

JACOBS CREEK SCHOOL TEACHERAGE

I. Context

The Jacobs¹ Creek School Teacherage is located at 12794 River Road, New Braunfels, Texas, which is actually located nearer to Sattler, Texas than to New Braunfels. A teacherage is a residence for one or more teachers. It can be combined with the school or it may be separate living quarters. As such, it is very much like a parsonage for a minister of a church. The use of teacherages began in the southern and western rural communities arising from the difficulty of finding the teacher a satisfactory place to live.



The Jacobs Creek School was one of many built in the rural areas of Comal County during the 1800s. Several, but not all, had a teacherage near the school. The building materials used varied based on when they were built, and what building materials were available. Many have long since disappeared especially those of wood as well as many that were abandoned. The Jacobs Creek School Teacherage is unique because a variety of building materials were utilized, and it has been in use since its construction in the late 1860s. It remains at the original site between Jacobs Creek and the Guadalupe River. The school itself was abandoned, not cared for, and left in rubble.

II. Overview

A. Brief History of New Braunfels and Comal County, Texas

Over one hundred and fifty years ago, most of this territory of Central Texas showed no signs of human co-habitation with nature. Only an occasional Indian campsite or trail that passed through the prairie toward the mountain region to the west existed.

After the war of 1836, when Texas became a Republic, the area became attractive to German settlers that immigrated under the auspice of the Adelsverein (Society for the Protection of German Immigration).² It was the most significant German immigration into Texas, if not the United States. Many made the trek from Indianola along the coast of south Texas inland to New Braunfels, which was founded in 1845. Less than a year later, Texas became the 28th state of the United States of America.

Before sponsoring the immigration to Texas from Germany in the mid-1840s, a group of German noblemen (the *Adelsverein*)³, developed a set of bylaws or statutes that would apply to themselves and to the emigrants. They included, but were not limited to, transportation to Texas, as well as from the Texas coast inland, the amount of land entitlements for single and married men, and medical needs such as hospitals and pharmacies. Also included were the establishment of churches and schools.

The importance of education was clearly such a priority that they addressed not only the availability of schools, but also the curriculum for the schools. What they may not have anticipated would be the necessity of having schools throughout the wilderness outside of town and the ability to provide teachers. This was probably not a problem in Germany because outside the larger German cities over the centuries, there were church or secular supported schools.

The challenge of establishing new towns in a new land as well as the farming communities was not accurately anticipated or planned. However, history shows that there was never a significant gap in educating the children once they arrived in New Braunfels and began to settle throughout Comal County.

New Braunfels was founded on Good Friday, March 21, 1845, and on the following Sunday, Reverend L. C. Ervendberg conducted church services under trees at the foot of a hill that became known as Sophienburg Hill. There were no shelters, much less buildings for houses, churches or schools. The colonists had to first build basic shelters or crude houses for protection from the elements, but by August 11, 1845, Hermann Seele conducted the first school class under the same trees. Afterwards, classes were first taught on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. In rainy weather, there was no class. It would not be until the first church was built that Seele and the students would have the pleasure of being inside for their classes. The first church service was March 22, 1846 and school classes began there soon after.

As more immigrants arrived, they began to seek land outside of New Braunfels. Following ancient trails along the river's edge, many migrated upstream on the Guadalupe River. The Guadalupe River and the various other flowing natural springs and creeks enabled their animals, particularly horses, oxen, cattle and mules to have access to water.

Routes were developed into the hill country along the waterways and creeks and small settlements sprang up from New Braunfels towards western Comal County. These settlements were separated by four or five miles as land was claimed. Many original settlers purchased their land in the Texas Hill Country from land grant holders. Most of these emigrants were from Europe, especially from Germany. They brought their customs, crafts, traditions, cultures and languages with them. Except in town, most fences were built of stacked rock found on their land, while rustic homes were fashioned from local timbers and rock.

