Research into the Press Coverage of Cafeteria and Lunch Counter Integration in downtown San Antonio on March 16, 1960

Report by Kolby Lanham, History Researcher at the Alamo

On March 16, 1960, six downtown businesses and one chain with 23 locations in San Antonio integrated their lunch counters and cafeterias. Press photographers attended and the news was reported across the nation. Now, 60 years later, there has been some debate over the events documented that day. Historians and community members are in disagreement on whether:

1) There was more than one published photograph of events that day.
2) The photograph referenced by the leaflet of the San Antonio Conservation Society, originally published in the San Antonio News, was taken inside the Woolworth building.¹
3) All lunch counters were integrated on the same day.

The Alamo Trust’s research team set out to answer these questions and determine if anything else could be revealed from sources dating to the time.

A summary of our evidence is provided on pages 1 through 3, with supporting original press clippings, photographs, and documents on pages 4 through 26.

**Question 1) Was there more than one published photograph of events that day?**

Alamo Trust researchers conducted archival research online via the microfilm records at the San Antonio Public Library and online at Newspapers.com. Two discoveries were made:

a) It is true that only one major San Antonio newspaper published a photograph of events that day, the San Antonio News (Image 1). Two other leading San Antonio newspapers at that time, the San Antonio Express and San Antonio Light published articles reporting on the integration on 16-18 March, 1960, but neither published a photograph (Images 2 through 7). The San Antonio Light front page article on March 16 references photographs on later pages, but these refer to related events, not those in San Antonio. The San Antonio Register also wrote of the events of March 16 in its March 18 edition.

b) Outside San Antonio, the San Antonio News photograph was not the only one published. At least two other photographs were published depicting lunch counter integration in San Antonio on March 16, 1960 (Images 8 and 9). Both were attributed to national news agencies rather than San Antonio-based publications: Unifax and Associated Press. Unifax’s photograph appeared across multiple outlets. Alamo Trust researchers contacted the Associated Press Archive and United Press International (the current name of Unifax) in an effort to discover the attributions made in these archives. Unfortunately, Associated Press was not able to find any record of the image originally

attributed to its photographers, which is unfortunate as it is strikingly similar to the photograph found in the *San Antonio News* and in the archives at UTSA Libraries Special Collections. No response was received from United Press International.

**Question 2)** Was the photograph referenced by the leaflet of the San Antonio Conservation Society, originally published in the *San Antonio News*, taken inside the Woolworth building?

Research into the S.H. Kress and Company Collection at the National Building Museum[^2] shows that the photograph originally published by the *San Antonio News* was taken at the Kress store basement cafeteria and **not** inside the Woolworth building.

In addition, all but one of the photographs in the *San Antonio Express News* archive at UTSA Libraries Special Collections was taken from the Kress store. This is proved by comparing the *San Antonio Express News* photographs with images from the Kress store. The Kress cafeteria and first floor lunch counter had distinctive fixtures, furniture and artwork which match in both images. See images 10 and 11 for example, and see Appendices 2 and 3 for a full set of images.

In addition, further research of the UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures Digital Collection produced a photograph of the Woolworth lunch counter which does not share any similarities with the interior photographs in the UTSA file (Image 12).

The folder of photographs in the *San Antonio Express News* archive at UTSA Libraries Special Collections contains nine images in total and an assignment card. One image in the folder is of Woolworth but does not depict integration (Image 13, depicting an African American boy outside looking through the glass door of the Woolworth). The assignment card lists “Bill” as the photographer, the place name as the “F.W. Woolworth Building” and the photographs labeled as “Negros at lunch counter.” The folder is labeled alternatively “Integration: African Americans at F.W. Woolworth lunch counter, 1960/03/16”[^3] and “Racial integration at a lunch counter in downtown San Antonio.”[^4]

**Question 3)** Were all lunch counters integrated that day?

Joske’s did not integrate its lunch counter that day. Over the coming months, numerous newspapers ran stories on the protests that followed, including sit-ins and pickets, for example as reported in the *San Antonio Express and News*, on April 24, 1960 (Image 14).

