

Texas Historical Commission staff (LCH), 2/19/2003, revised 12/23/2003
Official Texas Historical Medallion and 16"x12" plaque with post
Comal County (Job #09703)

Location: New Braunfels, 548 Hill Avenue

Subject codes: BH, QA, GN UTM ref.: 14 585119E 3285266N

THE HOFHEINZ HOUSE

GERMAN NATIVE FREDERICK HOFHEINZ CAME TO THE NEW BRAUNFELS AREA WITH HIS FAMILY IN 1852. HE LATER SETTLED IN KENDALL COUNTY AND WED EMILIE WILKE. HE SERVED AS GRAND LODGE PRESIDENT OF THE TEXAS SONS OF HERMANN AND RAN FOR TEXAS LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR BEFORE MOVING TO NEW BRAUNFELS IN 1905. THE COUPLE BUILT THIS HOME THE NEXT YEAR. CONVERTED TO APARTMENTS DURING WORLD WAR II, THE HOUSE WAS ALSO OWNED BY CHARLES KNIBBE AND BRUNO AND ELIZABETH SCHOENFELD. IT RETAINS MUCH OF ITS ORIGINAL QUEEN ANNE DETAILING, INCLUDING A CENTRAL TOWER ABOVE A PORCH ACCENTED WITH SPINDLED FRIEZEWORK.

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK – 2002

09703

RECEIVED

DEC 11 2002

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

THE HOFHEINZ HOUSE

The house that stands at 548 Hill Avenue in New Braunfels, Texas, is, in many ways, a microcosm of the birth and development of New Braunfels itself. Originally part of the Jahn country estate starting in 1846, then on two plots in the Jahn Addition in 1901, what was to be the house at 107 Grand Street was built as the retirement home of a prominent citizen Frederick Hofheinz. Decades later, because of its proximity to the tracks, the neighborhood deteriorated and the house became a rooming house for three families during World War II. After the war, the house was occupied by a family in a second wave of German immigrants in the 20th century, and finally, in 1971, it became the home of a couple of "Auslanders" who were looking for a perfect place to live away from city life.

Many of the German immigrants who came to Comal County beginning in 1846 experienced great hardship. One of the greatest personal tragedies for the early settlers involved the outbreak of disease, especially cholera. Frederick Hofheinz was one of the staunch pioneers whose lives and characters were altered and formed by this epidemic catastrophe.

Born in Nassau, Germany, April 28, 1840,¹ Mr. Hofheinz had originally immigrated from Bremerhafen to Hortontown, near New Braunfels, with his parents and his younger siblings in 1851² when he was eleven. His family's departure from Germany marked the end of his formal education. Unfortunately, his father died in the cholera epidemic of 1852, a few months after their grueling, nine-day voyage and arrival through the port of Indianola, and the family was destitute. As the oldest son, Frederick went to work as a teamster hauling freight from the coast into the interior from 1854, when he was fourteen, until he was twenty-two.³

In 1862 he moved to Kendall County and joined Captain E. Jones' volunteers organized to guard the frontier from Indian attack.⁴ Two years later, on September 18, 1864, he married Emilie Wilke⁵ and started farming and ranching in the area. Mr. Hofheinz was a popular local official, regularly elected Justice of the Peace and County Commissioner.⁶ When he decided against running for reelection, the voters elected him anyway, but he refused the office.

He then became active in the Order of the Sons of Hermann, holding the offices of member of the grand finance committee, grand trustee, first vice president, and in 1903 he was elected grand president of the order for the state of Texas. His term was so successful that he was reelected to another term without opposition in 1905. His two terms

were characterized by a marked increase in both new lodges and total membership.⁷

Mr. Hofheinz was a devoted Republican "from principle"⁸ during the time in Texas politics when that was a rarity. Although he never sought public office, during the 1902 state Republican convention he was nominated by acclamation for State Senator from the 24th District,⁹ which he refused. In 1906 he was nominated for Lieutenant Governor on the Republican ticket and, of course, lost "owing to the great Democratic majority of voters in the State."¹⁰

In 1905, Frederick turned the management of his ranch in Kendall County over to his youngest son and moved to New Braunfels. He became, in 1908, one of the principal founders of the New Braunfels State Bank.¹¹ He was elected president and director of the bank and reelected every year until 1911 when he retired.¹²

Frederick and Emilie celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1914. The couple originally had seven children, but one son Eduard died in 1912. Mr. Hofheinz died of complications following an operation for liver cancer at home April 21, 1918¹³, less than a week short of his seventy-eighth birthday. Frederick and Emilie were survived by four sons, Adolph, Hugo, Bruno and Max and two daughters, Adele (Mrs. Otto Beseler) and Emma (Mrs. Hugo Liesmann).

