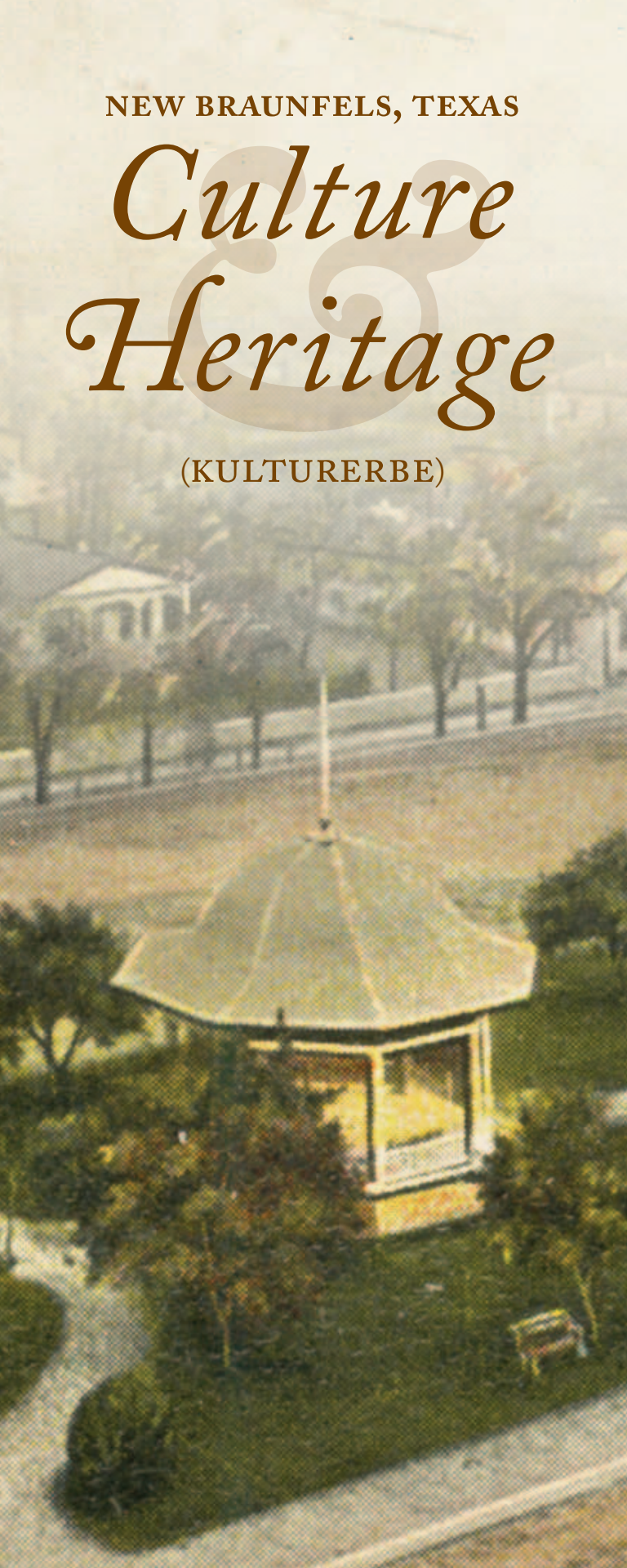
NEW BRAUNFELS, TEXAS

# *Culture & Heritage*

(KULTURERBE)



# *Trails & Explorations*

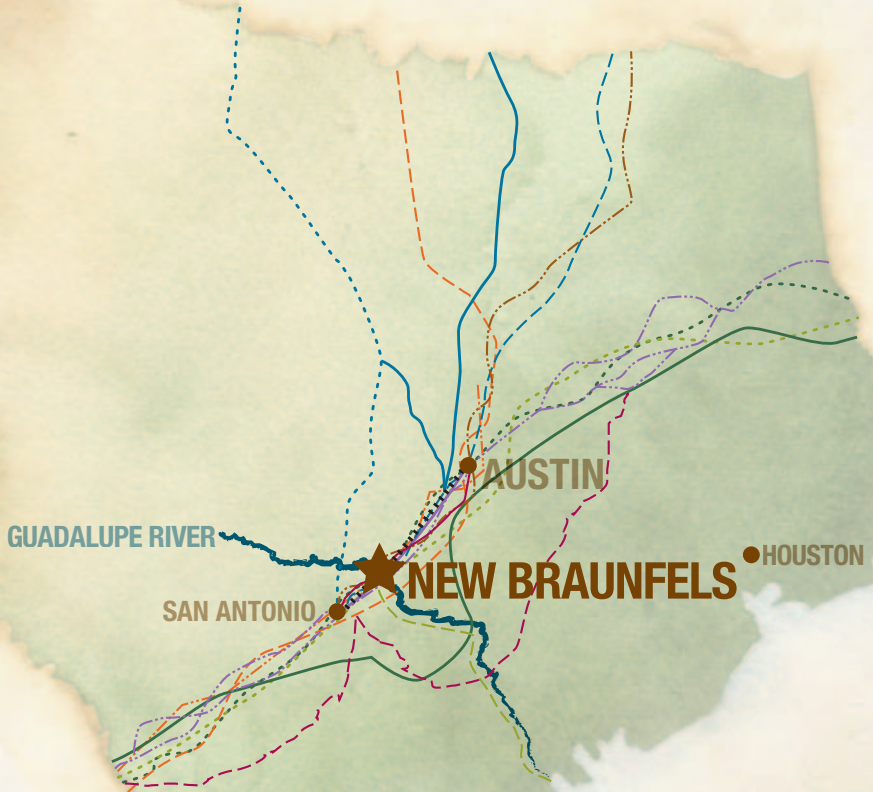
## (SPUREN UND FORSCHEN)

**Expeditions**
- Route of Teràn and Mazanet's expedition, 1691
- Route of the Gregorio de Salinas Varona expedition, 1693
- Governor Marqués de San Miguel de Aguayo's Expedition, 1721–1722
- Aguayo Expedition, 1721
- Inspection of New Spain, Rubí and Lafora, 1767–1767

**Transportation**
- Old Indianola Trail (Founder's Trail), 1848
- San Antonio Stage Line, 1874–1881
- El Camino Real de los Tejas
- El Camino Real de los Tejas: Lower Road
- Meridian Highway, 1917
- International & Great Northern Railroad, 1881

**Military Route**
- Michler, 1849

**Cattle Trails and Indian Nations**
- Shawnee, 1854 – 1866
- Chisholm, 1867 – 1876
- Western, 1876 – 1865




Native Americans were familiar with the Central Texas landscape for centuries before the first European settlers arrived. The region, then as today, was heavy with trade and social activity, and prominent tribes such as the Lipans, Tonkawas, Huecos, and Karankawas would leave their mark on the future community of New Braunfels.