**Questions Raised**

This research has raised two further questions:

1. Where were the Associated Press and Unifax photographs of lunch counter integration in San Antonio taken?

[^3]: https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utsa/00306/utsa-00306.html


Unfortunately, the original source of Image 8 – United Press International – has not responded to the Alamo Trust’s inquiries. Even when the picture is lightened, it is hard to definitively say where it was taken. It does appear as if trash cans of the same design appear in this photograph as in images of the Kress building first floor lunch counter. However, without access to contemporary photographs of all the other lunch counters integrated that day, it cannot be proved conclusively.

Associated Press, the original source of Image 9, is not able to find a copy of this photograph in their archives. It may have been lost over time. However, using the images from the San Antonio Express News archive as a comparison, it is possible to state that it was taken inside the Kress store.

2) Can we determine a reason why photographs at UTSA might have been misattributed to the Woolworth building?

While most news of San Antonio’s lunch counter integration was initially published on March 16 and 17, some outlets followed this up on with additional coverage on March 27. One article in particular may suggest a reason why photographs at UTSA had become mislabeled. The High Point Enterprise wrote that “The San Antonio Express and News sent reporters to one variety store for all-day observation. Only seven Negroes, all dressed better than average, ate there” (article copy in Appendix 4). It is possible that this “uneventful” location was the originally intended shoot location, the Woolworth, but like any good reporter, “Bill” went to a busier shoot location – which was at the Kress. In other words, perhaps the folder label wasn’t wrong – the folder location might indicate the location of the original shoot assignment of the Woolworth – it just wasn’t the location eventually depicted in all but one of the photographs, which was the Kress. We believe this is a valid working theory, but there is no definitive proof of it.
Wants The Veep In White House

Dick Gets Ike Bles

Support Formal

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Eisenhower said Wednesday that he favored a...
Lunch Counter Integration
Set To Begin Today In S.A.

Russ Chill West's Arms Proposal
10-Nation Meet Gets Off To Sour Start

Foster Parents Allowed To Adopt Gifted Child

Humphrey Claims Butler 'Outlives Usefulness'

Decision Told After Meeting

February Peak Of 64 Million Set For Jobs

Washington (AP) — The government reported February unemployment at
9.2 percent, down from 9.7 percent in January. The jobless rate was lower than in February last year.

In Our Town

Lunch Counters Integrate Quietly

San Antonio Negroes Wednednesday opened a new branch of its new integrated lunch counter in the Bush Hotel. The branch opened in 1959.

Clerk Admits Money Theft From Letters

Student who was allegedly the victim of a forged check.

Judiciary Questioned

City commissioners Wednesday night voted to close the City Hall Tuesday morning.

Levy Questioned

City commissioners Wednesday night voted to close the City Hall Tuesday morning.

Barriers Set

The Texas Highway Department Wednesday had announced that it would erect barriers in an effort to keep motorists from crossing the road.

Four on Missing Air Force Plane

Two Air Force pilots were missing after their plane crashed in the mountains.

In Our Town

Victims' Battered E cheers Indicate Fight For

In 1960, the San Antonio Express announced the integration of lunch counters in the city.

Three Society Women Found Slain in Cave

In 1960, three society women were found slain in a cave.

Russ Seek Armament Veto Right

Russell and others seek to veto armament policies.

Storm Due Snow on Monday

The forecast predicted snow on Monday.

San Antonio Express, March 17, 1960. Courtesy of San Antonio Public Library.
‘Sit-ins’ Local Problem, Ike Advises South

Federal Aid Rejected Terrorists

Beverra Wins Record 9200
See Champ In Close Win

Some S.A. Stores Integrate

Defense Chief Testifies

U.S. Top Power

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Defense Secretary John F. Kennedy testified Wednesday that the U.S. military has the "nuclear" power to deliver nuclear weapons and in long-range ability to deliver them.

