

José Antonio Navarro
Outline of a *Tejano* Hero

FEBRUARY 27, 1795 Born in San Fernando de Bexar (San Antonio)
FATHER Angel Navarro (1748–1808) of Corsica
MOTHER Josefa Ruiz (1766–1834) of San Antonio
WIFE Margarita de la Garza (1795–1861), with whom he had seven children
1821 Met Stephen F. Austin in San Antonio and formed a lifelong friendship
1827–28 Represented Texas in the first legislature of the state of Texas y Coahuila
1830–32 Served as land commissioner for the Green DeWitt Colony
1835 Appointed federal senator by the Republic of Mexico, but does not serve because of the political turmoil in Texas
1836 Elected as a delegate for San Antonio, helped draft and signed the Texas Declaration of Independence, and served on the committee that wrote the constitution for the Republic of Texas
1838–39 Served as Republic of Texas representative
1841–44 Imprisoned in Vera Cruz due to his involvement in the ill-fated Santa Fe Expedition
1845 Member of the State Constitutional Convention; defended the legal rights of *Tejanos*
1854 Elected to the San Antonio City Council
1854–55 Outspoken opponent of the Know Nothing party, an anti-immigrant political party that flourished in the 1850s
JANUARY 13, 1871 Died at home

CASA
NAVARRO

STATE HISTORIC SITE

*Home of José Antonio Navarro,
prominent merchant, rancher
and statesman.*



Se habla español

Casa Navarro State Historic Site
228 S. Laredo St.
San Antonio, TX 78207
210/226-4801



The Man

José Antonio Navarro was an influential political figure during the momentous 55 years (1810–1865) when Texas' destiny was forged. Navarro served in Texas legislatures under Mexico, the Republic of Texas and the state of Texas. In addition, he served on the committees that wrote the first two Texas constitutions in 1836 and 1845. He was one of only two native-born Texans to sign the Texas Declaration of Independence in 1836.



Although a prominent, influential leader, Navarro was not a professional politician. As a young man he learned the merchant trade, the occupation of his father. Factories from the United States and Europe sent ships loaded with merchandise to New Orleans, where Navarro arranged to import books, cloth, clothing, wine, sugar, rice and coffee.

Navarro also earned a living through land investment. During the 1830s, he purchased more than 50,000 acres of ranch land at a price of pennies per acre. Because thousands of people were immigrating into Texas, the demand for land increased. Navarro sold portions of his land holdings for up to three dollars per acre. His San Antonio rental properties also produced income.

His wife Margarita de la Garza was also a native of San Antonio. Between 1817 and 1837, she bore seven children; four sons and three daughters. Numerous descendants live in and around San Antonio, with many more scattered throughout the country.

Navarro was one of only two native-born Texans to sign the Texas Declaration of Independence in 1836.



The Property

Navarro bought the Laredo Street property, about 1.5 acres, in 1832, and purchased the San Geronimo Ranch in 1834. After selling the ranch, Navarro began construction on the property around 1854–55. About the same time, he built the two-story building on the corner. Navarro rented the first floor to a local merchant and used the second floor as his office. Navarro's youngest daughter, Josefa Navarro de Tobin, inherited the site along with its furnishings after Navarro's death. She sold a portion of the property in 1871 and the remainder in 1876.

The San Antonio Conservation Society saved the complex from demolition in 1960. Restoration of the three adobe and limestone buildings began in 1962 under the direction of architect Brooks Martin.

The main house, a one-story limestone structure with an attic, is a fine example of early-statehood domestic architecture. The two-story square store and office building is noted for bold quoins or exterior angles of a wall. The detached adobe and caliche block kitchen is typical of early Texas architecture with front and rear porches. The San Antonio Conservation Society Foundation deeded the Navarro property to the state in 1975. In January 2008, the Texas Historical Commission took over its operation.



The store and main house are documented in the Historic American Buildings Survey (1936 and 1963). The site is a registered Texas Historical Landmark (1962), and it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (1972).