The trails that cross Texas originated as Indian trails, marked by the ruts of teepee poles being drug as tribes traversed the area. Spanish and French explorers used these same trails as they entered the region. Their expeditions around New Braunfels were based on the ability to traverse rivers in the area. On the whole, Spaniards populated a very small portion of Texas, mostly confined to a few settlements near San Antonio de Bexar. Spaniards likely walked the ground where New Braunfels stands today years before any German settlers arrived, yet there are no permanent Spanish structures in the area.

Once Texas opened to Anglo immigration, very few North Americans came. A handful of residents on the Central Texas frontier hailed from Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia and Louisiana.

"From the virgin prairie, they built a town but their spirit filled it with life. Their traditions, costumes, mores & beliefs imbued it with faith, pride, industry, & laughter. We are what we are, today, because of them. Let us carry on their spirit!"

— Everett Anthony Fey

# Willkommen

## "A new town has been founded. The inhabitants are all German."

— letter from Christina Rieck,
May 10, 1845

*"This is a free land and the poorest is regarded and respected as the richest. Here no one has a priority. The respect of persons considers each persona as the next. However, he who does not want to work should not undertake the trip, but who wants to work and will work, will fit in very well and make good progress."*

— letter from Nicholas and Anton Riedel,
May 11, 1845

The characteristics of "work hard and make good progress" defined New Braunfels at its founding over 165 years ago. These principles were augmented by a devotion to civic involvement and family celebration.

As with most settlements in the New World, the culture became a mix of old and new. The German founders adapted to their new surroundings, deriving influence from Mexican, Indian, and African decendents. With each generation, new layers of culture and tradition were woven into the fabric of this little "burg."

Though much has changed from 1845 to today, the core principles set forth by the founders—hard work, progress, civic pride, and family devotion—have remained a steadfast way of New Braunfels life.

# *Our History*
## (UNSERE GESCHICHTE)



*Seele's farm by Carl G. Iwonski, 1848.*

*"The beauty of the place was astounding. Masses of wild flowers covered the prairie and powerful springs added to the magnificent beauty creating a crystal clear river which would serve the industry of the future."*

— Hermann Seele, diary, 1845



*Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels, Germany, circa 1840.*

## Willkommen.
## Bienvenidos.

Welcome to New Braunfels! Nestled in the heart of Texas, this is the only city in the state founded by German royalty. On March 14, 1845 Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels, Germany purchased 1,265 acres for $1,112. Thus, the "City of a Prince" was born. Seven days later, on Good Friday, Prince Carl led the first settlers into New Braunfels, named after his ancestral German home.

This city's story takes flight – on the dreams of German emigrants. After enduring months of sea travel and 60 days of treacherous land journey, they found promise in their new home – New Braunfels, Texas.

*"The land is so wonderfully situated: nothing better could be wished for: and much more beautiful than could be described."*
– Nicholas and Anton Riedel, letter, April 30, 1845

*"The location of the city in the broad valley, watered by the beautiful stream and surrounded by gently sloping hills is most charming."*
– Dr. Ferdinand von Roemer, 1845



*View of New Braunfels by Drammen, 1848.*

# Our Culture & Heritage (KULTURERBE)

Their principles of hard work and celebration of success caused the New Braunfelsers' work ethic to kick into gear immediately. Nicolaus Zink surveyed and platted the town and farm lots. The downtown streets traveled today are the same widths and layouts as drawn up in 1845. A prized feature is downtown's distinctly European "Main Plaza," which has always been the center of trade and celebrations.



*Cotton market on Main Plaza, 1890.*

*"This is a free land and the poorest is regarded and respected as the richest. Here no one has priority. The respect of persons considers each person as the next. However, he who does not want to work should not undertake the trip, but he who wants to work and will work, will fit in very well and make good progress."*
– Nicholas and Anton Riedel, letter, May 11, 1845



*Hermann Seele, teacher, public official, writer, cultural leader, considered "the Soul of New Braunfels," 1841.*

Culture and education were important, and within the first few months of settling in New Braunfels, Hermann Seele began teaching classes to 15 suntanned, barefoot children under the shade of an elm tree.



*New Braunfels Academy, 1858.*

*"Where the average frontiersman was illiterate and could barely read and write, the pioneer German settlers of New Braunfels brought with them the best educators and craftsmen, blacksmiths and machinists, European stone architecture, brewers and millers, journalists, weavers, music and saengerfests, brass bands, doctors, teachers, schools and libraries."*
– W.T. Block, article, January 1, 2007




*State Firemen's Convention in front of Seekatz Opera House, 1916.*

# Daily Life
## (ALTAGSLEBEN)



*Carl G. von Iwonski, circa 1850.*

Picturesque glimpses of daily life in the early frontier are available thanks to artists Conrad Casper Rohrsdorf and Carl G. von Iwonski. Both artists depicted houses built of logs, or branch huts plastered with adobe, and roofs of animal skins. Much bartering took place with the Lipan, Tonkawa, Karankawa, and Hueco Indians, who were a common sight in the new settlement. Ox drawn carts were the favored transportation as oxen were cheaper than horses and not as attractive to less friendly Indians. Days were spent building, fencing, foraging, hunting, acquiring livestock, and cultivating.

