



Manuel F. Lizcano, Historian

TITLE

Should San Antonio ever seek another patron saint, there's always Willis Haviland Carrier, the father of modern air-conditioning. After all, A/C in the Alamo City is nothing short of a godsend.

Carrier invented the modern A/C system 110 years ago today when he submitted a design to cool a Brooklyn printing plant. (The plant had trouble keeping ink impressions on its paper, which would shrink and expand with the summer heat and humidity.) To this day, Carrier's "psychometric chart" helps engineers calculate just how much energy it takes to regulate a room's temperature.

"Anybody in HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) probably has that chart within arm's reach," says Rocky Ormand, president of the Alamo chapter of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers and a sales engineer for Texas AirSystems in San Antonio.

By 1906, textile engineer Stuart Cramer had coined the term "air conditioning," a technological breakthrough that would cool scores of manufacturing plants and many more buildings large and small, commercial and residential. And in some cases, San Antonio led that charge.

Here are some cool A/C milestones with local connections.

1928: Frost Bank becomes the first air-conditioned bank in the U.S.

1928: The Milam Building opens as the first air-conditioned high-rise office building in the U.S. The first air-conditioned streetcar also goes into service in San Antonio.

1936: The St. Anthony Hotel becomes the first U.S. hotel with fully functioning air conditioning.

1936: Joske's becomes the first fully air-conditioned store in Texas.

1937: Handy Andy opens San Antonio's first "full air-cooled food store" at Highland Boulevard and South Gevers Ave.

1948: San Antonio Transit Company begins operation of some air-conditioned buses.

1950: St. Cecilia's becomes the first San Antonio Catholic Church to have air conditioning.

Sources: Express-News news research and file archives, San Antonio Central Library Texana/Genecalogy Department
rguzman@express-news.net

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