sixth Street I became disenchanted from the scene and getting down there was a more of pain in the ass, [especially] parking.”⁶³

Unfortunately, the venue closed in 1999, because “out-of-towners upped the ante, making the club's landlord an offer too good to refuse.”⁶⁴ Collectively, these entrepreneurs set

⁶¹ Craig Hillis. Phone Interview by Nicole Sutton. July 1, 2022.

⁶² Craig Hillis, Interview.

⁶³ Craig Hillis, Interview.

⁶⁴ Andy Langer, “The Boat,” When Rock & Roll Was Dangerous - Music - The Austin Chronicle, September 24, 1999, <https://www.austinchronicle.com/music/1999-09-24/74004/>.

urban renewal in motion, bringing in more patrons, and changing the atmosphere of East Sixth Street in the late 1970s.

With new businesses and people moving into Sixth Street, this led to the movement of other populations out of the area, shifting the demographics of the city. The process of gentrification is a product of urban renewal. Historically, Sixth Street businesses were owned by a diverse population, but over time became increasingly white-owned business. Eliot Tretter argues that the “growth coalition” and economic growth negatively impacted underrepresented communities.⁶⁵ Additionally, Interstate-35 created a barrier between the east and west side of town. Black and Latinx populations and businesses increasingly moved to the east side of town, while the Asian populations moved north. Ethnic enclaves formed in these areas of the city, while Sixth Street became increasingly white. An article from 1979 describes the change as “The new Sixth Street entrepreneurs are mostly young and white, but they are invading an area of rich cultural diversity.”⁶⁶ Moreover, as Sixth Street continued to be revamped through the 1980s and 1990s, non-local owners began to purchase buildings and businesses along Sixth Street.

One of the pitfalls of the urban renewal process on Sixth Street was an increase of property value, which pushed out local businesses. Orum’s *Power, Money, and the People: The Making of Modern Austin* discusses how locals envisioned economic growth, but wanted to keep businesses local.⁶⁷ Community members complained about outsiders owning businesses in their city, particularly national chains, which they believed curbed local business. Red Wassenich was the first to coin the slogan “Keep Austin Weird” when he called in to the KOOP radio station in 2000 making a donation “because it keeps

⁶⁵ Tretter, *Shadows of a Sunbelt City: The Environment, Racism, and the Knowledge Economy in Austin*, 2-3.

⁶⁶ Michael B Smith, “Renaissance on Sixth Street,” *The Austin-American Statesman*, April 15, 1979.

⁶⁷ Orum, *Power, Money & the People: The Making of Modern Austin*, x-xii.

Austin weird.”⁶⁸ This expression led to a campaign of bumper stickers meant to encourage Austin residents to buy from local businesses and encourage the local economy. Austin’s development arose from local and non-local entrepreneurs, backing from federal, state, and local government, and the vision of the local community to maintain a high quality of life in regard to environmental sustainability, and culture. There was a growing need to preserve Austin’s history and culture as urban renewal projects continued throughout the twentieth century and non-local businesses moved on to Sixth Street.

Sixth Street’s Preservation Movement

The community reacted to urban renewal along Sixth Street through a preservation movement. The Texas state legislature, city officials, local organizations, and community members collaborated to preserve Sixth Street’s history and culture beginning in the mid twentieth century, following a national trend. The US Congress created the Antiquities Act of 1906, the Historic Sites Act of 1935, and the National Historic Preservation Act in 1949, and the National Register of Historic Places in 1966 to preserve historic places throughout the nation. The post WWII economic boom led to increasing urban renewal, but also led to an increase in preservation committees across the nation and the state.

In 1953, the Texas state legislature created the Texas State Historical Survey Committee and three years later created county historical committees with the goal of preserving historic buildings and spaces on state and local levels. In the 1960s, the Texas State Historical Survey Committee expanded their program, adding the Texas Historical

⁶⁸ Brittany Flowers, “Is Austin Still Strange? the History behind the Phrase 'Keep Austin Weird',” kvue.com (KVUE, July 16, 2019), <https://www.kvue.com/article/news/is-austin-still-weird/269-0680af17-2207-4f64-b2ab-3726ecb1804a>.

Marker Program, which places historical plaques to commemorate people, places, and events significant to Texas history. When the United States Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966 which was designed to protect prehistoric and historic resources, and in Texas, the responsibilities were passed to the Historical Survey Committee. The state legislature added the Texas Antiquities Committee in 1969, which was an additional agency to act on preservation. In the same year, the 1856 Carrington-Covert House, 1883 Gethesmane Lutheran Church, and 1940 Luther Hall were renovated and served as headquarters of the agencies. In 1973, the state legislature renamed the Survey Committee and Antiquities Committee to the Texas Historical Commission (THC) and expanded its responsibilities.

Urban renewal projects put the late nineteenth century Victorian buildings at risk of being replaced with more modern architecture. When the Driskill Hotel closed in 1969, there were plans for its demolition until a campaign started by local citizens raised the money to keep the building.⁶⁹ Preservation of the area was important because East Sixth Street “has the greatest concentration of limestone Victorian commercial buildings west of the Mississippi.”⁷⁰ Citizens across the nation, the state, and the city of Austin began preservation commissions to save historic places from being obliterated. For example, in 1953, Austin native Margaret Boroughs Graham founded the Heritage Society of Austin, a non-profit organization to protect the architectural and cultural heritage of Travis County, which eventually became the Austin History Center.⁷¹

Additionally, the East Sixth Street Conservation Association, led by president and

⁶⁹ Corcoran, *Austin Music Is a Scene Not a Sound*.

⁷⁰ Corcoran, *Austin Music Is a Scene Not a Sound*.

