

TSHSC Staff (DP), 3/21/73

Official Texas Historical Building Medallion
w/14"x 9" Interpretive Plate
Comal County (Order #3908)

Location: 246 W. San Antonio S
New Braunfels

LOUIS HENNE CO.*

VICTORIAN EMBELLISHMENTS
DISTINGUISH THIS STRUCTURE,
BUILT 1893 BY NOTED LOCAL
CONTRACTOR CHRISTIAN HERRY.

OWNER LOUIS HENNE(1840-
1912)WORKED IN FAMILY TIN
SHOP NEXT DOOR,EXPANDED TO
THIS SITE.THIRD GENERATION
NOW CONDUCTS THIS BUSINESS.**

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK - 1973***

3908

FILE COPY-DO NOT REMOVE

*1/2" lettering
**3/8" lettering
***1/4" lettering

APPROVED

Truett Latimer

by Bob Watson
4-17-73

RECEIVED
READY FOR

APR 17 1973

SOUTHWELL ORDER
TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

LOUIS HENNE CO.
New Braunfels
Texas

The present Louis Henne Co. store was built in 1893 for owner Louis Henne by local contractor Christian Herry with Victorian embellishments on the brick exterior.

Flooring is oak; the ceiling ornate pressed tin. Original fixtures still are in use. They include nail bins, cases, counters, shelves and revolving cabinets for small articles.

Shelves are built to the top of the 14-foot-high walls and reached by ladders which slide on steel runners the length of the store. A well in the basement, no longer in use, still holds fresh water.

The store stands next to a lot bought by a German immigrant, Johann Ludwig Henne, for \$120 in October 1846.

The family had arrived at Galveston on Aug. 25, 1845, aboard the sailing ship "Hercules." They had left their home in Hanover, Germany, to join 152 Germans on their way to America.

By schooner, the Hennes and their five children were taken along the coast to Indianola where settlers bound for New Braunfels congregated and engaged wagons for the overland trip.

New Braunfels had been founded the previous March by Prince Carl zu Solms Braunfels as representative of the Mainzer Adelsverein. The Hennes were among those who survived the first terrible winter which took so many lives among the settlers—in Indianola, on the wagon trail, and in New Braunfels.

Johann, a tinsmith, opened his shop in 1846 in the heart of the village, and the fourth generation is operating the business he began. He served as city alderman from 1850 to 1851.

In 1857, Johann died, and Louis, then 17, became the man of the family of seven brothers and sisters.

Louis, who was five when the family arrived in Texas, had begun working in his father's tin shop as a small boy. He immediately took over operation of the business, and it has been Louis Henne's since 1857.

David Richardson, publisher of the Texas Almanac, was a customer of Louis Henne, according to the store ledger entries during the Civil War.

He had fled Galveston for New Braunfels when Union forces moved on the coast city. He and Sam Mather were partners in a paper mill in the German settlement during the war.

Repairs on the Austin, San Antonio Stage Co. coach lamps were made at Henne's as often as once a month, according to the account books.

"Louis Henne, Stoves and Tin" was among 66 New Braunfels businesses listed in the 1883 edition of R. G. Dun's Texas Reference, forerunner of Dun and Bradstreet.

Printed on the store statements in 1875 was:

"Bought of Louis Henne, manufacturer of Tin, Sheet Iron and Copper Wares, and dealer in Cooking and Parlor Stoves, House Furnishing Goods, etc. Tin Roofing and repairing done at short notice and on reasonable terms. Terms - New Cash - Coin."

Louis was the only one of seven brothers and sisters to marry. He and his wife, Emilie vom Stein, had five children. One of the sons, Paul Adolf, succeeded his father as head of the hardware store which now is owned solely by Adolf's son, Clifford.

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As business prospered, Louis branched out.

His property extended back to the next street where he built the family two-story home in the 1870's. The structure of Fachwerk covered with siding was torn down a few years ago.

Henne acquired other property in the block, maintaining a camp yard for customers who came down from the hill country by wagon to shop and return home the following day.