Emilie Hofheinz was born Emilie Wilke on May 29, 1843, in Port

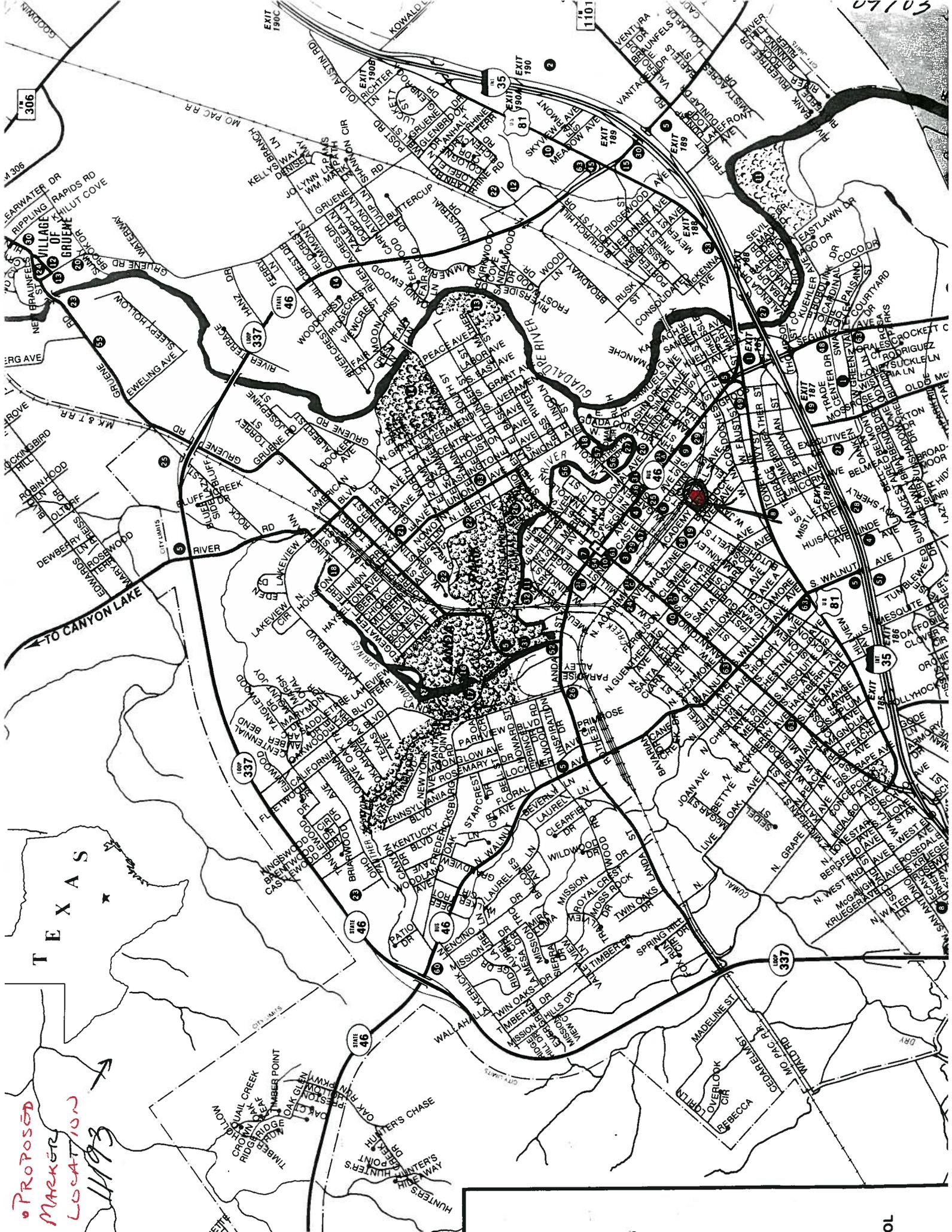
Lavaca, "not too long after the ship docked."¹⁴ She spent her early childhood in Lavaca and her teens in Kendall County, where she met Frederick. After Frederick's death, she lived with her son Max and his family until her death December 20, 1919, of a stroke following an earlier heart attack.¹⁵ The Hofheinzes are interred in a family plot in the Comal Cemetery. Their headstones include porcelain portraits of both Emilie and Frederick.