⁷¹ “Mission + History,” Preservation Austin (Preservation Austin), accessed October 10, 2022, <https://www.preservationaustin.org/mission-history>.

business owner Terry Throckmorton, began in 1973, with a three-stage project that included historic preservation as well as urban renewal.⁷² The project included increasing street lighting, proposal of a trolley car, restoration of eighteen buildings, creation of downtown housing, and increasing the amount of businesses.⁷³ The East Sixth Street Conservation Association, along with other local organizations, spearheaded a local fundraiser in April of 1975 to showcase newly restored buildings, and encourage community members to invest in the revitalization of historic Pecan Street, and to fund raise for planting trees along the street.⁷⁴ An *Austin-American Statesman* article describes the purpose of the festival as an attempt “to promote Sixth Street, which is developing as one of Austin’s best-known attractions.”⁷⁵ Many of the association’s goals did not come to fruition immediately. The trees were planted and lights were installed, but the East Sixth Street Conservation Association became defunct by the late 1970s. A city planner in 1979, Luther Polnau, stated that the “wisest and most productive approach would be to allow private enterprise to determine the direction of growth.”⁷⁶ Thus, the Sixth Street business owners became the momentum behind the changes on Sixth Street moving forward. The East Sixth Street Conservation Association was replaced by the Old Pecan Street Association in 1979. Jerry Creagh restored the oldest existing building on Sixth Street, located at 400 East Sixth Street, and named it Wylie’s Bar and Grille, which is

⁷² Michael B Smith, “Renaissance on Sixth Street,” *The Austin-American Statesman*, April 15, 1979.

⁷³ Julie Fernandez, Staff Writer. 1976. “Once dying East Sixth Street showing definite signs of life: Many businessmen feel they’re making history.” *The Austin American Statesman* (1973-1980), Jun 28. <https://libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/once-dying-east-sixth-street-showing-definite/docview/1671726902/se-2>.

⁷⁴ . “‘Saturday on Sixth Street’ To Display Restoration.”. 1975 *The Austin American Statesman* (1973-1980), Apr 21. <https://libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/saturday-on-sixth-street-display-restoration/docview/1503888042/se-2>.

⁷⁵ “Sixth Street Celebration Set Today.”. 1975 *The Austin American Statesman* (1973-1980), Apr 26. <https://libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/sixth-street-celebration-set-today/docview/1500059135/se-2>.

⁷⁶ Smith American-Statesman, Staff. 1979. “Renaissance on Sixth Street”.

where the Old Pecan Street Association held its meetings.⁷⁷ The new association continued the tradition of the “Saturday on 6th” street festival, naming it the Pecan Street Festival, which turned into a biannual festival promoting local craftwork and food vendors.

The Sixth Street Historic District was registered into the National Register of Historic Places inventory in 1975. The location is noted as “roughly bounded by 5th, 7th, Lavaca Street, and I-35.” It is classified as a district with both public and private ownership used for commercial, entertainment, and private residences.⁷⁸ Entry into the National Register created the Historic Sixth Street district and protected the historic places from being replaced with new architecture. By 1980, the National Trust for Historic Preservation established the National Main Street Center to protect historic main streets. In 1981, the THC created the Texas Main Street Program “to assist communities with downtown revitalization.”⁷⁹ While these programs protected Austin’s historic spaces, local citizens were concerned with the displacement of their culture by outsiders.

Preservation of Austin culture has been an ongoing challenge to Austin residents. Austin culture is a vague term that encapsulates a wide variety of ideals, including environmental goals, music history and experiences, and preservation of the city’s history and values. Critics sought to preserve historic buildings, spaces, stories of diverse business owners, and local political and music leaders. A multitude of organizations were created in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century to preserve the culture and the cultural economy. The Red River Cultural District, the Austin Museum of Popular

⁷⁷ Allen Childs, *Sixth Street* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Pub., 2010).

⁷⁸ Williams and Landon. “Sixth St Historic District Austin.”

⁷⁹ Texas Historical Commission, “Agency Timeline,” Agency Timeline | THC.Texas.gov - Texas Historical Commission, accessed August 16, 2022, <https://www.thc.texas.gov/about-us/agency-timeline>.

Culture (AusPop), and the Texas Walk of Stars are just a few of the downtown organizations aimed at cultural preservation.

Twelve Austin leaders, including Shannon Sedwick and Jerry Creagh, founded a project called the Texas Walk of Stars Association and Historical Society in 1987.⁸⁰ Their mission was to memorialize significant locals for their contributions to Austin's history and culture through star shaped plaques placed into the sidewalks. Over 50 stars line Trinity Street and a few are lined up in front of the Driskill Hotel. This group has preserved historical and cultural icons of the city and placed them in locations where tourists often walk and can learn more about local culture.

The Austin Museum of Popular Culture (AusPop) has amassed a collection of artifacts and art from the local music scene from 1960 to present.⁸¹ In an interview Leea Mechling, Director of AusPop, describes how the museum started. "My husband [Henry Gonzalez] and I were some of the first people to talk about collecting [Austin] show posters. In 2003 we had a friend who owned a chain of head shops, one of which was empty. George Majewski of Soap Creek and Danny Young used their own collections. Eddie Wilson offered space in north Austin in 2020, but everything closed [due to the pandemic] so we had pop-up exhibits."⁸² The Wittliff and the Bob Bullock museum helped them with and exhibited their collections. Additionally, graduate students began to help with digitizing their collection. The board of directors includes many local cultural leaders, including Eddie Wilson, Mike Tolleson, Kerry Awn, and Nick Barbaro. AusPop seeks to preserve Austin's music history.

⁸⁰ Ketchersid Larry, "Texas Walk of Stars in Austin," Dusk Before the Dawn, January 12, 2021, <https://www.duskbeforethedawn.net/2021/01/texas-walk-of-stars-in-austin/>.

⁸¹ "About," Austin Museum of Popular Culture - Formerly Known as SouthPop, accessed August 16, 2022, <https://www.southpop.org/about-1>.

⁸² Leea Mechling, Interview.

