

Pat Morrison 5-2-68 w/ county revisions
18" x 28" OTHM (State Matching Fund; 1967)
Comal County (
Location: Hwy. 306, about 12 miles NE of New Braunfels
at North Lookout on DCanyon Dam

*Read rubbing
6-20-1968
DP + EB*

GERMAN PIONEERS IN TEXAS *

IN THIS AREA, NOW COVERED BY
CANYON LAKE, GERMAN EMIGRANTS
WERE THE FIRST SETTLERS.

AESOCIETY OF NOBLES (MAINZER
ADELSVEREIN) SPONSORED THE
EMIGRATION OF 7,380 GERMANS TO
TEXAS FROM 1844 TO 1847. THEY
FOUNDED NEW BRAUNFELS IN 1845.
MOVING WEST, THEY ESTABLISHED
FREDERICKSBURG IN 1846.

THEIR COMANCHE INDIAN TREATY
OPENED 3,800,000 ACRES BETWEEN
THE LLANO AND COLORADO RIVERS
TO PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.

FARMERS AND ARTISANS, SCHOLARS
AND SCIENTISTS, THEY TRIUMPHED
OVER EPIDEMIC AND PRIVATION TO
HELP BUILD TEXAS AND THE WEST. **

(1968) ***

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

FILE COPY - DO NOT REMOVE

*APPROVED
T.B.
5-7-68*

Addendum

German Settlers, by Oscar Haas

1859

Lot # 44, New Braunfels, Texas

(Dedeke) Building History

With the first contingent of settlers for New Braunfels who crossed the Guadalupe River on Good Friday, Mar. 21, 1845, came Adam Pelzer, wife and four children. Herman Spiess, acting trustee of the German Emigration Company, conveyed lot No. 44 on Seguin Ave. to Adam Pelzer; the deed for the lot is recorded on Comal County Deed Records, Vol. E, pp. 614-615.

Mrs. Pelzer, age 35, died Aug. 9, 1846. (First Protestant Church Register, Vol 2, page 356). Evidently Mr. Pelzer and the children did not want to stay in New Braunfels and Pelzer conveyed the Lot #44 to Bernhard Heise, who died of cholera, age 46, Aug. 8, 1849. (Vol. 2 page 396, First Protestant Church Records).

Mrs. Heise died in 1858 and Friedrich Krause, (husband of daughter Margaretha Heise) was appointed administrator of Heise's estate and guardian of the two minor Heise children. Friedrich Krause and wife Margaretha Heise paid out the two Heise sons, and lot No. 44 was duly conveyed to Mrs. Krause in November 1859. The lot, together with its appurtenances, was appraised at \$700.00.

The 1850 census of Comal County lists Friedrich Krause, age 24, occupation - carpenter, and his father, Friedrich Krause, age 54, occupation - carpenter. Therefore and to all evidences, this team of father and son, master carpenters, built the extremely substantial front (45 ft. long) part of the now Dedeke building on Seguin Ave. Using giant cedars for floor joist and for the half timber walls, they built in 1860 the business building which has endured for 107 years [4-1 1967].

Businesses that have occupied the building have been varied. First occupants are unknown but in 1870, N. Winther advertised in the New Braunfelser Zeitung that he had acquired the most modern photographic equipment and was located in the Krause Bldg., opposite Moureau's on Seguin St. In 1868 H. Ciliax, photographer, advertised in the Zeitung and was probably located in this building.

In 1883, Fried. Krause and wife sold lot #44 to Julius A. Mittmann for \$2800.00. In 1887 the eastern portion of Lot #44 (the part on which this building is located) was purchased by Mrs. Olga Klappenbach. and in the same year Mrs. Klappenbach sold the land to L.A. Hoffmann and Richard Weber. Hoffmann and Weber conducted a store in the present building and later the general store became Weber and Deutsch. In the New Braunfelser Zeitung of May. 1, 1890 an article reads, L.A. Hoffmann erects a two-storied brick building on Seguin Ave., next to Weber & Deutsch. In 1888 Weber sold his share in the property to L. A. Hoffmann. Hoffmann now owned the entire eastern part in his own right.

In 1895 the Lenzen Halle, center of New Braunfels' concerts, singing societies, etc and drill hall for militia was destroyed by fire. To now supply a want, Hoffman's business building was converted into an opera house known as Hoffmann's Opera House. In the New Braunfelser Zeitung of Aug. 2, 1900 an article reads "Clemen's Rifles now count fifty-two men. They meet each Tuesday night in Hoffmann's Opera House...

The Hill Country of Comal County was settled by German immigrants who spread out from the settlement of New Braunfels within a few years after its founding in 1845.

New Braunfels was founded on a tract of two leagues purchased by Prince Carl zu Solms-Braunfels for the Mainzer Adelsverein, a society of German nobleman interested in establishing a colony in what was then the Republic of Texas.

Each head of a family and each single man received ^{upon arrival} a half-acre town lot and a ten acre farm lot on the outskirts of the settlement. *They were to receive more land later.*

Out in the Hill Country, land agents like deCordova, Hancock, and Murchison developed the sites of today's ranches.

Here in wilderness land, early settlers undertook the heroic challenge of turning rough caliche hills into productive ranches. It was a task which required a lifetime, even generations, of disciplined labor and thrift.

Miles upon miles of stone "fences" still stand upon ranches throughout the county as monuments to the diligence of settlers, -- men, women, and children -- who built them with rock cleared from the land.

Agriculture on the highly cultivated lands of Germany was insufficient preparation for the pioneers, those who had that much experience. They learned through tedious, often bitter, trial and error. Many never had turned a spade of earth in any country.

The first settlers represented every economic and social level. There were farmers and artisans, scientists and artists, aristocrats and soldiers.

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Demands of the land defeated many, and they drifted back into the settlement, to larger cities, even home to Europe. Other settlers succeeded them, taking up the challenge.

Productive ranches rewarded those who stayed to tame the wilderness.

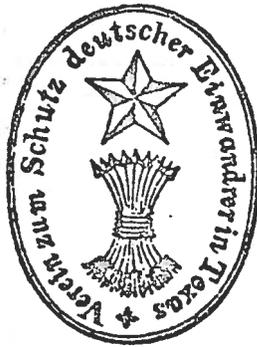
Much of this pioneer ranch land was cleared in preparation for inundation upon the completion of Canyon Dam ^{date?} and the formation of the Lake. Descendants of those early pioneers who had inhabited the land for generations moved out of the path of the oncoming waters.

Several small communities founded by the pioneers were also affected by the formation of the Lake. Hancock and Crane's Mill are no longer visible as such. Sattler and Fischer remain, and benefit from the "new settlers" who now inhabit the lake shores.

Submitted by C. W. Heitkamp, Ch.
Corral CHSC 11-2-67

A NEW LAND BECKONED

German Immigration to
Texas, 1844 - 1847



Compiled and Edited
by
Chester William and Ethel Hander Geue

Foreword by James M. Day

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for houses was available nearby, and the climate was mild. This ideal place was provided for the immigrants by Prince Solms while they were on the journey from Carlshafen.

Brought by stages, these immigrants arrived at their first home in the new land. Encamped overnight on the east bank of the Guadalupe River, they crossed the river on the morning of Friday, March 21, 1845, led by Prince Solms. He then named the place New Braunfels after Braunfels, Germany, the ancestral home of the Solms family.

Each settler was immediately given a town lot and a ten acre tract, but this did not invalidate his right to the land which would be allotted to him when the Fisher-Miller grant could be surveyed. The settlers began at once to plant corn and potatoes on their farm land and to build their homes. Before the end of 1845 there were one hundred and fifty houses in New Braunfels. For protection against the Indians, a stockade was built on a bluff on the east bank of the Comal Creek. Later a fort was constructed which was called "Sophienburg" in honor of Princess Sophie, the fiancée of Prince Solms.

Less than two months after the founding of New Braunfels, Prince Solms returned to Germany. In his eleventh report to the directors of the Society in Germany, he wrote, "It is a cheerful sight to see this beauty spot of nature developing and the land becoming inhabited."¹⁶

Eleven reports were sent by Prince Solms to the directors of the Society in Germany during the ten months which he spent in Texas. A twelfth and final report was given to them in Wiesbaden after he returned to Germany in 1845. In this, Prince Solms summarized the entire colonization project in Texas from the time of his arrival until his departure:

Report made to the General Assembly held at Wiesbaden on 28 July, 1845¹⁷

In May, 1844, the directors [of the Verein] requested that I go to Texas to establish the first settlement of the Verein. Although I felt flattered by the trust that was placed in me, I could not conceal from myself the difficulties to be met, difficulties which from my [later] personal experiences were even more serious than I had anticipated. From my many reports to the directors, the important details of the whole undertaking and the progress that is being made are well known. I will, therefore, give only a resumé of the whole undertaking.

Accompanied by Mr. Bourgeois d'Orvanne, I left Liverpool on May 19 [1844] and arrived in Boston on May 31.

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Because of previous instructions I was able to continue my journey at the earliest possible date so that I arrived at Galveston on July 1. From here I immediately departed for Washington-on-the-Brazos, the seat of the [Texas] government where I had several satisfactory conferences with the then Secretary of State, Dr. Anson Jones.

From there I next went to Nassau Plantation [in Fayette County] from where, at that time and also later, I sent particular reports to the directors.

On July 16 I started from there on my trip to western Texas and specifically to San Antonio de Bexar. I am reminded that it was at this time the Verein became aware of the untrustworthiness of Mr. Bourgeois d'Orvanne; namely, that he had no land. It, therefore, became my next concern to acquire some land. In this search for land I intended to become more familiar with the grant of Mr. Bourgeois d'Orvanne so that I might know whether or not to ask for a renewal of this grant at the next session of Congress.

I devoted the months of July and August to looking at various areas of land, paying particular attention to the land, the soil, the climate, and the general surroundings. Indeed, I made it a point to pay particular attention to the latter.

On the 23rd of August, Mr. von Wrede arrived with dispatches for me from the directors. After terminating our affairs with Mr. Bourgeois d'Orvanne and though not in the best of health, I left for Nassau Plantation on the 27th, as instructed, to await there the arrival of Mr. Fischer.

On account of the protracted delay of his arrival, I decided to meet him in Galveston. Previously I had made a visit to Washington-on-the-Brazos where I had a conference with Dr. Anson Jones regarding the recent changes in our organization.

Finally on the 20th of October, the long awaited Mr. Fischer arrived, seemingly in no hurry. He needlessly spent several days in Houston. He let us wait nine days for him in Nassau where I had returned.

Finally on November 16th, I could start on the trip to Port Lavaca where I arrived on the 22nd. I made an inspection of the coast along the Bay and selected Indian Point as the place of debarkation. Here I made a plan for Carlshafen. I then boarded the schooner *Com Jack* on which I had spent eight days inspecting the various bays, and sailed for Galveston to welcome the emigrants.

Arriving there after severe storms, I found that the emigrants of the first ship had already left and had probably sailed past us during the night. However, twenty-two hours after my arrival, I was on board the *Alert* which, after repeated heavy storms, returned me to Lavaca. There I found that very few of the emigrants had landed. I welcomed them in the name of the Verein. Finally all the

emigrants arrived in Carlshafen and I assembled them in an encampment on the Agua Dulce on January 3 [1845].

In vain I had waited up to now for the means of transportation which Mr. Fischer had been instructed to supply. He had been provided with funds; and on the part of the directors in Germany, they had attempted to provide for all contingencies except this which could not have been foreseen; namely, that Mr. Fischer was lax in carrying out his responsibilities. As soon as I saw that Mr. Fischer had adopted American habits, I no longer depended on him but sought for advice wherever I could. This made it necessary for me to undertake another trip to Galveston, hoping at the same time to attend to necessary matters with the Congress. However, Mr. Fischer had already upset matters there to such an extent that, for the time being, nothing more was to be accomplished.

As soon as possible, I returned to the encampment and sent the emigrants in several groups to the encampment near Victoria and further on at McCoy's Creek. From here they were to go directly to the place of destination.

I myself rode ahead to San Antonio to conclude the purchase of the land at Comal Springs. I took along a few companions to reconnoiter the area, and if necessary to clear it of Indians.

I deliberately kept to myself my earlier suspicions and later definite reports of Mr. Fischer's intrigues and his behavior in the encampment where he sought to create resentment against me. Although all this was painful to me personally, yet I felt that he could not shatter the inborn trust of a German toward a German prince who was with them in a far away, strange, and wild land which was in the dizzy throes of new-found liberties.

On March 21st the first group of emigrants crossed the Guadalupe [River], followed by the wagons. After this the town was laid out, houses were built around the public square, gardens were planted, and fields were plowed.

On April 9th I started on the defenses of the fort, and on the 28th we dedicated it with the thunder of cannon. I named it Sophienburg and named the town New Braunfels. Local authorities were installed who assumed the duties of administering the town's affairs.

