Mission Valley School Historical Marker

I. Context

The Mission Valley settlement was formed around the same time that New Braunfels was established in 1845. Its location is northwest of Mission Hill, where the Spanish had established a Mission, Nuestra Senora De Guadalupe, in 1758.[1]

As was customary in many German communities, education of the children was of high priority and the Mission Valley community was no exception. Initially, the community bonded and educated their children in private homes. Later, one acre of land was donated for the construction of a public free school building. As the community grew, a larger school and playground were needed. Soon another family donated 1.8 acres adjacent to the above one acre. A new rock building was constructed for the education of the children and the original school building on the acre was converted into a teacherage, a house for the teacher to live.

The rock school building was the only educational center for many years when in 1950 the community school closed its doors. The entire 2.8 acres are currently referred to as the Mission Valley Community Center.

II. Overview

The 2008 address of the location under consideration is: 1135 Mission Valley Road, New Braunfels, Texas 78132. The name of the road had changed several times during the years. See Attachment 1 – Mapquest of Area in Comal County.

[1] Historical Marker is located on Hwy 46 W outside of Loop 337, erected in 1936.

The Mission Valley settlement is located about five miles northwest of New Braunfels in Comal County, and about four miles northwest of Mission Hill. It was formed around the time that New Braunfels was established in 1845 with perhaps eleven families living there in the earlier years.[2] Education was important to the German people.

By 1861, the settlement held classes for their children in private homes.[3] The instructions

were held in five different homes during the next eight years.

Realizing that the home instructions were not ideal, in October of 1870, brothers, Karl and Julius Brehmer, gave one acre of land out of Survey 358 for the promotion of public education to the trustees Christian Pape, Heinrich Dietz and Heinrich Adams of the public free school in the Mission Valley settlement.[4] See Attachment 2 for the legal description of the property. The school building was constructed by volunteers of the community. See the **right** side of Attachment 3 for a sketch of the original school site. It was estimated that the original school was 16 ft by 18 feet in size, or 288 square feet. Records show 35 students in attendance during the 1873-1874 school year.[5]

It was during this time, in 1884, that Friedrich and Emilie Kunkel Heidrich offered to sell 1.8 acres of land out of adjacent Survey 284 to the school trustees Karl Brehmer, Gottlieb Kempin and Wilhelm Scheel for the promotion of public education. [6] See Attachment 4 for the legal description of the property. A rock building

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[2] Hermann Seele (Translated by Edward C. Breitenkamp), *The Cypress and Other Writings of a German Pioneer in Texas*, University of Texas Press, Austin and London 1979, p 41.

[3] Frieda Brehmer Heidrich, manuscript entitled *History of Mission Valley School*, pp 1-3. Copy is located at Sophienburg Archives in New Braunfels, Texas

[4] Comal County Clerk's Office, Volume K, pp 297-298. Family information shows that brothers, Karl and Julius Brehmer, gave the land: however, only Karl signed the deed record.

[5] Heidrich, p 4.

[6] Comal County Clerk's Office, Volume S, pp 31-32.

was constructed with the material donated by the Kappmeyer family who had a quarry not far from the school site. This building is 23 by 33 feet, or 759 square feet. Thus, the new building was about 2.6 times as big as the original one. See the **left** side of Attachment 3 for a sketch of the second site (to be referred to as the rock building). Attachments 5a-c show photos of the rock school as it appears in 2008, and Attachment 6 shows the floor plan. Based on older school pictures, it is estimated that the porch was added in the early 1920s.

During the time that the rock building was constructed, the original school building was modified to become the teacherage. See Attachment 7 for the photo of the teacherage is as it appears in 2008. A kitchen and bathroom were added on the west side of the original school building with a single roof over the complete structure. The original school apparently had a porch on the north side and on the south side.

Both schools depended on rain for their water uses. Each had a 10 by 10 feet square cistern about 12 feet underground. The rain gutter leading from the building can be seen in the 1920s photo of the rock structure. See Attachment 8.

