

Texas Historical Commission Staff (DP), 12/10/75;  
revised at State Marker Committee request, 1/12/76

18"x 28" Official Texas Historical Marker  
without post (to be mounted on stone)  
Comal County (Order #4484)

4484

Location: 386 N. Castell,  
New Braunfels

THE CHURCH OF \*\*\*  
SAINTS PETER AND PAUL\*

GERMAN CATHOLIC COLONISTS,WHO  
CAME TO NEW BRAUNFELS IN 1845,  
OBTAINED THEIR PROMISED CHURCH  
AND SCHOOL SITE(1847)WHEN BISHOP  
JOHN M.ODIN WAS DEEDED FOUR  
LOTS HERE ON"LUSTIGER STRUMPF"  
(HAPPY STOCKING)HILL--SO CALLED  
FROM ITS SHAPE. A LOG CABIN AT  
FIRST,AND THEN A WALNUT WOOD  
CHAPEL STOOD HERE. SINCE 1871  
THIS GOTHIC CHURCH OF NATIVE  
LIMESTONE HAS CROWNED THE HILL.  
THE CHURCH STEEPLE,FELLED BY AN  
1881 STORM,WAS REBUILT AND HAD A  
CLOCK ADDED IN 1889. FRANCISCAN  
CONVENTUAL FATHERS,BENEDICTINES,  
AND SISTERS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE  
HAVE,BY TURNS,CONDUCTED SCHOOL.\*\*

(1976)\*\*\*

\*3/4" lettering  
\*\*1/2" lettering  
\*\*\*1/4" lettering

FILE COPY - DO NOT REMOVE

APPROVED

Truett Latimer

by Bob Watson  
1-20-76

STS. PETER AND PAUL CHURCH, NEW BRAUNFELS, TEXAS:  
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE STRUCTURE

By Dr. Marguerite Davenport

In 1845 a group of German Catholics came to what is now New Braunfels, Texas. They were sponsored by Adelsverein, with Prince Carl Solms-Braunfels their Commissary General. Along with the Protestant immigrants, they were promised a tract of land for a church; a paragraph in the statutes of the German Emigration Company called for a church and school.<sup>1</sup> In 1847 Bishop John Mary Odin, C.M. obtained a site at what is now Castell and Bridge Streets. The German Emigration Company deeded to the church lots 225, 252, 253, and 280 of New Braunfels city property which had come to Prince Carl Solms-Braunfels by sale from the Veramendi and Garza families.<sup>2</sup>

Father Odin was himself an immigrant, having landed at Port Lavaca July 12, 1840. In 1841 he was named Vicar Apostolic of Texas; in 1847 he was raised to Vicariate for the Diocese of Galveston; in 1849 he was appointed resident pastor to New Braunfels. The church which he had constructed was a small log cabin, which served himself and Father Emmanuel Dominic. It was later used for the parish school (1854-58), when the Franciscan Conventual Fathers arrived as resident pastors and teachers.<sup>3</sup>

I do not think this is an authentic statement. Do not rely upon: D.P., 6 21-

In 1849 a black walnut chapel was built on the site where the present structure stands, Lot 253, <sup>one</sup> of the several lots deeded <sup>to</sup> the church by the Emigration Company. The hill upon which the church property lies was called by the pioneers Lustiger Strumpf, or Happy Stocking, because of its curved shape, thought to resemble a stocking.<sup>4</sup> No photographs of this church survive, to my knowledge, but a painting (either authentic or imagined) hangs in the Sophienburg Museum.

## 4484

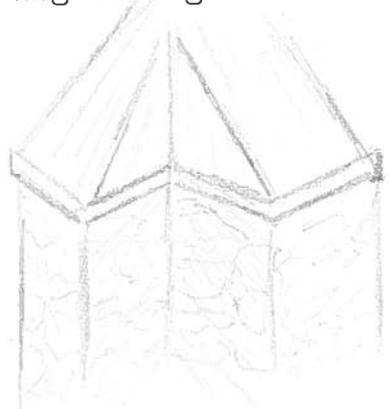
By 1860 the Catholic parish had outgrown the small walnut chapel and plans were made for a new limestone church building "105 feet by 60, with two steeples each 100 feet high and a limestone floor."<sup>5</sup> These plans were under the direction of Father F. X. Wenninger, S.J., who came to the parish for a brief time in the summer of 1859. It was also during the 60's that a young Father Fleury tried to raise money for a new church by a grand lottery, but he failed in his attempt.<sup>6</sup> The Civil War made it difficult for the parishioners to raise money, and more pressing problems of frontier life took precedence during those difficult years. It was not until 1871 that the present structure was completed.