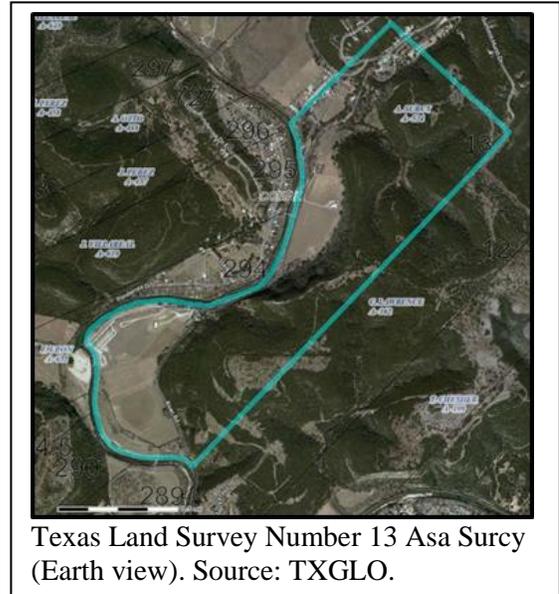
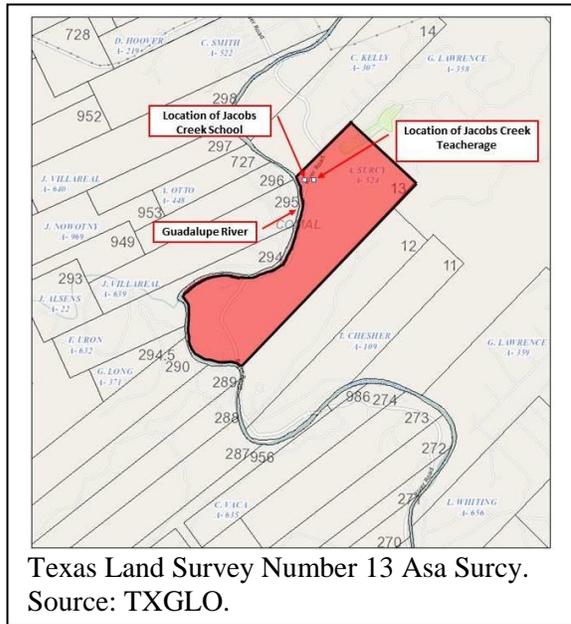
As the farmers settled along the river, they fenced their land to the river's edge, but that prevented access to and from the town. The solution was to have gates along the way that the farmers would allow their neighbors to pass through. In 1868, Oscar Friedrich agreed to allow passage through his land along the Guadalupe River to other land owners. Alton Rahe noted in his book on the history of Sattler and Mountain Valley, "Vera Pantermuehl remembered that it took all day to go to New Braunfels and return home. She recalls opening and closing 12 or 14 gates when traveling the River Road with her parents." The passage eventually became permanent county land, and today it is called River Road and extends from New Braunfels to the town of Sattler.

Most of the small settlements provided the necessities to the farmers and ranchers in the area. They sometimes included a sawmill, grist mill, flour mill, cotton gin, blacksmith shop, school, store, church, cemetery, lime kiln, charcoal burners, molasses vats and cane presses, depending on the needs of the surrounding settlers. These tiny settlements were usually self-sufficient and provided a means of sharing goods and wares. These settlements also developed as post offices along postal routes connecting San Antonio, New Braunfels, Blanco, Boerne, and the rest of the hill country. One such area emerged along the Guadalupe River became the community of Sattler.

B. Jacobs Creek School and Teacherage

On October 1867, Oscar Friedrich leased to the ". . . present Trustees of the School Community of Jacobs Creek . . ." land for \$1, for the first school in the area. The deed record for the lease did not specify an ending date only that ". . . for all time as long as a School will exist

there and lessons given to the children under the constitution that the Schoolhouses and improvements never shall be moved & at all times remain for purposes of school, . . ." and ". . . Oskar Friedrich binds himself never to move the house . . ." The land was a part of the Texas Land Survey Number 13 Asa Surcy land grant. The old "River Road" was adjacent to the property. The Jacobs Creek School was established a year later.



Pantermuehl family tradition holds that the log cabin teacherage was built by Carl Pantermuehl in 1870, the same year he married Agnes Friedrich, daughter of Oskar Friedrich, the landowner. Carl became the third teacher at the school, having previously taught at Danville School (near Solms, Texas) and was paid \$25 a month. Carl died January 1, 1905 and Agnes died August 23, 1943. They are both buried in the Mountain Valley Cemetery located in nearby Sattler.

