Haag Cemetery

I. Context

The Haag Cemetery is located in southern Comal County at 9750 Ridgeline Road which is a private road off of Lewis Ranch Road that runs into Schoenthal Road. It is about 10 miles west of New Braunfels, not far from Farm to Market Road 3009 in the Texas Hill Country. On September 15, 2016, the cemetery received the Historic Texas Cemetery designation.

New Braunfels was settled in 1845 by many German immigrants coming to Texas by way of the German Emigration Company, otherwise known as the Adelsverein or the Verein zum Schutze Deutscher Einwanderer in Texas (Society for the protection of German Immigrants in Texas). The Adelsverein founded the towns of New Braunfels and Fredericksburg. Many families moved out into Comal County from New Braunfels to acquire land for farming and ranching. Settlements developed to meet the needs of these people. The Haag Settlement was one of those settlements.

The Haag Cemetery in the Haag Settlement was established for the families of the Haag Brothers: Friedrich (Jakob), Peter (Johann) and Mathias (Mathuas), and their families who emigrated from Germany, to New Braunfels, Comal County, Texas.
In 1848-1849, Friedrich Haag purchased 320 acres about 10 miles southwest of New Braunfels. This is the area where most of the other Haag family members settled also. This area was known as the Haag Settlement. Brother Peter was the second brother to arrive and also purchase 320 acres. The Haag Cemetery is located on the Manual Gallardo Survey #363, Abstract #183. The western half of this property (Manual Gallardo Survey) was purchased in 1852 by Friedrich Haag. In the 1880s the name of the settlement was changed to Schoenthal, Texas. (German for "pretty valley").

II. Overview

Three brothers, Friedrich (Jakob), Peter (Johann) and Mathias (Mathaus) Haag emigrated from the Kingdom of Wurttemberg, Germany to Texas, settling in the hills southwest of New Braunfels. They were the sons of Peter Haag (7/11/1769 – 11/11/1840) and his wife Katherine (nee Knobloch) (1/13/1781 – 2/28/1830).

The three brothers, their families and their kin, owned an area comprising nearly 2,300 acres. Much of the land was Original Land Grants from The State of Texas. This area became
known as the Haag Settlement. The map to the left was compiled by Peter Haag descendent, Florence L. Joyner in 1992, after she researched land grant information on the Haag Family.

First brother, Jakob Friedrich and wife, Christine Friedrike Helz Haag

The first of the three brothers to arrive in Texas was Friedrich (Jakob) (7/23/1806 – 1858) with his wife, Christine Friedrike Helz (or Held) and their children: Adolph, Christine and Friedrich. A daughter Magdalene, was born later in Texas. The family arrived at Galveston on April 12, 1846 aboard the ship “Talisman.” Friedrich (Jakob) was a member of the Fisher-Miller Colony. He was given an Original Land Grant, Certificate No. 126 from the State of Texas, dated June 10, 1848, for a 640-acre tract in Giddings District No. 3, Section No. 1442 and 1443. What disposition he made of this property is unknown, but it is assumed that he found the land unsuitable, as many others did. He later purchased 320 acres about ten miles southwest of New Braunfels and this is the area where most of the family settled.
Second brother, Johann Peter and wife, Christiane Weilbacher Kappelmann Haag

The second family to arrive was Peter (Johann) (8/14/1811 – 11/20/1887), pictured on the left, and his wife, Christiane (nee Weilbacher) Kappelmann (12/10/1810 – 11/3/1892), pictured on the right. She was a widow with three children at the time of their marriage on February 2, 1841. The family left Germany on November 17, 1852 departing from Havre, France aboard the ship “Hurlbut” and arrived in New Orleans on March 1, 1853 and then traveled to Indianola by way of Galveston. The group that arrived at the Haag Settlement consisted of Peter, Christiane and their children: Adolph, Pauline and Sophie Kappelmann, and Charlotte, Ludwig and Fritz (Friedrich) Haag. Other family relatives traveling with Peter (Johann) and Christiane were Jacob Weilbacher (Christiane’s relative) and Heinericke Haag (Peter Haag’s niece, the daughter of brother, Mathias). Peter and Christiane’s last child was August Haag (6/26/1854-5/31/1931) born in Texas at the family homestead at the Haag Settlement.