The event of dedication was a community festival. It drew people of all faiths to Happy Stocking Hill to see the stone church that legend insists was built around the walnut chapel so that services could be held continuously during its erection. The Neu Braunfelzer Zeitung of June 30, 1871, records the cornerstone laying of Sts. Peter and Paul:

On Sunday morning, June 25, we attended the solemn cornerstone laying of Sts. Peter and Paul Church, now being erected. The beloved Bishop of the diocese, the Right Reverend Claudius Maria Dubuis graced the occasion with his presence. The tiny original church of the parish, bedecked with red, white, and blue banners with the symbol of the cross in the center of each, was already almost completely surrounded by the rock walls and roof of the new building. . . . The tiny structure appeared much larger because the door to the new building encompassed the entrance to the old. . . . Sts. Peter and Paul's Church will when completed, be not only a large, impressive building for its parishioners, but an ornament to the entire city. It is built upon a high place, away from the everyday business of the town, overlooking the beautiful panorama of the Comal Valley. The floor of the church is composed of the same pure limestone as the rock of the surrounding grounds."<sup>7</sup>

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The outer walls of the structure are of native limestone, brought to the site by wagon. The stone is rectangularly cut and stacked, mortared with cement. Buttresses of the kind common to country Gothic design support the walls at approximately 15 foot intervals. This particular shape was popular in Catholic churches of this area, but the corner buttresses create a design that adds to the overall aesthetics of the structure as well as giving strength to the corners:



The original plans of the 1860's called for a building 60' by 105' with two stone towers. These plans were changed before 1871, however, and only one tower adorns the present structure. It mounts the steep upsweep of the roofline, enhancing the worshipful spiraling effect of the Gothic. The measurements of the finished building were 56' by 77', smaller than the projected plans, but large enough to serve the congregational needs until the renovation of 1963. Inner walls were of plaster.

The single bell of the steeple was augmented in 1881 by three new bells, christened St. Peter Paulus Margarethe, St. Maria and St. Joseph. They have since been electrified. The high pinnacle was destroyed in 1886 by a storm, but was rebuilt in 1888. The Neu Braunfelzer Zeitung of December 6, 1888, notes that the tower is almost completed. The lapse of two years between the time of destruction of the steeple and completion of the tower may indicate that some changes were made, possibly to accommodate the tower clock, which arrived in April, 1889.<sup>8</sup>

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In 1898 some renovation was made under the direction of Father J.M.J. Wack. The previously open rafters of the interior were covered with metal. Wooden Gothic arches on columns ornamented the interior space. Walls and ceilings were painted gray and gold. Walnut and ash were used for the new Gothic altar and communion railing. The Sievers family of San Antonio carved the ornate high altar, which displayed statues of the patron saints. In 1910 the floor was made completely wooden, and during this decade new stained glass windows were added.<sup>9</sup>

The most recent renovation was begun in the early sixties under the direction of Msgr. Henry S. Herbst. Plans were drawn by Julian and Associates Architects of San Antonio. The general building contractor was Charles Madden Company of San Antonio. Letters from the files of the Catholic Chancery of the Archdiocese give the following plans for changing the outer structure:

The enlargement would consist of an addition at the sanctuary end of the church measuring 55' by 86'. Although the church is only 56 feet wide, the additional 30 feet would be for mother's room and also for an inquiry classroom. The entire addition is 4,850 feet.

The addition thus changes the outer structure by adding 55' to its length, and creating a 30' wing on one side of the rear of the church.

