

## What Does Fiesta Mean to You?

Spring in San Antonio, Texas means beautiful Bluebonnets, and for 125 years, it has also meant Fiesta season. Fiesta started out as a memorial to celebrate the lives lost at the Battles of the Alamo and San Jacinto, but now it is less of a memorial and more of a party. I spoke to a San Antonio native and a San Antonio transplant to find out what Fiesta means to them.

First, I spoke Jessica Sanchez, a San Antonio native. I asked her what Fiesta means to her. She replied, "Fiesta means parades, NIOSA (night in old San Antonio), food, drinks, diversity, culture and traditions." Sanchez knows that Fiesta started as a celebration to honor those that died at the Alamo. As a tradition Sanchez has attended the celebration every year except for the 10 years, she lived away from San Antonio. When asked what her first memory of Fiesta was she said, "Vendors, food, lots of families and it was hot." She feels that when she was younger Fiesta was more family friendly. She told me she does not like to take her kids to Fiesta because of the cost. This past Fiesta cost her family of seven \$100 to attend the Fiesta Flambeau Parade. She was also concerned about her children being around the large amount of people overindulging on alcohol at Fiesta events. At the end of our interview, I asked Sanchez what she wants people who live outside of San Antonio to think of Fiesta. She hopes people see Fiesta as a tradition that brings the city together, like a founder's day parade.

My second interview was with San Antonio transplant, Dustin Hoffmann. Hoffmann is originally from Prairie City, Iowa. He came to San Antonio for the first time in 2001-2002 as an Airman in the United States Air Force. He returned to San Antonio in 2012. I asked Mr. Hoffmann what Fiesta means to him. His replied, "Drunk driving and lots idiots downtown." Hoffmann has only attended Fiesta once back in 2002. He said he enjoyed his experience. It reminded him of other street carnivals with lots of food, lots of drinks, and a lot of people. I asked Mr. Hoffmann if he knew the history of how Fiesta started? He said he was not sure. He knew that it had started with the Battle of Flowers but not sure why. When asked if he would ever attend Fiesta again, Hoffmann said, "I would like to, but with the crowds and the hassle with parking, not sure it's worth it."

It seems the original meaning of Fiesta has gotten lost in the 125-year history of the celebration. For the public the annual celebration is no longer associated with those that died in the battles at the Alamo and San Jacinto. However, the lost meaning of the celebration does not seem to be hurting the event. Every year they continue to set records for attendance. Information for this article was accessed at the following website, <https://www.fiesta-sa.org>.