

18" x 28" Official Texas Historical Marker (SMF)  
Comal County - 2-18-69 - on property of Mission  
Valley Mills, closest to actual Guadalupe River  
crossing, New Braunfels

NEAR RIVER CROSSING USED BY  
NEW BRAUNFELS' FIRST SETTLERS

AT THE CROSSING OF THE SAN  
ANTONIO-NACOGDOCHES ROAD ON THE  
GUADALUPE RIVER (USED EARLIER  
BY SOME OF TEXAS MOST FAMOUS  
TRAIL-BLAZERS) ABOUT 200 GERMAN  
COLONISTS ENDED A JOURNEY THAT  
HAD BEGUN SIX MONTHS BEFORE IN  
EUROPE. HERE ON GOOD FRIDAY, 1845,  
THEY FOUNDED THE TOWN OF NEW  
BRAUNFELS, NAMED FOR THE ESTATE  
OF PRINCE SOLMS-PRAUNFELS, THE  
COMMISSIONER-GENERAL OF THE  
GERMAN EMIGRATION SOCIETY.

PART OF A WAVE OF GERMAN  
COLONISTS, 1844-1847, THIS SMALL  
GROUP AND OTHERS LIKE IT HAVE  
LEFT A DISTINCTIVE MARK ON THE  
HERITAGE AND CULTURE OF TEXAS. (1968)

FILE COPY - DO NOT REMOVE

The San Antonio-Nacogdoches Road, also known as Old San Antonio Road, King's Highway, Camino Real, was <sup>partially</sup> blazed in 1691 by Domingo Teran de los Rios, first provincial governor of Texas, as a direct route from Monclova to the Spanish missions established among the Indians of East Texas in 1690. ~~It is believed that the road was blazed by the Indians of East Texas in 1690.~~

~~appropriated \$5,000 for the survey and for the construction of the road.~~  
Moses Austin traversed the route to request an empresario grant from the Spanish government in 1820. Baron de Bastrop asked the Spanish government to give him a land grant. James Bowie advised his father-in-law, Juan Martin de Veramendi to take his grants from the Mexican government partly at San Marcos springs, partly at Comal Springs, partly at San Pedro springs.

Then came Prince Solms looking for a place between Indianola and the San Saba, where he could establish a supply or stopping station. <sup>for German emigrants.</sup>

Johann Jacob Rahm, native of Switzerland and a Texas Ranger in Capt. John Coffee Hays' Rangers' Company passed through the area and probably camped and rested their mounts for a day or two each time, and were in San Antonio when Prince Solms was conducting his search for land. Rahm's descriptions of the land and water and timbers and building rock were with such enthusiasm that Prince Solms bought 1265 acres, without first seeing the land. <sup>J. Sean</sup>

Under the direction of Mr. von Coll, the first group of German emigrants who had landed in Galveston and later taken to Port Lavaca in November and December 1844, were brought onto the place selected by Prince Solms for the first settlements. The first wagons with colonists crossed the Guadalupe River on Good Friday, March 21, 1845, and moved into the encampment provided for them. The occasion of the crossing of the Guadalupe Road Crossing by the first

end of six months of travel since they departed from Bremen in September 1844.

Emigrants were provided with acreage upon which to establish their homes and in April 1845 Prince Solms transferred the seat of government onto the hill in the south part of the township. On the plaza downtown, the emigrants hoisted the Republic of Texas flag, thus establishing officially the settlement which was ~~to~~ to become New Braunfels.

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OCT 3 1968

TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL SURVEY  
COMMITTEE

"new Braunfels First Settlers" marker

**THE HISTORY OF THE  
GERMAN SETTLEMENTS IN TEXAS**

**1831-1861**

**BY**

**RUDOLPH LEOPOLD BIESELE**

Adjunct Professor of History in the  
University of Texas

## CHAPTER VI

## NEW BRAUNFELS: ITS FOUNDING AND ITS EARLY HISTORY

The arrival of the immigrants at Indianola (Carlshafen) in December of 1844 increased the work of Prince Solms to a considerable degree and brought him face to face with the necessity of securing a tract of land on which to make the first settlement. The time had passed for making suggestions to the Society about different suitable places for a settlement on the way to the Fisher and Miller grant; the time for action was at hand. Prince Solms proved himself equal to the occasion. It is the object of this chapter to give an account of what Prince Solms did after the arrival of the immigrants to get them into the interior of Texas and to establish the first settlement for the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas. Following an account of the founding of New Braunfels, its history will be told briefly up to the time when Texas declared for secession from the Union.