Stone was taken from the old jail for the extension to the church, so that aesthetically the structure is harmonious. It is difficult to tell where the old stone leaves off and the new begins, so meticulous were the stone masons. The parishioners were determined to preserve the historical integrity of the church. In 1961 it was suggested by members of the Archdiocesan Building Board that the estimated cost ~~of~~

of renovation was more than dismantling and rebuilding would cost. The pastor replied that the people would not even consider such a suggestion and that they would "have to bury the pastor instead."<sup>10</sup>

According to the contractor's agreement of September 10, 1963, the following changes were made within the structure: new pews, new frames for stained glass windows, new door, painted statues, acoustical ceiling, new main altar and two side altars, new communion rail, composition tile floor. The interior is now simplified, the Gothic effect having been discarded for a light and uncluttered modern decor. The ash and walnut fixtures were disposed of; indirect lighting of the altar area illuminates a simple background painted a light neutral tone complementary to the repainted statues of the patron saints. Obviously, there have been mixed reactions to this modernization of the interior.

In summary, no substantial change has been made in the outer structure. The added wing harmonizes with the existing building, and is, in fact, not seen from the front of the church. The front entryway was changed when the new door was installed (see pictures). The church is in excellent condition, according to the 1973 appraisal description by Francis J. Spellman Realty.<sup>11</sup> Modernization has for the most part been functional, to serve the needs of a growing and working congregation.

The church has contributed greatly to the life of the community. Since the 1850's its greatest asset has been its school. In 1853 the Franciscan Conventual Fathers came to New Braunfels to teach as well as to preach. By this time there were also lay teachers to assist the religious in their instruction. The Franciscans were followed by the Benedictine Fathers of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, who also functioned ~~as~~

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as teachers. In 1868 the Sisters of Divine Providence were brought to the school. This is the religious order which helped to found the schools of Castroville, Texas, and which has its convent and school at Our Lady of the Lake in San Antonio. The sisters still operate the school, which has a modern plant on the grounds near the church. It has indeed progressed since the first group of sisters offered to its thirty students music, drama, handwork, and kindergarten.<sup>12</sup>

One of the outstanding pastors of the parish was Father Wack, under whose direction the 1898 renovations were made. A native of Lorraine, he was for thirty-eight years, until his death in 1927, much beloved by his congregation. In addition to the improvements on the church, he built the rectory, the parish hall, and enlarged the school. He was instrumental in erecting the grotto beside the church, which is a replica of Lourdes, built when the congregation was spared the deaths that claimed so many lives during the 1918 influenza epidemic.

Under his influence many vocations were declared by church members, among them Father Columban Wenzel, Msgr. Joseph Jacobi, Rev. J.J. Hildebrand, and the Reverend Bruno Hubertus. Father Hubertus (1912) has distinguished himself with many honors during his career. He was made Papal Chamberlain in 1954, Domestic Prelate in 1957, and Protonotary Apostolic in 1968, each a successively higher title offering privileges of vesture as well as prestige.<sup>13</sup>

The Sisters of Divine Providence were instrumental in the education of one New Braunfels woman to the vocation. Reverend Mother Angelique Ayres (1882-1968) grew up in New Braunfels and attended Sts. Peter and Paul after her conversion as a young woman. She later entered the convent of Our Lady of the Lake, and was teacher, First Councilor, Dean, and finally Superior General of the College. Her administrative

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abilities were responsible for the College's affiliation with the Catholic University of America. One of the first women to receive a master's degree from Catholic University in 1913, she returned to the Lake and devoted her energies to the College and to achieving state Board of Education approval of the four-year high school at the Lake, then called Our Lady of the Lake Academy.<sup>14</sup>

Sts. Peter and Paul parish has been fortunate in having lay workers dedicated to civic and church projects. The Dittlinger family of Dittlinger Industries is one such family. Hippolyt Dittlinger (1859-1946) came to New Braunfels as a young man in 1875 and by 1901 was owner of a flour mill and a large gin. In 1907 he began to manufacture lime and as a byproduct, <sup>operated</sup> a rock quarry and crushing ~~machining~~ machinery. The Dittlinger industries became some of the most important in the town. The family has given much in terms of money and time toward the building program of Sts. Peter and Paul. Mrs. Hippolyt Dittlinger (Elise Grob, 1863-1943) was a charter member of Christian Mothers Society of the church. She was charter member of the Child Welfare Club, co-founder of the Sophienburg Museum, and pioneer researcher for the Texas Historical Landmarks Association.<sup>15</sup> Their daughter, Mrs. Alfred Liebscher (Franziska), has been instrumental in establishing the Dittlinger Memorial Library, and is an accomplished historian. Her daughter, Sister Loretta Liebscher, is now a member of the Sisters of Divine Providence and a teacher in the parish school.