> *"We are now quite content and happy. When one gets adjusted, that is, has his house finished, field fenced, and wants to use a third of his time to working, which in Europe one has to, it is better living here, than that of a farmer in Europe. I have no desire ever to go back, whoever wants to see me must come here; I do not believe that he will regret it."*
>
> – Herbert Lux, letter, May 1, 1845



*The Waisenhaus (orphanage), 1846. Considered the first orphanage in Texas, chartered in 1848 as the Western Texas Orphan Asylum.*

As with most pioneering settlements, tragedy was also one of life's realities. Several hundred died in New Braunfels' early years due to illness, harsh winters, poor housing, and limited food. To help protect the less fortunate, an orphanage was established in 1848 by Rev. L.C. Ervendberg. His Western Texas Orphan Asylum is still standing today, owned by his descendants.

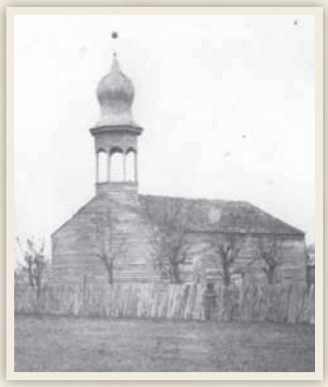


*Sophienburg, built to serve as a permanent fort and headquarters for the immigration association, built 1845.*

Building a community naturally developed a strong sense of pride in the town's founders. Barely a month after arriving, settlers laid the cornerstone for a larger building that would be the township's seat of government—Sophienburg Fort (named for Prince Carl's fiancée, Sophie, who never came to New Braunfels). Soon, the Prince's baker began selling bread, other noblemen opened taverns, breweries, general stores, restaurants, and garden markets, along with supply and processing stores, millworks, and craft shops. New Braunfels also quickly emerged as the commercial trade center of a growing agricultural area. Its exports could be found as close as Bastrop and Victoria and as far away as New Orleans, New York, and the Nassau province of Germany. By 1850 this thriving community, with a population of 1,723, was reported to be the fourth most populous city in Texas.

# Faith
## (GLAUBE)

Religious services began the day the German settlers arrived in New Braunfels. On that Good Friday, the first service was held under a grove of elm trees. The First Protestant Church would be incorporated later that year, in October 1845.



*German Evangelical Protestant Church, log church, 1846.*

The original log church with an "onion steeple belfry" served the congregation until 1879, when the current First Protestant Church building was erected of stone. At this church today, one can see the chalice presented by Prince Carl during the first mass held outdoors, as well as the original bells that hung in the onion belfry—which called the people to worship and the children to school.



*Chalice presented by Prince Carl on Good Friday, 1845.*

The first Catholic service was also held outdoors, in March 1846. Finding a Catholic priest proved very difficult, forcing the Bishop in Galveston to send "saddle-bag priests" until the New Braunfels Catholics got their first priest in 1849. This allowed the church to incorporate as Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church. The present-day stone church was erected in 1871, on the same land where that first Catholic mass was held decades earlier.

A Lutheran congregation formed in an outskirts community called Hortontown. Residents in the area built St. Martin's Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1850, originally in brick and fachwerk construction. While the community of Hortontown no longer exists, the church still stands, making it the oldest Lutheran church in the state of Texas.



*Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church, 1849.*

The area's first "Colored Methodist Church" was founded in 1890. The congregation purchased land and built the building today known as Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church. The first "Colored Baptist Church" in New Braunfels began in 1900. The 14 founding members held services in an open field under the shade of a live oak tree. Some years later, the land was purchased and the church that still stands today, known as Live Oak Baptist Church, was built.



*St. Martin's Evangelical Lutheran Church, built in 1851.*



*Live Oak Baptist Church, organized in 1900.*



*Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in 1890.*



*Mass at Perfecto Socorro Cemetery, now Our Lady of Perpetual Help, March 1931.*

# *Industry* (INDUSTRIE)




*Henne Tin and Sheet Iron, established 1846.*

*"Within the town itself are the following numbers of master-mechanics, nearly all of whom employ several workmen: carpenters and builders 20, wagonmakers 7, blacksmiths 8, gun and locksmiths 2, coppersmiths 1, tinsmiths 2, machinist 1, saddlers 3, shoemakers 6, turners 2, tailors 5, button and fringemakers 1, tanners 3, butchers 3, bakers 4, gristmills (corn, wheat, ice, pulp, grain) 4, stores and small tradesmens' shops 12, apothecaries 3..."*

– Frederick Law Olmsted, 1855

The German newcomers were quickly regarded as thrifty and industrious people. They rapidly set up shops and trades, adding newfound wealth to the region. The German farmers were especially efficient, producing yields more than double that of other farmers in Central Texas. In addition to crops, they raised sheep, cattle, pigs, and poultry for commercial production. Flour mills, textile factories, and processing plants were built to turn raw materials into fine finished goods.



*Gus Pfeuffer with prize Hereford, 1912.*

*"Only to the circumstance, that many people, engaged in agriculture, will settle in the vicinity, will New Braunfels be able to maintain itself, since it is not on a navigable river, nor has it other commercial advantages, except that it is a central point, where the agricultural population can exchange their products for merchandise and the artisans have their permanent place of residence."*

– Dr. Ferdinand von Roemer, 1847

| | |
|---|---|
| 1846 | Merriweather Gin – first grist and saw mill |
| 1848 | Torrey Mill – first flour mill, second grist and saw mills |
| 1850 | Holekamp Mill |
| 1852 | Neu Braunfelser Zeitung begins publication, initially only in German |
| 1853 | Merriweather Cotton Gin – first cotton gin in New Braunfels |
| 1856 | Gieseke Brothers Woolen Factory |
| 1857 | Hoffmann Gin – horse and steam powered gin |
| 1860 | Koester Brandy Distillery |
| 1862 | Torrey Cotton Factory – Torrey Woolen Factory |
| 1863 | Saltpeter Kiln |
| 1867 | New Braunfels Woolen Manufacturing Company – supplied 1,233 yards of gray wool to Texas A&M for uniforms. |
| 1878 | Gruene Cotton Gin – steam operated |
| 1887 | H. Dittlinger Roller Mills |
| 1890 | Torrey Masonry Dam – powered the city of New Braunfels and Dittlinger flour mill |
| 1895 | Landa Cotton and Oil Company |
| 1895 | Landa Flour Mill |