Other stories passed on by area families indicate that the teacherage had residents throughout the decades, even after the school closed. The continued use of the teacherage resulted in it being kept up in a livable condition. The patching and repairs through the decades kept it from falling to the ground as the school did.

In 1954, in a salute to the old schools in Comal County, an article in the *New Braunfels Herald* provided a succinct history of the Jacobs Creek School:

“Occupying an almost forgotten spot in the history of the hill country is the Jacobs Creek School Community about 15 miles north of New Braunfels.

The remains of the old school building stand on an acre of land on the Guadalupe River at the point of the Jacob's [sic] Creek confluence with the river.

The old building, built during a rise⁴ of the Guadalupe, has crumbled, but the logs remain in a small clearing about 200 yards off the River Road. The teacherage, built by residents of the community, is still standing.

In the statutes, dated October 11, 1867, incorporating the Jacobs Creek School as Precinct No. 10 of Comal County, the farmer Oscar Friedrich agreed to lease, grant and devise a place containing 6,800 square varas on his own land for building a schoolhouse. The grant of property was made to the school trustees and successors for the sum of \$1.00. He also agreed to transfer to the schoolmaster three or four acres of land next to the schoolhouse for a garden and field for his own use as long as the school would exist there and lessons be given to the children.

The school trustees bound themselves to build commonly the schoolhouse, to provide permanent improvements and to bear all disbursements in equal parts.

The school lands and improvements, as provided by the statutes, were to remain for all time and as long as the community exists for upholding a school and instruction of children. The property is now a part of the farm of Louis Meckel, since the school district was consolidated with the Mountain Valley School District.

The statutes also provided for the payment of \$25 species per month standing wages to Heinrich Horne, schoolmaster approved by the school board in New Braunfels. He began teaching school in October in rented house of Friedrich's farm continuing until the new schoolhouse was completed.

First trustees of the school district were Gottfried Rohde, president; Carl Baetge, W. Schlather, Adolph Otto, Oscar Friedrich, J. Pantermuehl, Anton Kanz, John Marschall, F. Pantermuehl, and F. Krause.

Carl Pantermuehl, father of A. F. Pantermuehl, 190 East Main, was one of the first teachers at Jacobs Creek, probably the third teacher. A man named Stube was the second.

A.F. Pantermuehl, born in 1872 recalls the following were among the early students of Jacobs Creek: Fritz, Fred, Otto, Frank, and Carl Tausch; K. Louis,

Gustav, and Fritz Krause; Oscar, and Edward Baetge; Lena, Bertha, "Hanntken," Anna, Pauline Tausch; and Carl and Robert Pantermuehl.

The 82-year-old resident, born in the teacherage, recalls that one Pantermuehl attended school one day, decided he didn't like it, so he jumped out of the window and never returned.

He said his father, who had previously taught at Danville School, was paid \$25 per month at Jacobs Creek."



C. Building Characteristics of the Teacherage

When the immigrants arrived in New Braunfels and the surrounding area, building materials were limited to hand-hewn timbers, hand-made shingles, hand-made bricks, hand-chiseled rock, and mortar. Settlers of German heritage constructed many of their residences following the vernacular construction, or folk traditions, of their heritage. The distinctive construction methods were log, rock and *fachwerk* or half-timber that utilized rough-hewn cedar timbers as a structural component and then bricks, rock or rubble as infill. These forms of building were

often utilized until the railroad arrived allowing for additional building materials.

Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc. noted on the Historic Resource Survey Form, in 2012, the following: "The Teacherage home of Carl Pantermuehl is an 1870 German Vernacular *fachwerk* house with side-gable roof form. Despite the addition onto its rear, the house retains the character-defining *fachwerk* features. The house is recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criteria C in the area of Architecture." Perhaps due to the materials that may have been most readily available at the time, the



Photo of Jacobs Creek Teacherage several years prior to Robert & Bessie ownership in 1978. Note boards over wall and roof. Source: Bess Story.

construction appears to have used three methods of construction. In addition to the *fachwerk*, it clearly shows the use of stone and log cabin style.