The parishioners and pastors of Sts. Peter and Paul Church are justly proud of its heritage and its place in the community. They wish to obtain a marker that will reflect officially what they have tried very hard to perpetuate in the church: structural authenticity; congregational dedication to historical significance; Catholicism in the sense that the

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community shares in the historical privilege that has been theirs. Its excellent condition and its accessibility to visitors make it a desirable structure on which to place a state historical marker. The Comal County Historical Survey Commission therefore requests their wish be granted.

Signed: Marquerite Danenport  
Comal County Historic  
Commission - member

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>"San Antonio, Archdiocese of," New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: The Catholic University of America), XII, p. 1016.

<sup>2</sup>See attached copies of the deed, recorded in Vol. C, p. 30, Comal County Deeds of Record. The Abstract copy of the Garza sale of the Veramendi land to Prince Carl Solms-Braunfels was obtained from the Archives of the Chancery of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas. The Chancery holds the original deed of sale.

<sup>3</sup>Monica Fuhrman, et al. The History of Sts. Peter and Paul Church and Parish 1844-1974 (privately printed), 1974, n.p.

<sup>4</sup>Interview with Miss Jeannette Altgelt, parishioner of Sts. Peter and Paul

<sup>5</sup>Fuhrman. Also cited in History of Sts. Peter and Paul's and the 125th Anniversary exhibit of Sts. Peter and Paul Church, both prepared by parishioners.

<sup>6</sup>From the Diamond Jubilee 1874-1949, published by the Archdiocese of San Antonio, 1949.

<sup>7</sup>Quoted from Fuhrman.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Minutes of the Archdiocesan Building Board, Feb. 24, 1961.

<sup>11</sup>Archives, the Catholic Chancery.

<sup>12</sup>Fuhrman.

<sup>13</sup>Archives, The Catholic Chancery.

<sup>14</sup>Sister Mary Generosa Callahan, CDP, The History of the Sisters of Divine Providence, San Antonio, Texas.(Milwaukee: Bruce Press), p. 243.

<sup>15</sup>From information given by the Alfred Liebscher family.

## Bibliography

General Studies of the Church were found in the New Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: The Catholic University of America) 15 vols.; The History of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of San Antonio, (San Antonio, 1897), although this history by P. F. Parisot and C. F. Smith has nothing on the New Braunfels church; and Sister Mary Generosa Callahan, CDP, The History of the Sisters of Divine Providence, San Antonio, Texas (Milwaukee: Bruss Press, 1956).

Privately printed books were of the greatest help in researching the history of the church. Mrs. Monica Fuhrman's The History of Saints Peter and Paul Church and Parish, 1844-1974 is as accurate history as will be found; The Archdiocesan publications such as the Diamond Jubilee edition (1949) were helpful for biographies of the various priests who have served the church in recent years. Oscar Haas' History of New Braunfels and Comal County (Austin: The Steck Co., 1968) has long been a standard reference book for county history.

Old copies of the New Braunfelser Zeitung are invaluable for pinpointing dates, and the 100th Edition of the Neu Braunfelser Zeitung (1952) carried a brief history of the church. Not reading German, I was forced to rely on translations for some of the earlier information.

I am most grateful to Sister Gertrude, Archivist of the Catholic Chancery in San Antonio, for her generosity in allowing me to research the archives and files on the church. Interviews with Sister M. Generosa Callahan, with the Dittlinger family, and with Miss Jeannette Altgelt helped to supplement the written histories. Also of invaluable service in directing me to resource persons was Mrs. Olum, of the Dittlinger Memorial Library in New Braunfels, Texas. Mrs. Frances Bridges took the photographs of the church as it appears today and The New Braunfels Herald supplied the enlargement from a printing of the old church.

This history was prepared by Marguerite L. Davenport, of the Comal County Historical Committee.

