

The Karl Haas Cemetery

I. Context

The Karl Haas Cemetery is in Comal County, Texas in the Mystic Shores subdivision northeast of Spring Branch, Texas. The cemetery is located at the northwest corner of Astral Point and Triton Drive. The cemetery is approximately 7.3 miles east of U.S. Highway 281, 1.4 miles north of Highway 306, and .6 miles west of North Cranes Mill Road.

The cemetery includes final resting places for Karl and Katherina Haas. This Haas family immigrated to America from Germany in 1861 as the Civil War began. They settled in northern Comal County and became early settlers in an area now known as the Mystic Shores subdivision. Their names are referenced herein as Carl and Catherine Haas.

Starting in 1845, a wave of German immigrants left their homeland to come to Texas with the help of the Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas (Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas), or “Adelsverein”. This Adelsverein was organized to both provide benefits to Germany of new trade opportunities and economic relief to immigrants.¹ On March 21, 1845, General Commissioner Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels led 237 families of settlers across the Guadalupe River, and the New Braunfels settlement was founded. A deadly cholera epidemic in New Braunfels in 1846 and other circumstances provoked many to leave the settlement and follow waterways both north and northwest to find new homelands. The area of northern Comal County became home to three German settlements: Fischer Store (1852), Rebecca Creek (1854) and Cranes Mill (mid-1860’s).

The Carl Henry Haas family arrived in Comal County from the Nister area of Germany by the spring of 1862. Carl and Maria Catherine Haas boarded the ship *Georg* as steerage passengers and left Bremen, Germany for the U.S. with their three surviving children, Adolph, Auguste and Amelia, or Emile.² The specific reason for their immigration to the U.S. is not known, but economic hardship at home and better prospects abroad were common drivers for German immigrants.

By 1867, the Carl Haas family owned 320 acres in the area. Their first parcel was a land scrip purchased on May 16, 1865 of 160 acres near Fisher, Texas west of today’s Cranes Mill Road and north of FM 306 (Survey #708, Abstract #277). Then, two years later, they purchased a headright grant of the adjacent 160 acres (Survey #625, Abstract #250).

The Haas family sold the land in 1936, and it came to be owned and managed as part of a large ranch successively by Dr. and Mrs. L. E. Casey, of Dallas County, Texas, then Wm. K. Holt Machinery Company in 1954, followed by H.R. Murphy through HRM Inc. In 1966, Mr. and Mrs. L. A. Nordan of San Antonio purchased the land as part of their large Seven Eleven Ranch - Comal. In 1999, the Nordan family sold their ranch to Bluegreen Southwest One, L.P. and the subdivision of Mystic Shores was developed in Comal County.

II. Overview

Carl and Catherine Haas

Carl Henry Haas was born December 25, 1819 to Johann Christian Haas (November 27, 1776 – December 23, 1845) and Elisabeth Gertrude Schmidt Haas (March 30, 1780 – January 1, 1855). Carl's parents married on January 1, 1797. Carl was born in Nister Rennard, Nassau, Germany.

Carl married Maria Catherine Haas (maiden name also Haas), of Nister, on December 5, 1847. Maria Catherine was born on August 29 or 30, 1816. Records show that her father's name was the same as Carl's father, Johann Christian Haas, but with different birth date (May 10, 1778 - July 20, 1829). Her mother was Anna Gertraude Stoffel (1786 - 1847), a very similar maiden name as Carl's mother. Unfortunately, the specific relationships of the two families is not known.

Together, Carl and Maria Catherine lived in Moehrendorf, Germany and had four children: Adolph, born September 20, 1844; Auguste, born September 4, 1847; Johanna, who died in infancy; and Amelia, or Emilie, born November 5, 1857.