The house at 548 Hill Avenue in New Braunfels, Texas, was constructed in 1906 by Frederick and Emilie Hofheinz after they had moved to New Braunfels from Kendall County the previous fall. The land on which the house was built was originally part of the Jahn Addition, formed in 1899¹⁶ from the land originally deeded to Charles A. Jahn when New Braunfels was founded. Before the formation of the Jahn Addition, however, in 1891, Heinrich Blumberg purchased half of the double lot on which the house now stands,¹⁷ and in 1892 Johann George Wahl purchased the second half of the double lot that matched Blumberg's.¹⁸ When purchased, the lots ran from Grand Avenue (now Hill Avenue) to Academy Street, the street behind Hill, which acted as a carriage access to Grand Avenue.

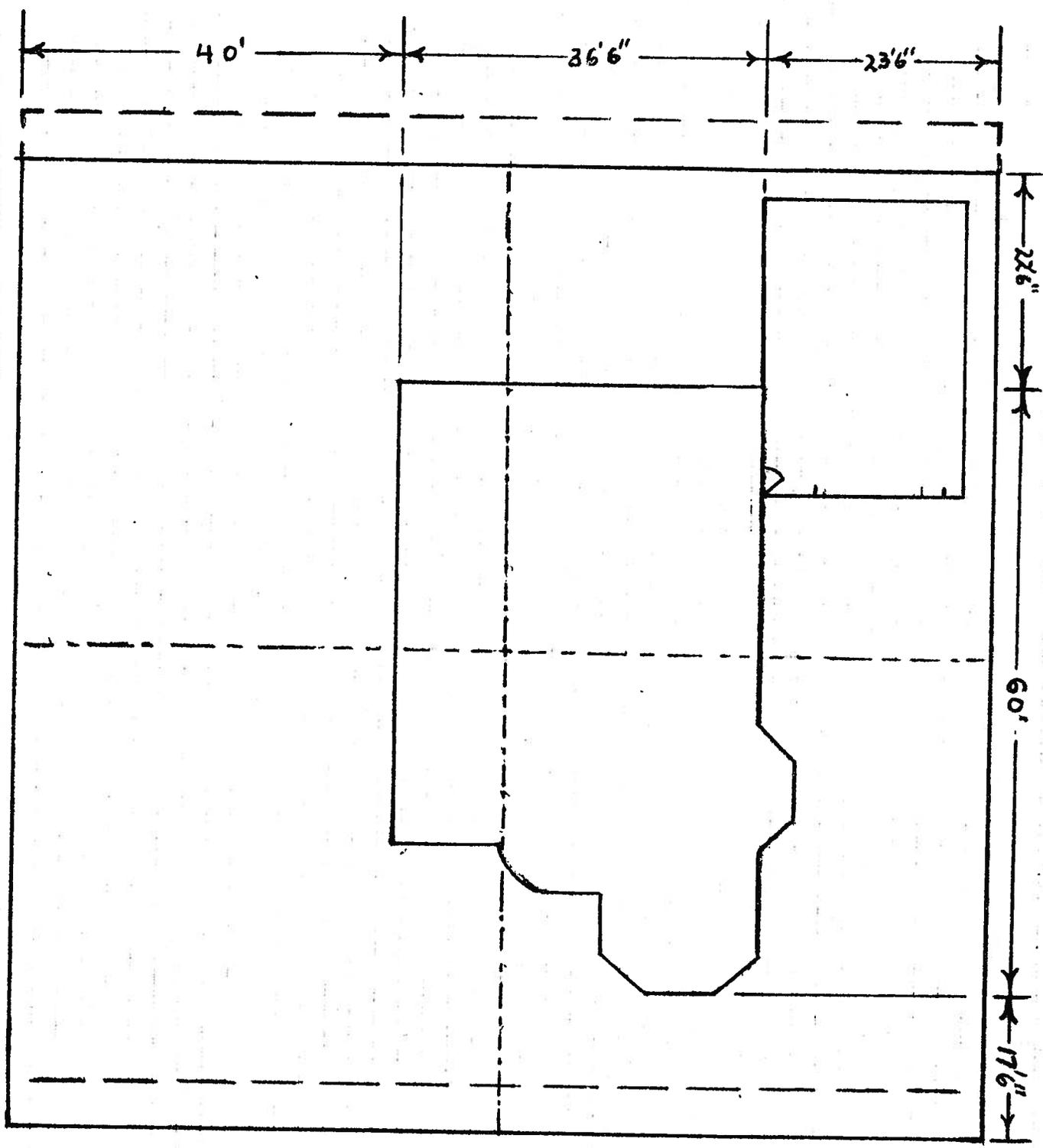
In 1905 and 1906 Frederick Hofheinz purchased both strips and built his house on the Hill Avenue half of the lot.¹⁹ After Mr. Hofheinz' death, his children sold the house, in 1920, to Charles Knibbe.²⁰ After Mr.