Bob Warnecke, Comal County Historical Commission member, architectural engineer and historian of early Texas residential structures, noted the following characteristics:

The principal construction is a hand-hewn ashe juniper (mountain cedar) "single pen" log structure approximately 15x18 foot. The log size is approximately 6-8 inches in diameter, hewn to approximately 4 ½ inches. The corner notching method used is the "V" notch, typically used in central Texas German construction. At the door and window openings, the non-notched interior ends of the logs are spiked into 1x4 ½ inch oak boards. The openings are lined with approximately 3x4 ½ inch ashe juniper support frames. The front wall is of "fachwerk" construction with handmade brick infill.

It appears that the original roof rafters are missing and that a newer, albeit very old, sawn longleaf yellow pine system was installed raising the roof approximately one foot. This was possibly due to a number of reasons, one being to increase the attic size to increase living space.

The long rear room is constructed of ashe juniper in a "fachwerk" fashion. It has limestone infill between the members.

The nailers on the rafters are yellow pine. Corrugated, galvanized metal roofing was installed possibly after the turn of the century as shown in some of the photos but the current metal roof is a standing-seam metal roof.

There is a front porch that faces south, with original cedar posts and ceiling and a single entrance. The wood planks of the floor in the parlor are original long-leaf pine and the flooring of the smaller back room has been replaced. There is an internal rock chimney which appears to be original.

C. Restoration of the Jacobs Creek Teacherage

In 1978, Robert and Bess Story purchased the teacherage. Robert was an architect and restored the structure. In the restoration, he replaced windows that were not salvageable. The replacement windows are wooden 6x6 double-hung panes. On the north side of the building, is a stained glass window, also not original to the home. That window was added prior to the 1970s and

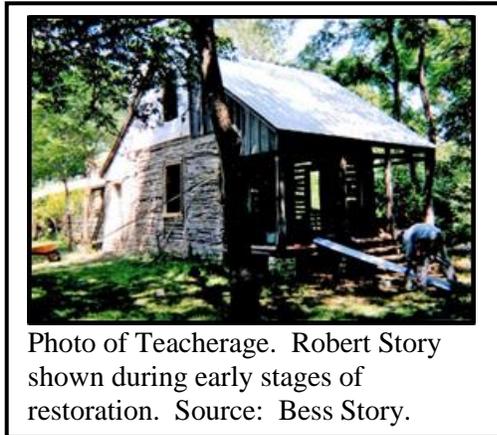


Photo of Teacherage. Robert Story shown during early stages of restoration. Source: Bess Story.



Photo of Jacobs Creek Teacherage in late 1970s, just prior to restoration. Source: Bess Story.

was salvaged from the Robert

B. Green Hospital when it was demolished in San Antonio. Rock skirting was added to secure the foundation and much of the mortar replaced. Robert replaced a Victorian-style front door installed by a previous owner, with a rustic type door that he built. A covered breezeway or "dogtrot" was built between the teacherage and an additional non-historic living space.

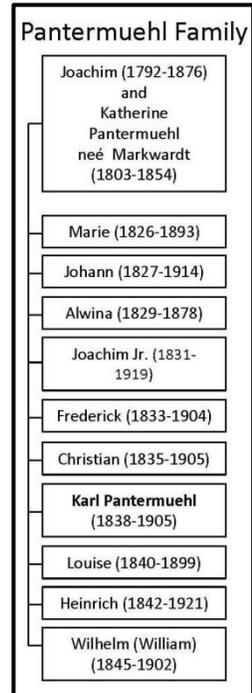
The inside of the house consists of a large front room and a smaller back room with the original dividing wall and door still present. The back room was called the "kammer" or sleeping quarters and was also used for storage. One-half of the upstairs (attic room) has been converted into a loft and the other half opened to the ceiling.

E. The Carl Pantermuehl Family

Carl (Karl) Pantermuehl was born February 6, 1838 in Koitenhagen, Pommern, Germany to Joachim (1792-1876) and Katherine Markwardt (1803-1854) Pantermuehl. Carl's mother, Katherine, died in Germany in 1854. The large family of Joachim Pantermuehl settled the Rebecca Creek area on the Charles Murhard survey and was a founding father of the Rebecca Creek community. This area is considered part of the Spring Branch area in western Comal County. More about the Pantermuehl family are in the footnotes of this document.

Joachim Jr., Friedrich, Wilhelm, Carl, and Christian Pantermuehl bought property in the Sattler area and much of it was near the Guadalupe River. They were prominent Sattler citizens.