*Gold token, given as change by merchants, had greater value when returning to the same merchant to purchase supplies, circa 1870.*




*New Braunfels Zeigtung header, 1852.*



*Landa Falls, Landa Estate, circa 1890.*



*Originally the Koester Brandy Distillery, later the New Braunfels Woolen Manufacturing Company, 1865.*

# Transportation

## (TRANSPORT)



*Schmitz Hotel, popular stagecoach stop, 1858.*

By 1848, stage coach lines, tied to government mail contracts, were passing through New Braunfels eight times a week. Some of these lines began connecting the Texas coastal ports of entry with inland communities as far back as 1835. Harrison & McCulloch were the main lines, with Brown & Tarbos, Risher Hall (Sawyer), and Allen Stage Coach Lines arriving soon after and continuing to service the New Braunfels area until the 1870's.



*Low-water wagon bridge on San Antonio St., 1894.*

Traveling east-west across Texas required finding a good spot to cross the Guadalupe River. For this reason, all trails seemed to lead to New Braunfels, and it became the preferred location. Centuries of traffic have crossed the Guadalupe at the same locations as the current Gruene and Faust Street bridges.

Nature provided the city's first bridge when two pecan trees fell onto an island. This primitive foot bridge allowed passage to the other side of the Comal River, and became known simply as the Pecan Bridge. New Braunfels had its first elevated footbridge in 1851 at the Torrey Mill.



*Ferry crossing Guadalupe River, drawing by P.N. Rawson, circa 1845.*



*Torrey's Mill and first high-water wagon bridge over Comal River, 1854.*



*Faust Street Bridge, built 1887.*

The first bridge over the Comal River suitable for wagons was constructed in 1856. In the 1870s, the Floege Bridge was built over the Guadalupe River. A whipple truss bridge was erected over the Guadalupe in 1887, spanning more than 640 feet. This bridge opened as one of the first permanent "toll-free" structures over a major waterway in Texas and still stands today. The bridge, known as The Faust Street Bridge, is the only example of a multiple-span bridge still surviving at its original site, and is yet another testament to the common goals of community prosperity and service held by the area's early settlers.

In 1880, steam locomotives, owned and operated by the International & Great Northern Railroad, crossed the Guadalupe River on a temporary trestle bridge into New Braunfels. By the 1900s the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad line was making regular stops for passengers, freight, and mail, at a permanent depot in New Braunfels.



*Steam passenger train at the depot, 1895.*

# Farm to Table

## (VERZULEGEN BAUERNHOF)

*"We have not lacked any good here; we eat meat every day. We have no black bread here; instead at every meal we make fresh cornbread from the so-called Welsh corn which we have planted in our gardens. The cornbread tastes very good. Every person has a pound of coffee a week."*

– Nicholas and Anton Riedel, May 11, 1845

Corn, sweet potatoes, vegetables, fruit, grapes, pecans, grain sorghum, wheat, rye, and oats were in abundant cultivation soon after the founding of New Braunfels. These and other fresh goods were found in markets and kitchen tables throughout the new "burg". Sauerkraut was put up by the barrel on some German farms, satisfying the desire for a homeland favorite that had been unknown to the southerners here.



*German sausage making, circa 1850.*

The large volume of beef and pork production also encouraged the survival of another German art—sausage making. This traditional delicacy, again, was virtually unknown in Texas until the Germans arrived, but has since become a storied part of the state's cuisine.

Chickens and geese were widely kept for eggs and meat, and by 1850, every German household had acquired a cow. Naturally, milk production and cheese making quickly took root, and soon German specialty cheeses were coveted throughout the region.

*"The taste for whiskey, which the German peasants and artisans unfortunately bring with them, is stimulated by the warm climate and further encouraged because the people are deprived of many delightful beverages of their native land, particularly good beer and light wine."*

– Dr. Ferdinand von Roemer, 1847

Mustang grapes grew wild in the Hill Country and wine making was a begrudged talent. Family wine recipes were prized and initially kept secret. Eventually, families shared their wine, perhaps mostly to add to their community commerce efforts.



*Sippel Beer Company Brewery, circa 1900.*

The area's bountiful farmers, vintners, and food artisans were known for gracious hospitality, pride, and business. The first known restaurant was in a rustic, one-room log house with no door and a dirt floor. A heavy-set woman nicknamed "Dicke Madam" served three meals a day to 10 or 12 customers who sat at one long table.



*Interior view of Peter Nowotny Saloon, 1918.*

1845 Arnold Henkel-Wedemeyers Tavern – first saloon in New Braunfels

1853 Weekly farmers markets on Main Plaza

1868 Naegelins' Bakery opens – now the oldest bakery in Texas

1871 Phoenix Saloon opens

1868 Guenther Brewery, Margarethe Guenther – first female brewmaster in Texas




*Naegelin's Bakery, established 1868.*




*Whiskey bottle from original Phoenix Saloon, 1871.*



*Valley fruit stand, circa 1940.*

# Architecture

## (ARCHITEKTUR)

*"Some houses were of logs, some were of studding framework filled in with brick, some were frame, while others were huts with walls made of cedar posts driven vertically into the ground like the posts of a stockade. The roofs, instead of being covered with the customary wooden shingles found throughout America, were covered with tent canvas or a couple of ox hides."*

– Dr. Ferdinand von Roemer, April 1846



*Two-story wood frame house with widow's walk, circa 1900.*



*Stacked native rocks fence, 1859.*

German settlers quickly built fences to secure their livestock. Early versions were made of cedar or oak, typically in zigzag construction. Around 1859 they began to utilize large, undesirable stones that were prone to breaking plows, stacking the stones for even stronger fencing. Often an entire family would labor for years to finish their entire property. Miles of quality stone fences were built, and many are still standing today—easily identifying German-founded communities.