Until May 15 I awaited the arrival of my successor, Baron von Meusebach. On this day, however, I began my return journey, stopping in Gonzales where I expected the Baron to pass. After two days he finally arrived and accompanied me as far as Galveston from where I sailed for New Orleans on June 4th.

In the meantime I gave my successor both verbal and written accounts of all events and detailed information on things he needed to know, and especially on matters that had to be taken care of in the future.

Signed on the original Carl Prince zu Solms

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The directors of the Society had appointed Baron Ottfried Hans von Meusebach¹⁹ as successor to Prince Solms, and he was still on his way to Texas when Prince Solms announced the date for his departure to be the 15th of May, 1845.

Late in May, Baron Meusebach arrived at New Braunfels after a long journey from New Orleans. The first situation that greeted him was a very unsatisfactory condition in the financial records of the Society. This was caused by the fact that "the commissioner-general [Solms], the treasurer, the doctor, and the engineer all had contracted debts in the name of the Society without making any record of them. They had signed promissory notes and had issued certificates of credit."¹⁹ The books showed a debt of \$20,000 and the creditors besieged Meusebach for the money owed them.

Anyone with less fortitude than John O. Meusebach, as he became known in Texas, would have returned to Europe immediately. The situation might even have been called dangerous since threats were made on his life. However, without delay Meusebach requested the treasurer to furnish him with a financial statement but he was told that this was impossible. Meusebach then "went to work on the books himself and in due time had them in respectable order. With order in the books and financial affairs of the company and by judicious business methods, he soon restored the confidence of the creditors."²⁰

Another and a more serious situation faced Meusebach when he learned that several thousand immigrants were due to arrive at Carlshafen in November 1845. Knowing that such a large number could not be settled in New Braunfels, he decided to establish another way station on the road to the Fisher-Miller grant. Meusebach found a suitable place about eighty miles northwest of New Braunfels on the Pedernales River. According to Don Biggers, author of *German Pioneers in Texas*, "He is said to have been the first white man to visit that particular section of the Llano and Pedernales rivers country. At a considerable distance from the Fisher & Miller grant he selected a 10,000 acre tract. It was good land, well watered and with ample timber to supply the needs of the colonists."²¹ The tract was surveyed and town lots made ready for the settlers. This new town was named Fredericksburg in honor of Prince Frederick of Prussia, a member of the Society.

Upon his return to New Braunfels Meusebach learned that four thousand immigrants would soon arrive at Galveston and that a credit of \$24,000 had been provided for him in a New

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Orleans bank. This amount probably seemed ample to the directors of the Society in Germany, but it was far from sufficient to transport four thousand immigrants over one hundred and fifty miles from the coast to New Braunfels, sustain them through the winter, build even the simplest log cabins, and provide them with food until they could raise a crop. The sum of six dollars per person was supposed to provide all of these things!

Between October 1845 and April 1846, thirty-six ships brought a total of 5,257 immigrants to Texas under the auspices of the Society. Meusebach secured the services of a Houston transporting company to move the immigrants from the coast to New Braunfels; but again he was faced with another very serious situation. Just as the work was started and after the first one hundred wagons had left Carlshafen, war broke out between the United States and Mexico in May 1846. The United States offered a much higher price to the private teamsters than Meusebach was paying with the result that the teamsters deserted Meusebach to work for the United States Army. Over four thousand immigrants were left at Carlshafen in tents or whatever shelter they could find to protect them from the sun and rain of the Texas spring and summer of 1846. Disease broke out among the immigrants already weakened by the long ocean voyage. It is estimated that four hundred died in Carlshafen or on the journey to New Braunfels. Many preferred to start the trip inland on foot rather than wait any longer in Carlshafen.

In their despair many men left their families to join the United States Army and go to Mexico.²² Moritz Tiling in his book *The German Element in Texas* estimates that five hundred enlisted in the American Army, and more than two hundred perished on the way to New Braunfels from hunger, exposure, disease, and exhaustion.²³ Those who arrived at New Braunfels and the newly established town of Fredericksburg carried with them the germs of malaria, bilious fever, dysentery, and other diseases. A terrible epidemic broke out in every place traversed by or lived in by the immigrants; and over five hundred deaths were recorded in the summer of 1846.²⁴ It would be impossible to estimate the number of other deaths along the road or in remote places since many were buried on farms. In many instances every member of a family died. Many widows and orphans were left to be cared for by other settlers.

In New Braunfels Pastor Ervendberg sought to provide a

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place for children made homeless by the epidemic and built the Waisenfarm or orphanage. A long shed was built on the banks of the Comal River for the many sick persons who came from Carishafen and for those who had no one else to care for them in New Braunfels. Dr. Koester visited the sick daily but the disease claimed the lives of two or three each day in New Braunfels alone during the summer of 1846.

Dr. Ferdinand Roemer in his book Texas, based on his stay in Texas from December 1845 to April 1847, wrote, "It is certain that in the few summer months of the year 1846 more than one thousand out of the four thousand German immigrants, who had come to Texas in the fall of 1845 under the protection of the Mainzer Verein, died and not more than one thousand two hundred actually settled upon the land secured by the Verein."²⁵

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Due to the foresight of John O. Meusebach, many immigrants had left New Braunfels before the epidemic became severe. On April 23, 1846 the first immigrant wagon train left New Braunfels for the new settlement of Fredericksburg on the Pedernales River. There were about one hundred men, women and children in this group. After a trip lasting sixteen days, the settlers reached their new home. The date was May 8, 1846. The first task undertaken was the awarding of town lots to heads of families and single men. "Later these first arrivals received also an outlying ten-acre lot. The settlers who came later received only a ten-acre lot. By 1848 about 600 settlers had received ten-acre lots."²⁶ Cultivation of fields was started at once to assure a harvest before winter. Store houses were built before homes so that the supplies would be protected. One month after the first settlers arrived, a second wagon train brought many others.

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Life was not pleasant in Fredericksburg during the first few months. The diseases that were brought from the coast claimed many lives during the summer and fall of 1846. In the epidemic of cholera in 1849, the Indians showed themselves to be real friends. They brought honey, meat, and bear fat to the colonists.

On March 1, 1847 John O. Meusebach once more performed a deed which helped the settlers very much. A few weeks before, accompanied by forty-five men, he had ventured into the lands of the Fisher-Miller grant in an attempt to make peace with the Comanche Indians. Wherever he was met by bands of Indians, he told them that his people had nothing but friendly feelings

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Information on
Prince Karl of Solms-Braunfels and the
Eleven Reports written by him to the Directors of the
Adelsverein on the German colonization in Texas, 1844-1847

Prince Karl of Solms-Braunfels, born in 1812, was a de-
scendant of a family of German nobility at Braunfels, Germany.
References to this family exist as far back as 946 A.D.

In 1844, at the age of 32, he was chosen by the committee
of directors of the Adelsverein as Commissioner-General for the
proposed colonial establishment in Texas. Accompanied by
Bourgeois d'Orvanne, as Colonial Director, he journeyed to
Texas and landed at Galveston on July 1, 1844.

Immediately, he began work on the Verein's project which
was to settle several thousand immigrants on a grant of land
in Texas. In the process of making arrangements for the prospec-
tive colonists, he wrote letters or reports, to the directors
in Germany. The eleven reports which he wrote constitute an
excellent account of his activities from the time he wrote the
first report on July 15, 1844 until the eleventh or last report
written on April 30, 1845 at the newly-established town of New
Braunfels.

On May 15, 1845, Prince Solms returned to Germany to
take a needed rest and to make an oral report to the directors
on the progress of the immigration. Prince Solms did not re-
turn to Texas; he died in 1875 without seeing again the town he
established and named for his family.

The eleven reports of Prince Solms were published in Ger-
man in the *Neu Braunfelser Zeitung Jahrbuch* (Yearbook) for
1916 and in the *100th Anniversary Edition of the New Braunfels*
Zeitung. Ten of the reports were translated into English by
Oscar Haas, historian of New Braunfels and Comal County. The
eighth report was translated by Chester W. Geue of Fort Worth,
Texas. In the translation, an endeavor was made to retain as
near as possible the structure and descriptive language of the
original.

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I have the honor to advise the directors that after completing the business with Mr. Fisher I inspected the assembled company. I was generally pleased with their horsemanship and marksmanship, as well as their deportment.

I left after that on my trip to San Antonio where I arrived on the 10th. The 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th were spent in negotiations with Messrs. Veramendi and LaGarza⁵⁹ for the purchase of the land which had been erroneously reported as belonging to Senator Smith. Upon my return [to Germany], I shall report in more detail, and I can assure that the transaction can be proven to be advantageous.

The contract was signed on the 15th.⁶⁰ On the 16th I rode back to Seguin where on the 17th Messrs. Zink and von Coll arrived with thirteen men of the company. On the same day, I traveled six miles further and made camp at a spring flowing into the Guadalupe River. A furious norther blew up during the night and has been blowing continuously ever since.

On the 18th I crossed the Guadalupe at the ford of the great military⁶¹ road from Nacogdoches⁶² to San Antonio. The river is locked in by rocky cliffs and rushes wildly over rocks and boulders. Right here is the beginning of the land which I brought into the Verein's possession. The Comal Creek runs through it. On the right bank of this Creek there is rich prairie land with open terrain which continues toward a dominant elevation. On the left bank of Comal Creek there is well forested bottom land which extends to the cedar, oak, and elm covered cliffs which here already have considerable height. Beyond this there is a high ridge with summits here and there similar to our Black Forest.⁶³

The ridge runs from N.W. to S.E. Through this bottom land the Comal Spring [River] flows. It bubbles forth from the cliffs in seven separate springs and immediately attains a width of twenty steps. This stream of crystal clear water of considerable depth steadily widens, winds about like a forest torrent, and rushes on.

From its confluence with the Comal Creek I, with four companions, attempted to reach the head spring. However, having covered only five miles after hours of chopping through underbrush and heavy forest, we had to return without success. On

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the following day, guided by two Americans who were bear hunting, we reached the spring without any difficulty. [Comal River 3¼ miles, measured by R. S. Jahn, Civil Engineer, 1950.]

Each day, I rode about in the region to familiarize myself with the country. On the 20th of this month, for the first time I ascended the ridge on horseback, forcing a path through the heavy cedar thickets and using the outcropping ledges as steps. The view from the high ridge, behind which there is a plateau several miles wide, is enchanting. I rode three or four miles into this tableland without coming to its end. As soon as time permits, I shall make another tour up there.

All over the country there are signs of large and smaller camps of the Indians who, on account of the good hunting and excellent water, occasionally pitched their nomad tents here. However, as soon as civilization comes near, they withdraw because the sound of the ax in the woods is annoying to them. Should some go astray and wander this way, I believe that the clatter of the mills on the river and the noise of the forges would scare them off. The Comal River is especially adapted for just such installations on account of its ever constant water supply.

Enclosed herewith is a map of the land as attached to the purchase contract. Only the location of the high ridges is omitted.

Field plots have been staked out and the plow is turning the sod. I myself traced the outline of the citadel [fort] yesterday on the dominant height, below which the city is to be laid out in all directions.

Thirty-one wagons have arrived, and I am expecting the last half of the immigrants within a few days. I had an encampment erected on a bluff overlooking Comal Creek. For its protection I think it urgent that three sides be enclosed by palisades, whereas the fourth side is amply protected against attack by the high steep bluff of Comal Creek.

In my next report I hope to be able to announce the layout of the town and its consecration; and I shall then enclose an exact plan of it.

The weather is cool and moist; yes, on the morning of the 19th we had a home-like scene of snow. The health of the immigrants is satisfactory.

(Signed)

Encampment on Comal Creek
the 27th of March, 1845

The Commissioner-General
Karl, Prince of Solms

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Prince Solms's 11th Report
dated
30 April, 1845—Sophienburg⁶⁴

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I can announce to the directors today that I have transferred to the immigrants half acre city lots and ten acre farm lots located on the land here, and that I have named the new city "New Braunfels." On April 28th, I also laid the cornerstone of the proposed fort for the protection of the city. This will also enclose the Verein headquarters, and I have named the fort "Sophienburg."

The encampment has become less and less occupied whereas the erection of temporary homes on the building sites has begun. It is a cheerful sight to see this beauty spot of nature developing and the land becoming inhabited.

Only the buildings for the Verein and the urgently needed storehouse show very little progress. Engineer Zink's excuse is that there is a scarcity of workers since each one wants first of all to provide for his own.

The three supervisors [of the Verein here] have requested that they be given the greater part of their land allotment here since they would have to reside in the settlement. I discussed this with them; and since it is only fair that they receive a portion here, we came to an agreement that they have one third, that is 100 acres, surveyed for themselves, pending the approval of the directors.

Instead of a storehouse, the subordinate officials erected an inadequate shack in which many goods spoiled during the continuous rains, particularly four wagon loads of maize [corn].