Carl Pantermuehl married Agnes Friedrich on April 23, 1870. Carl and Agnes settled on a large ranch on the Guadalupe River near Jacobs Creek School. They had three children, Alfred, Julius and Louisa. Carl was a farmer and would become a teacher at the Jacobs Creek School.



F. The Oscar (Oskar) Friedrich Family

Oscar Friedrich came from Dresden, Saxony, married Auguste Rudolph in New York, and initially moved to Guadalupe County before moving to Comal County. Oscar bought 1695 acres in the Jacobs Creek area and it was referred to as "*Friedrichsthal*" or Friedrich's Valley. Jacobs Creek was named by Jacob de Cordova, land agent and surveyor for the State of Texas.⁵

III. Significance.

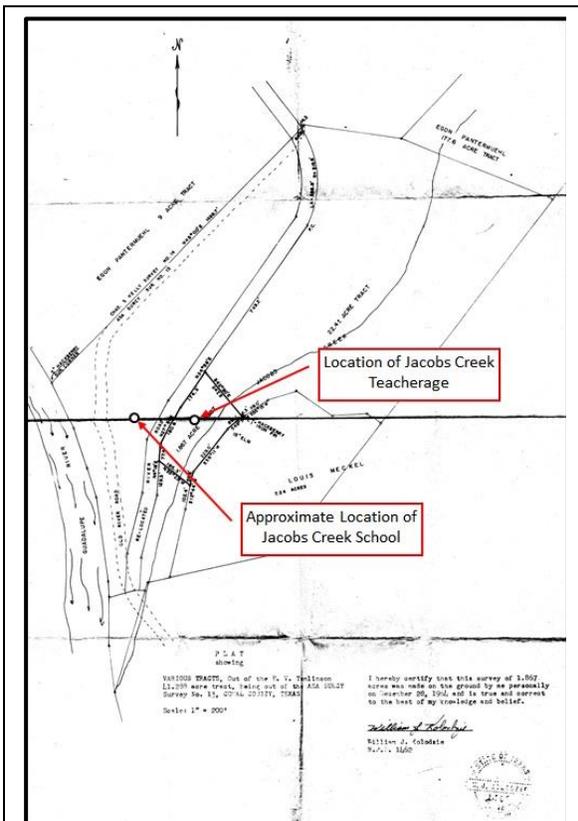
The Jacobs Creek Teacherage appears to be one of the first teacherages constructed in Comal County (ca. 1870),⁶ making it the oldest of the few teacherages still standing in the county. The provision of a teacherage, attracted an educator to the area. The structure is unique reflecting the combined construction methods of a log cabin, hand-hewn timbers, brick, *fachwerk*, and chiseled rock. With close observation its unique construction can be fully appreciated and viewed from the Guadalupe River Road.

After the Jacobs Creek School ceased to exist, the structure continued to serve as a home for individuals and families periodically for decades afterwards. Both local farm families and migrant workers called it home and many generations of children were born there.

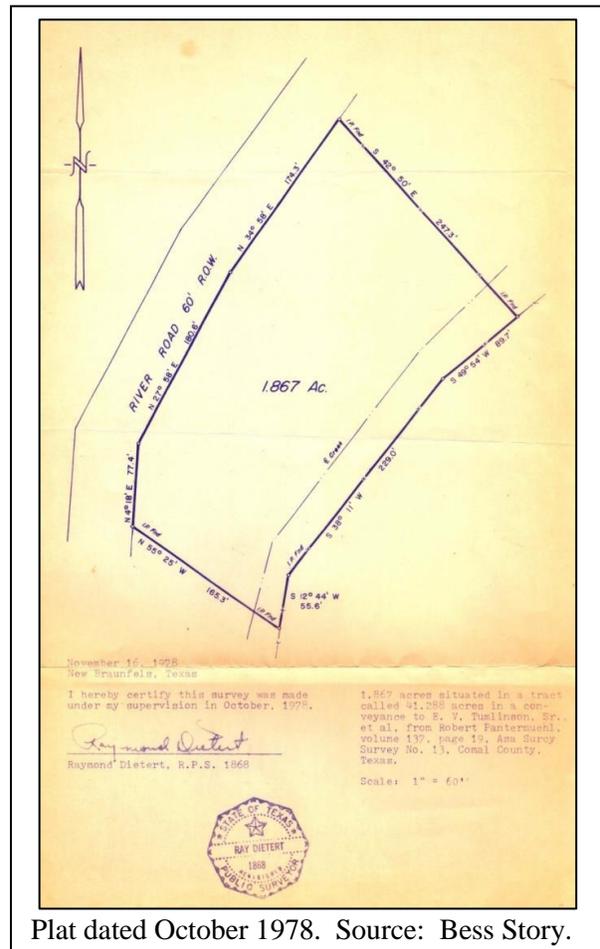
In 1978, Robert and Bess Story saw the cabin-like structure and purchased it. His knowledge as an architect and his desire to restore the house led to searching through Texas for the necessary building materials to restore it back to what surely would be recognizable to its first residents. It is likely that the 150-year-old Jacobs Creek teacherage would not be standing today if it had not been restored by Robert Story. It stands as testimony to the pioneer spirit of the settlers along the Guadalupe and their interest in education for their children.