Knibbe's death in 1927, his four surviving children inherited 548 Hill and 545 Academy, the property behind it. During the Second World War the house was divided into apartments.²¹ Following the war, in 1947, Bruno and Elizabeth Schoenfeld purchased the house from Ella Bremmer, daughter of the Knibbes,²² and the Schoenfelds' son Herman built his house on the Academy Street half of the original lot,²³ where the carriage house still stands.

A stonemason by trade, Bruno made additions to the skirt, adding stone flower boxes and tiled sidewalks around the side and back, and enlarging and framing in the back porch in 1949. He also planted pecan trees on the property and built a low rock wall across the front of the property in 1950.²⁴ The Bruno Schoenfelds lived at 548 Hill the rest of their lives. After Bruno's death in 1959 and Elizabeth's death in 1968,²⁵ the house remained abandoned until 1971, when it was purchased and subsequently restored by Bill and Bonnie Leitch, the present owners.²⁶ They have restored the original shutters and porch gingerbread and added a garage on the rear of the house.

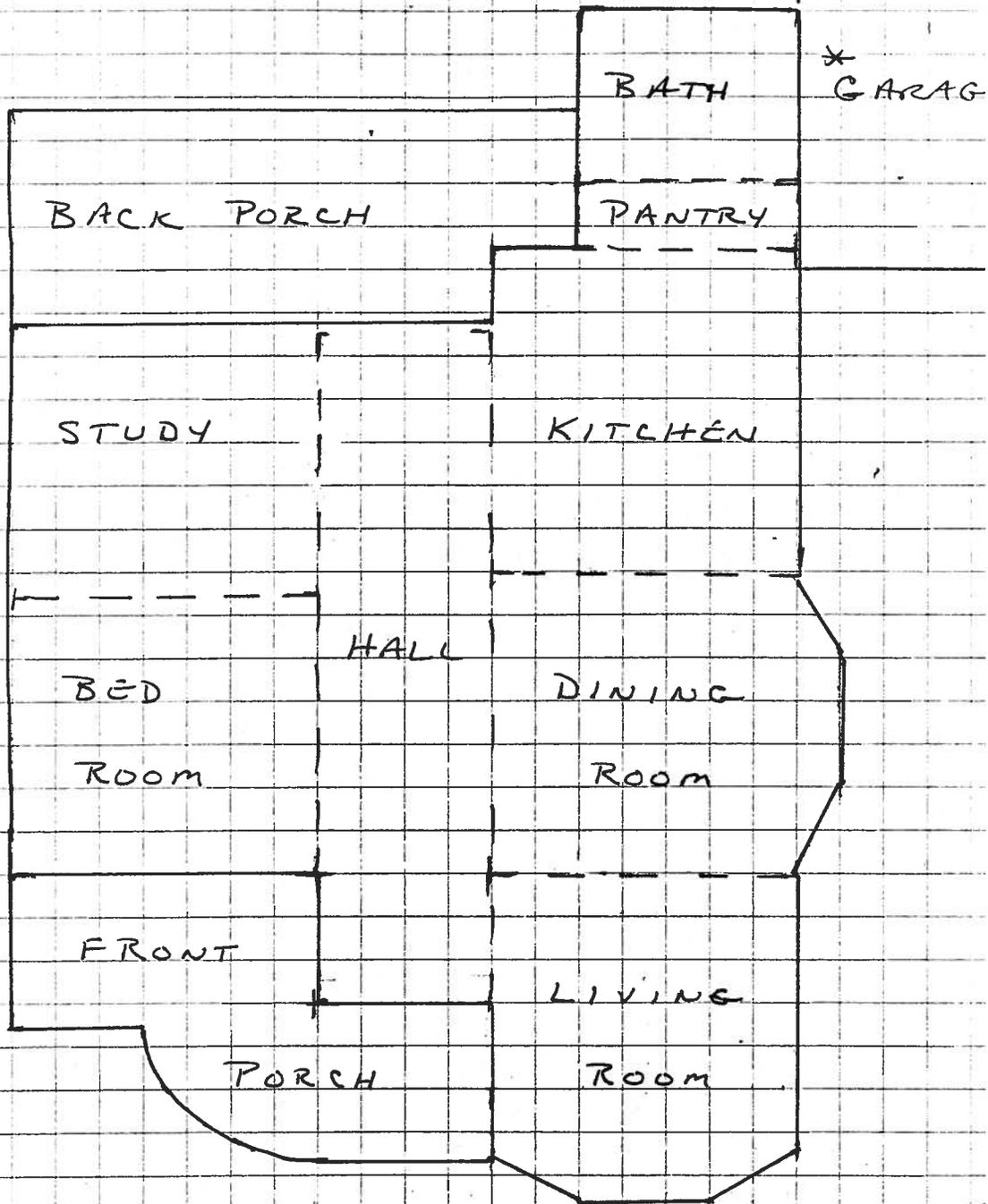


Proposed
Marker
Location
MAP3



Block 1024 Lot #s 10 & 12
548 Hill, New Braunfels

09703



Block 1024 Lots 410¹/₂12

THE ONLY ADDITION (BESIDES THE GARAGE*) WAS THE INDOOR BATH. THERE HAVE BEEN NO STRUCTURAL CHANGES.

END NOTES

¹San Antonio Express, April 24, 1918, p. 9.

²San Antonio Express, April 24, 1918, p. 9.

³San Antonio Express, April 24, 1918, p. 9.

⁴San Antonio Express, April 24, 1918, p. 9.