Carl and Maria Catherine left their home in Germany for the New World after the death of their parents. They left home unaware that the War Between the States would start during their journey to America. But, on April 12, 1861, the first shots of the Civil War were fired at Ft. Sumter, South Carolina. Carl and Catherine had planned to travel to Indianola, Texas. But, with the advent of the Civil War, the federal government blockaded the Gulf of Mexico at Texas, so the Haas family disembarked in New Orleans on May 17, 1861. Carl and Catherine were 42 and 45 years old, respectively, and their children were 17, 10 and 3 years old. It was here that Katherine's name began to be recorded as Catherine, and the spelling of Carl remained the same.

Details of the family's journey from Louisiana to Comal County are not fully documented. Records do not reflect the *Georg* having sailed to Texas. It is likely they

disembarked from the *Georg* and boarded another smaller vessel for Indianola. Family lore also says this Haas family stayed inland at New Orleans for a while before boarding a smaller vessel to Indianola. The family travelled from Indianola to the New Braunfels area by wagon and on horseback.

By spring 1862, Carl was in Comal County. On March 24, 1862, Carl recorded his livestock ownership brand and earmark. His son, Adolph, did the same the following year.

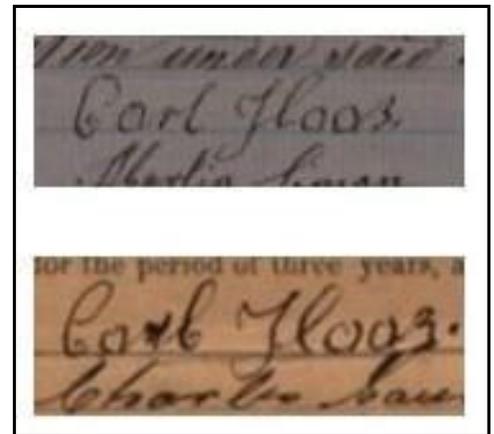
Mark and Brand Record.			County.				
NUMBER.	MARKS & BRANDS.		PLACE OF BRANDS.	Date of Registration.	Name of Owner.	RESIDENCE.	To whom Sold, Residence and Remarks.
	Marks.	Brands.					
44				March 24 1862	Carl Haas	Pro. Y.	
45			left hind quarter	Septemb. 25 1863	Adolph Haas	Pro. No. Y.	

Registered Livestock Brands of Carl and Adolph Haas, 1862 and 1863
Mark and Brand Records, Comal County

Within five years of Carl and Catherine's arrival in Texas, Carl purchased a Texas land scrip of 160 acres near Fischer, Texas just west of today's Cranes Mill Road, north of FM 306 and near today's Astral Point (Survey #708, Abstract #277). He applied for his survey on May 16, 1865. So the acreage was placed in the Comal County records as the Charles Haas Survey. However, the distinct signature of Carl Haas appears on the papers.

Carl completed all of his obligations to own this land outright and received his final patent on the land on October 11, 1866. At the time, the area the Haas family chose to homestead was still remote.

In the spring following patenting the purchase of his first 160 acres, Carl applied for a headright grant on an adjacent 160 acres (Survey #625, Abstract #250). This Carl Haas Survey is immediately southeast of the Charles Haas Survey. Carl filed for this second survey on March 16, 1867.



Matching signatures from Charles Haas Survey #708 (above) and Carl Haas Survey # 625 (bottom)

In order to progress from a headright grant to full, patented land ownership, grantees had to fulfill certain obligations such as cultivating the land for three years, building a home and fences and voting in the precinct. Carl and the Haas family fulfilled the homestead obligations and patented the new parcel on June 25, 1872.

The Haas family made a living by farming. In the 1870 census for Comal County, Texas, Carl registered as a farmer, and Catherine registered as a housewife. They listed the value of their real estate at \$500 and the value of their personal estate at another \$500. In their early settlement days, Carl and Catherine lived in the census area of the Spring Branch Post Office. However, in practical terms, they lived very near Fischer Store which was developing as an active commercial and social center. The Fischer Post Office opened in 1876.

For many years, Carl and Catherine lived very near their oldest son, Adolph. Adolph and his wife, Wilhelmina, had a large family of fifteen children. Adolph built a large ranch both immediately west and south of his parents' property.

