

Texas Historical Commission staff (CTS), 8/2/2006, revised 8/30/2006

27" x 42" Official Texas Historical Marker with post

Comal County (Job #17706) Subject GN (Atlas 13667 UTM 14 577789E 3287107N)

Location: New Braunfels, 815 FM 1863

NEW BRAUNFELS SCHUETZEN VEREIN

THE NEW BRAUNFELS SCHUETZEN VEREIN ORGANIZED IN 1849 AS ONE OF THE NATION'S EARLY SHOOTING CLUBS. GERMAN IMMIGRANTS FOUNDED THE TOWN ONLY FOUR YEARS EARLIER IN 1845 AND BROUGHT THE TRADITION OF TARGET SHOOTING TO AMERICA FROM THEIR HOMELAND. THE NEED TO PROVIDE FOOD AND PROTECT HOMES ALSO NECESSITATED THE PRACTICE IN THE NEW BRAUNFELS AREA, AS MANY EARLY SETTLERS JOINED THE ORGANIZATION.

AS THE CITY OF NEW BRAUNFELS GREW, THE SCHUETZEN VEREIN MOVED SEVERAL TIMES TO AVOID RESIDENTIAL AREAS. THE CLUB MOVED IN THE YEARS PRIOR TO WORLD WAR I AND THEN AGAIN WHEN NEW BRAUNFELS DOUBLED IN SIZE IN THE YEARS AFTER WORLD WAR II. IT WAS ALSO DURING THIS TIME THAT THE MISSION VALLEY SCHUETZEN VEREIN MERGED WITH NEW BRAUNFELS' CLUB. IN THE FOLLOWING DECADES, NEW BRAUNFELS CONTINUED TO GROW, ESPECIALLY AS IT BECAME PART OF AN EXTENDED METROPOLITAN AREA. WITH THE CITY'S CONTINUED EXPANSION, THE SHOOTING CLUB RELOCATED AGAIN.

THE SCHUETZEN VEREIN'S MOST IMPORTANT EVENT IS THE KOENIG (KING) MATCHES HELD ANNUALLY SINCE BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR. AN IMPORTANT TRADITION IN THE COMMUNITY, MEMBERS CONTINUED IT EVEN THROUGH THE AMMUNITION SHORTAGES OF THE CIVIL WAR AND WORLD WAR I, SOMETIMES FIRING ONLY ONCE EACH TO MAINTAIN STATUS OF THE ORGANIZATION.

AFTER MORE THAN 150 YEARS OF EXISTENCE, THE NEW BRAUNFELS SCHUETZEN VEREIN CONTINUES TO MEET, SERVING AS A REMINDER OF THE TOWN'S GERMAN HERITAGE AND HISTORIC PAST.

(2006)

New Braunfels Schuetzen Verein

The New Braunfels Schuetzen Verein (NB Marksman or Shooting Club) is thought to be the nation's oldest shooting club in continuous existence.¹ Organized July 4, 1849, just four years after the city of New Braunfels in 1845. It is probable that shares were sold to the immigrants by the Adelsverein in Germany² before their departure to America because target shooting was a tradition in their homeland. Due to the necessity of establishing homes, businesses and community, the luxury of shooting as a form of entertainment was put on hold, however, realizing that proficiency in shooting was necessary for providing food and protection on a still wild frontier, members began to gather for practice and eventually to formally organize. Even though during the civil war and WW I when ammunition was very scarce, three to four members gathered to hold the annual king match, sometimes firing only one shot each to maintain status of the organization.

Although records from early years have not been located, first mention of NBSV (New Braunfels Schuetzen Verein) in the local newspaper was May 27, 1870 announcing participation in the 25th anniversary of New Braunfels. In 1892, Capt. Ernst Dosch, in a letter to the editor,³ thanked the NB Schuetzen Verein for their greetings for his 70th birthday, being the only survivor of the original fourteen charter members, to be able to shoot again with them. In addition to Dosch, three other original members, Herman Seele, Ed. Kreiger & Wilhelm Seekatz, were present for the 50th anniversary when the Turnverein, Mennachor and Schuetzen Verein provided entertainment for all at the big "Schuetzenfest".⁴ After meeting arriving competitors at the IGN Railroad station, they paraded with their banners to the plaza for speeches and reading of the Declaration of Independence. There remains no doubt, therefore that July 4, 1849 was the date of organization, as these four men as well as the editor of the local newspaper would not have taken part in the perpetuation of such claims were it not based on fact.⁵

¹ National Rifle Association, *Rifleman*, March, 1948.