⁵New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung, April 26, 1918, p. 1.

⁶New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung, April 26, 1918, p. 1.

⁷San Antonio Express, April 24, 1918, p. 9.

⁸San Antonio Express, April 24, 1918, p. 9.

⁹San Antonio Express, April 24, 1918, p. 9.

¹⁰San Antonio Express, April 24, 1918, p. 9.

¹¹New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung, April 26, 1918, p. 1.

¹²New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung, April 26, 1918, p. 1.

¹³San Antonio Express, April 24, 1918, p. 9.

¹⁴New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung, December 25, 1919, p. 5.

¹⁵New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung, December 25, 1919, p. 5.

¹⁶Original Abstract of 548 Hill Avenue, owned by Herman Schoenfeld, 545 S. Academy, New Braunfels, TX., p. 53.

¹⁷Original Abstract of 548 Hill Avenue, owned by Herman Schoenfeld, 545 S. Academy, New Braunfels, TX., p. 55.

¹⁸Original Abstract of 548 Hill Avenue, owned by Herman Schoenfeld, 545 S. Academy, New Braunfels, TX., p. 57.

¹⁹Original Abstract of 548 Hill Avenue, owned by Herman Schoenfeld, 545 S. Academy, New Braunfels, TX., pp. 56, 59.

²⁰Original Abstract of 548 Hill Avenue, owned by Herman Schoenfeld, 545 S. Academy, New Braunfels, TX., p. 68.

²¹Conversation with Herman and Lila Schoenfeld, September 16, 2002.

²²Original Abstract of 548 Hill Avenue, owned by Herman Schoenfeld, 545 S. Academy, New Braunfels, TX., p. 77.

²³Conversation with Herman and Lila Schoenfeld, September 16, 2002.

