Texas Historical Commission staff (LCH), 8/1/02, revised 12/9/02
Official Texas Historical Medallion and 16"x12" plaque without post for attachment to stone
Comal County (Job #02802)

Location: 690 Mission Valley Road (about 4 mi. N of New Braunfels via SH 46)
Subject codes: GN, BH, VN *UTM ref.*: 14 577484E 3288680N

Homesite of

JOHANN AND GERTRUDA WALZEM

JOHANN JOSEPH AND ANNA GERTRUDA WALZEM CAME TO TEXAS FROM PRUSSIA c. 1851. IN 1859, THE STATE OF TEXAS OFFICIALLY GRANTED THEM THE LAND THEY HAD SETTLED (160 ACRES), INCLUDING THIS HOMESITE. JOHANN WAS A STONEMASON. HE AND HIS SONS BUILT THE HOME AND BARN, AS WELL AS NEARBY ST. JOHN CHAPEL. THEY ALSO DUG FOUR CISTERNS ON THE PROPERTY. STARTING IN 1871, THE LAND PASSED TO THE WALZEM'S CHIL-DREN: JOHANN, GERTRUDE, ANDREAS, HEINRICH AND PETER. THE HOME, BUILT IN STAGES OF STONE FROM THE SITE, SERVED AS A SCHOOL FOR THE LOCAL CHILDREN IN THE 1860s. THE BARN ALSO MAY HAVE BEEN USED AS A HOME.

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK - 2002

27 Nov 01

Background information to be used for the consideration of a Historical Marker on the Johann Joseph Walzem Home Site

I Current Owner –

The home site located on Survey 361 in Comal County, Texas has been in the Albert and Linda Klar Rahe family since 1934. See Attachment 1 for a map showing the location of the house and barn in Comal County, Texas. The current address for this property is 690 Mission Valley Road, New Braunfels, Texas 78132. Alton, son of Albert and Linda, and Yvonne Rahe are the current owners of approximately 84 acres which include 49 acres from Survey 361.

II Time of Construction and By Whom

After being associated with the home site for 67 years, the Rahe family has no firm information as to when the house, barn, rock fences, etc. were constructed or by whom. The only written information found was on the Walzem family who received the land from the State of Texas in 1859. No written information was available as to what changes were made to the house or barn between the years of 1859 and 1934, a period of 75 years. Similarly, no records were found pertaining to the property before 1851.

III Walzem Ownership

The following background information is recorded on the Walzem family to establish with rather firm evidence as to how long the family lived on the premise.

Johann Joseph Walzem received 160 acres in Survey 361 from the State of Texas in 1859 where this home site is located.[1] According to the

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[1] See Attachment 2 - The State of Texas by H. R. Runnels, Governor to John Joseph Walzem.

Land Office in Austin, the 160 acres were originally surveyed in 1854. Walzem received the land by pre-emption. This would mean that he settled and started working the land in 1851, a period of three years before the survey.

The 1860 Census[2] shows the Johann Joseph Walzem family as follows:

Name	Occupation	Age	Born
Johann Joseph	Stone mason	43	Prussia
Gertruda	Housewife	43	Prussia
Johanne		17	Prussia
Gertrude		12	Prussia
Andreas		8	Texas
Heinrich		3	Texas
Peter		1	Texas

The above census essentially shows that Andreas was born in 1852 in Texas and that Gertrude was born in Prussia in 1848. Thus, supporting the idea that the family could have come to Texas around 1851.

Mr. Walzem was a stone mason. Legend has it that he intermittently walked to San Antonio on weekends and worked there as a mason during the week. There are several houses in the Mission Valley Community which are believed to have been built by Mr. Walzem. [3]

Johann Joseph and his boys are credited with building the St. John Chapel located on an acre plot in the north end of his original 160 acres. See Figure 1a. Legend has it that Mr. Walzem built the chapel in thanksgiving for a safe trip to his homeland in Germany.[4] A stone at the top of the entrance to the chapel is marked 1870. Johann gave the land and chapel to the Right Reverend Bishop C. M. Dubois in June of

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[2] Oscar Haas, *History of New Braunfels and Comal County, Texas* 1844-1946. The Steck Company, 1968, p 290.