*Guadalupe Hotel and Jon von Coll Saloon, Main Plaza, circa 1858.*

The settlers' initial wooden cabins were temporary dwellings. After several years they built more elaborate houses that showcased construction methods brought from Germany, including distinctive half-timbering fachwerk. These homes were commonly one and a half stories, with open porches on the front and outside stairways.



*Some early settlers used "wattle and daub" fachwerk as an interior insulation for their homes, circa 1850.*

Half-timbering fachwerk lost favor after the Civil War. Builders realized the native limestone and sandstone did not need the support of wooden beams, and so they began constructing larger stone houses.



*Comal County Courthouse, 3½ story Romanesque-style building constructed with limestone in 1898.*

# *Organizations & Clubs* (VEREINE)



*Four of the original Schuetzen Verein members at the 50th anniversary, 1899.*

Though often noted for their efficient work, Germans are equally passionate about social activity, as evident in the variety of clubs established wherever they settled. The first to be formed in New Braunfels was a shooting club, the New Braunfels Schuetzen Verein, on July 4, 1849. It is the oldest continually operating shooting club in the United States. Even during war, when ammunition was scarce, the competitions continued with only two bullets per participant.

Singing was a popular social activity, so it didn't take long for the first singing society, the Germania Gesangverein, to form in 1850. That same year Hermann Seele started the first theatrical society, the New Braunfelser Theater-Gesellschaft. Seele, often referred to as "the cultural soul of the city," also built Saengerhalle, the first amusement hall, in 1855. He appreciated the need for the settlers to bond in recreation, and soon similar halls sprang up throughout the Hill Country. Many remain today, including the famous Gruene Hall, which opened in 1878.



*Saengerhalle at the Seele farm, detailed oil painting by Julius Ploetze, 1862.*



*Comal Club nine-pin bowling team champions, 1897.*

The Old World tradition of nine-pin bowling took hold in the New World when the Comal Club opened in 1897. The emphasis on team play made this a very popular rural activity, with alleys in virtually every village. Several are still functioning today, the last vestiges of nine-pin bowling in the U.S.



*25th Anniversary Jubilee, Anhalt Farmers Verein, founded 1850.*

The Turnverein (athletic club) formed in 1855, combining exercise with socializing. Other clubs mixed business with pleasure. Two of which were formed in 1852—the Gartenbau Verein for agriculture and horticulture, and the Shephard's Society representing cattle grazing and herding. The area's numerous craftsmen organized the Tradesmen and Workingman's Club a year later. A society for breeding and raising livestock, the Verein zum Shutze und zur Beforderüng der Viehzucht, soon followed. These were all precursors for the current agricultural and gardening clubs that are prolific in Texas today.



*Turnverein (athletic club), established 1855.*

# *Festivals* (FESTIVALS)



*50th anniversary celebration, 1895.*

*Spass*, the German word for "fun", is also an important word in German philosophy. So it was no surprise that music, athletic events, carnivals, dances, and celebrations for just about everything else became more and more important. One parade float sign in the 1890s summed up the mood of many festivals: "Strength and Cheer are given you by the foaming of noble City Beer".



*Annual Mayfest Parade in downtown New Braunfels, 1904.*

On October 17, 1853, the first Texas Sangerfest (singers festival) was held at Hermann Seele's farm on the banks of the Guadalupe River. The love of music was passed on generationally through old songs sung in German, and new songs in English. Seele also organized the Kindermasken Ball and Parade in 1857. It is the oldest children's festival and parade in the country, and is still celebrated each spring in New Braunfels.



*Children's Costume Parade, "Kindermasken Parade," 1857.*




*75th anniversary celebration, 1920.*



*Parade float, downtown New Braunfels, circa 1900.*

The city's grandest occasions came every quarter-century as New Braunfelsers celebrated their founding with 3-4 days of great ceremony and jubilation. The 25th anniversary, in 1870, included a celebratory parade, with streets and buildings decorated with mountain laurel and cedar. A cannon the original settlers brought from Germany was fired several times a day during the festival. The 50th anniversary in 1895 was celebrated with more cannons along with fireworks, concerts, and dancing. Proceeds were used to install a fountain on the Main Plaza that same year. Naturally, a curb had to be added two years later to keep folks from watering their horses in the fountain.



The Comal County Fair began in 1893 and is still held today, making it one of the oldest county fairs in Texas. It comes to life every September, with all the traditional entries of needlework, pies, cookies, grain, art, cattle, sheep, and swine, as well as the popular carnival, rodeo, and dances.

*Comal County Fair, circa 1950.*

# Outdoor Life

## (IM FREIENLEBEN)



*Early paddle boat design, circa 1900.*

*"When the sun's rays fell upon the Comal River, a magical play of blue and green color was produced. The depth of the water is deceptive, owing to its clearness which enables one to see every pebble on the bottom. The temperature of the water is always the same with a steady flow year round. For this reason it smokes like a hot spring during the winter months…during such a time the inhabitants will always find a warm bath of the most pleasant kind."*

– Dr. Ferdinand von Roemer, 1846



*Family picnic, 1882.*

*"A small seam of trees indicates the course of the Guadalupe River and the cypress take rank among the latter with their mighty trunks, ten feet in diameter, rising out of the water. The beautiful stream flows in a deep bed and a natural prairie meadow one-fourth mile wide, extends between the river and a gently rising chain of hills, on which mesquite trees were scattered."*

– Dr. Ferdinand von Roemer, 1846

Situated on some of the most lush, verdant land in Texas, it's no surprise outdoor recreation became a staple of New Braunfels' way of life. The Comal Springs are the largest in the entire American Southwest, blessed with an average of 185 million gallons of gushing cold, crystal-clear water per day.