Each school building used a wood stove for heating in the winter. The school patrons took turns supplying the wood for the school. At the rock building the wood was stored in the wood shed and the older male students were responsible for bringing in the wood for the single stove in the school room.

The original school had no electricity. Electricity became available to both the rock building and the teacherage in January, 1942.[7] Thus, the school did have electricity for the last eight years of its existence. .

[7] Information from New Braunfels Utilities.

After 80 years of public education at the site, the one-room rock school was closed in 1950 and the students went to New Braunfels Independent School District (NBISD). The Mission Valley Common School District was formally annexed by NBISD on 3 June 1952.

A few days before the annexation, 31 May 1952, the 2.8 acres of buildings and school property were bought by the Mission Valley Community Center.[8] The community center organization takes care of the property and sponsors an annual picnic for the community descendants and friends to reminisce and keep the spirit of the community alive.

The rock school structure still looks like it did when it was constructed in 1884, with the exception of the added front porch and rear storage room. This is the only school site in Comal County where the entire facility is still intact.[9] A few school buildings in the county have been preserved, however, their playgrounds, etc. were not. Many other schools have either been razed or modified for residency.

III. Significance

In 2008, the Mission Valley School and associated grounds serve as a reminder of the community's commitment to education, and most importantly serves as a perfect example of what one-room schools and playgrounds used to look like.

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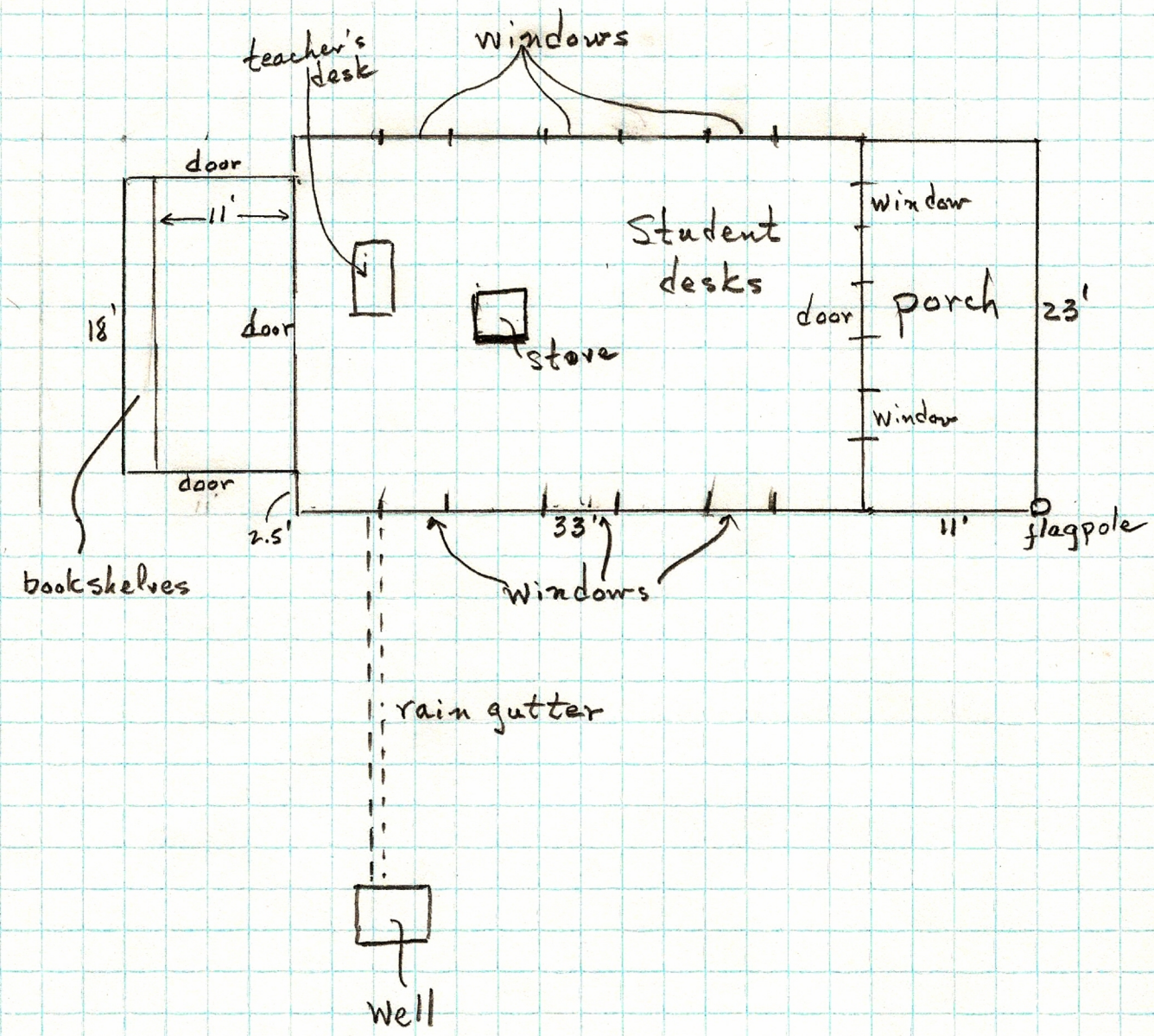
[8] Comal County Clerk's Office, Volume 98, pp 450-452.
[9] Research by Alton J. Rahe, author of *History of Sattler and Mountain Valley School, Comal County, Texas,* Walsworth Publishing Company, 1999.