Prince Solms pointed out again the impossibility and impracticability of founding the first settlement on the Llano and praised the region between the Guadalupe and San Antonio rivers as especially suitable. He considered the so-called "fountains"<sup>1</sup> thirty miles from San Antonio on the way to Austin, as an ideal location for the first settlement, because of the fertile soil, the beautiful region, the excellent cedar and oak woods, the good water, and the abundant water power. The proximity to San Antonio and Seguin would enable the settlers to get aid and protection readily. Lying at the foot of the hill country, this settlement was to become the center of the colonization work, since it was equidistant from the coast and the colony lands.<sup>2</sup>

Having made up his mind on the location of the first settlement,

<sup>1</sup>The "fountains" are the Comal springs, called "las fontanas" by the Mexicans.

<sup>2</sup>How correct this prediction would be, Prince Solms could not know, of course, when he made it. After his return to Germany in 1845, Prince Solms must have secured quite a bit of satisfaction from observing that the Society was using this settlement as the base of operations for founding other settlements.

On the next day, March 15, Prince Solms, Rafael C. Garza, and his wife, Maria Antonio Veramendi Garza, signed the deed. The consideration was one thousand one hundred and eleven dollars. The sum of five hundred dollars was paid for one equal undivided fourth part of the tract, and the sum of six hundred and eleven dollars was to be paid upon the successful termination of a suit in favor of Garza and his wife, said suit to be instituted by them to clear their title to the land. Then a proper conveyance for the land was to be executed by Garza and his wife.<sup>17</sup>

What Prince Solms thought of the tract of land which he had purchased is best seen in his own description of it, in which he said: "Here (at the Guadalupe) the land which I purchased for the Society begins. On the right bank of the Comal Creek, which flows through it, lies a fertile prairie which reaches south to a ridge of hills. On its left bank there is richly-wooded bottom land stretching to the cliffs, which are covered with cedar, oak, and elm. These cliffs, with the hills rising gradually back of them toward the north resemble the Black Forest. Through the bottom land flows the Comal River, which, gushing out of the rock in seven large springs, shortly reaches a width of twenty paces and, becoming larger and larger, rushes along like a swift mountain stream. Its water is very deep and clear as crystal."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup>For the Articles of Agreement by which Prince Solms acquired this tract of land, see Comal County Deed Records, Vol. E, 58. The Articles of Agreement are dated March 14, 1845.

In 1854, in its spring term, the Supreme Court of Texas decided a suit instituted to clear the title to the Veramendi tract in favor of the Veramendi heirs. Thus the sum of six hundred and eleven dollars became due, but when the citizens of New Braunfels offered to pay the principal, together with the accrued interest, the Veramendi heirs refused to accept the money and filed suit for damages against the several owners as trespassers. A committee consisting of Dr. Theodor Koester, Franz Mourcau, G. H. Judson, James Ferguson, and H. Seele represented the citizens in this case, which was finally won by the New Braunfels citizens. (See Comal County Deed Records, Book L, 478, for a certified copy of the judgment of the District Court of Guadalupe County in this case. The judgment is dated November 18, 1869.) Some years later another suit was filed against Maria Albrecht, the City of New Braunfels, *et al.* by various claimants under the old Veramendi title, but the New Braunfels citizens were again given the judgment. (See Comal County District Court Minutes, Book E, 344-352, and Comal County Deed Records, Book N, 556-565.)

On August 4, 1845, another tract of land was purchased, lying to the northwest of the original tract. It consisted mainly of cedar brakes, but also of some farming land along Comal Creek.

<sup>18</sup>"Berichte an den Adelsverein," in *Kalender*, 61; Photostat *Original Berichte*, 91-92.