²⁴Conversation with Herman and Lila Schoenfeld, September 16, 2002.

²⁵Conversation with Herman and Lila Schoenfeld, September 16, 2002.

²⁶Comal County Deed Records, Comal County Courthouse, New Braunfels, Texas: Vol. 187, pp. 574-577.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cavanaugh, Joan. Granddaughter of Frederick and Emilie Hofheinz. Personal letters and photograph.
- Comal County Deed Records, Comal County Courthouse, New Braunfels, Texas.
- Liesmann, Leo H. Grandson of Frederick and Emilie Hofheinz. Personal letter.
- Obituary of Emilie Hofheinz. New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung. New Braunfels: December 25, 1919.
- Obituary of Frederick Hofheinz. San Antonio Express. San Antonio: April 24, 1918.
- Obituary of Frederick Hofheinz. New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung. New Braunfels: April 25, 1918.
- Original Abstract of 548 Hill Avenue, New Braunfels, Texas. Owned by Herman Schoenfeld.
- Schoenfeld, Herman and Lila. Son and daughter-in-law of Bruno and Elizabeth Schoenfeld, previous owners and residents of 548 Hill Avenue. Personal conversation.

Emma Jahn and
Charles A. Jahn,

To

The City of New Braunfels,

GENERAL WARRANTY DEED.

Dated July 1st, 1900,

Filed for Record February 11th, 1901.

Recorded in Vol. 2 page 566,
Comal County Deed Records.

CONSIDERATION: For and in consideration of the benefits accruing to grantors' property by reason of the City of New Braunfels, keeping open and assuming charge of the Streets herein conveyed to the said City of New Braunfels.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS by Miss Emma Jahn and Charles A. Jahn are in statutory form. Taken by H. E. Fischer, Notary Public, Comal County, Texas, March 3d, 1900.

DESCRIPTION.

Conveys unto the City of New Braunfels, a municipal corporation, of Comal County, Texas, all those certain strips of land in Jahn Addition of the City of New Braunfels, Comal County, Texas, as follows: A strip 66 1/2 feet wide being a continuation of Castell Street from Butcher Street, to the South East line of Block No. 12 and Block No. 14, of the said Jahn Addition, which extension or continuation is to be known as Castell Street.

A Strip of land 60 feet wide to be known as Grand Avenue which extends from Butcher Street in a south East direction to Jahn Street and parallel with Castell Street, between Block No. 10 and Block No. 2 of the said Jahn Addition.

A strip of land 60 feet 5 inches wide being a continuation of Academy Street in a direct line from Butcher Street in a southeasterly direction to Macgogoches Street; and which extension is to be known as Academy Street.

A strip of land 70 feet wide, extending in a South West direction from Seguin Street to Boenig Street and which strip of land is on the South West side of Block No. 1, No. 2, No. 10, No. 11 and No. 13 and which strip of land is to be known as Jahn Street.

A Strip of land 60 feet wide between Block No. 5 and Block No. 7 of said Jahn Addition, and extending from Academy Street in a south West

direction to Boenig Street and which is known as Elm Street.

The aforesaid strips of land with their respective names as streets are shown in the map of Jahn Addition, which is recorded in Comal County Records Book Z on page 367, to which reference is made for description. The aforesaid strips of land is conveyed to the grantee to be used and kept open as streets.

Note: A part of the Map above referred to is shown on page 2 of this Abstract.

#17

Anna Jahn, surviving wife
of John Jahn, deceased, and
Emma Jahn and Carl Jahn,
only children and heirs at
law of said John Jahn, dec'd.

To

Heinrich Blumberg,
All of Comal County, Texas.

GENERAL WARRANTY DEED.

Dated June 10th, 1891.

Filed for Record June 10th, 1891.

Recorded in Vol. U page 61,
Comal County Deed Records.

CONSIDERATION: \$175.00 paid.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS are in statutory form. Taken by H. E. Fischer, Notary
Public, Comal County, Texas, June 10th, 1891 .

D E S C R I P T I O N .