Although Mr. v. Meusebach⁶⁵ (from whom I received a letter dated the 6th of April in New Orleans) has not arrived yet, I expect him any day, and I have arranged for my departure on Thursday the 15th of May. I hope to arrive in Boston in a month so that I can depart from America by steam boat on the 15th of June. However, on account of slow traveling conditions here, irregular communication [transportation] between Galveston and New Orleans, and the long trip up the Mississippi, nothing definite can be planned.

I am very anxious to arrive in Germany in due time so that some very important changes can be made in our colonization system. Among these are:

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John O. Meusebach

GERMAN COLONIZER IN TEXAS

by Irene Marschall King



UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PRESS, AUSTIN & LONDON

*For DeLoce M. Parmelee
who carries high
standards for all historians.
May you prosper!
Irene Marschall King
May 5, 1967*

he had always had a wide horizon—now he was traveling toward it, as it were, and they gave him encouragement.

In Mainz Meusebach met the enthusiastic Count Carl Castell, who related some particulars about the organization. Since Texas desired settlers no money was paid to the government by Fisher and Miller for the land grant. The stipulation, however, was that six thousand families were to be settled on the Grant by August, 1847. Each settler was to receive 640 acres if married, 320 if single. The contractor, in this case the Society, had the right to retain one half of the land granted to the settler. Therefore, each married immigrant brought the Society 320 acres. That number multiplied by six thousand families amounted to almost 2,000,000 acres.

Fisher-Miller Grant

Castell showed unbounded delight over the prospect of that much land. He passed lightly over further details of the contract with the Republic of Texas, for example, that the Society was to pay surveying costs on all land, including alternate sections reserved by the Republic, and that the first six hundred families were to be settled within eighteen months. As for finances, Castell was confident that the deposit of \$240 by married men and half that amount by the unmarried was adequate to cover what the Society promised, namely: ocean passage, transportation of family and unlimited baggage from Galveston to the settlement, a cabin, and sustenance until the first crop was raised. Half of this first deposit was credited to the immigrants, who could draw on it for farming implements or extra rations from the company's stores.⁷ The emigrants were allowed also to deposit funds additional to the required amount. On this money, which could be withdrawn at will, they were to receive interest. Each individual was given a deposit book in which accounts were recorded by officials. Those wishing to buy supplies on credit from the Society store had that privilege.

The Executive Secretary emphasized only the vast acreage; he said to Meusebach, in effect, "You will learn all details in Texas, where you will be able to care for all needs. The contract for you to become commissioner-general is ready for your signature."

Thereupon Meusebach signed the document; the date was February 24, 1845. He deposited \$2,000, the cost of a share, with Count Castell, who remarked that the payment was merely an evidence of Meusebach's union of interests with those of the Verein.

⁷ Moritz Tiling, *History of the German Element in Texas from 1820-1850, and Historical Sketches of the German Texas Singers' League and Houston Turnverein from 1853-1913*, p. 73.

Meusebach wondered who was paying for the expenses. He noted the various outlays: the cost of Farm Nassau; the investment in the Fisher-Miller Grant; the purchase of the site of the colony at New Braunfels; and now the daily sustenance for the 439 colonists. The total of these expenses was a large sum; the addition of the salaries and travel allowances for the personnel in Germany and in Texas would put an obvious strain on the capital. A quick summation of these outlays was the basis of Meusebach's statement to Castell that insolvency of the Verein was in sight. Castell replied, "The members will not allow that to happen; they will not leave it in the lurch."⁸

Castell gave Meusebach a letter of credit in the amount of \$10,000. In light of the probable financial difficulties this sum should give a measure of relief, thought Meusebach.

Meusebach's solution for refilling the treasury was to assess each member of the organization, or to take in more members. On an earlier occasion Castell's answer to a similar suggestion had been, "If the door were opened, the forty members would appear within an hour."⁹ But Castell did not act on either of Meusebach's suggestions. One reason was that the members wished to keep the Society exclusive—as it was often expressed, *inter pares*.¹⁰ Membership was restricted to the nobility. An employed person, even a financier, would not be received.

In many respects the Society resembled a club or fraternity made up of like-minded individuals. Although the printed material stated that the purpose of the Verein was philanthropic, a speculative motive also could be discerned by some. A prospective member, Count von Walderdorf, said that the statutes of the Society did not show the protection of the immigrants to be the focal point of the organization; therefore, he did not join. No member attempted to refute the accusation.

Meusebach concluded that the Society did not take in additional members because it wished to conceal its actual financial straits. Since Prince Solms was on the ground in Texas, it was reasonable to expect him to have plans that would suggest a way out. The new Commissioner-General relied on getting a report before the retiring executive left New Braunfels.

Count Castell attempted to conceal from Meusebach the dire financial situation of the Verein. Nor did he mention other matters which troubled

⁸ Meusebach, Mainz, September 8, 1851, to Verein. SB Archives, XL, 55.

⁹ Castell, Mainz, September 16, 1843, to Boos-Waldeck. SB Archives, I, 106.

¹⁰ W. von Rosenberg, *Kritik der Geschichte des Vereins zum Schutze der Deutschen Auswanderer nach Texas*, p. 9.

him, as his letter written to Prince Solms just a month earlier, on January 20, 1845, revealed:

You will certainly wait for von Meusebach since it is necessary that you instruct him personally. Also it would make a bad impression on the Verein if you, like Boos-Waldeck, departed and left things to strangers, especially since you promised to stay two years. Because of the infamous newspaper articles, we have lost over 400 emigrants who were accepted. We helped on the payment of many in order to hold them. In March we are sending twenty-five young men at our own costs. More we could not do, because otherwise our funds are at an end. We had to pay the cost of Meusebach's trip and outfitting him—he became a Verein member.

We shall have to pay your return trip as well as that of d'Orvanne, and certainly we'll have to pay d'Orvanne for his writings. With all of this we cannot do more. Therefore, I beg of you not to make your return voyage too expensive, for I tell you in confidence, we will otherwise be bankrupt before we earn.

Bourgeois d'Orvanne is in Paris; he is coming here shortly to indict us for \$100,000 damages.

Bring some Texas rarities along, also silver out of the San Saba Valley to show as an exhibit to the general meeting of the Verein.¹¹

This beginning with uncertainties presented difficulties, yet Meusebach determined to proceed. From Mainz he traveled via Aachen, Cologne, Ostend, Dover, and London to Liverpool, which was his port of embarkation for the journey to America. His heavier baggage, including chests, a secretary, and many books, had been sent from Bremen by a sailship. His attendant had already embarked for Texas.

Meusebach turned to look at the English shore, full of hurry and bustle, yet well ordered from years of established seaside procedure. The afternoon sun pierced the overhanging fog; to the west an occasional bright stream of gold could be seen. He looked sharply in that direction. Then he walked up the gangplank, carrying his own bag. To himself he said, "At this point I relinquish my title. From here on I stand in my own shoes, John O. Meusebach."

¹¹ Castell, Mainz, January 20, 1845, to Solms. SB Archives, LIX, 191-196.

Financial problems

CHAPTER 8

Texas on the Horizon

Like Janus, the double-faced Roman god, who could look in opposite directions at the same time, Meusebach now viewed the past and the future. For him Germany represented the past, which he must fold up and tuck away in some isolated compartment of his mind and heart. The future was represented by new work in a new world—Texas.

During the voyage Meusebach studied the material Castell had given him in Mainz. He discerned that the sums to be charged the German emigrants whom the Society was bringing to Texas did not cover the cost of their move; twenty-four dollars would not build a house. And who would transport a family and unlimited baggage from Galveston to Indianola in Matagorda Bay and on to the colony for four dollars? Castell's geographical location of the colony hardly seemed to fit the map. The Count had told Meusebach that Prince Solms had bought land for a settlement 165 miles northwest of the disembarkation port, and had named the settlement New Braunfels. Why had the Prince settled at this point, 150 miles short of the Fisher-Miller land, which the Verein expected him to occupy? Meusebach certainly would ask Prince Solms this question when he met him in New Braunfels. The new Commissioner-General feared that the members of the Verein had been overpersuaded when they placed their entire undertaking into the hands of the man who was selling them the land—Henry Francis Fisher.

The problems of the Verein, however, did not consume all of Meusebach's thoughts during the two-week voyage across the Atlantic. Since English was the language spoken aboard *The Cambria*, Meusebach gave close attention to the conversations going on. His practice of the use of English was somewhat academic; hence he was glad to hear the idiomatic. He was told that the English spoken in Texas would sound quite different from that which was spoken by a person native to England.

depending on the weather. The accommodations for the immigrants in Carlshafen were tents; a two-room frame building served as headquarters for the officials of the Society. Provisions were sent with each ship so that food would be at hand on the immigrants' arrival in Texas. The supplies brought by the ships were supplemented by meat and corn meal secured in Texas. The plan was that the immigrants would be taken to the settlement by wagons or ox carts immediately after arrival.

Klaener reported that five Bremen brigs, landing in July, November, and December, 1844, had brought a total of 439 persons to Galveston and Carlshafen. On March 21, 1845, about two hundred of the number had reached the place soon to be called New Braunfels. The remainder had followed during the next month. Most of the immigrants had thought it was too late to prepare the soil and sow grain. They had felt no urgency to raise food because the Society had promised provisions until the first crop was harvested, or even until the second crop came in if no harvest was made in the first. Thus Klaener painted the picture with quick strokes. The Agent had many ideas for improvement and many reports of complaints, which, for the most part, were directed against Fisher.

On his arrival in July, 1844, Prince Solms had been welcomed by the citizens of Houston with a salute of twenty-one guns. Since that time, however, his popularity had declined sharply. Klaener, though appointed by Solms, felt that the Prince's attitude had been unrealistic on many points. For example, he had chosen to disembark the immigrants at Carlshafen, which, being located in the uninhabited region of Indian Point, offered only meager accommodations. Meusebach saw that Galveston would have been more advantageous as the disembarkation port for the Agent, as that was Klaener's home; therefore, certain arguments were to be discounted. In the meantime Meusebach made preparations to investigate matters for himself. He wanted to get the facts from the Prince, and, of course, once in New Braunfels, Meusebach expected to present his credentials to the Prince.

So that he might know from firsthand experience just what the immigrants underwent, Meusebach determined to follow the exact route they traveled from Carlshafen to the new settlement. He took a schooner to Carlshafen, where he arrived at twilight on May 8, after a three-day trip. The lantern carried by the local agent of the Society, Ludwig Willke, shed a welcoming light over the beach. Willke greeted Meusebach warmly, but gave warning immediately that rattlesnakes might be crawling about the area. The men entered the poorly constructed headquarters building, where Willke related the events of the last three months. The story of the

200 reach
New B. in 1845
(March 21)

privations suffered by the immigrants disturbed the new Commissioner-General; of immediate concern, however, were the mosquitoes, which settled so heavily on him that he felt he must go outside to distract the insects. Walking under the Texas stars made him forget, momentarily at least, all but the beauty of the heavens. Yet Meusebach remembered to have mosquito nets sent to Carlshafen to protect future immigrants.¹ Meusebach, interested in the cultivation of every kind of plant life, was pleased that Willke's tobacco plants were thriving. Looking ahead, he hoped for the possibility of marketing the tobacco.

Early the next day, with Willke accompanying him, Meusebach set out on horseback to ride the 165 miles to the settlement, New Braunfels. At the first of the six overnight stops the brand-new Texan had his first typically Texan meal—corn bread and bacon, mainstays of every meal. Novelty gave zest to Meusebach's appetite that first meal, but a year later the German immigrant yearned for a slice of firm rye bread. As the two riders covered the miles the newcomer marveled that so few villages were to be seen. Were there no centers of population on this route?

Willke explained: Prince Solms had deliberately chosen to avoid American settlements; he wanted his people to remain German and not to mingle with Americans. At that moment Meusebach longed for the roads of Germany, paved with stones laid centuries before. His companion explained that wagons were often mired in the morass. The Prince, he said, had plans to lay out a road on which a railroad could be built in the summer of 1845. The railroad was to have live-oak rails, and until locomotives could be brought over, horses were to draw the cars.²

Meusebach the naturalist was alert to the kind of country they were traveling and to every geological formation. Leaving the barren waste of the coastland, he was relieved to find better vegetation. Not long thereafter trees became part of the landscape. The live oaks intrigued him. He liked their name; and their "alive" quality compensated for the evergreens—the pines and spruces—of Germany. The cacti and the yucca attracted him,³ and the fragrant wild flowers were enchanting.

Meusebach wanted to linger at many places. The "flower-spangled"⁴

¹ Meusebach, Houston, June 10, 1845, to Bracht. Solms-Braunfels Archives, LL, 162.

² "Berichte des Prinzen Karl zu Solms-Braunfels an den Mainzer Adelsverein" (Port Lavaca, December 23, 1844, to Verein), *Kalender der Neu-Braunfelsener Zeitung fuer 1916*, p. 45.