The city has continued to preserve Austin’s cultural history over time. In 2013, the Red River Cultural District was designated as a “cultural tourism destination and entertainment district” by the Austin City Council and designated by the Texas Commission on the Arts in 2020.⁸³ The funding is managed by the Red River Merchants’ Association, “which was first organized to preserve cultural tourism” in 2017. The city, businesses, and local organizations still work together to preserve Austin’s culture.

Sixth Street’s history is one of retail businesses, a diverse population, and continual change. Urban renewal brought growth to Sixth Street as well as preservation movements. Austin’s focus has been to revitalize its history and to introduce it to new populations and tourists.

⁸³ “Red River History,” The Red River Cultural District, accessed August 16, 2022, <https://redriverculturaldistrict.org/history/>.

III. LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL

On Sixth Street, the process of urban renewal and an increased concentration of bars and music venues led to a significant rise in tourism. The South by Southwest festival played a major role in bringing national and international attention to Austin's music and film scene. By placing the festival on Sixth Street, SXSW brought attention and tourism to the area. Nick Barbaro and Louis Black, the co-founders of the *Austin Chronicle*, founded the SXSW festival along with Roland Swenson and Louis Meyers, making them the actors in Sixth Street's tourism growth. The *Austin Chronicle* journalists set up a music community, while the founders of SXSW, as well as associations, such as the Texas Music Association and the Music Advisory Committee, set in motion the creation of a music industry.

Music Journalism

A group of journalists working for *The Austin Chronicle* set the development of the music industry in motion. The local alternative paper was established in February 1981 by a group of individuals hanging out at Raul's, a tejano bar turned punk venue near the University of Texas campus.⁸⁴ They included Joe Dishner, Nick Barbaro, Louis Black, Sarah Whistler, Ed Lowry, and Jeff Whittington, who had previously worked for the University of Texas student paper, *The Daily Texan*, and in the Radio-Television-Film Department.⁸⁵ Nick Barbaro and Louis Black led this endeavor. While writing notes about CinemaTexas, Black had an idea to create an alternative newspaper like the *Austin Sun*.⁸⁶ This worked out perfectly since Barbaro and Dishner asked Black to join them on the editorial board. Black remains the editor of the *Austin Chronicle* to this day. Most of

⁸⁴ Shank, *Dissonant Identities*, 194.

⁸⁵ Patoski, *Austin to ATX*, 154.

⁸⁶ Patoski, *Austin to ATX*, 155.

the funding came from Barbaro's mother, and they were able to purchase most of the equipment needed from the defunct newspaper, the *Austin Sun*.⁸⁷ Barbaro would then become the publisher, and the first issue came out September 3, 1981.

The music columnists promoted local bands and encouraged the community voices to support them through the reader's poll and the Austin Music Awards. In 1982, Jeff Whittington wrote "In a city with such a phenomenal amount of music activity, it is only fitting that as many as possible of our best music-makers be recognized."⁸⁸

Margaret Moser established the music column "In One Ear" and ran the Austin Music Awards from 1981-2014.⁸⁹ Her protégé, Kevin Curtin, dubs her "one of the most important journalists in Texas history."⁹⁰ Her work highly influenced the Austin music scene as she covered shows and promoted artists. Moser was a prolific writer, who interacted with musicians behind the scenes, and brought their music to life through her music columns, which endorsed their popularity in the city. "By promoting these activities and encouraging readers to participate in them-through extensive coverage of the local scene in interviews and reviews as well as the listings in the readers' poll- the *Chronicle* also contributed to the creation of such a community, organized around the cultural practice of popular music."⁹¹ The *Chronicle* promoted community involvement in the music scene, but many extra steps were needed to create a music industry.

Music Associations

The next move towards a music industry in Austin was the development of the Texas Music Association and the Music Advisory Committee. In 1981, the Texas Music

⁸⁷ Patoski, *Austin to ATX*, 156.

⁸⁸ Shank, *Dissonant Identities*, 195.

⁸⁹ Patoski, *Austin to ATX*, 30.

⁹⁰ Kevin Curtin. Zoom Interview by Nicole Sutton. November 8, 2021

⁹¹ Shank, *Dissonant Identities*, 196.

Association was founded, modeled after the Nashville Country Music Association, as the “first music trade organization in the state” and as a response to the decline in Texas’ dying progressive country music scene.⁹² Former *Austin Chronicle* distributor, Roland Swenson, became president of the Austin chapter of the Texas Music Association in 1990. At the same time that leaders were developing a formal music organization, city leaders were eager to promote economic growth and a tourist industry. In 1984, the Texas Music Association president, Ernie Gammage, approached the Austin Chamber of Commerce to promote the Austin music industry. Phyllis Krantzman’s master’s thesis “The Impact of the Music Entertainment Industry on Austin, Texas,” written for the Community and Regional Planning program at the University of Texas, provided the basis for their argument.⁹³ The thesis caught the attention of David Lord, the head of the Austin Visitors and Conventions Bureau, whose job was to promote tourism in Austin.⁹⁴ This led to the Chamber funding “a series of studies on local music businesses”, including the Austin Music Advisory Committee, led by the *Austin Chronicle* writer, Jeff Whittington, and music critic, Ed Ward.⁹⁵ Ed Ward had written for *Rolling Stone*, *Cream*, the *Austin American-Statesman*, *Texas Monthly*, *Third Coast*, and the *New York Rocker*. The “committee included L.E. McCullough of the Austin Music Umbrella, Louis Meyers and Mark Pratz of Lunch Money Productions (bookers of the Continental Club and Liberty Lunch), Roland Swenson of Moment Productions, Andy Murphy of Panda Productions, Rob Klein of Sidetrack Productions, Susan Jarrett of Austin Record Distributors, Phyllis Krantzman, and Carolyn Phillips of the *Austin Chronicle*.”⁹⁶ These formal music

⁹² Shank, *Dissonant Identities*, 193.