3 Die in Plane Collision

Baby’s Body Left in Dump

The two men were killed in a collision between a small plane and a Cessna. The bodies were found in the wreckage of the Cessna.

Midwest Lashed Again

Farmers in the Midwest are suffering from a drought that has lasted for several years. The drought has caused a decrease in crop yields and has led to increased prices for grain and other agricultural products.

Notes Bear Queen’s Likeness

The notes show a likeness of Queen Elizabeth II. The Queen is shown with her hair upswept and wearing a pearl necklace.

Murder Suspect Held

A suspect in a recent murder case was held for questioning. The suspect is being questioned about a series of burglaries that have been occurring in the area.

Thieves Ask Extension

A group of thieves is asking for an extension of time to pay for stolen goods. The thieves are unable to pay for the goods and are asking for an extension of time.

Whiz on Phizz

TV to Census Quiz
EASTER CASH SAVINGS COUPONS
GOOD ALL DAY THURSDAY!
DOWNTOWN & NORTHIDE
(MOST COUPONS GOOD AT BOTH STORES)

Clip and Bring This COUPON
36" SOLID COLOR DIP-DRI COTTONS
DOWNTOWN & NORTHIDE
Mill remnants of better qualities. Yards. Priced in dms and high shades.
Good Only Thursday, March 16th (11)

Clip and Bring This COUPON
FULL FASHIONED SHEER NYLON HOSE
DOWNTOWN & NORTHIDE
Pretty soft Spring and Easter shades. Sizes 8½ to 10½. 3 pairs for $1.50. Worth $10.00 per pair.
Good Only Thursday, March 16th (11)

Clip and Bring This COUPON
36" PRINTED COTTON CRINKLE CREPES
DOWNTOWN & NORTHIDE
Full bolts and still remnants. Sizes at pattern and color combinations. No sewing ever.
Good Only Thursday, March 16th (11)

Clip and Bring This COUPON
MEN'S NYLON STRETCH SOCKS
DOWNTOWN & NORTHIDE
First quality and genuine branded merchandise. New styles and patterns. All sizes.
Good Only Thursday, March 16th (11)

Clip and Bring This COUPON
MEN'S SHORTS AND T-SHIRTS
DOWNTOWN & NORTHIDE
Last sizes. Quality merchandise. Worth $10.00 to $15.00. 3 for $3.00. Sizes 34 to 42. Lengths of waist and leg.
Good Only Thursday, March 16th (11)

Clip and Bring This COUPON
36" GENUINE INDIAN HEAD DOWN COAT
DOWNTOWN ONLY
Wool and nylon. Mill remnants of 8½ a yard. For all sizes. Assorted colors and styles. Worth $25.00 to $50.00. Limited at 4 per person.
Good Only Thursday, March 16th (11)

Clip and Bring This COUPON
INFANTS' FITTED BIRDS-EYE DIAPERS
DOWNTOWN & NORTHIDE
White. One size fits all. 2 pairs for $1.00. Colors and styles will vary, reasonable. 2 dozen per person.
Good Only Thursday, March 16th (11)

Clip and Bring This COUPON
BOYS' DOUBLE KNEE BLUE JEANS
DOWNTOWN & NORTHIDE
Heavy 14 oz. denim, western design. Western style. Regular or slim sizes 4 to 12. Limited to 2 per person.
Good Only Thursday, March 16th (11)

Clip and Bring This COUPON
39" PRINTED SHEER COTTONS
DOWNTOWN ONLY
2 to $6 good values of yard. Sizes 6 to 14. Give complete information on desired colors, sizes, and other combinations.
Good Only Thursday, March 16th (11)

Clip and Bring This COUPON
HERSHEY BARS
DOWNTOWN ONLY
Sweet milk chocolate. Plain or with toasted almonds. Limit of 2.
Good Only Thursday, March 16th (11)

