

2466

14" x 24" Official Texas Historical Marker
Comal County - 12-30-68 - On grounds at 246 East
Lincoln, New Braunfels

RUSH

JUNCTION OF TWO IMPORTANT RIVERS, THE
GUADALUPE AND THE COMAL

SITE CLAIMED MAY 8, 1713,
FOR KING OF SPAIN BY GOV.
MARTIN de ALARCON, AND USED
BY PRIESTS AND ARMY UNITS
IN TRAFFIC TO EAST TEXAS.

IN 1845, FERRY HERE, RUN
BY ADOLPH von WEDEMEYER,
AIDED GERMAN IMMIGRANTS
SETTLING CENTRAL TEXAS.

IN 1860'S THIS WAS SITE OF
BRICK KILN AND TANNERY. (1968)

RUSH

S. W. GEISER
Southern Methodist University
Dallas, Texas

SEP 20 1941

Dear Mr. Haas:

I am always glad to get my copy of the N.B.Z.: it always contains your continuing historical notes, and other interesting items. I am reminded of the fact that my subscription is in arrears: please hand the enclosed check* to Herr Nebelgall (when you see him). I am assuming that he will be around the C.H. occasionally. Give my very best regards to Herren Oheim and Nebelgall: they are doing a very fine job of editing and managing our N.B.Z. I was especially interested in Herr Oheim's "Bemerkungen" in the Sept. 11. issue; and also found the article "Begehen Tiers Selbstmord" of interest. I am so busy with my University work and my historical investigations that often I see Texas news for the first time in the Zeitung.

P.S. I can't find my checkbook just now; will send the check to them directly - S.W.G.

I enclose a transcript of a happening of 80 years ago in N.B. that even so well-informed a man of yourself (in the history of Comal County) may not have previously known. It had it copied out of the 1861 volume of "The Geologist" - a London publication. You can use the information as you please, or as Mr. Oheim pleases. I should be glad to have you return it, however, when you are done with it - say, by Sept. 30th - in the enclosed stamped reply-envelope. Curiously enough, this find of a skeleton of the fossil elephant has escaped the keen eyes of all students of Texan Pleistocene fossil mammals - so far! I should be glad if you would find out for me any thing you can of this eighty-year old happening: 1) Who was then the mayor of N.B.; 2) where was this well "near the junction of the Guadalupe and the Comal"; 3) can anyone tell who it was that found it, and what finally became of the skeleton? If I had access to a file of the N.B.Z. of 1860/61, I should run it for an account of this geological "find" - I surmise that Herr F.J. Lindheimer had a good account of it!

Any help you can give me will be warmly appreciated. Who Prof. G.E. Roberts' New Braunfels correspondent was, I can't tell. (Roberts, of course

was an English geologist.)

I am mailing you, under separate cover, a brief biographical account of a
dear old German naturalist, Dr. Bruno Matthes, long resident in Texas; and a sec-
ond copy which I hope you will pass on to the Euseby Faust Mem. library with
my compliments. It is an special pleasure to me to discover and publish all I
can find on the contributions of our early Germans in Texas to the natural his-
tory of the State.

With most cordial thanks to you for your continuing publications of the history
of Comal County (which I greatly appreciate), and any help you may be able
to give me in my present inquiry, I am

Very sincerely yours.

W. Davis

b.
Copy from copy furnished by Dr. S.W. Geiser, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas

OSCAR HAAS
TREASURER COMAL COUNTY
NEW BRAUNFELS, TEXAS

"Transcript of
a happening 80 years
ago in New Braunfels"
Sep. 20, 1941

THE JOHN CRERAR LIBRARY

References on "The occurrence of a large elephantine beast in Texas, at the junction of the rivers Guadalupe and Comal

Selected for - Dr. S.W. Geiser, 3543 Haynie Ave., Dallas, Texas

"-----I append for the amusement of those who like quaint zoological descriptions, an extract from a Texas letter, relating the discovery of a great Pachyderm:-

"The great local excitement here just now is the fact that within the corporate limits of New Braunfels, within close pistol shot of the residence of our worthy mayor, the bones of an immense mammoth or mastodon have been discovered. I have not as yet visited the spot, or big hole in the ground, where the digging is going on, but am told that the specimens so far dug up promise a sizeable skeleton when all are put together, - say thirty odd feet long by twenty odd in height. Barnum might make a new start in the world were he now here to take advantage of this wonderful bringing to light of an undoubted curiosity.

"The discovery was first made by some German well-digger, who fell upon a huge shoulder-bone while prospecting underground for water. I will give more and fuller particulars when they excavate deep enough or wide enough to bring the entire "critter" out, so that we can all see him, she, or it. If there ever was a spot upon earth where a huge animal could find a good range, it was right here, where the waters of the beautiful Guadalupe take in those of the more beautiful Comal. "We should like to know more of this find-----"

George E. Roberts.