Catherine died on March 15, 1887 at age 70. Carl then lived with his son Adolph until his own death twelve years later. Carl died on April 26, 1899 at age 79.

The Karl Haas Cemetery

The Haas family cemetery is located on the first property owned by Carl Haas at today's Astral Point and Triton Drive. Carl and Catherine Haas are buried on the land where they made their home and raised their family.

The cemetery includes two burial sites. Each plot has a concrete vault covered with many decorative concrete shells. The shells are similar in style to those made by H.T. Mordhurst, a German who worked in the concrete business in New Braunfels, Texas starting in 1900 and who developed a technique of decorating graves with shells made from cockleshells, cement and wire. However, it is not known who created the many shells at the Haas Cemetery or when they were placed on the vaults.

There is one upright, white marble obelisk in good condition which reflects the couples' names as Karl and Katherina Haas. The cemetery is fenced by ornamental wire mesh with scalloped tops that is in good condition. The wire is attached to upright cedar posts. A pipe along the upper edges of the fence line provides stability.

The obelisk has carving on three sides. The south side reflects the name of Karl Haas and includes his date of birth, December 25, 1819 and date of death, April 26, 1899. The north side

reflects the name of Katherina Haas and includes her date of birth, August 30, 1816 and date of death, March 15, 1887. The east side includes an inscription of a poem by Luise Egloff (1802 – 1835), a blind German nature poet, from her book of poetry published in 1843 in Germany.

The inscription is from the fourth verse of “Das Wiedersehen”:

Eltern trennt es oft von ihren Kindern,
Graufam schnell raubt sie des Todes Hand;
Der Gedanke kann den Schmerz nur lindern:
Wiedersehen winkt im bessern Land.

Translation is as follows:

Parents are often separated from their children,
The hand of death robs them horribly fast.
The thought can only ease the pain:
A reunion beckons in a better land.

The two burial sites are positioned in the German tradition with the head of each towards the west and the feet towards the east such that the buried person lays facing to the east.

A very large live oak tree stands outside the eastern edge of the cemetery. The tree trunk measures 14.5 feet in circumference, and the canopy of the tree extends over and beyond the entire cemetery. A thick mat of vinca vine tends to grow heavily in the area of the cemetery, although it is trimmed back fully each time the cemetery is cleaned.

Carl and Catherine’s oldest son, Adolph, died in 1917 and was initially buried in the family cemetery. Adolph’s wife, Wilhelmina, died in 1938 and was buried at the Comal Cemetery at 422 Peace Avenue in New Braunfels, Texas. Later at an unknown date, Adolph’s remains were reinterred next to Wilhelmina at the Comal Cemetery.

At least one other Haas family member was buried in the Haas Family Cemetery. Frederich “Fritz” Haas was born March 27, 1893. He married Frieda Hallenberger from the nearby Twin Sisters area in January 1915. Fritz and Frieda celebrated the birth of daughter Nora Frieda on September 14 of that year. Sadly, less than two weeks later, on September 25, 1915, Fritz died at the young age of 22. Fritz had been a healthy and robust man, working hard on the Haas Ranch. Shortly before his death, Fritz was in an automobile accident. He sustained a wound in his jaw during the accident and, later, developed lock jaw. He predeceased both his father and mother. Fritz was buried in the Haas family cemetery.²⁶ He was reinterred later to the Comal

Cemetery. Unfortunately, the Comal Cemetery records for Fritz are missing or non-existent and the date of his internment there cannot be confirmed. However, he has a resting place and marker at the Comal Cemetery.