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Filed by Return at 3 P. M. Tuesday January 30th 1857  
Recorded at 6 P. M. Monday February 3rd 1857  
Taken out by Rev. Mr. Odier April 8th 1857 per paid

110. 1102  
Bishop Odier  
United States of America  
State of Texas  
County Council  
and Bishop Monseigneur Odier bound himself to build a Church for the  
use of the Catholic Community in the City of New Braunfels - have granted  
bargained sold released and conveyed and by these presents do grant bargain  
sell release and convey unto them the said Rev. the Bishop Monseigneur  
Odier or his successors in office all the right title interest claim and demand  
of the German Emigration Company in and to all these four lots or parcel of land  
situated lying and being in the City of New Braunfels County Council and designated  
in the Maps of said City of New Braunfels According to the list of the four lots  
as No. Two Hundred and Twenty five [225] Two Hundred  
and fifty three [253] and Two Hundred and eighty [280] Containing twenty thousand  
square feet or half an acre bavarian measurement each lot said lots bounded as it will  
more fully appear by reference to the plot hereby annexed: together with all and singu-  
lar the rights members hereditaments and appurtenances to the same belonging  
to have and to hold all and singular the said lots or parcels of land and premises  
unto them the said Reverend the Bishop Monseigneur Odier or his successors in  
office forever. And I Hermann Spiess acting as Trustee of the German  
Emigration Company bind myself my successors and constituents to warrant and  
forever defend all and singular the rights and premises unto them the said Reverend  
the Bishop Monseigneur Odier or his successors in office against the claim or  
claim of all and every person or persons who whatsoever claiming or to claim the  
same or any part thereof by through or under me my successors and con-  
stituents. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and official  
seal this the 27th day of November A. D. 1847.  
Signed sealed and delivered in  
presence of witnesses  
Dr. Th. Köster  
H. Willke  
Substitute of Mr. Spiess

Before me the undersigned Clerk of said County Court this day for  
County of Council Equally appeared Hermann Willke to me well known who being by  
me duly sworn according to law solemnly deposed and said that he was present at  
the signing of the foregoing deed and Instrument of writing to B. Odier and  
Ludwig Bene sign the same and heard him acknowledge that he executed it  
for the consideration and purposes therein set forth And that he deposed  
and Th. Köster signed their names thereto as witnesses  
In testimony whereof I here to set my hand and official seal of  
said County Court at New Braunfels January the 30th 1857.  
C. Sealbaugh Clerk of Court,  
County, Texas

city court  
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C.

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT.

4484

Between

Rafael C. Garza and his wife,  
Ma. Antonia Veramendi Garza

§  
§  
§

and Prince Charles of Solms.

The Republic of Texas.

Articles of Agreement made and entered into this fourteenth day of March, A. D. 1845, between Rafael C. Garza and Ma. Antonia Veramendi Garza, his wife, of the County of Bexar, in the Republic aforesaid, on the one part, and Prince Charles of Solms Braunfels as Trustee of the Association for the Protection of German Emigrants in Texas of the other part, as follows:

The said Rafael C. Garza and Ma. Antonia Veramendi Garza, his wife, do hereby covenant, promise and agree with the said Prince Charles of Solms as aforesaid to sell, assign, grant and surrender unto him as Trustee as aforesaid, all the existing right, title and interest of inheritance that the said Ma Antonia Veramendi Garza has as heir at law of the Estates of her deceased father and brother both named Juan Martin Veramendi, in and to all that certain tract of land consisting of two Leagues, more or less, situated, lying and being within the County of Bexar on the Southwestern margin of the waters on the ~~Chadler~~ <sup>Comal</sup> River and known as the "Comal Tract" the same being more particularly designated and described by the plat boundaries and descriptions hereunto annexed, signed by the parties hereto and made a part of this agreement, - the said right, title and interest of such inheritance in said Comal Tract herein covenanted to be conveyed is not to exceed one equal undivided fourth part of said tract, for the sum of one thousand, one hundred and eleven dollars, five hundred dollars of which sum is to them the said Rafael C. Garza and Ma Antonia Veramendi Garza his wife, in hand paid by the said Prince Charles of Solms as aforesaid at the sealing of these presents, and for the further consideration and upon the conditions hereinafter expressed, and that they, the said Rafael C. Garza and Ma Antonia Garza, his wife, shall and will, on the thirtieth day from and after termination of a certain suit to be instituted in the District Court of said County wherein the title to said tract of land is involved provided the said suit so to be instituted should terminate in favor of the said parties of the first part, on receiving from the said Prince Charles as aforesaid the sum of six hundred and eleven dollars, being the balance of the consideration aforementioned and upon the said party of the second part paying the entire costs of counsel or counsels employed by the said party of the first part, at his own cost and expense, execute a proper conveyance for the conveying and assuring the fee simple of the said premises to the said Prince Charles of Solms as aforesaid free from all encumbrances which conveyance