³ Meusebach, Galveston, May 31, 1845, to Castell. SB Archives, LX, 204.

⁴ William Kennedy, *Texas: its geography, natural history and topography*, p. 40.

prairies seemed to call to him. William Kennedy, in his book on Texas, used that beautiful phrase. Perhaps he took it from a song that had been widely distributed on broadsides, "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Texas had its own flag, the Lone Star, but after annexation it would be superseded by the flag of the United States. Everyone appeared pleased that the annexation of Texas had been approved in Washington, D.C. The Republic of Texas had existed only ten years. The citizens of the Republic were to vote on the question of annexation soon. No doubt the vote would favor annexation; in Meusebach's opinion that was the proper course. He determined to arrange immediately for naturalization papers and voting privileges.

He was brought harshly back to reality by the presentation of due bills drawn on the Society, which people along the route presented to him when they found that he represented the group. The number of such confrontations grew as the travelers neared the settlement. When Meusebach saw New Braunfels lying before him, he brushed aside the harrassment of the creditors, the minutiae of the moment. Before him lay his new home—and the freedom he was seeking.

Soon the travelers were in the colony, with the settlers gathered around them. As Meusebach heard the native tongue of Germany again, his thoughts returned to the Old World. But a new world was all around him. He had to pierce the frontier, for his countrymen as well as for himself. The Society had a noble idea, one worthy of princes. But the idea alone was not sufficient; it had yet to be directed to fulfillment. With that thought he went to present himself to Prince Solms.

Meusebach walked briskly to what had been pointed out as the headquarters building. He held firmly to his slender briefcase as he greeted the attendant and asked for Prince Solms. To his amazement, he was told that the Prince was gone. The agent of the Society informed the new Commissioner-General that his predecessor was already on his way to Galveston and thence to Germany. The agent then introduced himself as Lieutenant J. Jean von Coll, the treasurer of the settlement. He made apologies for the Prince, saying that he was restless and eager to catch his ship. He could probably be overtaken in Gonzales.

For a moment shadows enveloped Meusebach. He had relied confidently on getting the benefit of the Prince's experience. The bills in his pocket reminded him that he needed all the help he could get. When he asked the agent for an explanation of these bills he was told that the Prince did not require a record of promissory notes because so many different individ-

financial problems

als issued them. When Meusebach further questioned the financial situation the Treasurer answered, "The Prince's theory was that no accounting was necessary until all funds were used up."⁵

Meusebach lost no time in handing von Coll the notes that had been thrust upon him. Von Coll said he surmised well enough that the treasury held no balance, yet he was under orders and had to work according to instructions. Meusebach better understood this man's failings as treasurer when he learned that he had been a lieutenant in the service of the Duke of Nassau, the "protector" of the Society. This service had taught the Lieutenant unquestioning adherence to the dictates of his superiors. Whether it qualified him to be a bookkeeper or treasurer was open to question.

Meusebach, trained in business, felt it was urgent to know the state of the finances. He therefore made a quick survey and found the indebtedness to total nearly \$20,000. Such a huge debt was a staggering handicap with which to start work. His \$10,000 letter of credit reassured him somewhat. Meusebach asked whether the Prince could have foreseen such an indebtedness. The Treasurer felt that he could have if at any time he had added up the disbursements. He confided also that the Prince's provision for daily food was one big expenditure. For example, fresh meat was provided three times daily. The colonists mentioned this fact when they wrote home, because in Germany on many days they had had no meat at all.

What the new Commissioner-General learned about the state of the Society's finances gave him great concern, but he hoped that the Prince could clear certain matters. He decided to hurry back to Galveston in the hope of overtaking Prince Solms. At the end of his 230-mile journey to the port city he found the Prince eager to see him as well. Creditors of the Society had taken out a writ of attachment; Prince Solms was being detained by law. Meusebach, drawing on his letter of credit, lifted the attachment. The Prince expressed gratitude, but he had another favor to ask. He needed more funds to deal with creditors who might overtake him in New Orleans. Meusebach supplied the money; practically all of his \$10,000 letter of credit was now used.

Meusebach pressed Solms for an explanation of the colony's finances, but Solms only referred him to the Treasurer. Meusebach countered with what he had already learned from von Coll—that the treasury was empty—and added that his own quick survey showed heavy indebtedness. Prince Solms agreed to take Meusebach's report of the financial needs to the

⁵ D'Orvanne, San Antonio, August 22, 1844, to Verein. SB Archives, XLVIIIa, 187.

Verein directors in Germany. He promised to leave any unused funds in New Orleans.

The Prince turned east. He must return to Germany and to Frau Sophia, the widowed Princess of Salm-Salm, née Princess of Lowenstein. Before his departure from the settlement, the Prince had deposited the Princess' picture, with her array of names attached, as the principal item in the cornerstone of Sophienburg, the fortress he was having built in New Braunfels. To make it official he had stamped the picture with his seal and had signed it with his own name, Prinz Karl zu Solms-Braunfels, and added twenty-two names and titles belonging to him.⁶

Meusebach turned his face west. He had much to see about in the colony of New Braunfels; among other things he must find a solution to the financial dilemma into which Prince Solms had plunged the Society. The Prince himself had claimed no knowledge of business. His reaction to financial matters is shown by his report written after ten months in Texas:

I can assure you that the disposition of the funds, the accounting of them, as well as the anxiety that there would still be money to see me through so that I would not suddenly be "on the rocks" with so many people, gave me more fear, distress, and sorrow, and called forth more drops of sweat than the July sun and the Indian tribes of Texas were able to draw from me.⁷

Although Meusebach had sympathy for the Prince, a cavalier, in his lack of business ability, he felt the importance of letting the Verein know immediately how matters stood. His report of June 3, 1845, which Solms had agreed to take with him, began with a frank statement: "I regret to be able to send only bad news. I put urgently the thought into your hearts that the existence of 400 people is threatened unless we quickly get significant funds."⁸ The report added that \$20,000 was needed to cover existing debts. He did not report the indignity of the attachment for debt that had been put on Prince Solms or the partial use of the letter of credit to extricate the Prince.

Prince Solms took this report to the executive headquarters in Germany. He made a report himself to the Verein on July 28, 1845, but probably made no mention of financial difficulties in the colony. He wrote laconically, "I sailed June 4 for New Orleans after telling my successor orally

⁶ Robert Penniger (ed., comp.), *Fest-Ausgabe zum fünfzigjährigen Jubiläum der Deutschen Kolonie Friedrichsburg*, pp. 43-44.

⁷ "Berichte des Prinzen Karl zu Solms-Braunfels" (Galveston, February 12, 1845, to Verein), *Kalender fuer 1916*, p. 58.

⁸ Meusebach, Galveston, June 3, 1845, to Castell. SB Archives, XXX, 163.

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sustenance for the 439 people in the colony would not have been delivered. The Society had promised maintenance until a crop was harvested, but they had thought that the immigrants would plant a garden immediately upon arrival. As a result of untoward circumstances—the immigrants arrived in New Braunfels too late to start a garden, and garden tools were not always available—food had to be brought in. To secure sufficient food in a sparsely settled land took planning, then arrangement for storage.

had circumstances

Making provision for adequate shelter was a second requirement. Fisher's estimate of \$24 as the cost of a house was obviously far too low, because in Texas the minimum cost of a house or cabin was found to be \$100. The promises of the Verein had to be kept; therefore, the organization suffered a loss of \$76 on each house. Fisher's estimates, in every case, had been designed to persuade the members of the Verein that their capital of \$80,000 was adequate to supply all the needs of the undertaking.

The Society also had promised to advance each settler the material for cultivating and fencing fifteen acres, as well as the necessary oxen, cows, and horses to start a farm. These items were difficult to obtain in a frontier land; so a period of waiting was required of the settler. Although such delays often brought Meusebach close to despair, he received encouragement from many of the colonists who manifested sympathetic understanding of the conditions or expressed gratitude for the new life which was being opened for them. He thus was able to face the task with fortitude.

The Commissioner-General strove constantly to build the morale of the colonists by trying to answer their questions and to assuage their misgivings. Many colonists were severely disappointed at not being located where their promised 320 acres lay. Some accepted their town lot and ten-acre plot with great reluctance, although the Society specified that these land provisions were not to take the place of the 320-acre tracts described in the immigration agreements.

With perseverance Meusebach was able to conclude a financial report covering Prince Solms's term of office and to dispatch it to Germany on August 7, 1845. He worked five days and five nights on the report, since only at night could he escape interruptions. He found that the debts of the Society at the time of the Prince's departure came to the staggering amount of \$19,460.02. Not only was the original principal of the Society, \$80,000, used up, but now a sum close to \$20,000 stood as a debt. And the colonization project had barely begun!

\$20,000 debt

Prince Solms had left New Braunfels in May. There was no end to the expense in the colony; expenditures for provisions had to be made every single day. These amounts added to the standing debt brought the total in-

debtedness to \$24,000 by the time Meusebach sent in his itemized report in August. His letter of credit had been largely used up to rescue the Prince in his dilemma upon departure. Meusebach relied on the Prince's promise to report the financial needs to the Society and to see that remittances were sent to Texas without delay.

The headquarters where the reports were calculated was only a makeshift log structure. The wind whipped through the cracks, frequently scattering the papers. When engineer Zink was asked to improve the structure, he replied that all of his helpers were busy fencing in their plots, while he was concerned with surveying. Meusebach's residence was a log house, the only furnishings being two rough tables and a sofa.²⁵ In view of the frequent mention of Sophienburg, Meusebach had expected to see something memorable. What he actually saw atop the little hill was a cornerstone with a furrow drawn to indicate the dimensions of the structure; not a stone or a single log was at hand for building.²⁶

The settlers enjoyed lighter moments in the course of daily living. Hermann Seele, who became the teacher for the first German-English school, which opened on August 11, 1845, gives this word picture of the colonists' adaptation to circumstances as they arose:

School

The swollen Guadalupe prevented crossing, so the possessions of the colonists were piled high, watched over by soldiers of the Verein. They wore long riding boots, grey blouses, black velvet collars decorated with brass buttons, broad-brimmed hats trimmed with black feathers, tilted back on their heads, swords buckled on. Armed with rifles, they made a good impression and called forth a feeling of security; one felt that he was no longer dependent wholly on himself.

The transfer of baggage across the Guadalupe in leaky boats took several days and several men were needed on each side. The guarding soldiers changed posts frequently, so that often there were several people in the unsteady vehicles.

On the occasion of the transfer of a barrel of sherry, halfway across the Guadalupe, the men pulling the ferryboat noticed the wine spilling and stopped the boat mid-stream until their thirst was slacked. Shouts from either side had little effect. When at last the boat and cargo reached the far side of the river, the remainder of the wine was quickly disposed of. The question of further work that day was not raised.²⁷

The Prince's predilection for things military was manifest in the com-

²⁵ Meusebach, New Braunfels, September 8, 1845, to Verein. SB Archives, LI, 134.

²⁶ Meusebach, Galveston, January 20, 1846, to Castell. SB Archives, LII, 65.

²⁷ Hermann Seele, "Meine Ankunft in Neu-Braunfels," *Kalender der Neu-Braunfelsener Zeitung fuer 1914*, p. 36.

pleted stockade, a palisade of logs. Close at hand were the two outmoded cannons, which Solms had brought from the Braunfels principality in Germany. The firing of the cannons night and morning perhaps had kept most of the Indian tribes at a distance from the settlement. The Waco tribe, however, had evidenced friendliness. To strengthen that relationship Meusebach decided to pay the Indians a formal call. The chief greeted the stately man in a noncommittal manner, but the squaws and children looked with wonder at the flowing beard of the white man. When he took off his hat and the rays of the setting sun burnished his hair and beard the squaws were astonished even more.

The Indian chief indicated that he desired a second meeting the next day under a widespread pecan tree near a bend of the Comal River. At the appointed time Meusebach appeared, walking a little ahead of his own delegation. Swift as an arrow twenty squaws sprang from the bushes, caught the white chief quite unceremoniously, held his hair and beard to the water's edge, and rubbed them vigorously in the crystal-clear water. When they had convinced themselves that the reddish-gold color would not wash off they disappeared into the woods like wild deer. This encounter was finished quickly, and Meusebach remained calm throughout. The conference proceeded as planned. Soon Meusebach and the Indian chief were smoking the peace pipe.

The Waco Indians remained the steadfast friends of the Germans. They named Meusebach "Ma-be-quo-si-to-mu," "Chief with the burning hair of the head."²⁸

A few tribes were friendly toward the white people, as the story of the Waco Indians' relationship with Meusebach illustrates. But on the whole, white men always had to be wary of the Indians, for their lives could be at stake in dealing with them. The true picture of the Indians was unlike those presented in the advertisements of the Verein, in which the Indians were shown only in charming, friendly colors. "What fraud!" said Alwin Sörgel in his book of advice to immigrants.²⁹ Count Castell had not mentioned the word "Indian" to Meusebach during their conference in Mainz. It is likely that Fisher had carefully avoided bringing the Indians to the attention of the Verein when he was negotiating the sale of his land in 1844. While Meusebach was still in Germany the Count had said that the Society was making plans to send a contingent of emigrants late in 1845.