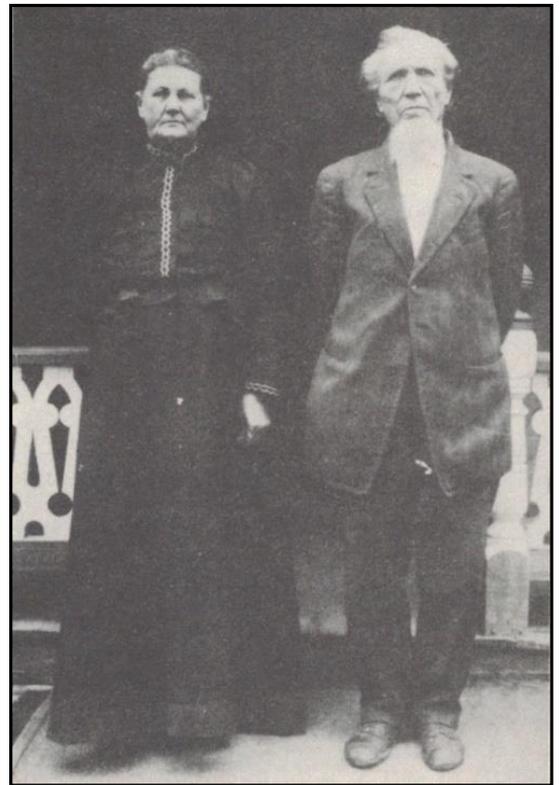
The cemetery and rights of ingress and egress were reserved by the heirs of Adolph Haas, Sr. (Wilhelmina Haas, et al) when they sold the family ranch property to Dr. L.E. Casey of Dallas County, Texas on September 26, 1936. The reserve is reflected in Deed No. 6322 recorded in the Comal County, Texas deed records, Book 66, pages 571 – 578. The cemetery has an access easement legally reserved that extends for the full width of the cemetery on the south side and continues from the cemetery to Astral Point. The easement is shown on Attachment 4.

The Adolph Haas, Sr. Family

Adolph Haas and his wife, Wilhelmina, had each immigrated to Texas from Germany with their respective families. After they met and married in Texas, they built a big family and a large, successful ranch out of the raw country far north of New Braunfels and just southwest of Fischer Store, Texas.

Adolph was born Sept. 20, 1844 at Westerwald, Germany. At age 17 in 1861, he travelled with his parents, Carl and Catherine, and his two younger sisters, Auguste and Emile, to New Orleans aboard the ship *Georg* and then travelled on to Texas. As they travelled, the Civil War began.

Comal County records show two entries for the service of Adolph Haas in the Civil War; one on February 15, 1862 where he was listed as a conscript with duties as a government teamster and one on September 21, 1863, where he is listed as a private in Capt. Heinemeyer's Company A, Infantry, 31st Brigade.



Wilhelmina and Adolph, Sr.
Courtesy of Angie Schulze

Adolph lived with his parents on the land they homesteaded for about five years. In 1866, shortly after the close of the Civil War and at the young age of 22, Adolph obtained his own headright grant for 160 acres in the far northern corner of Comal County (Survey #624, Abstract

251). He completed his patent, including residency requirements, in 1874. This original patent was located about a mile south of the Narrows on the Little Blanco River near today's Carmel Drive and Big Sur Drive in Blanco, Texas. Adolph sold this first acreage in 1883 and, over time, purchased numerous tracts closer to his parent's property. (See Attachment 2A for a map of the Haas holdings.)

Wilhelmina "Mina" Kruekenmeier (Kruckemeyer) Haas, was born Sept. 21, 1855 in Comal County as the fourth of seven children. Her father was Christian Kruckemeyer (or Kruckemeier), born 1820 in Doelman, Kingdom of Holzminen, Germany. Her mother was Wilhelmina Meier, of Dohofen, Eschershausen, Bavarian/ Switzerland. Christian and Wilhelmina were married in New Braunfels on January 5, 1851 by Pastor Ludwig C. Ervendberg, who chartered the first German Protestant Church in 1845. The couple settled at Twin Sisters, Texas, where Wilhemina was raised.

Little Wilhelmina was only seven years old when her father, Christian, was drafted into the Confederate Army on February 15, 1862 (the same day as young Adolph joined), where he served as a wagoner hauling freight from the coast to the Texas Hill Country. Christian Kruckemeyer met his death from Indians in June 1871.