(The Geologist, 1861 4 page 162)
A London Publication

Copy made from note received from Mr.C.A.Jahn
at this time living with his daughter Henriette
(Mrs.Willie Weiss) in Seguin, Texas.

New Braunfels, Sept 29th 1941

Mr.O.Haas
New Braunfels, Texas

Dear Friend:

The early residents of N.Brfls did get water for household purposes from the Comal or Springs entering the Comal river. This was inconvenient and most every family did try to find water by digging a well or having a well dug on their premises. There were men who made it their business to dig wells about 35 ft deep five feet in diameter walled with lime rock. By digging these wells they unearthed a large head of a fossil mammal. They also found in other parts of the city limits large bones of some monster, the head and bones were found in a sandy loam strata. The head about three feet long by two $\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, about two feet thick was for several years lying near the entrance door of August Forcke's Drug Store.* The head and bones when exposed to the air, peeled off what has finally become of them I do not know

The above is the reply from Mr.Jahn to a note from me addressed to Mr.Jahn. It was hoped that because Mr.Jahn was a boy of 10 years of age when "the bones of an immense mammoth" had been discovered by a well digger, he probably could remember who the well digger was and on whose property the well was located.

*Sophienburg Memorial Museum in New Braunfels has part of it?
O.H.

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

BOULDER, COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

April 5, 1946

Dear Oscar:

Thanks for the letter of April 3 which arrived today. I am sorry that I cannot send you a copy of my book, for I do not have an extra copy. Sometimes I see one advertised in book catalogs, but recently it has not appeared. It was published by the Quivira Society, whose publications were edited by Dr. George P. Hammond, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Perhaps he still has some extra copies.

I believe you can go even farther back than 1718, perhaps even to about 1690, provided the De León expedition hit the New Braunfels area. Alarcón merely followed the Spanish road blazed by previous expeditions to East Texas, and these expeditions crossed the Guadalupe at New Braunfels, I believe just above the Missouri Pacific RR. bridge. You remember that before the dam was built below the bridge, there was a ford across the river there. I do believe that Alarcón perhaps stayed in the New Braunfels area longer than the previous explorers. Alarcón seems to have called Comal Creek, Arroyo San Miguel, or St. Michael's Creek. He was later almost drowned in the Guadalupe.

Another diary of the Alarcón expedition, not as long as the one by Celiz, by a priest named Mesquia, was published by me in the SOUTHWESTERN HISTORICAL QUARTERLY, XLI, No. 4 (April, 1938). Again I unfortunately have only one copy left of it. It may be obtained from

the Texas State Historical Association, University Station, Austin, but our high school library (in New Braunfels, I mean), may have a copy.

I am glad to see you so interested in the history of New Braunfels. I read your articles in the ZEITUNG, to which I still subscribe to keep up with my German and get news from home at the same time. I certainly would like to be in N.B. for the Geburtstagfeier in May, but I'm afraid I cannot get off at that time.

You of course know of Rudolph Biesele's book on the Germans in Texas and that large pamphlet-like publication on the history of New Braunfels, I believe, got out by S.V. Pfeuffer years ago. I had a copy, but somehow lost it. Incidentally, I got the two volume work on the Germans in the U.S. down in Argentina at a book auction for about 6c a volume. It was a steal. Also, before I left New Braunfels I gave to the museum, the Sophienburg, some pictures of the 50th and 75th anniversary celebrations, which might be interesting now. You might look them up. The 50th anniversary pictures were very interesting. There must have been around a dozen pictures in all but I do not remember exactly. The 75th anniversary pictures would contain people many of whom are still living.

I shall be busy as all get-out until April 16, when I have to give a faculty lecture here on Argentina and the U.S., but after that I'll go through my pictures here and see if I have any. I brought a lot along since Dad was a photographer and took many pictures.

Best of luck on your job.

Very sincerely,

Fritz
Best regards to Fred Oheim and his family.

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San Antonio News
San Antonio, Texas
AUG 20 1969



HISTORIC CROSSING—Mrs. James T. Hoile, right, owner of the river property that recently was designated a state historical site with a marker, is pictured with Miss Linda Heitkamp, left, and Toya Ohlrich. Linda's father, C. W. Heitkamp, is chairman of the Comal County Historical Survey Committee, and Toya's father is mayor of New Braunfels, Jack Ohlrich. In 1845 a ferry aided German immigrant crossing at the junction of the Comal and Guadalupe Rivers. In the 1860s this was the location of a brick kiln and tannery.