Clip and Bring This COUPON
20" x 30" CHENILLE RUGS
DOWNTOWN & NORTHIDE
First quality. Raspberry, green, and blue. Sizes 16" x 20" and 20" x 36". Worsted weight. Worth $6.00 to $10.00. Limited to 2 per person.
Good Only Thursday, March 16th (11)

Clip and Bring This COUPON
BOYS' SPORT SHIRTS
DOWNTOWN & NORTHIDE
Seersucker cotton and wash and wear fabric. Sizes 6 to 12. Plain or striped. Worth $6.00 to $8.00. Limited to 2 per person.
Good Only Thursday, March 16th (11)

Clip and Bring This COUPON
31" LILT HOME PERMANENT
DOWNTOWN & NORTHIDE
Limited at 2 per person.
Good Only Thursday, March 16th (11)

Clip and Bring This COUPON
36" PRINTED WOMEN'S CAMISOLE
DOWNTOWN & NORTHIDE
3 worn pieces at original prices. Worth $20.00.
Good Only Thursday, March 16th (11)

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SAN ANTONIO, Tex.—Two Negro women quietly sip coffee and chat Wednesday on the first day of integrated lunch counters in San Antonio. Local businessmen met Tuesday night and decided on integration in an unanimous vote. There were no incidents.—(Unifax).
10: Original copy of a photograph of San Antonio lunch counter integration, *San Antonio Express News* archive, Courtesy of UTSA Libraries Special Collections.
13: Original copy of a photograph from the *San Antonio Express News* archive contained in the same assignment folder as others from lunch counter integration on March 16, 1960. Courtesy of UTSA Libraries Special Collections.
Negro Sit-Inners, Pickets Appear at Joske’s of Texas

Appendix 2: Photographs contained in Folder E-0006-017, Integration: African Americans at F.W. Woolworth lunch counter, 1960/03/16, UTSA Libraries Special Collections.
San Antonio Integration Is Quiet

SAN ANTONIO, TEX. (AP)—This Southern city integrated nearly 28 voting places 10 days ago and the only notable result is that Negroes rarely take advantage of the facilities made open to them.

This was ominous Saturday about the local outcome of an issue which has swept the South, rekindling in violence and anger in many cities.

The San Antonio voting places were integrated without demonstrators or incidents Wednesday a week ago. The desegregation took place at its worst stores and 13 chain drug stores.

While patterns of the lunch counters appeared more interracial in important downtown stores where integration took place that they were in feeling that other customers were Negroes.

In Houston, Waco and Galveston, store managers have showed their lunch counters rather than integrate them.

The San Antonio Express-News and News and Nuggets in its new weekly feature for all-day observation show Negroes, all treated better than average, eat there.

How did San Antonio enter Integration without trouble?

You get a mixture of reactions.

Clarence Larkins, managing editor of the San Antonio Express, says "San Antonio is very non-poltical and more of a Western culture area rather than Southern." He said the atmosphere that characterized school integration, golf courses, swimming pools, trains and the like has been demonstrated in the lunch counter integration.

Buck Wire, city editor of the San Antonio News, asked other reasons, pointing out that the city has less than Negroes in many Southern cities and that people have seen begin and white militerial are white.

The integration agreement was worked out in quiet conferences between businessmen and church leaders of many faiths after National Area for the Advancement of Colored People officers 5000 and whites like those in many other Southern cities.

Columnist Don McConnell, writing in the Miami Herald, said Negro Catholic diocesan publication, quoted an unnamed Protestant minister as saying, "The agreement was possible because the archiepiscopal put some hundred in." He referred to Archbishop Robert E. Lory of San Antonio where city is strongly Catholic.

Catholic parochial schools in integrated some years before the 1965 Supreme Court decision regarding school segregation in accordance.

Clarence A. Lowe, NAACP field secretary, said "People should go to Harry Y. Bureau, NAACP leader in San Antonio's, to the church leaders and to the San Antonio business men and editors.

"It would be a shining example for the end of the nation. This is real action in the best democratic and Christian tradition."