Adolph met Wilhelmina in Comal County, and they married on May 5, 1872. They had fifteen children (ten sons and five daughters), named August, Otto, Adolph, Jr., Helene, Willie, Emma, Max, Emil., Henry, Hugo, Auguste, Adolfine ("Phine"), Minnie, Fritz and Albert.

Adolph and Wilhelmina lived on Adolph's original homestead in far northern Comal County until 1883, when they sold the property to Henry Kruckemeier (brother of Wilhelmina) and began to accumulate acreage near Carl Haas.

By late 1890, Adolph and his wife, Wilhemina Kruckemeyer Haas, owed over 1,900 acres within what would later become the Mystic Shores subdivision. By 1906, their ownership increased to over 3,400 acres on both sides of today's FM 306 in the subdivision. Today, a significant portion of the Mystic Shores subdivision can trace its heritage back to Adolph and Wilhelmina Haas.

The Adolph Haas farm and ranch was part of the Fischer Settlement. The children, however, attended the Rebecca Creek School located about five miles southeast of their home. Adolph Haas belonged to the Marienthal lodge of the Order of the Sons of Hermann in Sattler, Texas. He was also affiliated with the Twin Sisters Singing Club.

The Haas family lived in a large, wooden home with a full downstairs and a tall pitched tin roof. The house also had a very large single room upstairs – a bunkroom for the fifteen children. The house had batten walls and a sturdy wooden staircase inside.



Adolph Haas Family Home, circa 1929
Photo from Angie Schulze

In the days of the Haas' ranch, there was no local road tax or county road maintenance programs. Road work was done by citizens petitioning for the improvements and community-minded men doing the work themselves. The Comal County Commissioners would appoint the road masters. In 1883, Adolf served his community as overseer of the Road Precinct #3, which referred to itself as for Fischer Store and Sattler and included the area from the Guadalupe River north to Blanco County and east to Sorrel Creek.

From their fifteen children, Adolph and Wilhemina were blessed with 57 grandchildren and 109 great grandchildren.

Adolph Haas, Sr. died at age 73 on Nov. 19, 1917 in New Braunfels, Texas at the home of his son, Emil Otto.

Wilhelmina and her children sold 3,294.45 acres of the Haas Ranch to Dr. L.E. Casey, of Dallas County, Texas, on September 26, 1936.

Wilhemina died Dec. 13, 1938 in Comal County. In addition to her husband, Adolph, and her daughter, Adolphine, Wilhemina was pre-deceased by two sons, Fritz and Albert.

In advance of a reunion of the Haas family in New Braunfels celebrating 150 years of the Haas family in America, Haas descendant Dorothy Ebert wrote a commentary in the “Herald Zeitung” newspaper published just prior to the gathering of August 28, 2011.

Note: Mrs. Ebert is the great granddaughter of Adolph and Wilhelmina Haas through their son, Otto, and his wife, Emilie Uecker Haas. Mrs. Ebert is also the great, great granddaughter of Christian Kruckemeyer (father of Wilhelmina Kruckemeyer Haas).

Comal County’s Haas Family Gathers Sunday

by Dorothy Ann Ebert

On Sunday, Aug. 28 [2011] from noon to 4 p.m., the Adolph Haas family, originally all of Comal County, will celebrate its “Sesquicentennial in the United States” with a family reunion at the Clear Springs Hermann sons Hall on Highway 46.

Carl and Catherine Haas and their three children, Adolph, age 17, Augusta 10, and Emilie, 3, from Moehrendorf, Germany, sailed in 1861 from the Port of Bremen on the ship “Georg”. They disembarked at the New Orleans, La., port about two months later on May 17, 1861.

Ft. Sumter had been fired upon April 12, 1861, during their journey across the ocean, signaling the start of the Civil War, and the Federal troops had therefore already blockaded the Gulf of Mexico, impeding their intended journey to Texas for possibly only a short time.