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On March 16 Prince Solms rode from San Antonio to Seguin, where Zink and von Coll arrived on the 17th with thirteen men of the mounted company. That night Prince Solms camped on the Guadalupe River about six miles above Seguin and on the following day he forded the Guadalupe at the place where the San Antonio-Nacogdoches road crosses it.<sup>19</sup> Three days later the immigrant wagons forded the river at the same place and halted on the east bank of Comal Creek.<sup>20</sup> The date, March 21, 1845, thus marks the beginning of the settlement of New Braunfels, named in honor of Prince Solms's estate, Braunfels, on the Lahn River, a tributary of the Rhine and noted for the many castles and ruins along its course. X

It is not possible to state with any certainty or correctness the names of those who were present at the founding of New Braunfels. Some of the immigrants remained at Carlshafen to live, according to the sixth report made by Prince Solms, but their names are not given.<sup>21</sup> Some others remained at Carlshafen until the beginning of April, 1845, when the Society's teamsters took them up to New Braunfels. After an overland journey lasting a month, this second group reached the Guadalupe opposite New Braunfels, where high water delayed them for a few days.<sup>22</sup> It can not be ascertained how many of the Fisher and Miller immigrants who arrived in Galveston on July 8, 1844, decided finally to leave Galveston and join the Society's immigrants at Carlshafen.

<sup>19</sup>In his tenth report, dated Camp on Comal Creek, March 27, 1845, Prince Solms reported that he and his small company of men saw a sight on the morning of the 19th that made them think of home, for the ground was covered with snow. On the 20th he rode to the top of the hill northwest of the tract of land which he had purchased and described the view from there as "enchanted." ("Berichte an den Adelsverein," in *Kalender*, 62; Photostat, *Original Berichte*, 92.)

<sup>20</sup>*Neu Braunfelser Zeitung*, May 27, 1870, 4, col. 1. March 21, 1845, was Good Friday. (For the route taken by the immigrants, see map, Chapter VII, 152.)

<sup>21</sup>See above, 112, footnote 3. There is extant a map of Indianola (Carlshafen) which shows the farms of George Thielepape and Theodore Mueller, both of whom were among the first immigrants. The map shows also numerous town lots, but it does not give the names of the owners. From Mr. E. W. Winkler, Librarian of the University of Texas, who owns a copy of this map, the writer was able to get a copy, which is given in Appendix D.

<sup>22</sup>Seele, H., "Meine Ankunft in Neu Braunfels," in *Kalender der Neu Braunfelser Zeitung fuer 1914*, 36-43.

hafen.<sup>23</sup> Then, too, there were some Germans in Galveston and on Cummins Creek east of La Grange in Fayette County who expressed a desire to Prince Solms to become colonists of the Society.<sup>24</sup> Prince Solms, in his tenth report, made in camp on Comal Creek on March 27, 1845, wrote that thirty-one wagons had arrived and that he expected the remaining half of the settlers to arrive in a few days.<sup>25</sup> The five Bremen brigs, *Weser*, *John Dethard*, *Ferdinand*, *Herrschel*, and *Apollo* brought only four hundred and thirty-nine men, women, and children to Galveston and Carlshafen in July, November, and December, 1844. With these facts taken into consideration, the conclusion is that only about two hundred persons were present at the founding of New Braunfels on Good Friday, March 21, 1845.<sup>26</sup>

Very little time was lost in giving the immigrants some land. Each head of a family and single man over the age of seventeen got a half-acre town lot and a ten-acre farm lot, which, however,

<sup>23</sup>"Berichte an den Adelsverein," in *Kalender*, 37; Photostat *Original Berichte*, 57. Prince Solms said that only a few families of this group survived the summer of 1844.

<sup>24</sup>"Berichte an den Adelsverein," in *Kalender*, 37; Photostat *Original Berichte*, 57.

<sup>25</sup>"Berichte an den Adelsverein," in *Kalender*, 62; Photostat *Original Berichte*, 93.

<sup>26</sup>The five immigrant ships arrived at Galveston on the following dates: The *Weser*, July 8, the *John Dethard*, November 29, the *Ferdinand*, December 14, the *Herrschel*, December 18, and the *Apollo*, December 20, 1844. There were one hundred and three families listed on these five ships, but in three instances the immigrant's wife and children were to come later, and one man came over as a widower with four children. There were one hundred and thirty-four children, while the number of single men over the age of seventeen was one hundred and three. Thus the five ships brought over a total of four hundred and thirty-nine men, women, and children. The immigrant lists from which these figures are taken are found in Colonization Papers, 1843-1845, Texas State Library. It should be stated that there is another immigrant list in the Colonization Papers, 1846-1873, which gives a total of 318 men, women, and children, instead of 299, the number given in Colonization Papers, 1843-1845, for the immigrants brought over by the *John Dethard*, the *Ferdinand*, and the *Herrschel*.