Conveys all that certain tract of land, situated in the City of
New Braunfels, in Comal County, Texas, described as follows, to wit:
Lot No. 11 and Lot No. 12 in Block No. 2 of Jahn Addition; said Lot
No. 11 fronting 50 feet on Academy Street and having a depth of 105
feet and said lot No. 12 fronting 50 feet on Grand Avenue and having a
depth of 105 feet all in accordance with a plat of said Jahn Addition
which plat is to be recorded in the records of Comal County.

18

GENERAL WARRANTY DEED.

Anna Jahn, widow of
John Jahn, deceased, and
Emma Jahn, and Carl A.
Jahn, only children of
John Jahn, deceased.

To

Johann George Wahl,
All of Comal County, Texas.

Dated March 14th, 1892.

Filed for March 22d, 1892.

Recorded in Vol. 23 page 35,
Comal County Deed Records.

CONSIDERATION: \$150.00 paid in cash
and said Wahl's promissory note for
the sum of \$150.00 payable to the
order of Emma Jahn and Carl A. Jahn
on or before the 14th day of March
1893, with 8% interest per annum.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS are in statutory form. Taken by H. E. Fischer Notary
Public Comal County, Texas, March 16th, 1892.

D E S C R I P T I O N .

Conveys all that certain tract of land, situated in Comal County,
Texas, in the City of New Braunfels, known as Lots Nos. 9 and 10 in
Block No. 2 of the Jahn Addition to said City of New Braunfels, each
lot having a front of 50 feet and a depth of 105 feet; said Lot No. 9
fronting on Academy Street and Lot No. 10 in Gran Avenue of said Addi-
tion in accordance with a plat of the same to be recorded in the Re-
cords of Deeds of Comal County,

A Vendor's Lien is retained against the above described property
until the above described note is fully paid, when this deed shall
become absolute.

#19

GENERAL WARRANTY DEED.

Henry Blumberg and his
wife Emma Blumberg,
of Guadalupe County, Texas,

Dated August 30th, 1905.

Filed for Record November 29th, 1905.

To

Recorded in Vol. 27 page 574,
Comal County Deed Records.

Fried. Hofheinz,
of Kendall County, Texas.

CONSIDERATION: \$400.00 paid.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS are in statutory form. Taken by A. W. Dibrell, Clerk of
the County Court of Guadalupe County, Texas, August 30th, 1905.

D E S C R I P T I O N .

Conveys all that certain parcel or lots of land situated in the
City of New Braunfels, in Comal County, Texas, being lot No. 11 and No.
12 in Block No. 2 of Jahn's Addition to the City of New Braunfels;
said lot No. 11 fronting 50 feet on Academy Street and having a
depth of 105 feet, and said lot No. 12 fronting 50 feet on Grand Avenue,
and having a depth of 105 feet, all in accordance with a plat of said
Jahn's Addition on Record in Comal County Records for deeds, and being
the same property conveyed to Henry Blumberg, by Anna Jahn, Emma Jahn
and Chas. A. Jahn by deed dated June 10th, 1891, and recorded in Comal
County Records for Deeds in Vol. V on page 61.

#19

GENERAL WARRANTY DEED.

Johann George Wahl and his wife, Wilhelmine Wahl,

Dated March 21st, 1906.

To

Filed for Record March 22d, 1906.

Friedrich Hofheinz, of Comal County, Texas,

Recorded in Vol. 28 page 87, Comal County Deed Records.

CONSIDERATION: \$600.00 paid.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS are in statutory form. Taken by F. Hampe, Notary Public, Comal County, Texas, March 21st, 1906.

D E S C R I P T I O N .

Conveys all that certain tract of land, situated in the City of New Braunfels, and known as Lots Nos. 9 and 10 in Block No. 2 of the Jahn Addition to said City of New Braunfels,; each lot having a front of 50 feet and a depth of 105 feet. Said Lot No. 9 fronting on Academy Street and said Lot No. 10 on Grand Avenue of said Addition, in accordance with a plat of the same to be recorded in the Records of Deeds of Comal County,

#20

WARRANTY DEED

Max Hofheinz, et al

Dated January 20, 1920.

To

Filed for Record March 13, 1920.

Chas. Knibbe.

Recorded in Vol. 41, pages 224-6,
Comal County Deed Records.

The State of Texas
County of Comal.

