

Col. Egon Tausch and Mrs. Bremer;
recopied 2/28/72, TSHSC Staff (DP)

Official Texas Historical Marker
w/14"x 9" Interpretive Plate

Comal County (Order #3516) Location: 17 mi NW of
New Braunfels,
off County Rd
311

PANTERMUEHL HOUSE*

PIONEER HOME OF HEINRICH

PANTERMUEHL (1842-1921) AND

WIFE PAULINE, GERMAN-BORN

SETTLERS OF COMAL COUNTY.

BUILT ABOUT 1865, ITS USE OF

LIMESTONE AND NATIVE CEDAR

IS TYPICAL OF SMALL GERMAN

FARM COTTAGES OF THIS AREA.**

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK - 1972***

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

APPROVED

Truett Latimer

by B. W. Watson
2-28-72

RECEIVED
READY FOR

FEB 28 1972

SOUTHWELL ORDER
TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

3516
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NO. 2 - CURTIS BREMER RANCH (Old Heinrich Pantermuehl Homestead)

We are fortunate to have this house as the first on our tour. It exemplifies, possibly more than any place we have visited, how a small pioneer rock farm cottage can be restored and enlarged for modern living and still retain all the original charm and construction features. The present owners, Curtis and Edna Bremer, have shown real feeling and talent in the restoration, and should feel great satisfaction in the results.

The house was built, probably in the middle 1860's, by Heinrich Pantermuehl, who had come to Texas with his father and nine brothers and sisters about 1850 or 1852. As can be seen, it was built entirely of hand-faced limestone quarried on the property. Originally it comprised two rooms and a separated, rather large, stone kitchen in the rear, with a breeze way between the two structures. This was fairly common in these early German homesteads, and kept the heat and smoke of the cooking area out of the living quarters. As was quite usual, the house was of story-and-a-half construction, with the attic used for storage, tobacco drying, and at times as sleeping quarters for the children. The only access to the attic, as is also usual, was by means of an outside stairway.

Heinrich Pantermuehl moved from Fischer's Store to Smithson's Valley in the middle 1860's, and may have at first lived in a small house on the property while building the bigger homestead. The foundations of several such little houses have been found on the various properties at one time owned by Ben Smithson. The foundation stones of the little house can still be seen located a few yards south of the front part of the house.

Heinrich Pantermuehl was the son of Joachim Pantermuehl, who had emigrated to Texas from Prussia about 1850 to 1852. He came alone with ten children and settled at Fischer's Store. His wife died shortly before the family departed Germany, and local tradition has it that his wife, just before her death, made Joachim promise that he would go through with their plan and take all the children to Texas, which he did. Joachim never remarried, and continued to live at Fischer's Store until his death.

Heinrich was born in 1842 in Prussia. He married Pauline Startz, daughter of August Startz, in 1867, when he was 25 years old. He may have started to build his homestead while still single. Heinrich and Pauline had three children: Herman, Richard and Emily. Herman reportedly died early in life; Richard became a school teacher in Dallas; and Emily married Alva Barker of Harper, Texas. The latter had four children.

The Patent from the State of Texas for the 160 acres, made to Henry Pantermuehl, was No. 144 dated February 10, 1881 (Survey 761, recorded in Comal County Records in Volume P, Page 295). As has often been observed, the Patent was frequently not finalized until years after the grantee was already living on the grant. Thus the house was probably standing and lived in long before the state grant was actually recorded. The house was in all probability completed before 1870, as its construction details attest. Heinrich subsequently purchased several adjoining tracts of land, thus enlarging his holdings.

Land for the Smithson's Valley Cemetery, a well-known landmark in Comal County, was deeded to the community in perpetuity by Heinrich. He and his wife, Pauline, are buried there. Heinrich died September 28, 1921, and Pauline on January 17, 1933.

The property, of which only the original grant of 160 acres is of interest here, remained in Pantermuehl's possession until the turn of the century, after which the property changed hands some ten times in fairly rapid succession, until Julius Bremer and wife, Alice, bought it on April 24, 1933.

Julius Bremer and his wife, Alice Weidner Bremer, kept the old house in its original condition except for the addition of a concrete floor to the porch. For years it was used only temporarily as a hunters' lodging and for storage, while the Bremers lived in their newer house nearby.

The Julius Bremers were married in 1925 and had two children: Arlene, born in 1926, and Curtis, born in 1934. Julius died in 1953.

Curtis, then still single, commenced restoration of the house in 1961. In 1962 he married Edna Fundis of Wanette,

Oklahoma, and in 1963, the couple moved into the house and started more extensive restoration. First the new bedroom and bath were added to the south side, and the bedroom in the old part was restored. Two years later the dining room, living room and attic were restored. The attic consisted of only the walls and the rough-floored joists at that time. The house was finally completed to its present condition in 1970.

A few of the many noteworthy features of the house are as follows:

The breezeway between the original kitchen and the rest of the house has been made into the present kitchen, while the old kitchen was converted to a bedroom. It should be noted that these changes were made by adhering closely to the character and feeling of the original construction, even the new kitchen - an indispensable necessity for comfortable living - complementing perfectly the character of the old rooms.