shall contain a general warranty and the usual full covenants. And the said Prince Charles of Solms Braunsfels as aforesaid agrees with the said Rafael O. Garza and Ma Antonio Veramendi Garza, his wife, that he the said Prince Charles of Solms as aforesaid shall and will on the said 30th day from and after the termination of the said certain suit to be instituted in the District Court of said County wherein the title to said tract of land is involved, provided the said suit so to be instituted should terminate in favor of the said parties of the first part, and on the execution of such conveyance pay unto the said Rafael O. Garza and Ma Antonia Veramendi Garza, his wife, the sum of six hundred and eleven dollars, being the balance of the consideration and the entire costs of counsel or counselors employed, or to be employed by said party of the first party aforesaid. And it is further agreed between the parties aforesaid as follows:

The said Prince Charles of Solms Braunsfels as aforesaid shall have the possession of the right, title and interest of inheritance in the said two league tract herein covenanted to be conveyed which is not to exceed one equal fourth part of said Comal Tract so soon as the same shall be set apart, divided, and the divisional lines thereof run by the Commissioners who have been appointed by the Probate Court of said County to divide the Estates aforesaid between the lawful heirs of the same and receive and be entitled to the profits thereof, until the said 30th day from and after the termination of the suit to be instituted as aforesaid, the party of the second part paying the taxes that hereafter accrue on the said premises, herein agreed to be conveyed. And it is further agreed between the parties aforesaid that should the suit to be instituted as aforesaid prove unsuccessful by the party of the first part, then and in that case the party of the second part agrees with the party of the first part to pay a moiety or equal half part of the fee or fees of counsel or counselors employed by the party of the first part as well as the costs of Court accruing on said suit to be instituted as aforesaid. And it is understood that the stipulations aforesaid are to apply to and to bind the heirs, executors and administrators of the respective parties to these presents, and that no error or mis-statements in the description of the premises herein covenanted to be conveyed shall vitiate this agreement. And for the faithful performance of all and singular the covenants, conditions and agreements herein contained, the parties to these presents for themselves and for each of their heirs, executors, administrators and assigns bind themselves each to the other firmly by these presents.

In testimony whereof the parties to these presents have hereunto set their hands and seals. Done in duplicate or "Bis-partite" at the City of San Antonio on the day and date first above written.

Rafael O. Garza,  
Maria A. Veramendi Garza,  
Charles Prince of Solms.

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Signed and delivered in the presence of the undersigned witnesses:  
Thomas T. Divine,  
Ambrosio Rodriguez.

4484 16.

Republic of Texas, §  
County of Bexar. §

I, David Morgan, Chief Justice of the County aforesaid, do hereby certify that Rafael O. Garza and Charles Prince of Soloms,

parties to the foregoing deed bearing date on the fourteenth day of March instant, personally appeared before me and acknowledged having executed the same in Duplicate for the purpose therein set forth, and I further certify that at the same time appeared Ma Antonia Veramendi Garza the wife of the said Rafael O. Garza, also a party to said deed, and having been examined by me privily and apart from her husband and having the deed aforesaid fully explained to her, she the said Ma Antonia Veramendi Garza acknowledged the same to be her act and deed and declared that she had willingly signed, sealed and delivered the same, and that she wished not to retract it.

Given under my hand and seal at the city of San Antonio, this fifteenth day of March, A. D. one thousand eight hundred and forty five,

David Morgan, C. J. B. Co.

The County Clerk's certificate shows that the foregoing instrument was recorded in Book E, on pages 58, 59 & 60 of Comal County Deed Records on January 14, 1856.

The foregoing instrument together with the County Clerk's certificate thereon showing the same to have been recorded in Book E on pages 58-60 Comal County Deed Records, was again filed for record February 22nd 1856 and recorded in Book E on pages 120-122, Comal County Deed Records, as is shown by the certificate of the County Clerk on that page.

Johann Friedrich "Fritz" Geue House, 256 W. Mill Street

Built on Townlot #103 which was first granted to settler Philipp Weil as a result of the public drawing held by the Adelsverein in April 1845 just a few weeks after their initial arrival and conveyed to Weil by Hermann Spiess, Trustee of the German Emigration Company.