² Certificate in possession of New Braunfels Schuetzen Verein

³ *New Braunfels Herald*, May 12, 1892

⁴ *New Braunfels Herald*, July 6, 1892

⁵ History of New Braunfels Schuetzen Verein, Walter Mittendorf & Harold Adams, 1948, in possession of Gay Wimberley, Secretary/Treasurer of NBSV, 147 Hueco Springs Lp. Rd., New Braunfels, TX 78132

The banner of New Braunfels Schuetzen Verein was embroidered by fourteen local young ladies, representing the fourteen charter members, and presented to the club at the annual King match on July 4, 1890. The banner was lost for many years,⁶ but found in 1961⁷ in a map tube in the attic of a barn behind the Heilig Mercantile when it was torn down to build the Sears store, now the Frilly Frog.

Early reports of matches refer to ranges at the Comal or Klingemann Springs, then Stebbens Point, near the convergence of the Comal and Guadalupe Rivers, which is believed to be the same property purchased by the Verein in 1882,⁸ below the hill of what is now Eagles Hall, near Mather Street. After 28 years, due to population growth, it became necessary to sell this range and move to a location much farther out of town, to what would later be referred to by many as the best and nicest range in the area. It was located where the Braunfels Haus Apartments now stand on Howard Street.⁹ Once again in the mid 1940's growth of the community made it obvious that the organization could not continue at this location and the property was sold. The Mission Valley Schuetzen Verein, which had ceased to hold matches, offered their property to the NBSV if they would absorb their members.¹⁰ The two clubs merged¹¹ and began holding matches, however, several neighbors did not like the idea of the revival of shooting, so one of the members, Mr. Ed. Heidrich offered to sell NBSV two acres on FM 1863¹². Members soon cleared the land and the Mission Valley building was dismantled and reassembled at the new location. The building which in addition to being our clubhouse was used for many years as the Mission Valley Community Center. Things went smoothly until a subdivision was built behind the target house at this location in the 1970's. Soon, homeowners began to complain, and after much discussion and threat of lawsuits, the Heidrich/Stahl family came to our aid once again and offered to swap some property¹³ and allow us to shoot in a different direction. This is the present location where our regular matches are held. . With the development of the neighboring land, the club once again

⁶ History of NBSV, Mittendorf & Adams 1948

⁷ New Braunfels Schuetzen Verein, A Photo Documentary, pg.96, A. Schlickerrieder, M.A. Thesis, August 1993

⁸ Comal County Deed Records, Vol. Q, Pg. 112, March 24, 1882

⁹ Comal County Deed Records, Vol. 30, pg 588, June 9, 1909

¹⁰ History of NBSV, Mittendorf & Adams 1948

¹¹ Minutes of NBSV and Mission Valley SV

¹² Comal County Deed Records, Vol.83, pg 86, Feb 5, 1946

¹³ Comal County Deed Records, Vol. 257, pg. 215, September 14, 1977

sough out a location for a future range. When a parcel of property next to the Dietz Range became available, the organization purchased it with the proceeds of a bequest from the estate of Don and Hilda Rahe as an investment in the future. Improvements have been gradually added and we now hold a traditional 200 yard centerfire match there. In addition to the 200 yard range is a 100 yard range also available.

The New Braunfels Schuetzen Verein continues to hold King (Koenig) matches on or near the 4th of July each year. Since 1949, a Queen (Koenigen) is also awarded a medal for the best center shot. The winners become members of the Board of Directors. Members of NBSV also compete with three other area clubs at "Prize Shoots" where contestants with the highest scores claim merchandise prizes at the conclusion of the match. At one time there were more than sixty¹⁴ area clubs within a 25-30 mile radius of New Braunfels that participated in competition.

The New Braunfels, a member of the Texanischen Schuetzenbund, shoots the positions of a standing rest, with barrel rested on a graduated stand; and standing offhand, which is self explanatory. The standing rest is unique to the Texas hill country to the best of our knowledge.

It is the desire of the Officers and members, to continue the traditions as well as the shooting camaraderie of the New Braunfels Schuetzen Verein alive and growing

¹⁴ History of NBSV, Mittendorf & Adams 1948

Bibliography

Comal, County of, Deed Records

Minutes of New Braunfels Schuetzen Verein and Mission Valley Schuetzen Verein, 1946--47.

Mittendorf, W. & Adams, H.; 1948, *History of New Braunfels Schuetzen Verein*
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New Braunfels Herald, 1870 forward, selected articles; Sophienberg Archives

Schlickenrieder, Annelies, M.A., 1993. *The New Braunfels SchuetzenVerein, A Photodocumentary*, Thesis, University of Texas, Austin, TX.

Verein zum Schutze, Deutscher Einwanderer in TEXAS, 1843. Share No. 23
Carl Josef von Castell. Share Certificate

Proposed Marker Location