Third Brother, Mathias and wife Christine Barbara Christ Haag

The last brother to arrive was Mathias (Mathaus) (1/6/1804 – 12/28/1862) with his wife, Christine Barbara (nee Christ) (2/2/1808 – 11/14/1869), and their children and other family members. They left their home in Germany on August 26, 1856, and arrived in Galveston about two months later. This group consisted of Mathias, Christine and children: Katherine, Christine, Ludwig and Fritz. Their daughter Heinerike arrived previously with Peter Haag’s family. There was another known daughter, Sophie, who did not accompany the family to Texas. Other relatives and friends on the voyage were August Weilbacher, Wilhelm Weilbacher, Christiana Weilbacher, Johann Bartruf, Michael Christ and Johann Wenzel. Mathias Haag bought property in 1857 from Heinrich Startz and settled his family in Smithson Valley.
Peter Haag Family Home at the Haag Settlement

After their arrival, Peter Haag and his family began the task of making a home for themselves. The photo below was taken in the 1880s of the Peter Haag homestead.

Still standing today, in good condition, is a fort-like two-story stone structure which may have served as their first home. The photos of the “fort” were taken in the mid-1990s. It is estimated that the fort is over 150 years old. This structure is located behind the family homestead. There are gun ports on the sides and back that were used during Indian attacks. The women and small children were housed in the upper story for protection. No mortar was used in the construction. Solid limestone blocks were “chinked” up with small rocks and stones to fill all of the cracks. The large family home, probably built later,
is still in use today by its present owner, although it has been remodeled numerous times, and bears little resemblance to the original home. Also, a large barn, horse stalls and pen are still standing. Louis Haag, one of Peter’s and Christiane’s grandchildren, died at the age of 12 in the corral while trying to break a horse. He was the son of Friedrich (known as “Fritz”) and his wife Jakobina (nee Froelich) Haag, whose home was nearby. His grave (photo above, right), located in the Haag Cemetery is marked by a stone with the following inscription: “Hier ruht Unser lieber Söhn” which translates as: “Here lies a dear son” and at the bottom: “Ich war den meinen Stolz und Freude. Da faste jäh der Tod mich an. Und führte mich zu ihren Leide Plätzlich des Himmels Friedens Bahn.” This translates as: “I was the pride and joy. Then death took me by sudden misfortune and leads me from suffering suddenly on Heaven’s peaceful track.”

The Haag family members were all well educated in Germany and there were numerous teachers in the family. The family established the “Haag Settlement School” in 1865. Christine (Haag) Speiser donated 320 acres to the School Trustees: Peter Haag, Hermann Twiefel and Charles Kopplin. Christine (Haag) Speiser bought the family property in 1860 from her siblings after the death of their father Friedrich (Jakob) in 1858. On August 28, 1868, the property was purchased for a private school by Anselm Eiband. He taught there until 1872 when he began to publish the local paper *The Neu-Braunfelser Zeitung*. In 1883, Peter Haag’s son Friedrich (Fritz) was a trustee for the Schoenthal School. On property adjacent to the Haag Cemetery are remnants of a well, and the foundation for the Haag Settlement School building, still visible under an animal pen.

Peter and Christiane Haag were Christians and the family is listed in the original German Protestant Church records in New Braunfels. There are numerous entries throughout the records
relating to family baptisms, confirmations, marriages and deaths. Also, archive records of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Texas, show that “A. Falkenberg” preached at the “Haag Settlement.” The obituaries of Peter published in the Neu-Braunfelser Zeitung, praised these virtuous people.

Peter had been an officer in the German Army prior to his marriage to Christiane. They left their German homeland because of the political unrest and wanted a new life in Texas. Peter became a Naturalized Citizen of the United States in early 1859. He was very involved in the many activities and functions involving the area in which he lived. He was a presiding officer for elections, a member of various committees such as those formed during the Civil War to provide support for the families left behind, and also provided assistance by giving horses and blankets to the soldiers. He served on the Road Committee, as a school trustee, as well as accepting the responsibility for guardianship of the minor children of his brother Friedrich (Jakob), who died in 1858. Peter and Christiane lived on their property until the day they died.

**The Haag Cemetery**

The landscape of the Haag Cemetery is representative of many other German family cemeteries found throughout Central Texas. Graves are oriented east to west with the feet to the east, most probably in the Christian tradition of facing Christ on Judgment Day. In the typical German desire for “orderliness,” graves are arranged in rows, and graves are curbed with rocks perpetuating a custom still widely seen in Germany today. The headstones are of granite, marble or limestone. One grave has only a rock border with no headstone. There are no existing wooden markers. There are several unmarked gravesites. The German Protestant Church records in New Braunfels show Bertha Haag, daughter of August & Lina (Uhr) Haag, born 1/28/1885 and died 6/27/1885, from “teething”. She was initially buried in the Haag cemetery. Her body was later removed and reburied with her parents in Roselawn Cemetery in San Antonio (now San Fernando).