The *Neu Braunfelser Zeitung*, in its issue of May 27, 1870, gave a list of 167 names with the comment that the list was as complete as it could be made. It is claimed for this list that it contains the names of immigrants who were present at the founding of New Braunfels. On May 8, 1895, the *Neu Braunfelser Zeitung* published another list in which 207 immigrant names appeared, but it is not claimed that these persons were all present at the founding of New Braunfels. A third list, containing 220 names of pioneer settlers of New Braunfels and vicinity, appeared in the *Neu Braunfelser Zeitung*, July 22, 1926, 6, cols. 2 and 3, and 7, col. 1. (See Appendix E for lists.)

were not to take the place of the 160- and 320-acre tracts specified in the immigration agreements. Some of the immigrants set to work at once to get their farm lots into condition for planting, but others, feeling that the Society was obligated to support them, planted neither corn nor potatoes, although it was not too late in the season for either.<sup>27</sup> After the farm lots were planted, as well as during spare moments before that time, the settlers began to build their cabins to replace the tents which the Society had furnished them upon their arrival at the settlement. For the protection of the settlers a stockade was built on the east bank of Comal Creek and named the *Zinkenburg*, in honor of Nicolaus Zink, the surveyor, who platted the settlement into town and farm lots. Work was started, too, on the Society's buildings on the *Vereinsberg*.<sup>28</sup> In his last report, dated April 30, 1845, Prince Solms said that the cabins of the settlers were gradually beginning to go up. He regretted, however, that the Society's buildings were not making much headway and that very little had as yet been done on the Society's large storehouse. A shed, built for taking care of some of the Society's goods, was so leaky that many of the food supplies spoiled, especially four wagonloads of corn. Zink, in charge of construction work for the Society, offered as an excuse that there was a scarcity of workers, since each man was looking after his own interests first. On April 28 Prince Solms laid the cornerstone of the fort which was erected on the *Vereinsberg* for the protection of the settlers. The fort was named the *Sophienburg*, in honor of Sophia, princess of Salm-Salm, Prince Solms's lady love. For the cornerstone laying the Prince gave the officials

<sup>27</sup>Photostat *Original Berichte*, 95. No reference is given here to the "Berichte an den Adelsverein," in *Kalender*, because in this, as in a few other instances, the *Kalender* omitted a part of the original.

Hermann Seele, who arrived in New Braunfels on May 6, said that his friend, Eduard von Hartz, one of the first settlers, told him that there was dissatisfaction among the settlers and that only a few understood that Prince Solms had done the best under the circumstances. Some accepted their town and farm lots with great reluctance and demanded to be taken to the grant; others sold their lots for a song, abused the Society for not keeping its promise, and demanded to be supported by the Society. (See Seele, H., "Meine Ankunft in Neu Braunfels," *Kalender der Neu Braunfelscher Zeitung fuer 1914*, 41.)

<sup>28</sup>The *Vereinsberg* is a hill just west of the present freight depot of the Missouri Pacific Railroad and rises about thirty feet above the flat on which the principal business and the old residence section of New Braunfels lies.

See also Appendix D, *Karte der Stadt Neu Braunfels*.



NEAR RIVER CROSSING USED BY  
**NEW BRAUNFELS' FIRST SETTLERS**

AT THE CROSSING OF THE SAN ANTONIO-NACOGDOCHES ROAD ON THE GUADALUPE RIVER (USED EARLIER BY SOME OF TEXAS' MOST FAMOUS TRAIL-BLAZERS) ABOUT 200 GERMAN COLONISTS ENDED A JOURNEY THAT HAD BEGUN SIX MONTHS BEFORE IN EUROPE. HERE ON GOOD FRIDAY, 1845, THEY FOUNDED THE TOWN OF NEW BRAUNFELS, NAMED FOR THE ESTATE OF PRINCE SOLMS-BRAUNFELS, THE COMMISSIONER-GENERAL OF THE GERMAN EMIGRATION SOCIETY.

PART OF A WAVE OF GERMAN COLONISTS, 1844-1847, THIS SMALL GROUP AND OTHERS LIKE IT HAVE LEFT A DISTINCTIVE MARK ON THE HERITAGE AND CULTURE OF TEXAS.

(1909)