IV. Documentation.

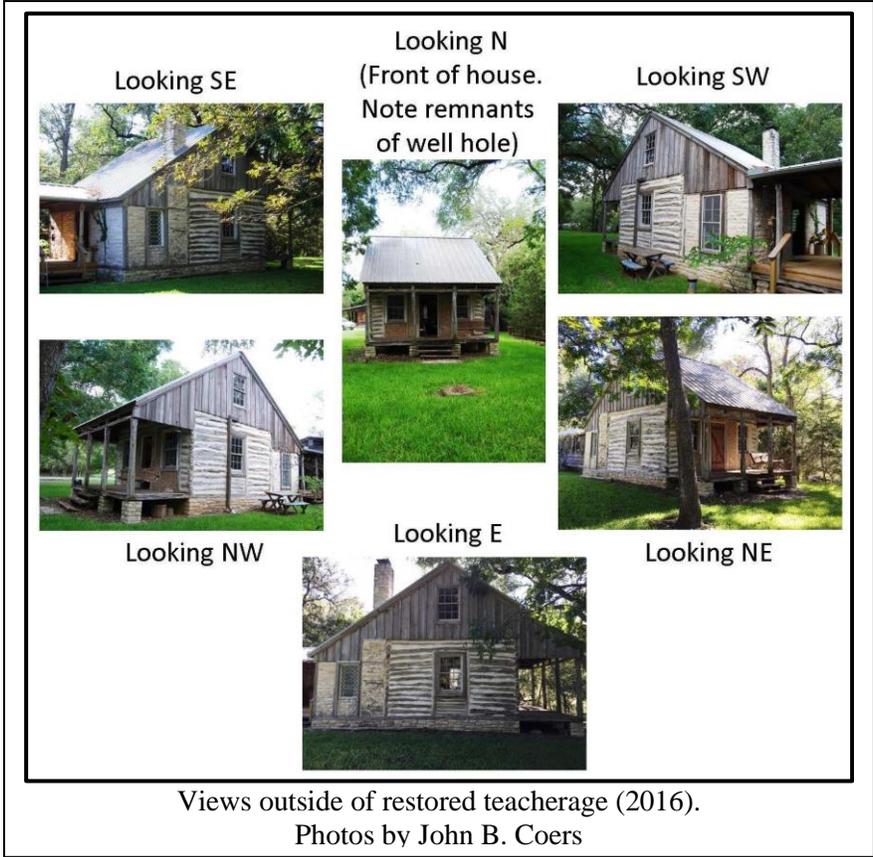
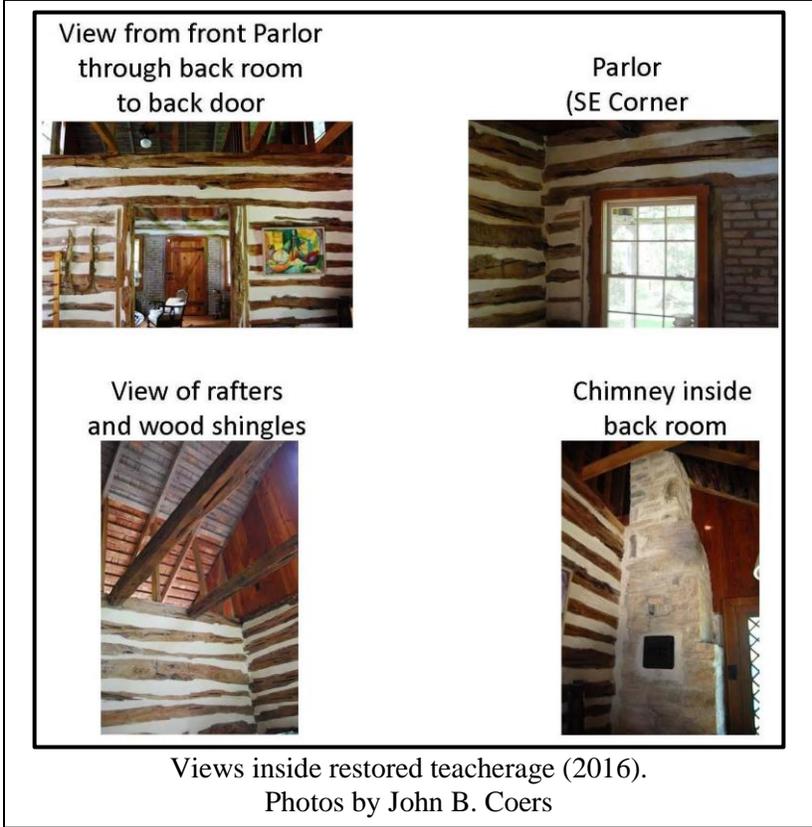
- A. Attachments include Attachment A-Site Plan, Attachment B-Floor Plan, and Current Images #1-4 taken 2016.**
- B. Additional Maps and Photos Related to the Jacobs Creek Teacherage**