⁹³ Shank, *Dissonant Identities*, 199.

⁹⁴ Shank, *Dissonant Identities*, 200.

⁹⁵ Shank, *Dissonant Identities*, 201-202.

⁹⁶ Shank, *Dissonant Identities*, 202-203.

associations set the stage for an organized, joint effort of music commodification, and creation of the South by Southwest music festival.

South by Southwest

The South by Southwest (SXSW) music festival was originally an extension of the New York New Music Seminar, now called the New Music Seminar (NMS). This event, beginning in 1980, was a place for music industry people to meet and discuss the challenges of the music business. For several years Roland Swenson attended the NMS in New York, and as an official delegate from Austin in 1986, he announced a regional version of the NMS would be held in Austin in the spring of 1987.⁹⁷ Swenson ran his own record label, Classified Records, doing business in the same converted two-story house on West Twelfth Street as the *Austin Chronicle*. The organizers of the NMS fell through, so Swenson and the Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) picked up the event. “Louis Black, Nick Barbaro, and, Roland Swenson, and Louis Jay Meyers, a banjo player and steel guitarist who booked reggae acts into Liberty Lunch, met for a series of breakfast meetings to discuss the idea for a music convention.”⁹⁸ Swenson and Meyers convinced Black and Barbaro to head the Southwest Music Seminar in 1987. Louis Black, a hardcore cinephile, came up with the name South by Southwest, a riff on the Alfred Hitchcock movie *North by Northwest*. The Austin CVB kicked in funding to make the conference happen. The *Chronicle* reached out to eleven alt-weeklies across the United States, asking each to sponsor a band from their city. That guaranteed music from outside the Austin area and loads of coverage from the weeklies.⁹⁹ “By pulling off the first SXSW, Swenson, Black, Barbaro, and Meyers jump-started what would grow into

⁹⁷ Patoski, *Austin to ATX*, 157.

⁹⁸ Patoski, *Austin to ATX*, 34.

⁹⁹ Patoski, *Austin to ATX*, 158.

Austin's biggest annual event."¹⁰⁰ They successfully booked 150 performing acts at thirteen venues, 700 registered participants, and eight major labels. Their differentiation from the NMS was that they focused on local bands, as two-thirds of the performances were local musicians. Their purpose in doing so, was to get local bands signed to a music label. Margaret Moser wrote that "In 1987, the annual Thursday night AMA ceremony became a convenient way to introduce an entirely new kind of music presence to Austin, South by Southwest. Suddenly, *Chronicle* music wasn't just covering the beat and reviewing records, we had world class acts handed to us and the change to posit local talent beside the majors the way we'd always dreamed."¹⁰¹ Barbaro, Black, Meyers, and Swenson created a festival that would forever change Austin and the city's music scene. They not only helped create a music industry by inviting national record labels and music industry professionals, but also by putting local bands in the limelight they promoted their growth as well. "There couldn't be a SXSW without the *Chronicle* and I don't just say that because of the people who did it, but because of the *Chronicle* always giving like a lot bandwidth to music and to musicians and to venues. I think the *Chronicle* has always treated Austin like it is a music industry and probably did before it was legitimately a music industry."¹⁰² These four men created a music festival which would enable local acts to get signed to major labels, create a music industry, and increase the city's economy. One of the goals of South by Southwest is to focus attention on unsigned bands. By bringing in major labels to the city, the local and unsigned bands had one shot to get a record deal.

¹⁰⁰ Patoski, *Austin to ATX*, 159.

¹⁰¹ Margaret Moser, *The Austin Chronicle Music Anthology*, 3.

¹⁰² Kevin Curtin. Interview by Nicole Sutton. November 8, 2021

The venues used during the first SXSW festival included Antone's, Cave Club, Continental Club, Liberty Lunch, Raven's Garage, Steamboat 1874, Thistles, Alley Oop's, Flying Circus, Hole in the Wall, the Ritz Theater, State Theater, Texas Tavern, and Baxter's.¹⁰³ The majority of the venues used for SXSW are located on Sixth Street, which brought in tourists from around the world. In 1991, Austin's official motto became "the Live Music Capital of the World" for its number of venues per capita.

The first SXSW was a success and has continued to grow every year, adding more than just music. Registrations for the second year of SXSW increased from 700 to 1200 people. The number of bands performing tripled to 415 bands. In its fourth year, they included international acts and the first hip-hop showcases. "The fifth year, when 2,833 registered for the music conference, Louis Jay Meyers, the person in charge of booking bands for SXSW, sold his stake before the 1995 SXSW [stating] 'I was tired of being the most hated man in Austin music'."¹⁰⁴ In 1994, the festival founders added SXSW Film and SXSW Multimedia as additional conferences.¹⁰⁵ Later, it became known as the South by Southwest Conference. Kevin Curtin states "[the founders of SXSW] were trying to connect a disconnected industry, especially the in the south, and obviously it snow balled to becoming this cultural center... that co-acted with Austin's hometown music ecosystem, and also surpassed it and overshadowed it to varying degrees."¹⁰⁶ The efforts of music journalists, venue owners, and city officials paid off, and by 2019 SXSW accounted for 1% of the city's revenue and has helped the redevelopment of Austin's

¹⁰³ "The First SXSW Lineup - 1987." <https://www.newcommute.net/feed/2017/3/14/the-first-sxsw-lineup-1987>

¹⁰⁴ Patoski, *Austin to ATX*, 167.

¹⁰⁵ Alex Geiser, "SXSW Stays Course, Continues Growth," *Daily Texan*, March 18, 2010, <http://www.dailytexanonline.com/content/sxsw-stays-course-continues-growth>. The festival continued to grow in every direction, adding more conferences, more panel sessions, more bands, and even adding SXSWedu in 2011, a conference for teachers.