²⁸ Anonymous, "Der Häuptling mit dem brennenden Haupthaar," *Kalender der Neu-Braunfelser Zeitung fuer 1905*, pp. 59-60.

²⁹ Sörgel, *Für auswanderungslustige: Briefe eines unter dem schutze des Mainzer vereins nach Texas ausgewanderten*, p. 2.

Before he could absent himself from the colony, however, he must endeavor to make the settlement stand on its own feet.⁵ Prince Solms had ingratiated himself with the colonists by approving a credit system. With supplies thus available the settlers relied on the Verein to fill their needs. Now in an attempt to make the immigrants self-sustaining, Meusebach sought out labor assignments for them. Making preparations for the transportation and reception of more than a hundred new immigrants arriving at Indian Point during the late summer furnished some employment opportunities. The transfer was accomplished in such a fast and orderly fashion that it was described by officials as exemplary.

Careful management had inspired creditors to continue furnishing supplies; but after three months passed without the arrival of money, Meusebach was at a loss as to where to turn. His impulse was to resign his post, but he reasoned that the Society's contract with the immigrants must be kept, regardless of personal disadvantage. He turned to the work before him and waited expectantly for the next mail from Germany. When no financial help had been received by September 8, Meusebach wrote, "There is exactly zero [and he drew a "0"] in the Treasury." In fact, money was so scarce that a collection had to be taken among the officials to pay messengers to take out letters.⁶

In the face of this financial crisis, another problem of equal importance weighed upon him. Where was he to settle the immigrants that Castell planned to send later? The logical answer was to make the settlement on the land purchased for that purpose, the Fisher-Miller Grant. Meusebach decided to make an inspection tour of that land without further delay. He had recognized from the beginning the necessity of this inspection, but the urgencies of each day had deterred him. Fisher could certainly be expected to go as guide to the land he had sold the Germans. At Meusebach's urging Fisher started with him, but did not venture beyond Twin Sisters Creek, sixty miles northwest of New Braunfels.⁷ Meusebach continued with a few companions, using his compass to advantage. He pierced the wilderness far enough to know the nature of the territory and to see the imminence of the Indians. He reported that nomadic, unfriendly Indians were found within the Grant.⁸ He found the distance from New Braunfels to the nearest boundary of the Grant to approximate 150 miles. The inter-

⁵ Meusebach, Galveston, January 20, 1846, to Castell. Solms-Braunfels Archives, LII, 105, 109.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁷ Meusebach, Fredericksburg, January 19, 1847, to Castell. SB Archives, LXIII, 44.

⁸ Meusebach, Galveston, January 20, 1846, to Castell. SB Archives, LII, 60.

of Germany. Why could not the handcraft industries of those regions be introduced in this new area? "Picturesque" was the word Meusebach applied to the locality; he added that the romantic mountain parties that could be held there would rival those of Germany.¹³ In thinking over his surveying trip to the northwest, Meusebach declared the section he had chosen for the new settlement "the most beautiful part of the entire country."¹⁴ That was the place his people deserved, but plans to make it habitable were necessary.

After Meusebach returned to New Braunfels preparations for receiving the thousands of new immigrants occupied his time almost entirely. But that way station in the Pedernales Valley had to be opened. His first step was to organize a surveying party of thirty-six men under the command of Lieutenant Louis Bene, whom he instructed to lay out a road from New Braunfels to the site of the proposed settlement. The Bene group reached the location late in December, 1845. There they used the tools that had been provided to build a headquarters blockhouse. The surveyors divided the land into plots. On leaving they buried their tools under a spreading live oak so the Indians would have no cause to suspect an attack and so the settlers would have tools at hand. Since supplies necessary for further work could not be replenished in the wilderness, the expedition returned to New Braunfels in February, 1846.

Two months later, on April 23, 1846, under the direction of Lieutenant Bene and accompanied by eight men of the Society's military company, the first immigrant train of twenty wagons and two-wheeled Mexican carts left New Braunfels. The 120 men, women, and children in the train said a poignant farewell. After an arduous trip of sixteen days, they reached Fredericksburg on May 8, 1846.

Near the end of their journey some Indians gave the Germans great fright. The settlers were soon relieved to find that the Indians were making only peaceful overtures, since they were of the friendly Delaware tribe. As the leaders of the caravan neared the Pedernales River one of their number saw a bear and quickly felled him with a ringing shot. Those at the end of the train presumed that the shot was fired against Indians. Said the eleven-year-old daughter of the Heinrich Strackbeins: "Mother, we should have eaten our eggs yesterday instead of saving them to set for chicks in our new home. Who knows now that we'll ever get there?"¹⁵

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

¹⁵ Robert Penniger (ed., comp.), *Fest-Ausgabe zum fünfzigjährigen Jubiläum der Deutschen Kolonie Friedrichsburg*, p. 62.

May 8, 1846
1st to Fredericksburg

When the long caravan reached its destination in the evening on that May day in 1846, a great fire was built, over which was roasted the bear meat and the meat of a panther that also had been killed on the approach to the Pedernales. The immigrants drew courage from each other as they partook of that communal meal. When the next day dawned, and with it the requirements of starting a life in the wilderness, the test of courage came.

Soon after the immigrant train had left New Braunfels, Governor J. Pinckney Henderson sent the authorities this message:

I am led to believe that the Mexican Government will add to its invasion of the soil of Texas, an attempt at formenting the hostility of the Indians on our frontier . . . I would suggest the prudence of abstaining from a movement in that direction until time shall prove that it can be made without a reckless exposure of human life.—I do this . . . because circumstances may render it impossible to afford the military protection which was intended to be given to the expedition on the part of the state.¹⁶

The New Braunfels colonists hurried the messenger on to Fredericksburg. They expected their fellow Germans to return. Not one did so. Three days later the colonists again spurned the opportunity to return to New Braunfels with the teamsters and the Society's soldiers.

Esther Mueller, a resident of Fredericksburg, gives the following account of the colonization in her paper, "How Fredericksburg Came To Be":

Once the German emigrants had arrived, the region between the town creeks resounded with axe blows on oak trees, as they set up temporary homes with brush shelters and tents of linen sheets.

A commissary and a wooden stockade were built at the Adelsverein headquarters and became the business center.

In June a second wagon train arrived. Others followed in quick succession. In July the surveyors were giving out town lots, and numerous log cabins appeared along Ufer Strasse and Haupt Strasse. By the end of 1846 five hundred emigrants had reached Fredericksburg. In the fall an epidemic of fever and dysentery swept the colony and many settlers died. Ninety-four found resting places in the *friedhof* [cemetery].¹⁷

Meusebach had selected the site and made the plans for the founding of Fredericksburg. He was responsible for the lives of thousands of immi-

¹⁶ J. Pinckney Henderson, Austin, May 2, 1846, to authorities in New Braunfels. SB Archives, XXVIII, 29.

¹⁷ Esther Mueller, "How Fredericksburg Came To Be," *The Edwards Plateau Historian*, I (1965), 1-5.

June
second
wagon

grants—at Indian Point, New Braunfels, and now Fredericksburg. He was bound by responsibilities, as evidenced in a letter to Count Castell: “I rode up and down the Colorado and farther into the country in order to arrange for an uninterrupted flow of wagons. But always money is short. Everything that was still possible to assemble I directed to New Braunfels, in order finally to start the second expedition to Fredericksburg under the leadership of the Col. Director Dr. Schubbert.”¹⁸ Meusebach projected his thoughts far into the future, seeing the fruition of his high hopes for the new colony, Fredericksburg.

¹⁸ Meusebach, Nassau [Farm], April 17, 1846, to Castell. SB Archives, LII, 169–170.

CHAPTER 12

Swarm of Immigrants

After an absence of two months on this reconnaissance trip to the Fisher-Miller territory, Meusebach had returned to New Braunfels early in November with the hope and the belief that letters with money or credit would be at hand. Letters he found. The first one that he opened stated with apparent satisfaction, almost triumphantly, that more than four thousand immigrants were to arrive soon. Meusebach expected the second letter to give word about the financial provision for that large contingent. Instead, it revealed the establishment of a credit of \$24,000 in New Orleans. That amount merely cleared the indebtedness as of the moment.

Nov. 1845

He turned hopefully to the next letter from the Executive Secretary. It gave details about the 4,304 emigrants who were soon to be on their way to Texas; no mention was made of money to care for them. Meusebach reread the letter. His eyes saw the four digits, yet his mind, his reason, told him that the Society could not be sending ten times as many people as were already in New Braunfels. He was preparing the valley of the Pedernales to receive a contingent equal to that of New Braunfels. Prince Solms had certainly recognized the settling of New Braunfels as an all-consuming task; he had on-the-spot experience. He surely would not allow such a responsibility to be magnified ten times.

Fisher was waiting for Meusebach in New Braunfels. Upon Meusebach's return early in November they drew up a new contract to replace the one made in Germany on June 26, 1844. Under the terms of the new agreement Fisher and Miller were given \$5,000 and the promise of 250,000 acres (one sixth of the maximum amount of land that the Society could acquire from the state by colonizing the Fisher-Miller Grant). In return for these concessions Fisher and Miller transferred to the Society all of their rights in the Grant. The Verein was to pay \$14,000 to Fisher and Miller if it

property of the Society in Texas. Lanfear recognized the crisis and was moved by the appeal. He requested time to consider the question for a few hours. That night, with the ray of hope shining, was the first time of relaxation for Meusebach in many months. The next morning Lanfear reported that he had studied his instructions from headquarters about financial matters and that everywhere he read, "Construe strictly."¹⁷ The banker was left with no alternative but to refuse the loan.

Deeply dejected, Meusebach hurried back to Galveston, hoping yet again that Castell had sent money. This was February, 1846. Castell had been despatching immigrants by the shipload since October of 1845, but money to care for them, to transport them, and to house them he had not despatched. Meusebach conferred with D. H. Klaener, the Society's agent in Galveston, and found him so desperate about supplies for the immigrants that he had mortgaged his own property.¹⁸ Klaener's position was not an easy one to fill, but he did not falter in doing all in his power to help.

Only one remedy seemed to be left: the public press in Germany. In his capacity as trustee of the Society, Meusebach could not issue a statement, but Klaener, as agent, could, and he agreed to do so. Meusebach instructed him to make a correct statement about the sufferings of the immigrants caused by the Society's failure to fulfill its promises and to give that statement to the press.¹⁹ Simultaneously a deputation from the immigrants themselves was sent to appeal for help directly to the Verein. Not until after the newspaper releases were extraordinary efforts made to raise money on a large scale.

The unfavorable publicity was very displeasing to Count Castell, who wrote under the date of July 10, 1846 [to Meusebach]:

"The letter of Mr. Klaener, addressed to the Mayor of Bremen, Mr. Schmidt (published in the papers), has made the worst impression. It has been communicated to the governments who now call for an explanation. It states that sickness and death prevail in Indianola and New Braunfels, and that the Company does not come up to its promise to remove immigrants upwards. We would have risked everything if we could not say we have acted immediately as soon as we heard how matters stood."²⁰

A letter to Meusebach from Castell dated March 24, 1846, had put the whole situation in the right perspective: "The leading committee did

¹⁷ Meusebach, Galveston, January 20, 1846, to Castell. SB Archives, LH, 85.

¹⁸ Meusebach, *Answer to Interrogatories*, p. 20.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Castell's letter [to Meusebach] is quoted in Meusebach, *Answer to Interrogatories*, p. 20.

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make the fault to send the immigrants and not the money for transportation'.²¹

The crucial situation at Carlshafen, however, had not been felt by the members of the Verein; they could hardly conceive of a life other than their own orderly existence. Furthermore, the members resting in the belief that the small sums that they had sent from time to time somehow could have accomplished the care and transportation of the people, had relied on their executive secretary, Castell, to keep things in order. Only when their honor or standing was affected did they give the situation their attention. After the newspapers revealed the calamitous conditions at Carlshafen a general meeting of the Verein was called; only seven of the forty members answered. An emergency decision was reached to send funds immediately by a special messenger and to subscribe to a loan of \$80,000, for which the Duke of Nassau gave security.

Relief thus came in the form of a credit of \$60,000, which was brought over by Philip Capps, a special messenger. The banker's letter announcing the credit was dated July 14, 1846; the notice from New Orleans came August 17; the money reached New Braunfels on September 7, 1846. Meusebach succinctly stated the cause for the tragic situation: "If the same amount had been sent one year before, in September, 1845, when the money was due or overdue, probably the most, if not all, of the inconveniences, troubles and misfortunes would have been avoided."²² Says Tiling, "Nothing could arraign the Adelsverein more severely than this statement."²³

FINANCIAL STRESS

²¹ Castell is quoted, *ibid.*, p. 17.