Many of the markers and headstones reflect the German heritage of those who are buried there. The headstones of family members are inscribed in German and some of the inscriptions include: “Hier ruhr unsere liebe Mutter and Gattin” (Here rests our mother and wife); “Hier ruht in Gott” (Here rests in God); and “Unser lieber Söhn” (Our loving son). Many tombstones have symbols such as drawn curtains, roses and hands extended downward, some with the pointing finger pointing downward. The married individuals have a pair of hands entwined whereas the single children have a single hand extended. The stone for the twin girls has two hands
extending downward towards a single rose. The hand represents the hand of God pulling the loved one into Heaven. Many of the headstones indicate the birth dates and death dates with the German words, “Geboren” and “Gestorben” or the abbreviated “Geb” and “Gest.”

The cemetery is grass-covered and centered around a very large oak tree. It is fenced with hand-constructed rock walls on all four sides with an entrance. There are currently eight marked graves in the cemetery.

The Cemetery is located on private property, not publicly accessible and is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. William S. Dean Jr. They have spent both time and money maintaining this family cemetery containing the graves of many German immigrant ancestors.

**Known Marked Graves**

The earliest known grave is that of Heinrich Haag, undoubtedly that of a grandchild that died on 7/26/1879.

**Twin Girls**: each born and died August 7, 1883;

(inscription: “Hier ruhen unsere zwei Müdelein” or translation: “Here rests our two girls.”)

**Heinrich Haag**: 12/15/1878 – 7/26/1879 (infant);

**Male**: 12/16/1879 (infant died same day)

**Louis Haag**: 5/9/1870 – 6/11/1882 (killed while trying to break a horse);

**Friedrich Haag**: 11/14/1886 – 10/29/1890;

**Jakobina (Froelich) Haag**: 4/19/1850 to 5/13/1890 (Fritz’s wife)

(inscription: “Hier ruhre unsere liebe Mutter and Gattin” or translation: “Here rests our dear mother and wife”)

**Peter Johann Haag**: 8/14/1811 to 11/20/1887 (Christiane’s husband)

(inscription: “Ruhe san___tnach aus gestandnen Leiden Edler Gaite. Teurer Vater du, Und geniesbein Herrn die höhren Freuden, Ungestörbinen ger Himmels.” or translation: “Rest peacefully ___ out of sufferings noble spouse. You, dearest father, enjoy the highest pleasure with the Lord in peace toward Heaven.”)

**Christiane (Weilbacher) Haag**: 12/10/1810 to 11/3/1892 (Peter’s wife)

**III. Historical Significance**

The Haag Settlement Cemetery was a plot of ground that was set aside as a family cemetery simply as matter of necessity and family duty.
The Germans accepted very early the concept of private, family cemeteries. The Haag Cemetery is one of these family cemeteries. Established at a time when there were no paved roads and when the nearest town was a day’s ride on horseback, the private family cemetery was a practical frontier necessity in these remote locations when burial was an immediate need.

A summary of the significance of this cemetery can be found in the obituary of Christiane Weilbacher Haag who died November 3, 1892: “Because of the political unrest in the 40s and 50s (1840s and 1850s) the family decided to emigrate from Germany to America. On November 17, 1852, they boarded the ship and after a long and rather dangerous voyage, disembarked in the harbor of Indianola on March 1, 1853, and continued the long trip to New Braunfels, Texas. The new immigrants started their new life and homestead in the Hill Country. The family was happy and satisfied at their farm, hard work and thrift, good times and bad for over 34 years together. Always keeping the welfare of the household and children in mind.”

It was once said that Peter and Christiane had one of the largest, and finest orchards in that part of the country. There is a large fig tree near their home and pecan trees that Peter planted. The ancient stone fences on the property bear evidence of the German immigrant touch made so long ago. The remains of the old home are still there as is the cemetery, a reminder of the past with trials and tribulations of settling the frontier.

The current owner of the cemetery and surrounding property is dedicated to preserving the history of the people that first settled the area for the many descendants still living in the area and the telling of the story for generations to come.

This narrative was compiled by Sherry Fayard using the files of her mother, Florence L. Joyner, and also John Coers, Cindy Coers and Karen Boyd.

ATTACHMENT A: Site maps and photos