*Trophy catfish, 1931.*



*Camp Placid and spring-fed pool in Landa Park, circa 1920.*

Early on, New Braunfels' two rivers were the source of power for industry, but they were just as prized for family outings, picnics, fishing, swimming, and other playful uses. In May of 1860, notable merchant Joseph Landa purchased the land where the largest springs formed a natural lake, and "Landa Pasture" quickly became a favorite recreation spot for visitors to New Braunfels. Helen Gould, daughter of railroad financier Jay Gould, found herself so impressed with the natural beauty of the area she decided to convince both her father and the Landas to build a railroad spur into the area, so others could enjoy the picturesque setting. Within a year, train excursions from San Antonio and Austin brought a new daily industry—tourism—to New Braunfels.

The city opened the Comal Baths in 1900, where children and adults learned how to swim. Today, the city still conducts thousands of swimming lessons each year. A Texas A&M professor opened Camp Warnecke in 1918 to conduct summer school sessions along the banks of the Comal River. From humble beginnings, the camp grew to 100 cabins, a recreation hall, and a popular restaurant. A few decades later, this location is now part of another thriving resort—Schlitterbahn, the world's #1 rated water park.




*Comal Baths, where swim lessons were taught, circa 1920.*

Steamboat excursions began on Landa Lake in 1920. In 1936 the city purchased 128 acres of Landa's Pasture, and purchased 72 additional acres later. The city-run Landa Park is now a hub of family and tourist activity, including popular paddle boat trips.

# Music (MUSIK)



*Saengerfest arch on the Main Plaza, 1881.*

The Germans brought their love of music with them to the New World. Singing societies were a favorite leisure activity, with as many as ten formed in New Braunfels' early years. These German singing societies became the primary promoters of serious music in Texas prior to World War I.

The state's first Saengerfest (singers festival) began in 1853. One of New Braunfels' most popular singing societies, the Germania Gesanverein, invited similar organizations from Austin, San Antonio, and Sisterdale to a two-day singing festival held in New Braunfels on October 15-16.

Music was a part of many activities. Bands ranged from a single fiddler playing for dances in the 1840s to full concert ensembles by the 1880s. German bands typically played high-quality instruments, and were often connected with the conductor's teaching activities. The German band tradition continues to thrive today, as evidenced by the flurry of area events each year.



*Volunteer firemen's band, circa 1900.*



*Carroll Hoffman, circa 1900.*

Popular German folk music and dances, including the polka and schottische, as well as the use of the accordion and other German instruments, had a widespread influence on Texas music. Later generations incorporated the German influence into their own musical styles, creating new music genres, including the Tex-Mex conjunto.



*Rios Brothers Orchestra, circa 1931.*

The strong musical culture of emigrating Germans boasts a long-lasting impact throughout Texas. Numerous dance halls were opened in nearly every village, and became a center of social gatherings. Some of these community centers remained throughout the 20th and 21st centuries as popular music venues for a wide range of genres, from country to blues to Tejano to rock. Gruene Hall and Anhalt Hall are prime examples in the New Braunfels area that are active and successful today.




*Gruene Hall, the oldest continually running dance hall in Texas, built 1878.*

# Theater & Art

## (THEATER UND KUNST)



*Cast of "Mein Leopold," live theater production at Seekatz Opera House, circa 1900.*

Hermann Seele helped found the New Braunfelser Theater-Gesellschaft just six short months after the founding of New Braunfels. The proceeds from the theatre company's first six performances were donated to the school board's building fund. Thus, the first public school in the state of Texas was funded in part by the theatrical arts.




*Seekatz Opera House, circa 1900.*



*Carl Iwonski watercolor of live theater production "Die Einfalt im Lande" ("The Simplicity in the Land") at Seekatz Opera House, circa 1860.*

Sophisticated German-language theater and opera flourished in Central Texas after 1850, presented mostly by social clubs in German towns such as New Braunfels.

Visual artists flourished as well. Carl Iwonski, one of the town's original founders, provides historians with knowledge and visions of the new land and its early residents. His paintings and drawings of the city, along with portraits of community leaders, are among the few images available before the advent photography.



*Fritz Goldbeck – poet and mayor, circa 1850.*

Fritz Goldbeck, another original settler, arrived to New Braunfels when he was 14 years old. Goldbeck became the first German-Texan poet, writing a great number of poems, using simple and unpretentious language to describe the settlers' lives. He was later a two-term mayor of New Braunfels. Additional poets were Ludwig Vogel, Rev. Gustave Eisenlohr, Hermann Seele, Rev. Louis Ervendberg, and Rev. August Schuchard.




*Cover of Goldbeck's book, circa 1850.*

# Communities
## (GEMEINSCHAFTEN)

**ANHALT** is located north of Highway 46. It was settled in the late 1850s and was first known as the Krause Settlement. It is now considered a ghost town.

**BRACKEN** – located on the International & Great Northern Railroad about 13.5 miles southwest of New Braunfels – was originally called Davenport, and was settled in 1868.

**BULVERDE,** settled in 1850, was first called the Pieper Settlement and is located near the intersection of FM 1863 and Highway 281.

**BUFFALO SPRINGS** was a community that developed during the late 1840s to 1850s along the Guadalupe River Road, downstream from Sattler.

**COMAL** dates back to the 1840s and is located near FM 482 and Old Nacogdoches Road. In 1980, the population was 40. Also known as Wenzel and 8-Mile Creek.

**COMAL RANCHE**, founded in 1861, was a 5,324-acre area on the north bank of the Guadalupe River, south of Spring Branch.

**COMAL TOWN** was first settled in 1846 and is in the area of the current CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Hospital - New Braunfels.

**DANVILLE** is about eight miles southwest of New Braunfels, settled in 1848 by German farming families.

**DITTLINGER** was a company town established by the Dittlinger Lime Company in 1907. It was located near Solms, four miles southwest of New Braunfels.

**FISCHER** was settled in the early 1850s. It was originally called Fischer's Store and served as a log trading post for settlers between Blanco and New Braunfels.