²² Meusebach, *Answer to Interrogatories*, p. 21.

²³ Moritz Tiling, *History of the German Element in Texas from 1820-1850, and Historical Sketches of the German Texas Singers' League and Houston Turnverein from 1853-1913*, p. 90.

shafen, and the immigrants were left to their own resources. Since the transportation to the land on which they were to be settled could not be furnished, they now demanded refund of their deposit money. Meusebach felt the justice of their claim since the Verein had obligated itself to get them to the colony. Difficulties multiplied: food supplies were insufficient; immigrants not sponsored by the Verein attached themselves to the group. All provisions for the four thousand people now had to be brought in from a distance, even from as far away as New Orleans. The costs eroded the funds until they were exhausted. Since everything had to be bought without delay, the spirit of speculation drove prices to new heights. In the midst of these difficulties word came that the ship *Nahaud* had been wrecked off the coast of England, and that the emigrants had barely escaped with their lives. The compassionate inhabitants of the seaside village of Zorbay cared for the passengers until the Verein sent a rescue ship. This expenditure further cut into the Society's resources.

In this sea-level location of Carlshafen, with wholly inadequate living facilities, disease spread rapidly and soon became epidemic. The most devastating illness of all was diagnosed later by Dr. William Hermes, Sr., as petechial fever, known also as spinal meningitis. Dr. Hermes, not a physician until some years later, came as an immigrant in 1846 and had the dread disease himself.

Disease raged; the unduly severe weather in the winter of 1846 increased the illness and the death toll was heavy. When the immigrants finally were moved from the coast, the contagion spread to New Braunfels and on to Fredericksburg. Although physicians were in attendance, diagnoses were sometimes in error, and treatment was often unavailing. One estimate places the total number of deaths between 800 and 850. All burial ceremony had to be dispensed with. The emotional strain on the survivors was so great, reports say, that some lost their reason and some threw themselves into revelry of all kinds. Such was the effect upon those who, having come to seek a new life, met desolation instead.

What Meusebach had foreseen as a march to the place of hopeful beginnings now became the slow, measured tread of disheartened pilgrims. Instead of welcoming them with acclamation, all he could do was to extend sympathy and to feel compassion. He saw to it that provision was made for the orphans. As evidence of his sorrow and concern, he gave the last of his chests, brought from Germany, to be used in making caskets.⁹ The tragedy of it all struck deep within him.

⁹ Meusebach, Galveston, January 20, 1846, to Castell. SB Archives, LII, 110.

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papers served on him, both in Galveston and Houston, for debts of the Verein.¹⁵

Such experiences, pressing upon the Commissioner-General even at Nassau, left his spirits at a low ebb. An opportunity to use his mind in some intellectual pursuit was always the best means of lifting Meusebach out of depression. The exchange of ideas with men who could project their thoughts beyond the immediate moment gave him true satisfaction. Two such men were Ferdinand Lindheimer, a botanist, and Ferdinand Roemer, a geologist, about whom Meusebach had written, "I hope similarly minded people will come here [to New Braunfels] so that we can make a permanent place for German knowledge at the side of American freedom."¹⁶

The spirit of this naturalist seemed to revive as he stated his intention to work up a scholarly booklet in collaboration with Lindheimer and Roemer. In this pamphlet he would tell about the settlements and then portray in detail the west-central part of Texas, where a great primordial cataclysm had lifted up the hills. Meusebach's friendship with Lindheimer, a trained naturalist, was stimulating. Lindheimer, who had come to Texas in 1836 and was now at home in New Braunfels, was making botanical collections for Professor Asa Gray of Harvard College. Like Meusebach he had attended the University of Bonn before coming to America. Meusebach sent his own specimens of flora and fauna to the University of Halle, and to the Berlin Zoo he sent two live panthers and six partridges, with the plan of later establishing a Texas menagerie in Berlin. He requested that the Universities of Berlin and Munich send meteorological instruments to Lindheimer, whom he named director of a botanical garden in New Braunfels. Together the friends made plans to set up a pilot school to grow fruits which might prove valuable commercially to the colonists.

The second young scientist, Roemer, was in the New Braunfels area during 1846-47. Prince Solms, on his return to Germany from New Braunfels had recommended that a geological survey of Texas be made, with particular attention given to the area within the Fisher-Miller Grant, where he hoped there were rich mineral deposits. He appealed to the Berlin Academy of Sciences, whose members chose Roemer as the person competent to make the survey. This geologist, a graduate of the University of Berlin, had come to Texas with a letter of introduction from Alexander

¹⁵ Meusebach, New Braunfels, August 12, 1846, to Castell. SB Archives, LII, 222.

¹⁶ Meusebach, Galveston, January 20, 1846, to Castell. SB Archives, LII, 125.

Humboldt, who said that "Dr. Roemer, like a book, needs but to be opened to yield good answers to all questions."¹⁷

Roemer was the guest of Meusebach during his stay in Texas, and he used his host's extensive library to advantage. These two scientists shared many experiences. The geologist wrote an account of his experiences in the state in his book *Texas*, first published in Bonn, Germany, in 1849. In the Foreword to the book he expressed appreciation for Meusebach's interest in his work. Meusebach wrote about this association: "Professor Dr. Roemer, on his arrival in Texas, consulted me and with him I made in 1846 and 1847 the first geological exploration in the State, the results of which have been published. . . .¹⁸ I first discovered the real Coal Measures . . . at the mouth of Brady's Creek into the San Saba. . . .¹⁹ Roemer's accurate, early geological observations are the basis for his being called "Father of the Geology of Texas."

Geology
Survey

Excursions, such as the one to the lower Brazos River, where he found the bones of prehistoric animals, and the explorations with Roemer were rewarding, but the exercise of his mental faculties, even more important to Meusebach, took precedence over everything. Knowledge and freedom were the forces that motivated him; they bespoke his inmost being.

Meusebach was a person whose mind, with few exceptions, controlled his actions. This characteristic made him appear authoritative, a quality that sometimes irritated his associates. When one of them, von Coll, once threatened to put a bullet through Meusebach's head rather than take a further word of correction, he was disarmed by Meusebach's calmness. Meusebach later wrote: "If he threatens me personally, I am ready to meet him. I have stood in the line of fire before. I never shunned a student's duel. The matter is different in official relationships. I recognize neither enmities nor friendships. Only accomplishments determine my evaluation."²⁰ Striving for perfection was a part of Meusebach's thinking. A Verein official reported that Meusebach had to descend from a "world of ideals" to approach the practical. The official did not intend this evaluation as a compliment, but the essence of a compliment was in the phrase, for this "idealist" counted the ideal essential as a goal.

To Meusebach growth without learning was hollow. A school had been

¹⁷ Samuel Wood Geiser, *Naturalists of the Frontier*, p. 184.

¹⁸ Ferdinand von Roemer, *Die Kreidebildungen von Texas und ihre organischen Einschluesse* [*The Cretaceous Formations of Texas and Their Organic Inclusions*] (Bonn: Adolphus Marcus, 1852).

¹⁹ Meusebach, n.pl., January 19, 1858, to Governor Runnels. MSS. Governors' Correspondence.

²⁰ Meusebach, Galveston, January 20, 1846, to Castell. SB Archives, LII, 76.

established in New Braunfels on August 11, 1845. An elm tree served as the meeting place until the next year, when the school moved into the block church. In Fredericksburg the first school was held in the octagonal church, *die Vereins Kirche*, even before it was finished. The Verein, said Meusebach, should do all it could to support schools and to undergird learning, for "sensible persons are generally also good people."²¹

Meusebach soon observed typical American characteristics. He was impressed by the fact that the Americans were innately business people and therefore could evaluate the importance of the undertaking by the Verein. He also sensed their basic values; "Names mean nothing to Americans," said Meusebach, "Gold and votes carry importance."²² He recognized that both values are witnesses to ownership. Gold predicates ownership of something tangible; the vote is an intangible possession, yet one that the owner may utilize as he sees fit. With the vote, as it could be exercised in Texas, Meusebach felt the possibility of attaining something far beyond the material. Only when he was able to exclude the material did he feel that life had come into fruition. With Goethe, he felt that life is great and meaningful as one fills it with beautiful things to remember.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

Men to serve on the staff of the Commissioner-General were chosen not because they were qualified for work but because a Verein member wished to reward an individual or because he had to seek asylum. In the latter classification was C. Herber. He was reputed to be a counterfeiter, but, as Castell said, "Herber is popular with people."⁹ A mutual dislike developed between Herber and Meusebach.

Nearer at hand Castell would have seen disease so devastating that deaths were numbered by hundreds. Unfortunately the disease germs were brought from Indian Point to New Braunfels and on to Fredericksburg. While physicians were in attendance, Castell would have recognized that doctors in both settlements made glaring errors. According to Dr. William Hermes, Dr. Schubert in Fredericksburg diagnosed spinal meningitis as scurvy, an error that probably caused many fatalities.¹⁰ In New Braunfels the sick were cared for under a long shed, which was erected to serve as a kind of hospital. An orphanage was established to care for children who had lost their parents during the epidemic. Castell's compassion would have extended to such situations, but he could not have lingered, because plans for the future had to be projected.

Such plans, of course, were the work of the Verein, but Castell also took time to write frequently to Philip Capps and to determine procedure with him. Capps was the special commissioner, who was sent with the funds to relieve the desperate state of the colony after the members of the Verein had been awakened to their responsibilities in Texas by the newspaper disclosures. The Verein had voted that his assignment was to stand "helpfully by the side" of Meusebach.¹¹

Count Castell had chosen Philip Capps as the envoy. Although Count Leiningen questioned the choice, Capps' unbounded loyalty to Castell seemed to be the important factor in the decision. Castell had recognized Capps as a member of the Verein in January, 1846, without requiring that he buy shares in the organization. The two men had a friendly as well as an official relationship, for Castell had asked Capps to seek out "an establishment in Texas, bought inexpensively, but well situated." He continued, "We might even be neighbors."¹²

Capps likewise had been interested in Texas, for he had mentioned the idea of going there as early as October, 1845. That journey was delayed

⁹ Castell, Mainz, March 16, 1845, to Meusebach. SB Archives, LI, 32.

¹⁰ Wilhelm Hermes, "Erlebnisse eines deutschen Einwanderers in Texas," *Kalender der Neu-Braunfelser Zeitung* *feur* 1922, p. 23.

¹¹ Minutes of Verein, Wiesbaden, June 13, 1847, SB Archives, XXVIII, 72.

¹² Castell, Hanover, March 4, [no year], to Capps. SB Archives, XLII, 249.

CHAPTER 16

The Hanging Mob

Philip Cappes capitalized on the unhappiness of the colonists to set up the framework of a plot. The colonists had reason for their discontent; they had come to Texas picturing themselves as land-owners, but here they waited in New Braunfels, many miles from those acres. The time limit for claiming the land was closing in—August, 1847. The Verein had failed in its promises, and the resultant ill feelings were vented on the man who stood for the Verein—Meusebach.

Although Cappes was not in New Braunfels on the last day of the year, 1846, he helped to set the stage for a revolt against the Commissioner-General. Contrary to Meusebach's advice, Cappes invited Fisher to New Braunfels. After having done so, however, Cappes wondered to himself, "Is Fisher likely to change horses?"¹

Meusebach was Fisher's host at breakfast on December 31, when a group of colonists led by disgruntled Rudolph Iwonski began vociferously making its demands. These demands had been listed with the obvious assistance of Fisher:

- 1) All immigrants shall receive land in the Grant without preference; Mr. Fisher shall look after the interests of the immigrants.
- 2) The survey of the lands shall be carried out without any preference; Mr. Fisher shall safeguard the interests of the colonists in seeing to an early survey.
- 3) The immigrants who did not receive town lots in New Braunfels, though they were in Prince Solms's original group, shall now receive those lots.
- 4) The disposition of the wooded area claimed by the colonists as a city park, the title of which is still held by the Verein, shall be cleared by testimony of Prince Solms.
- 5) Mr. von Meusebach shall demand discharge from his present duties from

¹ Cappes, Galveston, October 29, 1846, to Castell. Solms-Braunfels Archives, XLI, 46.

the directors of the Verein. He will continue to direct its affairs until the arrival of his successor.²

Fisher was ostensibly placating the rioters, when in reality he was inciting them to action.³

The mob, spurred on by Iwonski's shouts, pressed into the room; Herber brandished a large whip that he found there. Meusebach stood quietly and talked with them in measured tones. This cool composure so heated the mob that some called out, "Hang him!" Meusebach remained unruffled, and presently the crowd of about 120 men dispersed, but not until a full box of cigars was entirely emptied. As the proceedings of the morning came to a climax Fisher was noticeably absent.⁴

On the afternoon of this mob action a deputation of Americans living in New Braunfels came spontaneously to Meusebach to express their indignation over the event and their willingness to stand by him to their "last drop of blood." On the following day, January 1, 1847, a group of Americans as well as a number of German colonists assembled and passed resolutions condemning the action of the mob and declaring it a slander to the wishes of the community.⁵ The assembly authorized publication of the resolutions in the *New Era Houston Democrat*.⁶

This action on the part of responsible citizens gave satisfaction to Meusebach, but he decided to go ahead with the resignation he had determined months earlier to make. After only a few weeks in New Braunfels, he had recognized that the Verein did not actually know what its business was and he had wanted to resign immediately so that he could return to Germany and inform the members of the Society of the conditions of their undertaking in Texas. He had remained at his post, however, to guide the project through its perilous times. Now before laying down his work he decided to carry out his plan of long standing, to make a peace treaty with the Indians. Since a representative of the Verein, Philip Capps, was at hand, Meusebach decided to turn his office over to him, at least for the time being.