¹⁰⁶ Kevin Curtin, Interview.

nightlife, increased tourism, and marked it as “The Live Music Capital of the World.”¹⁰⁷

South by Southwest brought in musicians, audience members, and music industry professionals. Local journalists spread the news to encourage its growth and fostered community involvement. Margaret Moser mentored many younger writers, including Michael Corcoran, who wrote a column in the *Austin Chronicle* from 1985-1988 from the view of a persona known as “Corky.” Corky representing the dissonant voices of the typical local audience member. During the first SXSW conference, “Corky spread the buzz about Two Nice Girls, the Wagoneers, and other local bands, bragging about the positive reception national recording industry figures had given to the town’s musicians.”¹⁰⁸ Shank argues that Corcoran played a significant role in promoting local Austin musicians and SXSW. Corcoran continues to write for various outlets, including his own website which shares stories of historical music shows and venues. Shank states that “By emphasizing the value of local music performed in the clubs, South by Southwest paid tribute to the original honky-tonk setting of the Austin music scene even as it trained local entrepreneurs how to operate within the new industrial structure.”¹⁰⁹ SXSW led to the creation of an industry that brought in more musicians, labels, and music industry workers into the heart of downtown.

South by Southwest would not be possible without the labor from the volunteers and musicians. The SXSW Volunteer Program includes hundreds of individuals who run the ins and outs of the festival, unpaid. While many argue that the volunteers should get paid from a for-profit festival, others argue that it provides an opportunity for volunteers

¹⁰⁷ Harris, “SXSW’s Impact on Austin Economy Totals a Record \$356 Million, Study Shows.” <https://variety.com/2019/music/news/south-by-southwest-2019-economic-impact-1203364879/>

¹⁰⁸ Shank, *Dissonant Identities*, 232.

¹⁰⁹ Shank, *Dissonant Identities*, 232.

to see shows and meet people without having to buy a badge.¹¹⁰ Musicians who play at the festival have the opportunity, but no guarantee, to be signed by a label. They travel and stay at their own expense. The bands that also have staff, such as guitar technicians and stage managers, pay out of pocket.

The South by Southwest festival continues to grow every year giving opportunities to musicians to get signed, film premieres, educators, technology set-ups, and networking within these fields. The festival helped develop the Austin economy through the creation of a music industry. In 2012, the Austin Chamber of Congress recognized the founders of SXSW, Louis Black, Roland Swenson, and Nick Barbaro for their impact on the city of Austin and the music industry.¹¹¹ Journalists at the *Austin Chronicle* have continued the counter-culture scene, promoted community involvement and legitimized local musicians. The Austin music experience in the late 1980s was created by these actors and made possible by the unpaid volunteers and musicians. The increase in music venues, marketing by the journalists, and growth of music associations and the South by Southwest music festival led to a larger growth of Sixth Street tourism.

¹¹⁰ Patoski, *Austin to ATX*, 173.

¹¹¹ Patoski, *Austin to ATX*, 171.

IV. SIXTH STREET WORKERS

Local business owners shaped Sixth Street through providing a variety of experiences and opportunities for networking, entertainment, and socialization. The creation of new social spaces on Sixth Street from the 1980 to 2000 led to a centralization of like-minded patrons, which benefited business owners and service industry workers. As more variety of businesses and atmospheres arose on the street in the 1980s and 1990s, it attracted more patrons, and the businesses close proximity allowed for patrons to walk from one business to another. The perspective of Sixth Street workers is largely missing from the narrative of Austin's history. Sixth Street's growth in business and tourism could not have taken place without the laborers in the service and music industry.

Sixth Street continued to have a variety of businesses in the late twentieth century. Ashley Tennyson worked at Forbidden Fruit, a sex shop, from 1998-2000. She said her favorite part about her job was "the people I worked with- it was a Sixth Street family."¹¹² She describes her typical day before a work shift as strolling through Aaron's Rock'n'Roll store, getting a burger at Casino El Camino, and then heading to work. She said the most important thing about her job was "making sure people were comfortable, safe, and had an honest conversation." Forbidden Fruit, which opened in 1981, was one of the few erotic stores that stuck around after the urban renewal process.

As stated previously, Pecan Street Cafe embarked as a new fine dining experience, but many other restaurants followed suit. While a few other restaurants already existed on Sixth Street, patrons were eager to see new menus. An Austin journalist in 1979, wrote, "Almost from the moment you cross Congress Avenue, headed east on Sixth Street, the

¹¹² Ashley Tennyson. Phone Interview by Nicole Sutton. February 16, 2022.

atmosphere changes from the dull and institutional to the lively and provocative.”¹¹³

These new spaces attracted locals and tourists to Sixth Street to enjoy good food, a good drink, and great music.

Ron and Mel Nakashima opened Paradise Cafe in 1981 at 401 E. Sixth Street in the historic Cotton Exchange building. The limestone building, erected in 1874, was juxtaposed with a tropical theme, called a “fern bar” to entice patrons. With a nod to Austin’s history, one wall of the building was lined with the floorboards from the roller rink next door to the Armadillo World Headquarters.¹¹⁴ Rena Arrechi Summers, a cocktail waitress and manager at Paradise Cafe from 1998-2005, met “her husband and most of her friends there.”¹¹⁵ She found out about the job through word of mouth. A guy she was dating knew another waitress and when he connected them, she was hired on the spot. She said her favorite part of the job was “interacting with people and talking to tourists about their interests and what brought them to Austin.”¹¹⁶ Even when she was not working she would start her night at Paradise Cafe because it was “one of the places you could get real food.” DJ Cornwell was a bouncer there from 1992-2000. He had a girlfriend working at Maggie Mae’s, a music venue that opened in 1978 around the corner. He walked down the street looking for a job, only a block away he found one at Paradise. He met his life-long best friends while working at the cafe. Some were his colleagues at Paradise, some were regular customers, while others were bartenders on East Sixth Street. He describes the typical customer base as “a mixture of all types of people in Austin, until the Warehouse district opened, moving the older customer base

¹¹³ Smith, “Renaissance on Sixth Street,”..