**FREIHEIT** – German for "freedom" – is located on FM 1101 at FM 483 just east of New Braunfels. It was founded around 1891 as the San Geronimo School community.

**GRUENE** was founded and settled by German farmers in the mid-1840s. Ernst Gruene, a German immigrant, and his bride Antoinette had reached the newly established city of New Braunfels in 1845, but acreage was scarce. Thus, Ernst and his two sons purchased land just down river. His younger son, Henry D. Gruene, planted his land with cotton. Having become the number one cash crop, the cotton business soon brought 20 to 30 families to Henry D.'s lands. The death of Henry D. in 1920 marked the downfall of Gruene's development and good fortune. In 1922, the original cotton gin burned and was replaced by a modern electric model down the road. Yet, the economic disasters of the boll weevil and the Great Depression were too much for the family businesses and they went under, except for Gruene Hall, which never closed. Gruene found new life in the 1970s, though, and today is equal parts sleepy village and widely popular tourist destination.



*H.D. Gruene's home, now Gruene Mansion Inn, built 1872.*

**HONEY CREEK** was originally called the Kunz Settlement around 1848. The site was approximately five miles northwest of Bulverde.

**HORTONTOWN** was founded in 1847 in the area around St. Martin's Evangelical Lutheran Church on Loop 337.

**HUNTER** – eleven miles northeast of New Braunfels, was named for A.J. Hunter, owner of a huge cotton plantation, who settled the area in 1867.

# Communities (GEMEINSCHAFTEN)

**MISSION HILL** is located on Hwy 46, west of Loop 337. It was named after the Spanish Mission, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, which is believed to have been founded there in 1756. The mission was abandoned in 1758.

**NEIGHBORSVILLE** was laid out in 1853 and includes the current location of the Faust St. Bridge.

**SCHOENTHAL** community began as Haag's Settlement around 1851.

**SISTERDALE** was founded by Captain Nicholas Zink in 1847. It is located in the Canyon Lake area, between East and West Sister Creeks, just north of the Guadalupe River.

**SMITHSON VALLEY** was settled by Ben Smithson in 1856. It is located 15 miles northwest of New Braunfels.

**SOLMS** was founded in the late 1840s, south of New Braunfels. It was originally called Four Mile Creek for the nearby stream with the same name.

**UFNAU** was a tiny settlement of Swiss immigrants who named the community after their native Ufnau, Switzerland, around 1858. It is near Anhalt, west of the intersection of Hwy 281 and Hwy 46.

**VIEW** was originally called Austin Hill when settlers purchased land in the area in the 1850s. It was located north of New Braunfels at Watson Lane.

**WACO (HUECO) SPRINGS** was established in 1847, two miles from the intersection of Loop 337 and River Road.

**WESSON** probably had the most name changes of any Texas town. It was located where FM 311 crosses the Guadalupe River 19 miles northwest of New Braunfels.

# Directory

## ARTISANS & MUSICIANS

**Bisque Bistro**
301 W. San Antonio St. #122
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-629-5475
www.bisquebistro.com

**Buck Pottery**
1296 Gruene Rd.
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-629-7975
www.buckpottery.com

**Oma & The Oompahs**
317 Lakeview Blvd.
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-625-9288
www.omaandtheoompahs.com

**Paul Tadlock's Fine Art**
960 Gruene River Drive
New Braunfels, TX 78132
www.paultadlock.com

**Whitworth Stained Glass**
104 Melody Lane
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-214-3370
www.whitworthstainedglass.com

## MUSEUMS

**Bill & Dolores Schumann Arboretum**
830-221-4350

**Dick's Classic Garage**
120 Stagecoach Trail
San Marcos, TX 78667
512-878-2406
www.dicksclassicgarage.com

**Heritage Museum of the Texas Hill Country**
4831 FM 2673
Canyon Lake, TX 78133
830-899-4542
www.theheritagemuseum.com

**Heritage Village – Museum of Texas Handmade Furniture**
1370 Churchill Drive
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-629-6504
www.nbheritagevillage.com

**Historic Outdoor Art Museum**
PO Box 311805
New Braunfels, TX 78131-1805
830-609-1369
www.gnbac.org

**McKenna Children's Museum**
801 W. San Antonio Street
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-606-9525
www.mckennakids.org

**New Braunfels Conservation Society**
1300 Churchill Drive
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-629-2943
www.nbconservation.org

**New Braunfels Railroad Museum**
302 W. San Antonio Street
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-627-2447
www.newbraunfelsrailroadmuseum.org

**Sophienburg Museum & Archives**
401 W. Coll Street
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-629-1572
www.sophienburg.org

## LIVE THEATER

**Brauntex Performing Arts Theatre**
290 West San Antonio Street
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-627-0808
www.brauntex.org

**Circle Arts Theatre**
124 Elizabeth Avenue (Landa Park)
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-620-4848
www.circleartstheatre.org

**New Braunfels Theatre Company**
1111 N. Walnut Ave.
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-627-0808
www.newbraunfelstheatrecompany.com

**S.T.A.G.E.**
1300 Bulverde Road
Bulverde, TX 78163
830-438-2339
www.stagebulverde.org

## ENTERTAINMENT & LIVE MUSIC

**Gruene Hall**
1281 Gruene Road
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-606-1281
www.gruenehall.com

**Harmony Sweet**
2405 Lifehaus Industrial Dr. #213
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-387-5100
www.harmonysweet.com

**Mid-Texas Symphony**
PO Box 3216-TLU
Seguin, TX 78155
830-629-0336
www.mtsymphony.org

**Phoenix Saloon**
193 W. San Antonio St.
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-643-1400
www.thephoenixsaloon.com

**River Road Ice House**
1791 Hueco Springs Loop Road
New Braunfels, TX 78132
830-626-1335
www.riverroadicehouse.com

**San Antonio Opera**
909 NE Loop 410 #636
San Antonio, TX 78209
210-225-5972
www.saopera.com

**Tavern in the Gruene**
830 Gruene Road
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-608-0438
www.tavernthegruene.com