Meusebach knew, to an extent, the duplicity of Capps, for in his letter

² Meusebach, Fredericksburg, January 19, 1847, to Verein. SB Archives, XXVIII, 20-23.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

⁴ Oswald Mueller (trans.), *Roemer's Texas*, p. 217.

⁵ Alwin H. Sörgel, Indian Point, January 1, 1847, to Capps. SB Archives, XXVIII, 23-25. Sörgel was in New Braunfels on December 31, 1846, but was sent to Indian Point the next day by Meusebach.

⁶ Meusebach, Fredericksburg, January 19, 1847, to Verein. SB Archives, XXVIII, 163-165.

} peace treaty planned

asking Capps to handle matters while he was absent on the expedition to the Indians, he said that it was Capps' invitation to Fisher—which Meusebach had advised against—that had provided Fisher with the opening he wanted to gain control of the land grant. Fisher included provisos for that purpose in the demands voiced by the mob, which he helped incite.

One of the grievances listed by the rioters related to the ownership of a certain park area. During the single month of April, 1845, in which Prince Solms was actually in New Braunfels with the colonists, he had designated a wooded area as a park for them, but he did not give a title making it a community property. Now the colonists wanted the Prince in Germany to decide whether the area belonged to the Society or to the colony-community. When this question arose at a meeting of the Society in Germany in March, 1847, Castell remarked: "Why should we be so foolish as to give a forest to a city whose future citizens we do not know? These *Halunken* make a thousand demands but want to do nothing."⁷

The uprising against Meusebach hurt him deeply. The colonists were justified in wanting the land which had been promised to them; in that he concurred with them wholeheartedly. But their manner of demanding their rights—mob action—distressed him. He, however, found some balm in thinking that he was taking the blame for the Society and that his own integrity had not been assailed.

He would let nothing deter him from securing the titles to the lands. The Grant should have been ready for occupancy before the Verein sent one person to Texas. In reality the immigrants were the donors, for it was only by their presence in the land that the Society had claim to it, although the Society wished to appear as the donor to those immigrating. Meusebach made a point of letting the colonists know that they were under obligation to the Republic of Texas for the grant of land.

Surveying the land now occupied by Indians was the first step to securing a title. An American courier who had been employed by the colony vanished when he learned that Meusebach intended to go into the heart of the Grant.⁸ Surveyors refused to go unless Meusebach settled the Indian question.⁹ In early December he had organized his expedition, with plans to go as far as "the San Saba Fort."¹⁰

⁷ Castell, Wiesbaden, March, 1847, to Capps. SB Archives, XLI, 274.

⁸ Meusebach, Fredericksburg, January 19, 1847, to Verein. SB Archives, XXVIII, 182.

⁹ John O. Meusebach, *Answer to Interrogatories*, p. 23.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

Treitschke, the historian of the nineteenth century, gives this evaluation:

Unfortunately the well meant undertaking was inaugurated with a superficiality characteristic of distinguished persons knowing nothing of business. The capital of \$80,000 was quite inadequate. The political calculations upon which the scheme was based proved illusory for Texas joined the American union in the year 1845. Prince Charles of Solms Braunfels, a fanciful, good humored and boastful youth paid a visit to Texas, where he founded the town of New Braunfels and organised the district of Sophienburg, and named it after a German princess whom he delighted to honor. But he soon tired of the affair. Of the five thousand emigrants sent by the princely society to Texas during the years 1845 and 1846, more than two thousand perished miserably. The fifteen hundred survivors, vigorously led by Commissioner General von Meusebach, learned to fend for themselves; but in the end like all the other German immigrants who came into the American union, they became German-English Americans. The lamentable failure of this Society, which was dissolved in the year 1847, had an unfortunate reaction upon home politics, for the radicals, who beneath the surface were at work with growing success, were not slow to turn the unfortunate affair to account.⁴

John A. Hawgood says that Prince Carl Victor Leiningen apparently regarded the undertaking in Texas as an unwieldy monster and the association that had created it as constituting a sort of corporate Frankenstein.⁵

An arraignment made by Solon Loving is somewhat in the same line: "It is supposed the Society thought they were purchasing land, but they could hardly have thought they were getting the amount of land they thought they were getting for the price they were paying, even though land was ridiculously cheap in Texas at the time. Exen though the Society did think they were buying land, they cannot be excused for thinking so."⁶

Despite the severe pressures on Meusebach as commissioner-general, he was able to view the Verein and its accomplishments objectively. At a crucial time, June 26, 1846, he wrote: "Even if all is lost the Verein has done much; it gave German colonization a foothold, an influence that cannot be overlooked. Later, time will tell and recognize how much the Verein did. Here ten thousands more was done for the immigrants than anywhere in the world!"⁷

⁴ Heinrich Gotthard von Treitschke, *History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century* (Eden and Cedar Paul, trans.), VII, 276.

⁵ John A. Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German-America*, p. 175.

⁶ Solon Ollie Loving, "A History of the Fisher-Miller Land Grant from 1848-1860" (M.A. Thesis, The University of Texas), p. 40.

⁷ Meusebach, Nassau, June 26, 1846, to Verein. SB Archives, LII, 206-207.

Epidemic
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teenth President of the United States. Rutherford B. Hayes kept a diary while making a horseback trip through Texas in the winter of 1848-1849. About New Braunfels and its people Hayes wrote: "Those fair-headed Teutons have built in a short three years the most prosperous, singular, and interesting town in Texas. This is a German village of two or three thousand people at the junction of two of the most beautiful streams I ever saw, the Guadalupe and the Comal . . . The water is so transparent the fish seem hanging in the air."³



After Meusebach was absolved from daily responsibility for others, he sought the quietness and freedom that the small farm at Comanche Springs provided. There a life close to nature gave him refreshment of soul and body. Ferdinand Lindheimer, the botanist with whom Meusebach had worked in New Braunfels, was his guest at this farm, where the two nature lovers made botanical collections. Lindheimer's classification labels for 1849 bear the place tag of Comanche Springs. These two scientists found delight in giving appropriate names to their findings, such as *Lindheimeria Texana*, a flower yellow in color, known more commonly as the "Texas Star." At his Comanche Springs farm Meusebach had made pets of two bear cubs, the mother of which he had killed earlier. One day while he and Lindheimer were admiring the cubs, one put both paws on Meusebach's shoulders. Seeing this, Lindheimer said, "From this point on there is danger for human beings."⁴ The idea of danger from the cubs that appeared so warmly attentive made Meusebach shudder. On impulse he drew his pistol and with one shot for each bear he put an end to the danger. When he saw his pets lying prostrate, he recoiled. Lindheimer consoled him by saying, "You acted wisely. If you had waited to shoot, it would have been harder." The two friends walked away, with Lindheimer calling attention to the native larkspur and wondering whether it was as prolific in Germany.

{ Ft. Stock ton }

bear cubs

The desire to see his family in Germany was with Meusebach constantly, but the report of political conditions there was so discouraging that it arrested his incentive to return. The years 1848 to 1849 were marked by retrogression rather than progress in gaining a constitution for Germany. The promise in that revolutionary movement toward a constitution, which ended in failure, caused many Germans to seek a place where promises of freedom could be realized. A country where the different states were

³ Claude Michael Gruener, "Rutherford B. Hayes's Horseback Ride through Texas," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXVIII, No. 3 (January, 1965), 357.
⁴ Lucy Meusebach Marschall, Notes and Memoranda. MSS. Meusebach Family Files.

The gains in population bear out the Governor's flowery words. In 1847 the state census showed the population as 142,000. In 1850 the first federal census of Texas revealed a population of 212,592. Immigrants poured into the state in the next decade. In 1860 the census showed that the population had risen to 604,216, a gain of 184.2 per cent.

Meusebach was appointed a member of the Committee on State Affairs and of the Committee on Education. The Education Committee brought in a bill early in 1852 which provided for a system of common schools. The execution of the bill had to await the financial means provided by the State School Law of 1854. The Germans favored free schools removed from sectarian influences, with attendance made compulsory. They made their demands known to the state in a mass meeting held in New Braunfels in 1854. That same year Representative Gustav Schleicher introduced a bill to authorize New Braunfels to levy a tax for support of the free public school.

The Committee on State Affairs recommended a bill incorporating the city of Austin. This committee requested the Governor to obtain from a competent architect the plan of a building for a state capitol, "to be built of brick or stone, in a substantial manner but on as cheap a plan as practicable."⁴ The amount authorized for the building, \$100,000, came up for a vote several times. On February 13, 1852, the Senate and House, sitting together, passed the appropriation. The architect-engineer who submitted the plan for the building was F. Giraud of San Antonio. During the 1851 session he received \$100, which sum covered only the work of the draftsmen. An additional \$250 was deemed as necessary compensation for the services of the architect himself. This sum was approved when the committee of which Meusebach was chairman submitted the bill to the Legislature.⁵

Three years elapsed before the capitol building was actually constructed. In June, 1856, a "Report on the building and furniture of the Capitol of the State of Texas" revealed dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the structure and the handling of related funds as well. A second architect, John Brandon, was employed, and received a fee of \$500. He testified that he drew the plans for the building, with the help of assistants, in three and one-half days.⁶ When this building was destroyed by fire in 1881 plans were already underway for the construction of a more suitable

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁶ Texas State Legislature, Adjourned session (July 7-September 1, 1856), *Report on the building and furniture of the Capitol of the State of Texas* p. 13.

Capitol
in Austin

to the heights within himself. The horses started in a walk but soon moved into a canter. As the young couple rode through the country, she brimful of life, he a bit grave, the promise of autumnal glory was all about them. Sufficient for them was the present moment: it was their wedding day.

Meusebach took his bride to Comanche Springs to begin their life together in the house in which he was already established. The family silver, linen, china, and Venetian glass, Meusebach's favorite, which he had brought back from his 1851 trip to Germany, had added some niceties, which were in contrast to the crude furnishings. Agnes also added a few items that gave distinction to the pioneer home.

The natural water supply at Comanche Springs made possible the excellent growth of vegetables and flowers. The spring proved advantageous in keeping cool the butter and cream, which Agnes often used in preparing dishes that her Austrian mother had taught her. Meusebach liked the butter especially, for, he was wont to say, "Bread is made only to hold butter."³ The couple enjoyed the wheat flour ground at the Mormon mill, where the first wheat flour of the entire region was made.

Corn meal, however, seemed foreign to the Meusebachs, even after they had used it for a number of years. Agnes varied her cooking between American and German; she would prepare fried chicken, American style, but for dessert she would serve a strawberry *Torte*, Austrian style.

When Governor Bell called the special session of the Fourth Legislature to meet on January 13, 1853, Meusebach left his bride with her parents in New Braunfels while he journeyed to Austin. Upon his return Agnes and her parents enjoyed hearing about his experiences; they had a good laugh over what a Lipan Indian was reported to have said about Colonel Jack Hays: "Me and Red Wing not afraid to go to hell together. Captain Jack heap brave; not afraid to go to hell by himself."

Agnes enjoyed visits in New Braunfels, but a trip with her husband to the "Latin Settlement" at Sisterdale was a stimulating experience. The men and women constituting the settlement were cultured and intelligent; so conversation was on an intellectual level. Merriment prevailed, too, and they enjoyed waltzing, and singing, and concert music on a fine piano. These Sisterdale settlers, self-constituted exiles from Germany, were not so successful in agriculture as in intellectual pursuits, but they had found their Arcadia in Texas and were content. Social and political freedom enabled them to make the most of life.