The origin of three main Haas family branches from Germany to Comal County have been distinguished from the area between Koblenz and Siegen, Germany, formerly Nassau Province of Prussia, now the Westerwald area of the Rhineland Platz. Carl Haas’ family came from Marienberg, Catherine (Haas) Haas from Moehrendorf (now named Nister-Moehrendorf), and the Haas family to which belonged the former County Historian Oscar Haas, were from Gusterhain. The family of the first two were distinguished stateside as the “cottontails” while the latter were the “jackrabbits”.

According to Wilfred H. Schlather's well-researched book "War Between the States, Participants from Comal County, Texas", published in 2009, and available at our local library for research, Adolph at age 18 served as a government teamster in the Comal County Militia Company G, 1st Regiment, 31st Brigade, of the Texas State Troops, organized on Dec. 13, 1861 into seven Comal County companies plus two from Kendall Co. and were commanded by Jacob Schmitz.

Adolph later received a land grant of 160 acres off Cranes Mill Road near Fischer, Texas on the north side of what is now Canyon Lake and developed this into a farm and ranch of 3,000 acres. Having married Wilhelmina Kruckemeyer, daughter of the famed Christian Kruckemeyer, who reportedly was shot by Indians, together these two raised 15 children to adulthood, 10 boys and 5 girls, each of whom in time married and birthed children, many of whom lived into their 90's, while the youngest, quite lively, celebrated her 100th birthday and then lived another 352 days. On the 100th anniversary date of the Carl Haas family being in America in 1961, there were approximately 250 descendants with most still living in the area.

Today, many descendants still live in New Braunfels and the Hill County area of Boerne, Clear Springs, Spring Branch, and also Seguin. Some have served on the NBISD [New Braunfels Independent School District] school board, have bands contributing to the Wurstfest agenda, while others have served in county and city offices, have had their own restaurants, various honorable occupations, or continued farming and ranching.

A number have served in the military, as soldiers and officers, some in WWI and WWII in Germany and even one of whom lost his life in Germany as a 1st Lt. helicopter pilot during the Berlin Wall Crisis.

Annual planned reunions, captured by photos, have taken place since at least 1935, following simple family gatherings prior for birthdays and Christmas.

Adolph and Wilhelmina are buried in the Comal Cemetery on Peace Avenue while his parents, Carl and Catherine, are buried in the Haas private cemetery in the Mystic Shores Subdivision off Crane's Mill Road.

The entire family had been frequent visitors to Fischer's Store. The oldest brother of Carl, Christian Haas, settled prior to Carl in the Wetmore area, mailing address Anhalt,

Texas; Carl having been the youngest in the family. (Remainder of article is reunion details.)

III. Significance

The Haas Family Cemetery is the final resting place of Carl and Catherine Haas. They are buried on land granted them in 1865 and patented in 1866. Today, this cemetery is surrounded by a large subdivision, Mystic Shores. Of all of the land grants that comprise today's Mystic Shores subdivision, the Carl Haas family was among the first "true settlers" in the area. Others may have claimed land in the area before the Haas family, but sold it opportunistically and did not live there for any length of time. Carl and Catherine Haas are among the very first settlers to carve out a home and raise their family within the boundaries of today's Mystic Shores.

Mystic Shores is currently the largest subdivision in Comal County, Texas. The subdivision consists of over 7,000 acres and 2,200 home sites. Many of the new residents come from large metropolitan areas. Few traces of the early settlers remain. The area is rapidly changing to a neighborhood environment. If not intentionally preserved, important history can be easily lost or forgotten.

Recognition of the Karl Haas Family Cemetery will honor the legacy of this important family of settlers and will preserve this piece of history in Comal County, Texas. Current and future generations of this very large Haas family, many of whom still live within 60 miles, will reunion here and will care for the cemetery. Recognition will also encourage care and vigilance for the safety of the cemetery as neighbors are educated on the importance of the family to the area's history.

The story of Carl and Catherine Haas is like that of many early Texas settlers, particularly German settlers. Their story is one of perseverance and determination interwoven with challenges and tragedies. Through sheer hard work and optimism, they pursued their dreams of freedom and opportunity. In doing so, they carved a path of opportunity and prosperity for future generations.