Townlot #103, consisting of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre Bavarian measurement (by American measurement these lots are 96' wide, 192' deep), was then conveyed by Wilhelm weil and Jacob Weil on 2 January 1854 for the sum of \$1.00 to Johann H. Chr. Kurre.

(The 1850 census as listed pp 246-261 in History of New Braunfels and Comal County, Texas, 1844-1946, by Oscar Haas, does not include Philipp weil, Wilhelm Weil, Jacob Weil, or Johann H. Chr. Kurre. However, one "Ph. Weil" and a "Th. Weil" are listed among the early settlers of New Braunfels whom Dr. Rudolph L. Biesele names in his book, The History of the German Settlements in Texas 1331-1861, Appendix E, page 245.)

On 17 August 1862 Christian Kurre conveyed Townlot #108 to Barbara Christine Mueller for the sum of \$120.00. (1860 Census, Oscar Haas, p. 279, lists 49-year-old Barbara Mueller with two children, Bertha, 13 years old, and Carl, 6 years old, natives of Hesse.)

On 12 March 1867, Barbara Christine Mueller, widow, conveyed "in the street called the 'Lustige Strumpf' and known and designated as Townlot #108" (Merry stocking - jolly sock) to Christoph Maurer for the sum of \$150.00

(Fred Oheim surmises that Mill Street was known in 1867 as the "Lustige Strumpf" (jolly sock) because of an old German Folk Song about spending for fun and merriment the money one had socked away (hidden in an old sock -- a popular and widespread method of stashing away savings in the early pre-Bank days), and the fact that the large (for the times) and popular tavern owned and operated by the young Count Henkel von Donnersmark was located on Townlot #21 at the corner of Mill and Castell Streets (where Winn's parking lot is now located), just across the street from Townlots 108, 109, & 110, and in close proximity to the Zinckenburg and Ma Blaedorn's.)

A Deed of Trust from Friedrich Geue and his wife, Marie Geue, to Christian Andreas was executed 23 September 1871 on that part of Townlot 108 shown on the Permission Letter, and it was evidently at this time that the house was built by Master Mason Geue.

On 20 March 1890 additional land comprised of a 22' strip fronting on Mill St. and more or less 110' deep, part of Townlot #109, was purchased for \$150.00 from Heinrich Leonards and wife, Auguste.

Johann Friedrich Geue died 27 October 1892, leaving a widow and three daughters, Anna (who married Emil Sekatz), Emilie (who married Louis Sekatz), and Ida (who married Charles Welsch, born near Twin Sisters 2 March 1876, son of John Welsch who had emigrated from Germany and settled in the Spring Branch - Twin Sisters area). Ida Geue Welsch and Charles Welsch were the parents of Judge Alvin B. Welsch and Hanno Welsch of New Braunfels, and Irma Julia Welsch (Mrs Erwin Schlueter) living at Clear Springs.

On 12 November 1904 an additional 22' strip of land from Townlot #109, extending back to Bridge Street was purchased for \$100, the deed to Marie Geue signed by Heinrich Leonards, independent executor of the estate of Auguste Leonards, deceased.

Marie Geue died 14 December 1924, and the ownership of the house was transferred to Charles Welsch and his wife, Ida Geue Welsch, she being also a daughter and heir of Fritz Geue, builder of the house, and his wife Marie Geue.

Ida Welsch died 28 June 1935 and the property was then conveyed to Friederich Kunkel. Upon his death, the Kunkel heirs conveyed the house to the present owner, Mrs Clara Gronle and her husband. After Mr. Gronle's death the widow married Mr. Leopold, who also is now deceased.

The house on Townlot #108, 256 W. Mill Street, is one room wide, five rooms front to back.