¹¹⁴ Unknown, “Sixth Street Survivors,” The Cafes Paradise and Old Pecan Street: still plating after all these years - Food - The Austin Chronicle (Austin Chronicle, June 4, 2004), <https://www.austinchronicle.com/food/2004-06-04/213622/>.

¹¹⁵ Rena Arrechi Summers. Phone Interview by Nicole Sutton. January 29, 2022.

¹¹⁶ Rena Arrechi Summers, Interview.

farther west, and then it became mostly UT students from fraternities.”¹¹⁷ He taught his co-worker, Bill Hogan, how to be a bartender. Hogan ended up purchasing the cafe in 2007, and running several other businesses in Austin. Cornwell now runs a tourist boating business on Lady Bird Lake, just six blocks from Paradise Cafe. There were a limited amount of restaurants along Sixth Street in the 1980s and few that served food late at night, which gave Paradise a competitive edge.

Since these businesses covered seven blocks of Sixth Street it was easy to entice patrons of one business into another due to their close proximity and encouraged collaboration between business owners. If anyone understands the importance of close proximity of businesses, it is Bob Woody. Woody, dubbed “the Mayor of Sixth Street” by Austin’s actual former mayor, Gus Garcia, has owned over thirty-eight businesses in Austin, many of them on Sixth Street.¹¹⁸ In the early 1980s he purchased the Pecan Street Cafe and did not stop there. He then went on to purchase the Blind Pig Pub (formerly the Bates Motel at 317 East Sixth Street), Austin Street Party, The Ranch, the Coppertank Event Center, Shakespeare’s Pub, Buford’s Backyard Beer Garden, Buckshots, Micheladas, and the Post Office. Most of his bars, venues, and restaurants are within a block of each other. *Community Impact* journalist Macy Hurwitz describes his contribution thusly: “Woody is the president of three associations downtown, owns the Texas Walk of Stars, and he owns six buildings in Austin.”¹¹⁹ Woody is invested in the economic success of East Sixth Street and its historical preservation.

¹¹⁷ DJ Cornwell. In Person Interview by Nicole Sutton. January 21, 2022.

¹¹⁸ Macy Hurwitz, “Bob Woody,” *Community Impact* (Community Impact, October 23, 2012), <https://communityimpact.com/austin/news/2012/10/23/bob-woody/>.

¹¹⁹ Hurwitz, “Bob Woody,” *Community Impact*.

This close proximity also encouraged business owners to create a unique atmosphere to differentiate their business from others and catering to a changing population and music scene. The 1980s ushered in new genres of music, such as punk, rock, and new wave creating a need for new venues around a new group of patrons.

Austinite and biker Paul Sessums opened the Black Cat in 1985 on E. Sixth Street. Michael Corcoran argues that “When the Black Cat opened in 1985 that’s when it got cool. Black Cat was the club that turned it around on Sixth Street...all of a sudden, Charlie Sexton was there and it was a hangout for musicians.”¹²⁰ Sessum’s successful bar and venue brought in more patrons, more acts, and paid musicians well. Corcoran states that “Bands that played the Black Cat had to do 3-4 hour sets, no breaks, and for that they were paid handsomely. Paul gave them all the door, which for top acts like Soulhat, Joe Rockhead, Little Sister, Johnny Law, and Ian Moore, could be as much as \$3,000 a night if they turned the house.”¹²¹

Emo’s, a music venue on the corner of East Sixth and Red River Street opened in Austin in 1992. Former employee Graham Williams worked there from 1997-2006. He had a friend who worked as security and promoted shows as a hobby, which led him to working the door and then stage management. He eventually became the talent buyer and began booking the shows. Half of the bands booked were local acts such as Explosions in the Sky, Trail of Dead, Spoon, and the Impossibles; while the other half were national acts such as Murder City Devils, Death Cab for Cutie, The Get Up Kids, Thursday, and Thrice. Emo’s was just the starting point for his career, which he describes as “Emo’s was my college. Learning the business, taxes, license fees. Getting connections and

¹²⁰ Michael Corcoran, Interview.

¹²¹ Corcoran, *Austin Music Is a Scene Not a Sound*.

meeting agents.”¹²² When a few agents told him that they wanted to work with him, but their band did not want to play at Emo’s, that’s is when he decided to leave and create his own company, Transmission Events, which ran from 2006-2014. During his time at Transmission Events he launched Fun Fun Fun Fest with a vision of creating “a festival for me.”¹²³ He has since launched two other booking companies, Margin Walker from 2016-2020 and Resound in 2021, which he currently operates. His time working on Sixth Street led him to network with many music industry workers, such as James Moody, the booker for Mohawk, a music venue on Red River Street. Graham Williams has played a tremendous role in the Austin music scene, and it began on Sixth Street.

New businesses led to new job opportunities downtown. In an interview with Chris Payeur, a former bartender and current sound engineer, she discussed how she worked at four different businesses along East Sixth Street from 1991-2010, including Emo’s, The Mercury, The Parish, and Lovejoys. Payeur moved from Houston while finishing school for sound engineering. She began working at Emo’s in 1991 as a bartender and shortly thereafter took a job as a sound engineer. She was one of the few females in the sound technology industry in Austin at the time. Payeur’s work experience on Sixth Street has led to a significant number of other gigs around town.

While the vibrant atmosphere of Sixth Street draws in tourist and customers, the workers on Sixth keep the space alive and thriving. Networking between service industry workers and music industry workers led to life long friendships, patronage of other businesses, and additional job opportunities. These industry workers help create the night life of Sixth Street.

¹²² Graham Williams. Phone Interview by Nicole Sutton. June 28, 2022.

¹²³ Graham Williams, Interview.