Plat dated December 28, 1964. Note location of Guadalupe River and original River Road. Source: Bess Story.



Plat dated October 1978. Source: Bess Story.



C. Research

Bess Story who owns and lives on the property requested the historical research and marker. In addition, Wade Pantermuehl and Margie Meckel Skolaut provided interesting family stories and related information pertaining to the history of the property. Additional research and narrative by John Coers, Cindy Coers and Karen Boyd. Site plan by Wilfred Schlather and floor plan by Bob Warnecke.

D. Endnotes.

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- ¹ This narrative uses "Jacobs," without an apostrophe, as the name of the creek, school, and teacherage. That was (and is) the proper possessive form in German and is reflected in related historical documents. The spelling has carried over as the proper spelling in English as well.
- ² Also known as the "*Mainzer Verein*" named after the German river "*Main*" or the "*Mainzer*" area of Germany (e.g., Frankfurt am Main or Frankfurt on the river Main.). Geue, Chester W. and Ethel H. Geue, *A New Land Beckoned, German Immigration to Texas, 1844-1847*, (Waco: Texian Press, © 1966, New and enlarged edition, 1972), p. 178.
- ³ The *Adelsverein* basically translates to "group of noblemen." It later was known as the "*Mainzer Verein*" after the city of "*Mainz*", where they first met. They formed an organization called the "*Verein zum Schutz deutscher Einwanderer in Texas*" which translates to "The Society for the Protection of Germans in Texas." Other terms used include *Verein* and, under new management, the German Emigration Company.
- ⁴ This may have intended to say "on a rise," as the school was built on a small rise or hill near the Guadalupe River, which was, and still is, subject to flooding.
- ⁵ More about the Friedrich family: A daughter, Agnes was born October 27, 1851 to Oscar and Auguste Rudolph Friedrich in Thornhill, located near Gruene, Texas.⁵ The 1860 Comal County Census for the Friedrich family lists Oscar, age 48, farmer from Saxony; Auguste, age 39 from Saxony; Agnes, age 8 from Texas; Adele, age 5 from Texas; Otto, age 3 from Texas; and Heinrich Kreikenbaum, age 17, laborer from Brunswick. Kreikenbaum was hired from the *Waisenhaus* [Orphanage] in New Braunfels.⁵ Agnes had three siblings, Adele (1855-1882), Otto (1857-1897) and Clara (1859-1864). Rahe, p. 166.
- ⁶ Rahe, p. 39. In his book, the Jacobs Creek School is the earliest dated school (1867) in the rural area of Comal County. The teacherage was built soon afterward (ca. 1870).