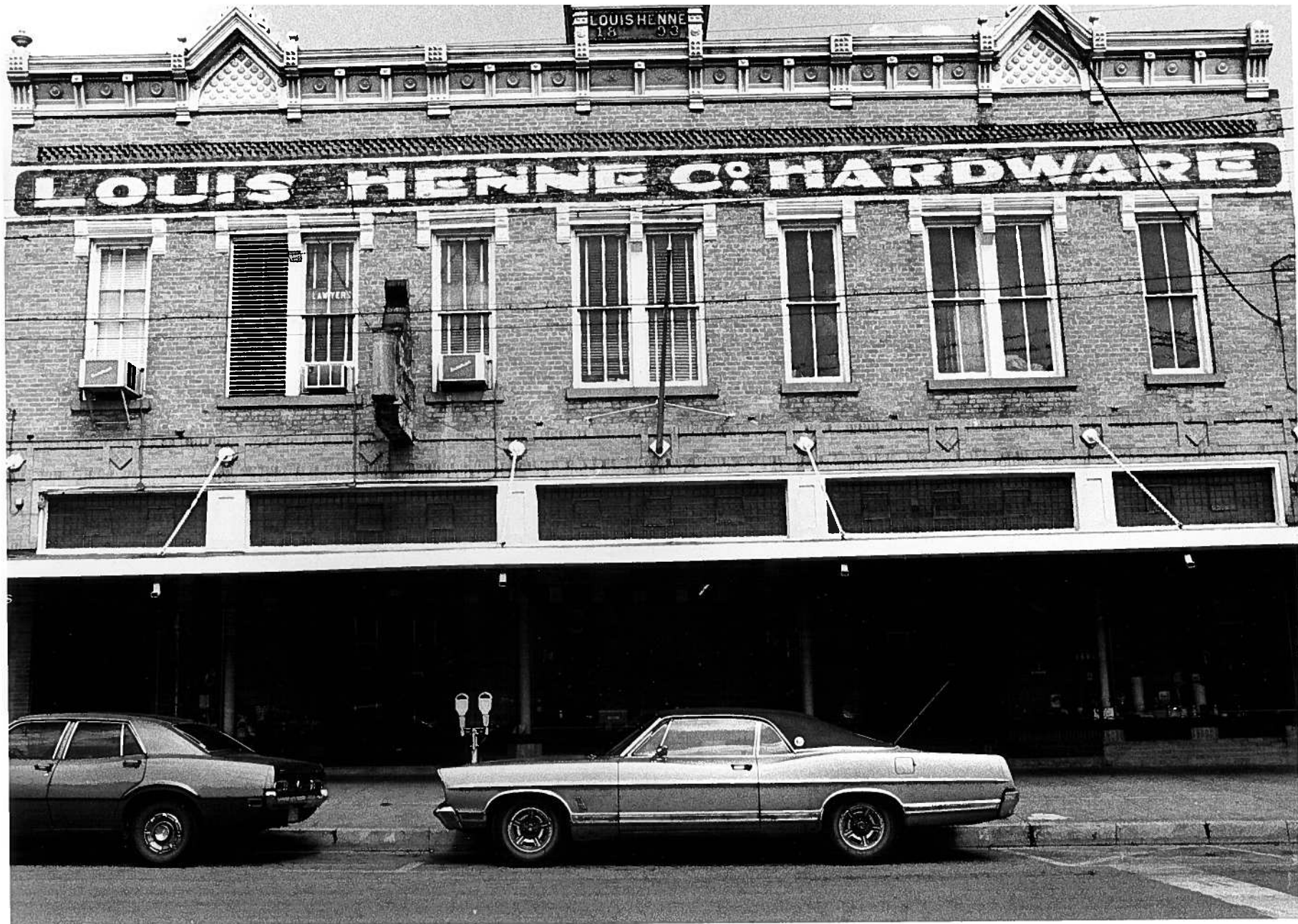
A blacksmith and wheelright shop also were opened on the site. Henne also acquired a lumber yard on the corner of Castell and Coll St..

Louis Henne was a strong advocate of fire prevention. In 1893, the city ordinance requiring metal roofs within the city limits was passed. The act saved \$2.50 on each \$1,000 of insurance annually in NewBraunfels. For many years, New Braunfels was known as the "city of tin roofs."

The present store which Henne built in 1893 confined one side to hardware, the other to dry goods. Huge bins that held vegetables and dried fruits now are stored in the basement of the building.

Louis Henne was a leading merchant in New Braunfels when it was a major merchandising center of South Texas, and it remains the largest hardware store in the city. In addition to the usual patrons, visitors from out of town come just to see the 19th Century interior, a nostalgia trip, and to buy the old-fashioned crockery pitchers and other remnants of an early era that suppliers are ceasing to stock.

Louis Henne was head of the firm for 55 years, until his death in 1912.



LOUIS HENNE
1893

LOUIS HENNE CO. HARDWARE

LAWYERS