[3] Marjorie Cook, "Tribute of Thankful Traveler Rests in Mission Valley Historic Ruins" *New Braunfels Herald*, 4 October 1952.

[4] Ibid.

1871, as recorded in Volume L, Page 315-316 in the Deed Records of Comal County, Texas. See Figure 1b.

Gertruda died in 1873 and was buried on the chapel grounds.[5] Johann remarried in 1875 [6] and then apparently had little to do with this piece of land.

In the "History of the Mission Valley School", Mrs. Frieda Brehmer Heidrich wrote in 1932 that school was held in private homes before Mr. Karl and Julius Brehmer gave an acre of land for the establishment of a permanent school building.[7] Mrs. Heidrich went on to say that in 1866, Mr. August Tampke taught the children of the community in the large room of the Walzem home. At this time, Andreas, Heinrich and Peter would have been about 14, 9, and 7 years old, respectively.

Records also show that Mr. J. J. Walzem served in Company D as a volunteer for service in the Confederate States Army at the age of 45.[8]

The land was deeded to the Walzem children starting in 1871, according to the abstracts of the 160 acres. Johann and Gertruda were associated with the land from the state for about 20 years. It is the writer's assumption that he built the chapel between the years of 1866 and 1870. Thus, he would have had about sixteen years to clear the land, build the rock fences, build the house, dig three or four thirty-foot underground cisterns[9], and build a barn with a cellar. If the Walzem family did accomplish all of this, the home site would be about 140 years old.[10]

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[5] Grave was moved to the Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Cemetery, New Braunfels, Texas in the late 1960s.

[6] The Pioneer Families (Catholic families) manuscript from Father Wahlen, 1972, p 55.

[7] Copy of Heidrich manuscript can be found in the Sophienburg Archives at 200 N. Seguin St. in New Braunfels, Texas.

[8] Oscar Haas, *History of New Braunfels and Comal County, Texas* 1844-1946. The Steck Company, 1968, p 159.

[9] Will explain later.

[10] According to records from Riverside Cemetery, located near downtown Seguin, Texas, John Joseph Walzem was born on 11 May 1817 and died on 21 June 1885. This information on Guadalupe County Cemeteries is available in the Sophienburg Archives, New Braunfels, Texas.

IV Background information of the House and Barn[11]

After careful study of the construction of the house, there is good evidence that it was constructed in two stages. Furthermore, the structure currently used as a barn near the house also shows evidence of having been a home at one time. The barn structure will be referred as the "barn structure" and the home will be referred as the "current house" in subsequent discussions. [12] See Figure 1c for an overall sketch of the home site.

A. Barn Structure

It appears that, originally, the barn home structure consisted of two rooms separated by a dog trot. One room had a full-sized six by ten foot cellar built under it. Charred wood near the entrance to the cellar gives evidence that the structure above the cellar burned down. Apparently, after the fire, the rock walls were extended on the east and west sides. The extensions to the walls on the east and west sides are very obvious since the stones were not coursed together with the existing walls of the original barn home structure. The south wall of the building was constructed with tin. A tin roof covered the complete structure. This is the way it looks today. The blistered rocks on the remaining north wall and the scars on the near by oak tree are further evidence of a fire having occurred at one time. See Figures 2, 3a and 3b.

B. Current House Structure

There is no evidence as to the order in which the buildings were constructed. One thought is that the barn home was constructed first and that after it burned, the current home was built while the original

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[11] Observations by Albert J. Rahe, owner and operator of the ranch from 1934 until 1992, and Alton J. Rahe, current owner. Nearly all observations are based on structures and sites currently visible.