V. CONCLUSION: SELLING COOL

The 2004 documentary “The War on Sixth Street” covers the ballad of the street performer Gerry Van King, dubbed “the King of Sixth Street.”¹²⁴ King played his electric guitar on the streets for years before being issued a citation in 2002, and a year later, an arrest, for not following the city of Austin’s street performance protocols. The city’s rules include acoustic performances only, and music cannot reach above an 85 decibel limit. King’s confrontation with the Austin Police Department demonstrates the change in Austin culture towards the end of the millennium. Fifty years before, the police were focused on issues such as drug dealing and prostitution. The cultural economy of Austin is largely focused on music, which brings in tourists from all over the world, and aids other businesses on Sixth Street. Urban renewal brought people and money back to Sixth Street in the late twentieth century, but the continual process has pushed out local business owners and much of its diverse population. Citizens in the 1970s feared the disappearance of local culture which is why so many preservation associations took actions to keep buildings and spaces from being demolished. To change the trajectory of continual urban renewal, it will require collaboration from city officials, business owners, and local citizens to ensure local culture and values continue to resonate on Sixth Street. The history of Sixth Street is one of continual change in people and businesses for nearly two centuries, but a constant source of Austin’s history, entertainment, nightlife, and values.

¹²⁴ *The War on Sixth Street*, Austin Public Access (Austin History Center, 2022), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycVfmOejWOk>.

REFERENCES

- “About the TMO.” Texas Music Office | Office of the Texas Governor | Greg Abbott. Accessed August 16, 2022. <https://gov.texas.gov/music/page/about-the-tmo>.
- “About.” Austin Museum of Popular Culture - Formerly Known as SouthPop. Accessed August 16, 2022. <https://www.southpop.org/about-1>.
- “Austin's History: Urban Renewal.” Austin Public Library. Accessed August 16, 2022. <https://austin.bibliocommons.com/list/share/603054998/1442465287>.
- Barnes, Michael. “Austin Answered: Where Was the Old Soap Creek Saloon?” *Austin American Statesman*. November 28, 2017. <https://www.statesman.com/story/news/2017/11/29/austin-answered-where-was-the-old-soap-creek-saloon/10136692007/>.
- Bentley, Bill. “This Be an Empty World without the Blues.” CLIFFORD ANTONE - This Be an Empty World Without the Blues: So Clifford Antone filled it - Music - The Austin Chronicle, May 26, 2006. <https://www.austinchronicle.com/music/2006-05-26/368453/>.
- Black, Louis. “Chapter 1: Before the Beginning.” *Austin Chronicle*, September 7, 2001. <https://www.austinchronicle.com/features/2001-09-07/82873/>.
- Busch, Andrew M. *City in a Garden Environmental Transformations and Racial Justice in Twentieth-Century Austin, Texas*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017.
- Childs, Allen. *Sixth Street*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Pub., 2010.
- Commission, Texas Historical. “Agency Timeline.” Agency Timeline | THC.Texas.gov - Texas Historical Commission. Accessed August 16, 2022. <https://www.thc.texas.gov/about-us/agency-timeline>.
- Corcoran, Michael. *Austin Music Is a Scene Not a Sound*. Forth Worth, TX: TCU Press, proposed 2024.
- Curtin, Kevin. “Playback: Golden Years Wagoneers.” *Austin Chronicle*, April 12, 2013. <https://www.austinchronicle.com/music/2013-04-12/playback-golden-years-wagoneers/>.
- Flowers, Brittany. “Is Austin Still Strange? the History behind the Phrase 'Keep Austin Weird'.” kvue.com. KVUE, July 16, 2019. <https://www.kvue.com/article/news/is-austin-still-weird/269-0680af17-2207-4f64-b2ab-3726ecb1804a>.

- Geiser, Alex. "SXSW Stays Course, Continues Growth." *Daily Texan*, March 18, 2010. <http://www.dailytexanonline.com/content/sxsw-stays-course-continues-growth> . .
- Gracey, Joe. "Jim Franklin, Bill Livingood Manage: Ritz Opening Adds Class to Sixth Street." *The Austin American Statesman*, October 19, 1974.
- Hartman, Gary. *The History of Texas Music (John and Robin Dickson Series in Texas Music)*. College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 2008.
- "Historic Landmark Commission." Historic Landmark Commission | AustinTexas.gov. Accessed August 16, 2022. <https://www.austintexas.gov/content/historic-landmark-commission>.
- "History of Old Pecan Street Cafe." History. Accessed October 10, 2022. <https://oldpecanstcafe.com/history.html>.
- "History." Threadgill's. Accessed October 8, 2021. <https://www.threadgills.com/history>.
- "The Hole Story." Hole in the Wall. Accessed December 8, 2021. <https://www.holeinthewallaustin.com/our-story>.
- Hurwitz, Macy. "Bob Woody." Community Impact. Community Impact, October 23, 2012. <https://communityimpact.com/austin/news/2012/10/23/bob-woody/>.
- Jordan Buckley, Fri. "The Desegregation of Austin's Movie Theatres." A history of the stand-in movement - Screens . The Austin Chronicle, December 14, 2015. <https://www.austinchronicle.com/screens/2015-12-04/the-desegregation-of-austins-movie-theatres/>.
- Langer, Andy. "The Boat." When Rock & Roll Was Dangerous - Music - The Austin Chronicle, September 24, 1999. <https://www.austinchronicle.com/music/1999-09-24/74004/>.
- Levi-Garza, Jalaane, and Louis Pauls. "Out of the Ordinary: The History of Hancock Center." OUT OF THE ORDINARY: THE HISTORY OF HANCOCK CENTER | Hancock Neighborhood Association, September 24, 2011. <https://www.hancockna.org/www/node/25>.
- "The Life and Times of the Alamo and the Ritz." Screens - The Austin Chronicle. The Austin Chronicle, November 2, 2007. <https://www.austinchronicle.com/screens/2007-11-02/556452/>.
- Local Government Code Title 12. Planning and Development Subtitle A. Municipal Planning and Development (1987).