Attachment 1 – Mapquest map of Comal County
Attachment 2 – Legal Description of Original School Property
Attachment 3 – Sketch of Both School Sites
Attachment 4 – Legal Description of Second School Property
Attachment 5 – Photo of Rock Structure in 2008
Attachment 6 – Floor Plan of Rock Structure
Attachment 7 –Photo of Teacherage in 2008
Attachment 8 – 1920 Photo of Rock Structure

Mission Valley School
Dist No. 10

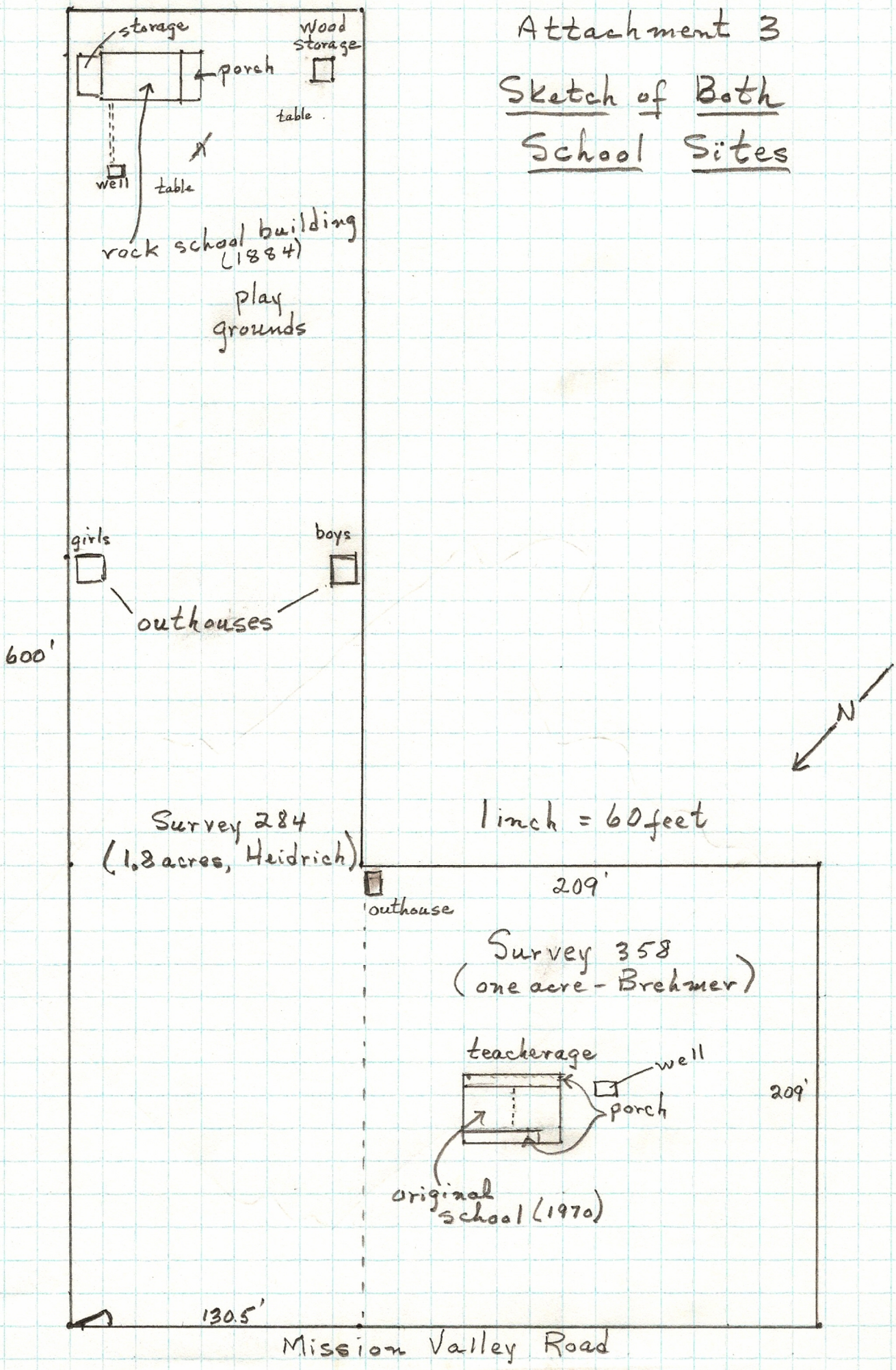
Attachment 6

Floor Plan of Rock Structure



Attachment 3

Sketch of Both School Sites



Attachment 4

Legal Description of Second School Property – Heidrich (Comal County Clerk's Office, Vol. S, pp 31-32)

About 1 4/5 acres of land, situated in Comal County, Texas, about 5 miles West from the City of New Braunfels, being a part of Survey 284, originally granted to J. Heidrich and now owned by said Friedrich Heidrich. Beginning at a stake, set for the original West corner of said Survey 284, being also the original North corner of Survey 358, from which an Elm 8 " dia. brs. S 33 deg. W. 2 1/4 varas and a cedar 6" dia. brs. S 66 ½ deg. E. 6 varas, marked +. Thence S. 37 deg. E. **215** varas the boundary line between said Surveys 284 and 358 to a stone. Thence N. 53 deg. E **47** varas to a stone-Thence N. 37 deg. W. **215** varas to a stake. Thence S. 53 deg. W. **47** varas to the place of the beginning.

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Attachment 2

Legal Description of Original School Property – Brehmer (Comal County Clerk's Office, Vol. K, pp 297-298)

One acre of land lying and being in Comal County and described as follows: Said acre of Land is the most northern part of original Survey 358, granted in the name of J. H. Hartman – five miles West from the City of New Braunfels – Beginning at a stone at S. 37 deg. E. at 4 1/3 varas from the most northern corner of said Survey 358. Thence with said boundary line between Survey 358 and Survey 284. S 37 deg. E. **75 1/5** varas to a stone. Thence S. 53 deg. W **75 1/5** varas to a stone. Thence N 37 deg. W. **75 1/5** varas to a stone. Hence N 53 deg. E **75 1/5** varas to the place of beginning.