Know All Men By These Presents:

That we, Max Hofheinz of Kendall County, Texas, Adolf Hofheinz of De Witt County, Texas, Hugo Hofheinz of Pexar County, Texas, Bruno Hofheinz of San Francisco County, California, Adele Beseler, joined herein by her husband, Otto Beseler of Refugio County, Texas, Emma Liesmann, joined herein by her husband, Hugo Liesmann, of Nueces County, Texas, being the sole and only legal heirs of Friedrich Hofheinz, and Emilie Hofheinz, both deceased, the Latters' residence at the time of their death, being New Braunfels, Comal County, Texas, for and in consideration of the sum of Thirty-eight Hundred (\$3800.00) Dollars, cash to us in hand paid by Chas. Knibbe, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, have granted, sold and conveyed, and by these presents do grant, sell and convey, unto the said Chas. Knibbe, of the County of Comal, State of Texas, all those certain tracts, pieces, parcels or lots of land situated within the corporate limits of the City of New Braunfels, Comal County, Texas, being known as Lots Nos. Nine (9) and Ten (10) in Block No. Two (2), of the Jahn Addition to said City of New Braunfels, and being the same lots and premises conveyed to Friedrich Hofheinz, by J. G. Wahl and Wilhelmine Wahl, by deed dated March 21, 1906, which deed is of record Vol. 28, pages 87-88, Comal County Deed Records, also Lots Nos. Eleven (11) and Twelve (12) in Block No. Two (2) of the Jahn Addition, to said City of New Braunfels, and being the same lots and premises conveyed to Friedrich Hofheinz by Henry Plumberg and Emma Plumberg by deed dated August 30, 1905, which deed is of record Vol. 27, pages 574-575, Comal County Deed Records.

Lots Nos. Nine (9) and Eleven (11) each fronting 50 feet on Academy Streets, and Lots Nos. Ten (10) and Twelve (12) each fronting 50 feet on Grand Avenue, and each of said four lots having a depth of One Hundred and Five (105) feet.

To Have and To Hold the above described premises, together with all and singular, the rights and appurtenances thereto in anywise belonging, unto the said Chas. Knibbe, his heirs and assigns forever; and we do hereby bind ourselves, our heirs, executors and administrators, to Warrant and Forever Defend, all and singular, the said premises unto the said Chas. Knibbe, his heirs and assigns, against every person whomsoever lawfully claiming, or to claim the same, or any part thereof.

Witness our hands this, the 10th day of September, A. D. 1947.

Documentary Stamps \$ 6.05
Cancelled.

Ella Bruemmer
(Ella Bruemmer)

Harry A. Knibbe
(Harry A. Knibbe)

Albert Bruemmer
(Albert Bruemmer)

Laura E. Knibbe
(Laura E. Knibbe)

Herrmann J. Knibbe
(Herrmann J. Knibbe)

Arno Knibbe
(Arno Knibbe)

Ada Knibbe
(Ada Knibbe)

Clara Knibbe
(Clara Knibbe)

The State of Texas, |
County of Comal. |

Before me, a notary public in and for Comal County, Texas, on this day personally appeared Albert Bruemmer and Ella Bruemmer, his wife, both known to me to be the persons whose names are subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that they each executed the same for the purposes and consideration therein expressed; and apart from her husband, and having the same fully explained to her, she, the said Ella Bruemmer, acknowledged such instrument to be her act and deed, and declared that she had willingly signed the same for the purposes and consideration therein expressed, and that she did not wish to retract it.

Given under my hand and seal of office this, the 10th day of September, A. D. 1947.

(Seal)

Martin Faust
(Martin Faust)
Notary Public in and for Comal County,
Texas.

The State of Texas, |
County of Comal. |

Before me, a notary public in and for Comal County, Texas, on this day personally appeared Herrmann J. Knibbe and Ada Knibbe, his wife, both known to me to be the persons whose names are subscribed to the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that they each executed the same for the purposes and consideration therein expressed; and the said Laura E. Knibbe, wife of the said Harry A. Knibbe, having been examined by me privately and apart from her husband, and having the same fully explained to her, she, the said Laura E. Knibbe, acknowledged such instrument to be her act and deed, and declared that she had willingly signed the same for the purposes and consideration therein expressed, and that she did not wish to retract it.

Given under my hand and seal of office this, the 10th day of September, A. D. 1947.