- Mellard, Jason. *Progressive Country: How the 1970s Transformed the Texan in Popular Culture*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2013.
- “Mission + History.” Preservation Austin. Preservation Austin. Accessed October 10, 2022. <https://www.preservationaustin.org/mission-history>.
- Montgomery, William E. “Austin Argos.” TSHA, November 1, 1994. <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/austin-argos>.
- Moser, Margaret. “Groover's Paradise The Ballad of Soap Creek Saloon.” *Austin Chronicle*. October 12, 2001. <https://www.austinchronicle.com/music/2001-10-12/83273/>.
- Moser, Margaret. “One, Two, Tres, Cuatro.” *Austin Chronicle*, January 20, 2012. <https://www.austinchronicle.com/music/2012-01-20/i-may-be-old-but-i-frequented-all-the-best-clubs/>.
- Nichols, Nina. “So You Think You Know Sixth Street?” *The Austin Chronicle*. November 13, 1981, Vol.1 edition, sec. Ed. 6th.
- Ninesling, Rosie. “The Kiss That Sparked a Riot.” *Austin Monthly*, March 2021. <https://www.austinmonthly.com/the-kiss-that-sparked-a-riot/>.
- “‘One of the Finest Hotels in Texas’ since 1886: The Driskill Hotel, Unbound Collection by Hyatt.” “One of the Finest Hotels in Texas” since 1886 | The Driskill Hotel, Unbound Collection by Hyatt. Accessed October 9, 2022. <https://driskillhotel.com/about/timeline/>.
- Orbock, Joseph A. “Paramount Theatre.” TSHA. Texas State Historical Association, June 3, 2015. <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/paramount-theatre>.
- Orum, Anthony M. *Power, Money & the People: The Making of Modern Austin*. Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2002.
- Patoski, Joe Nick. *Austin to ATX: The Hippies, Pickers, Slackers, and Geeks Who Transformed the Capital of Texas*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University, 2019.
- Paul, Alan, and Andy Aledort. *Texas Flood: The inside Story of Stevie Ray Vaughan*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Griffin, 2019.
- Powell, Austin, Doug Freeman, and Louis Black. *The Austin Chronicle Music Anthology*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2011.
- “Red River History.” The Red River Cultural District. Accessed August 16, 2022. <https://redriverculturaldistrict.org/history/>.

- Reid, Jan, and Don Roth. "The Coming of Redneck Hip." *Texas Monthly*. Texas Monthly, November 1973. <https://www.texasmonthly.com/arts-entertainment/the-coming-of-redneck-hip/>.
- Reid, Jan. *The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock*. Fort Worth, TX: TCU Press, 2021.
- Rittereiser, Susan, and Michael C. Miller. *Historic Movie Houses of Austin*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2016.
- Shank, Barry. *Dissonant Identities: The Rock'n'roll Scene in Austin, Texas*. Hanover, NH: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1994.
- Smith, Michael B. "Renaissance on Sixth Street." *The Austin-American Statesman*, April 15, 1979.
- Stimeling, Travis D. *Cosmic Cowboys and New Hicks: The Countercultural Sounds of Austin's Progressive Country Music Scene*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Swearingen, William Scott. *Environmental City: People, Place, Politics, and the Meaning of Modern Austin*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2010.
- Thompson, Karen R., and Kathy R. Howell. *Austin, Texas*. Chicago, IL: Arcadia Publishing, 2000.
- Tretter, Eliot. *Shadows of a Sunbelt City: The Environment, Racism, and the Knowledge Economy in Austin*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2016.
- Unknown. "About Us." Keep Austin Beautiful. Keep Austin Beautiful, February 18, 2022. <https://keepaustinbeautiful.org/about-keep-austin-beautiful/>.
- Unknown. "Our Purpose." Austin Community Foundation. Austin Community Foundation. Accessed October 11, 2022. <https://www.austincf.org/about/our-purpose/>.
- Unknown. "Sixth Street Survivors." The Cafes Paradise and Old Pecan Street: still plating after all these years - Food - The Austin Chronicle. Austin Chronicle, June 4, 2004. <https://www.austinchronicle.com/food/2004-06-04/213622/>.
- "Urban Renewal Board." Urban Renewal Board | AustinTexas.gov. Accessed August 16, 2022. <https://www.austintexas.gov/content/urban-renewal-board>.
- Ventura, Michael. "Look Ma, No Hands! ." *Austin Chronicle*, September 7, 2001. <https://www.austinchronicle.com/columns/2001-09-07/look-ma-no-hands/>.

- The War on Sixth Street. Austin Public Access.* Austin History Center, 2022.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycVfmOejWOk>.
- Watson, Jonathan. "Cosmic Cowboys, Thunderbirds, and Punks: From Austin Countercultures to the 'Live Music Capital of the World'." *Journal of Texas Music History*, 2016, 35–45.
<https://doi.org/https://digital.library.txstate.edu/handle/10877/7533>.
- Weems, Jason. *History Lover's Guide to Austin*. Charleston, SC: History Press, 2021.
- "When Was Austin Founded?" City of austin - austin history center: When was Austin founded? Accessed May 9, 2021. <http://www.austinlibrary.com/ahc/faq1.htm>.
- Whittaker, Richard. "What Next for the Former Alamo Ritz Location?" *Austin Chronicle*. July 2, 2021. <https://www.austinchronicle.com/screens/2021-07-02/what-next-for-the-former-alamo-ritz-location/>.
- Williams, Joe R, and Mary D Landon. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form- Sixth St Historic District Austin ." Austin: Texas Historical Commission, December 30, 1975.
- Wilson, Edwin O., Jesse Sublett, and Dave Marsh. *Armadillo World Headquarters*. Austin, TX: TSSI Publishing, 2019.