³ *Ibid.*

Sisterdale

Sisterdale was called the "Queen City of the Guadalupe" because of the quality of graciousness that emanated from her people. Visitors came to the community while it flowered during the 1850's; among them was Prince Paul of Württemberg, a botanist of note. Another visitor was Frederick Law Olmsted, who recorded his impressions in his book, *Journey through Texas*. He passed, as he says, "a rarely pleasant day" with Otto von Behr, who, like Meusebach, had been a friend of Humboldt and of Goethe's Bettina. Olmsted gives this picture of the day in the backwoods of Texas: "The dinner was Texan, of cornbread and frijoles, with coffee served in tin cups, but the salt was Attic, and the talk was worthy of golden goblets."⁴

A dozen miles from the Latin Settlement another group of unusual persons made their homes for a short period. These five individuals had been members of the Bettina colony on the Llano River, which lasted only as long as supplies were provided—one year. The colony then went to "pieces like a bubble" and "scattered to the four winds."⁵ After two years in the Sisterdale area, the five colonists moved a little farther west and, in time, founded the town of Boerne, south of Sisterdale. In that settlement the Meusebachs found congenial friends. The same held for the settlement of Comfort, which was founded in 1854 by Ernst Altgelt. The Altgelt family and the Meusebachs were closely associated all their lives. These friendships filled a need in the lives of the young couple, but soon their children had first call on their attention.

Their first child, a son, was born to the Meusebachs on July 26, 1853. His name, Ernst Otfried, was given in honor of his maternal grandfather and of his own father. The parents thought the baby was fascinating and wrote long letters about him to Meusebach's mother and sister in Germany. To their second son, born in 1855, they gave the name Otto; and to their third son, born in 1857, the name Max Rudolf. The father took great pride in these sons and wrote of their development in detail to relatives. No more sons came, but little daughters did, eight in number, and each seemed more welcome than the previous one. The names chosen for the daughters honored both sides of the family: Antonie, born in 1859; Elizabeth, 1862; Johanne and Francisca, 1864, twins who died as young children; Lucy, 1865; the twins Emmy and Lilly, 1868, of whom the

⁴ Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey Through Texas: or a Saddle-Trip on the Southwestern Frontier*, p. 93.

⁵ Louis Reinhart, "The Communistic Colony of Bettina, 1846-8," *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, III, No. 1 (July, 1899), 39.

Boerne

Comfort

Meusebachs
children
11-4=7

latter died in infancy. The last child was also named Lilly; she was born in 1872 and died two years later. Pilgrimages to the graves of the four little girls in New Braunfels were made by the family for many years.

The children of this family were shown attention and affection—more evident perhaps on the part of the father than the mother, who was the disciplinarian. The children were all born in New Braunfels, where the maternal grandparents lavished love on them.

In 1854 Governor Pease appointed Meusebach commissioner for the colony of the German Emigration Company. He served in this capacity for a year, issuing land certificates to his colonists, the titles to the land promised them by the Society. In fact, the amount of land promised by the Society was doubled. The colonists were now allotted the full 640 acres if married, 320 if single. The Republic of Texas granted every settler 640 or 320 acres and stipulated premium amounts to the contractor. At first the contractor, in this case the original Society, would promise each immigrant only one half of what the Republic granted each settler and the Society would retain the other half. Now, since the Society had disbanded, the colonists received the full allotment of land.

The bringing to final fruition of the promises of the Verein gave Meusebach deep satisfaction.

Meusebach personally issued certificates to 729 colonists for a total of 324,160 acres. Three other commissioners from the Land Office issued certificates, bringing the total amount of land granted the colonists to 1,735,200 acres. The land could be selected anywhere in the Grant where unclaimed land lay. Very few of the colonists moved to these tracts; those who retained the land found that it later became quite valuable. Some immediately sold the land certificates for a song.

In 1858 Colonel Jack Hays stopped at Comanche Springs. As he and Meusebach sat looking out over the valley, now so peaceful, they reminisced, one experience recalling another. The Colonel pointed to his rifle, saying that he had regarded it as a prized possession ever since Meusebach had presented it to him in the name of the Verein in the summer of 1845. The Colonel recalled how impressed he had been by Prince Solms. To see a prince in person was not an everyday occurrence. Prince Solms was a fine and tender-hearted gentleman, said the Colonel, as he thought back to the occasion when Henry Castro's colonists, looking in vain for their leader, were ill and destitute. The Colonel and his helper Johann Rahm assisted the Alsatians, and the Prince seemed to appreciate what they did.

Prince Solms, Meusebach recalled, recommended that the Verein pre-

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CHAPTER 24

Loyal Valley

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In 1867 Meusebach sold his Fredericksburg store and bought a small holding at Waco Springs, three miles above New Braunfels, on the Guadalupe. An abundance of water for vegetation had always attracted Meusebach, and no doubt the river influenced his investment in this farm. The location was accessible from his home in New Braunfels, where his family was living to be near the schools. The children enjoyed living in New Braunfels—the small lake on the grandparents' farm at the edge of town was a great attraction for the three boys, and Grandmother Coreth was there to pamper the little girls. In New Braunfels Meusebach's young wife had an opportunity to enjoy the companionship of other young women. Her reputation as a superior housekeeper was widespread. In her energetic nature was a fine orderliness. Of her children and her household servants she required adherence to high standards. She often taught morals to her children by repeating proverbs, such as *Wer das Kleine nicht ehrt ist das Grosse nicht wert* ("He who fails to honor the small, the unimportant, is not worthy of the great or important.") The little daughter Emmy at a later time recorded one hundred of the proverbs she had learned from her mother and father.¹ An example of the exactitude in the household was shown by the orderly wardrobes. The linen from Germany was embroidered with consecutive numbers. If ever these numbers were out of order, the entire stack came down. The maid did not make such an error twice.

Meusebach and his wife shared many interests. They made a beautiful couple as they danced together. She liked best to waltz to the "Blue Danube," because then she could tease her husband about the superiority of Austrian dance music. Sometimes a group of friends gathered to sing.

¹ Emmy Meusebach Marschall, Notes and Memoranda. MSS. In possession of Mrs. Homer T. Love, San Antonio, Texas.

Time out for conversation came often, particularly with Lindheimer, with whom Meusebach exchanged botanical specimens for identification. When newspapers arrived from Germany friends came to discuss the contents. All agreed that autocratic Germany could learn much from democratic Texas. Their attitude concurred with Victor Bracht's earlier description of the state: "Texas . . . this flower of political freedom and social independence."²

At the season of the equinox, September 12, 1869, a tornado tore through the city of New Braunfels. The Meusebach residence was one of the houses in the path of the storm. The house and contents were demolished and "made even with the ground."³ All of the family escaped injury except Meusebach himself, whose foot was pinned between heavy beams. It took the hard labor of two strong men to extricate him. Effects of the injury to his foot were with him the remainder of his life.

The Meusebachs made a point of employing persons who had been orphaned by the illness that ravaged the early colonists. Sometimes a helper was a representative of second-generation immigrants. One such employee, a sixteen-year-old nurse girl, proved providential. The Comal River flash flooded in New Braunfels on June 9, 1872. Just as the nurse finished decorating a small tree with candy as a surprise for the children, she saw a wall of water rushing down the narrow river. The girl was barely able to warn the family in time for them to escape; much of the house was swept down the torrent. With it went all the treasured German china and Venetian glass, which had been saved from the tornado.

The loss of material possessions was discouraging, but the help shown by friends at such a time was heart-warming. Meusebach wanted his children and his wife to enjoy social pleasures in a community with opportunities for cultural development. For himself, he was interested in a location where he could live quietly, without the press of so many activities. He therefore first put down his stakes in 1869 at a location midway between Fredericksburg and Mason. Definite prospects that a railroad would be built between these two towns, and the fact that the location was on the stage route to El Paso enhanced its value. He gave the sparse and scattered settlement the name of Loyal Valley to indicate his own loyalty to the Union, which he had sustained through the years.

The pull toward Loyal Valley was strong, but Meusebach and his wife waited until a propitious time in their children's schooling before they

² Viktor Bracht, *Texas im Jahre 1848*, p. 71.

³ Lucy Meusebach Marschall, Notes and Memoranda. MSS. Meusebach Family Files.

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Meusebach Family

moved. By 1875 all of the children, even the youngest, had had the benefits of the excellent New Braunfels schools. That was the year, therefore, that the move to Loyal Valley was made.

Low-lying hills encircled this valley. To the east, in the distance, stood majestic House Mountain, whose rose-red boulders indicated its granite foundation; to the south the chalky outcropping on the knolls showed a limestone foundation. Between was this valley, not as picturesque as some areas nearby, but promising great fertility because of its Archean geological formation. Soon after acquiring this valley land in 1869, Meusebach had begun planting an orchard, ornamental shrubs, and a rose garden. With care given them, they had grown well and seemed to speak a welcome when the family came to live there in 1875.

The site had attraction for Meusebach, who wanted to sow and reap the good earth. In his first letter to the Verein he had written, "I should like to obtain a large enough property to be the basis of nature study and the furtherance thereof in those rich fields."⁴ He believed he had found such a place in those seven hundred acres just beyond the center of activity, yet not entirely removed from the hum of progress. Here was the eddy in the current of civilization. The associations were not to be broken: it was a half day's travel to Fredericksburg; two days, or less, to New Braunfels.

For these trips, particularly the semiannual visits to New Braunfels, Meusebach drove a hack with an excellent team of horses. One well-matched pair of grey horses he named Greeley and Pilgrim. In his valley, he kept horses to compete in the races which were held on the open prairies nearby. Meusebach's horses, however, seldom won against the wilder horses belonging to the local ranch people.

The region called for a mercantile establishment, which Meusebach set up in a building constructed of native stone. This store soon became a community center, the more so when Meusebach was appointed postmaster and notary public. The native stone was used in building several dwellings in the area, including the residence to which Meusebach brought his family. Frau Meusebach liked the house. The children were delighted to be able to pick peaches from their own trees and to gather great bouquets of the flowering crape myrtle. The family made a point of having a little celebration for almost every occasion. That first evening in their Loyal Valley home the father gathered his family outside under the grape arbor and had his sons slice the watermelons which he had grown. No restraint was put on the children since they were eating outside. Their joy was unbounded.

⁴ Meusebach, Berlin, October 24, 1844, to Verein. Solms-Braunfels Archives, LI, 1.

CHAPTER 25

“Still Forward Press”

For the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of New Braunfels, in 1895, Meusebach was invited to be an honored guest. Because of his failing health he was forced to decline. The following year, 1896, Fredericksburg celebrated the fiftieth year of its founding. A book, *Fest-Ausgabe zum fünfzigjährigen Jubiläum der Deutschen Kolonie Friedrichsburg*, marking this anniversary gave the founder of Fredericksburg, John O. Meusebach, significant honor.¹

Accompanying her parents to the Fredericksburg celebration, a little three-year-old granddaughter of Meusebach found exquisite delight in the bright lights all about. Her father held her high as she exclaimed, “Mehr Licht! Mehr Licht!” When her grandfather was told about the incident, he said: “Those were Goethe’s last words. ‘I shall want more light till the setting of my sun’.”²

One of Meusebach’s grandsons felt that the man who had handled land almost like merchandise should have acquired more for himself. Such was not the thinking of this argonaut, who sought not gold but something gold cannot buy—freedom of mind and spirit.

In his letter to Castell written from Galveston on January 20, 1846,³ Meusebach had seen no lifting of the curtain of despair that was settling more heavily each day on the Galveston and Indianola areas. He realized that the destiny of hundreds of lives hung on his efforts. Despondency bowed him low at times, yet an inner source lifted him from hopelessness.

¹ Robert Penniger (ed., comp.), *Fest-Ausgabe zum Fünfzigjährigen Jubiläum der Deutschen Kolonie Friedrichsburg*, p. 58.

² Lucy Meusebach Marschall, Notes and Memoranda. MSS. Meusebach Family Files.

³ Meusebach, Galveston, January 20, 1846, to Castell. Solms-Braunfels Archives, LII, 125.

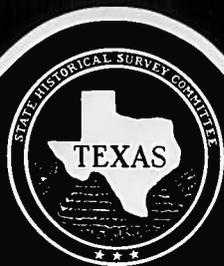
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GERMAN PIONEERS IN TEXAS

IN THIS AREA, NOW COVERED BY CANYON LAKE, GERMAN EMIGRANTS WERE THE FIRST SETTLERS.

A SOCIETY OF NOBLES (MAINZER ADELVSEREIN) SPONSORED THE EMIGRATION OF 7,380 GERMANS TO TEXAS FROM 1844 TO 1847. THEY FOUNDED NEW BRAUNFELS IN 1845. MOVING WEST, THEY ESTABLISHED FREDERICKSBURG IN 1846.

THEIR COMANCHE INDIAN TREATY OPENED 3,800,000 ACRES BETWEEN THE LLANO AND COLORADO RIVERS TO PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.

FARMERS AND ARTISANS, SCHOLARS AND SCIENTISTS, THEY TRIUMPHED OVER EPIDEMIC AND PRIVATION TO HELP BUILD TEXAS AND THE WEST.

(1968)