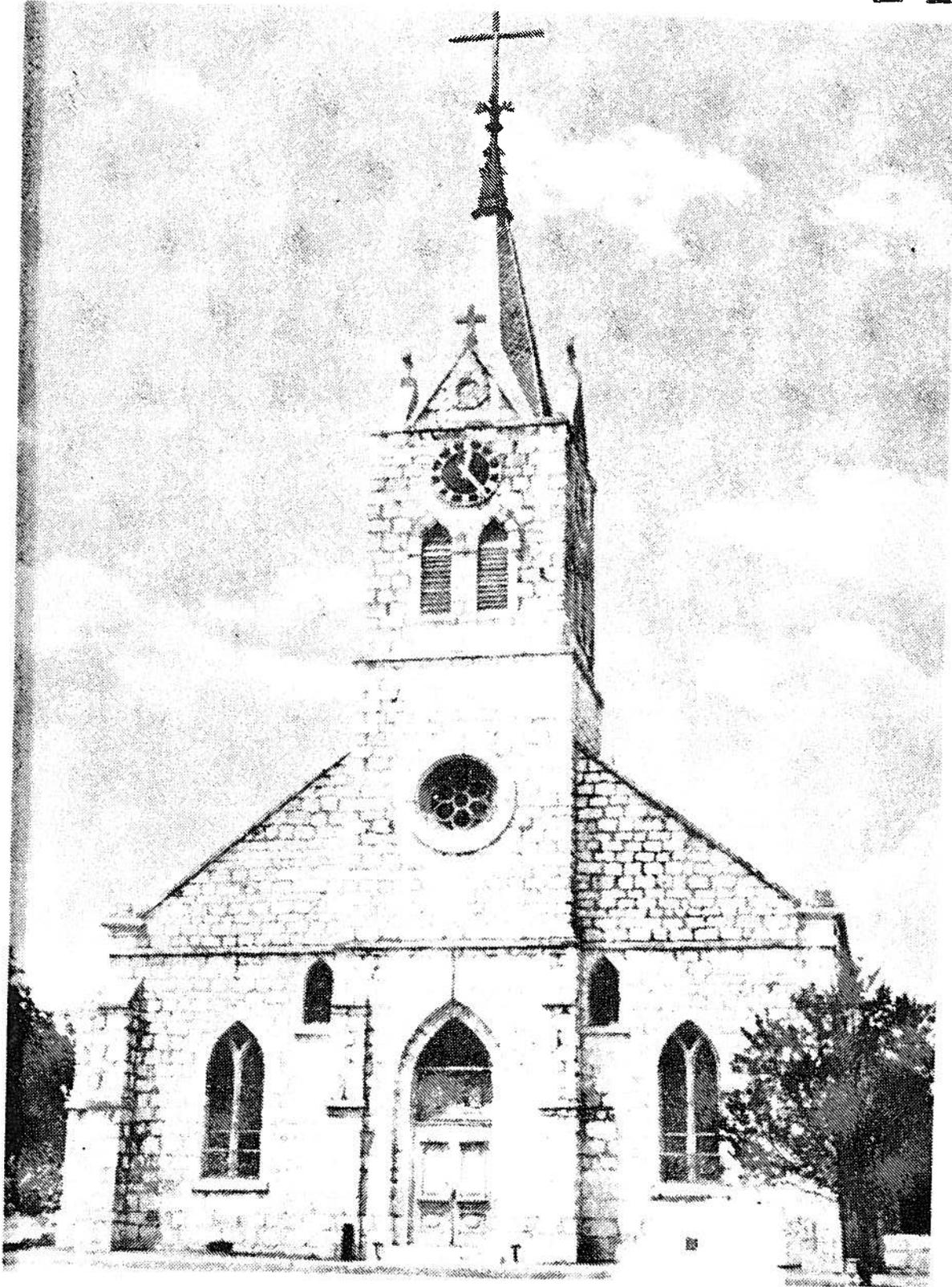
Johann Friederich "Fritz" Geue built first the two-room rock house fronting along Mill Street about 1871.

As with so many local houses, as the size of the family increased and/or finances improved, the original home was enlarged. In this case, two additional rooms of frame construction were attached, one behind the other, to the rear of the first two-room house. The farthest room was then used as the kitchen, and the adjacent porch on the NNE side of the house afforded easy access to the hand-dug, rock-lined well nearby (now covered with a cement slab).

The front porch was added to the house about the turn of the century, the steps originally centered and leading directly from the Mill Street sidewalk to the front door. At a later date (subsequent to Alvin Welsch's childhood), the porch railing was closed across the front, and the steps were moved to the side of the porch as they now exist.

At an even later date, the last room of the house, the bathroom, was added.

4484



Exterior - Sts. Peter and Paul  
before recent remodel

rch