**The Watering Hole Saloon**
1390 McQueeney Road
New Braunfels TX 78130
830-625-0045
www.wateringholesaloon.com

**Uptown Piano Bar & Courtyard**
295 E. San Antonio Street
New Braunfels, TX 78130
830-620-7600
www.theuptownpianobar.com

**WhiteWater Amphitheater**
11860 FM 306
New Braunfels, TX 78132
830-964-3800
www.whitewaterrocks.com



*Spring-fed pool and Camp Placid, circa 1920.*

# Festivals

MONTHLY:
Gruene Market Days – Historic Gruene
Gospel Brunch with a Texas Twist – Historic Gruene
Farm to Market Days – Downtown New Braunfels

| | |
|---|---|
| APRIL: | Folkfest & Kindermanken Parade |
| MAY: | Wein & Saengerfest |
| SEPTEMBER: | Comal County Fair |
| OCTOBER: | Gruene Music & Wine Festival |
| NOVEMBER: | Wurstfest |
| | Weihnachtsmarkt |
| DECEMBER: | Wassailfest |

# Historic Committee

| | |
|---|---|
| **MaryAnn Hollmig** | *mahnb812@satx.rr.com* |
| **Kathleen Krueger** | *kkrueger@nbtexas.org* |
| **Roxolin Krueger** | *roxolin@att.net* |
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| **Mary Jane** | *maryjane@gruenetexas.com* |
| **Martha Rehler** | *nbcs@axs4u.net* |
| **Linda Dietert** | *Sophienburg@sbcglobal.net* |




*Drink Stand in Landa Park, circa 1930.*

# *The first 30 years of New Braunfels, Texas: 1842–1872*

## April 20, 1842
A group of 21 German aristocrats came together at Biebrich on the Rhine near Mainz, Germany to form an organization known as the Adelsverein, or "Society"—short for Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas. The first four ships to set sail left Germany in the fall of 1844 and the last arrived on Dec. 21, 1844.

## July 1, 1844
Prince Carl Solms-Braunfels landed at Galveston to locate property for settlers that followed later. Lipan, Tonkawa, Karankawa, and Hueco Indians were in the area at the time of founding.

## March 6, 1845
After securing a landing site on the Texas Coast at what was then known as Carlshafen (now Indianola), Prince Carl returned to San Antonio where he heard of available land situated on the Comal and Guadalupe rivers, and the legend of Las Fontanas (Comal Springs).

## March 14, 1845
Prince Carl entered into an agreement with Maria Antonia Veramendi Garza and her husband for the purchase of 1,265 acres for $1,112. This included the present site of New Braunfels.

## March 18, 1845
Prince Carl crossed the Guadalupe River at the ford of the military road El Camino Real which stretched from Nacogdoches to San Antonio.

## March 21, 1845
On Good Friday, emigrant wagons forded the river at the same spot as Prince Carl, marking the founding of New Braunfels.

## April 28, 1845
The cornerstone was laid for a fort—the Sophienburg—named in honor of the prince's fiancée, the Lady Sophia, Princess of Salm-Salm.

## August 11, 1845
Hermann Seele began to teach the first school under the same elm trees that Reverend Ervenberg held Christian services.

## October 1845
The First Protestant Church was incorporated.

The first ferry across the Guadalupe River was established at the confluence of the Comal and Guadalupe rivers. The ferry was able to handle all but the heaviest flood waters and claimed to be able to carry the heaviest wagons.

## November 1845
Ernst and Antoinette Gruene arrived in Galveston.

## March 24, 1846
Comal County was created by the Texas legislature.

## March 1846
The first Catholic mass was held, and land was given for a structure to be built.

Kindermasken Ball was founded by Hermann Seele.

Dr. Ferdinand Lindheimer began collecting and studying flora in Texas. He organized his findings into a system, thus becoming known as the "Father of Texas Botany."

## 1847
Artist Conrad Casper Rohrdorf created first panoramic view of New Braunfels

# *The first 30 years of New Braunfels, Texas: 1842–1872*

**1849**
Black Walnut Church was built for the Catholic Church.

**July 4, 1849**
The New Braunfels Schuetzen Verein was founded. It is the oldest continuously active shooting club in the United States.

**1850**
New Braunfels was the fourth largest city in Texas.

Carl G. von Iwonski opens first art studio, to depict portraits of early settlers ink, oil and pencil

**March 2, 1850**
The area's first singing society formed – Germania Gesangverein.

**1850**
St. Martin's Lutheran Church was founded. It is now the oldest Lutheran church in Texas.

**1852**
A large meeting of interested New Braunfels residents elected Ferdinand Lindheimer as the newspaper's first editor from a list of three candidates. The money for purchase of the equipment was subscribed publicly, and each subscriber received a certificate of partnership.

**Nov. 12, 1852**
The first issue of the Neu-Braunfelser Zeitung was published.

**1853**
Lindheimer, a botanist who had no training in the newspaper business, became the sole owner of the Zeitung.

**1852**
The Agricultural and Horticultural Society of Comal County was founded by the Acker und Gartenbau Verein.

The Shepherd's Society was formed, representing cattle grazing and herding.

**1856**
The first wagon bridge across the Comal River was built by the City of New Braunfels.

**1857**
Henne Hardware opened and has been operating ever since. It is the oldest hardware store in Texas.

**1858**
The first public school was founded and funded through self-imposed tax. Citizens unanimously voted to impose the tax, 18 years before the State of Texas provided for such taxation.

**1860**
Original County facility built.

**1868**
Naegelin's Bakery opened and has been operating continuously ever since. It is now the oldest German bakery in Texas.

**1872**
The first generation German-American farmer Heinrich (Henry) D. Gruene purchased 6,000 acres of farmland three miles north of New Braunfels, along the Guadalupe River.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Conservation Plaza

Heritage Village

Institute of Texas Culture

Rightmire – Private Collection

Sophienburg Museum & Archives

San Antonio Library – Texana