The attic, which was only a rough-floored shell, has become a very charming bedroom. The insulation under the old shingle roof was so selected and installed as to leave the rafters and the cedar pegs holding them together, fully exposed. This treatment is believed to be unique among the houses we have observed. In most cases the new ceiling hides the old, distinctive German roof construction of mortised-and-tenoned rafters with pegs through the joints.

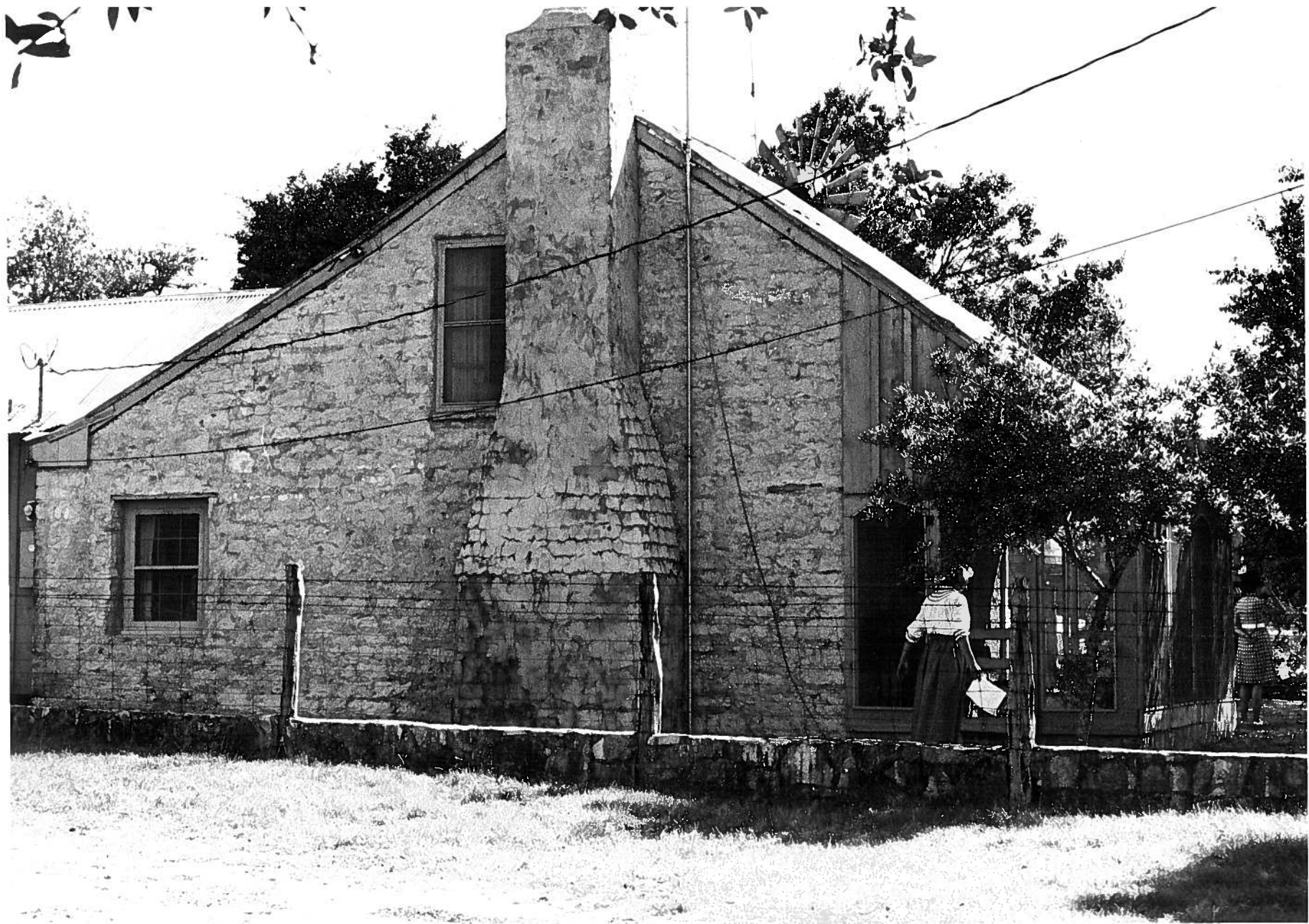
In the rest of the house the new roof was installed over the old cypress shingles, leaving crawl space between roof and ceiling. All the original "ceiling beading" popular in pioneer times was repaired and preserved, and the error of installing new ceilings of modern materials avoided.

Although some repair work on the walls was necessary, the walls, door openings, and window openings were left generally as they had been built; the original irregularities and minor defects of their construction add to the authenticity of the whole restoration.

The new addition of master bedroom, bath and garage is all of cedar board and batten construction on the outside, and stained in a color to make the whole appearance consonant with the old home. Hence there is not the clash between the two

parts often observed where more room has had to be added to an old house. As it is, one hardly is aware of the new built-on part. As for the little stone smokehouse in the back, it remains essentially unchanged over its original condition, and can be converted to any of several useful purposes. Only the walls have been cement-plastered on the inside to prevent further deterioration of the coursed rockwork.

The present owners of the property, Curtis and Edna Fundis Bremer, reside here permanently. They have two children, Charles Dawson, 7, and Julianne Fundis, 2. As is always the case, they feel that their restoration work is not completely finished even yet. But they have succeeded in creating a delightful home for their family, while preserving and restoring this old homestead with real feeling for its venerable beauty and character.





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