[12] See Attachment 3 for the field notes and measurements of the house and barn. These notes were made in a report entitled "*Early German Colonial Architecture in Texas: its origins and developments* ".by Mark Rahe in 1981 to satisfy requirements for an architectural degree from the University of Texas at Austin.

barn home was converted into a barn. This is hard to believe since it appears that the current house was constructed in two stages and that the hand-dug thirty-foot cistern located on the north side of the house depended upon the rain water runoff from the house. Additionally, why would anyone build such a well-constructed time-consuming cellar under the first home. Usually the settlers would build a simple timber structure for temporary living quarters before the more time-consuming permanent construction was undertaken. One must also remember that rocks had to be cleared from the fields before the crops could be grown for survival. There must have been plenty of rocks to remove from the fields as evidenced by the rock fences around the area. See Figure 4.

Now we will take a closer look at the evidence that the current home was constructed in at least two stages or time periods. It appears that the east side of the home was constructed first. It was modified at least once. The porch shows two of the columns which have been chamfered on only the two exterior sides while the other columns are chamfered on all four sides. Also among the two columns are mortises in the remaining floor and ceiling joists which suggests that half of the porch was a room at one time. Currently, there are doors leading from the main room where windows used to be in the north and south directions. The ceiling beams in the east side were milled on all four sides while the ceiling beams on the west side was hand-hewned on the top and bottom only. The ceiling on the west side is about 12 inches lower than the ceiling on the east side. The masonry work on the west side of the house is of better quality than the rubble stone construction on the east side of the house. See Figures 5 and 6.

At one time the east room was modified by closing in the fireplace with bricks and mortar, closing one of the built-in shelves with plaster and bricks, and replacing the baseboard with a wider board. When restoring the interior of the house in 1999, a one-inch brown color stripe was noticed on the wall when the baseboard was removed. Thus, assuming that the previous baseboard was somewhat narrower than the one currently removed.

One thought was that the east side of the house existed before Johann Joseph Walzem received the land from the State of Texas. The Land Office in Austin shows no record of any ownership prior to the

Walzems. However, someone could have built and occupied the house without having it officially recorded. The Land Office records go back to 1836.

The back room on the west side was used for a kitchen as evidenced by two different cuts in the ceiling for the stove pipes to extend through the roof.

On the north side was a separate smoke/wash house. This building had rock walls. It was located about fifteen feet from the back door of the kitchen. It is not known what material was used for the roof since the remaining ruins were there when the Rahe family bought the land. It might be of interest to note that only the chapel walls remain today, and that both the roofs of the chapel and the smoke/wash house perhaps failed for the same reason.

V. Additional observations of the Premises[13]

The Walzem place has three stock tanks. One is located about 200 feet from the house and the other two are across the open field on a hillside in the pasture. Each tank was dug in caleche clay-like subsoil and holds water very successfully. Next to each of the three stock tanks was a hand-dug cistern. Each cistern was very neatly outlined with native rocks from the top to the very bottom of about thirty feet. These reservoirs were not necessarily located in an area for water to drain into after a rain. Perhaps there was water seepage in each reservoir from the stock tanks. There is a good chance that the family used the purified water for household purposes. The cisterns could have also been used for keeping potatoes, onions, and other garden produces in a cool dry place. However, since each stock tank had a cistern, it is doubtful that that much storage was required.

A new rock masonry structure was built over the cistern behind the house in June of 1939. It replaced a wooden structure which offered very little protection from one falling into the hand-dug cistern. Mr. Fritz Meckel did the rock work.

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[13] Observations by Albert J. Rahe, owner and operator of the ranch from 1934 until 1992, and Alton J. Rahe, current owner. Nearly all observations are based on structures and sites currently visible.

There is further evidence that the current house is located on what used to be a working farm. The hog pen was located on the east side of the house on the side of the hill and the chicken house was located between the barn and the house. Over the years many pieces of old implements were located on the grounds.

The well-constructed rock fences on the site were most likely constructed before or during Mr. Walzems ownership since barbed wire came into use in the 1880s, and most likely only wire fences were constructed after that time.

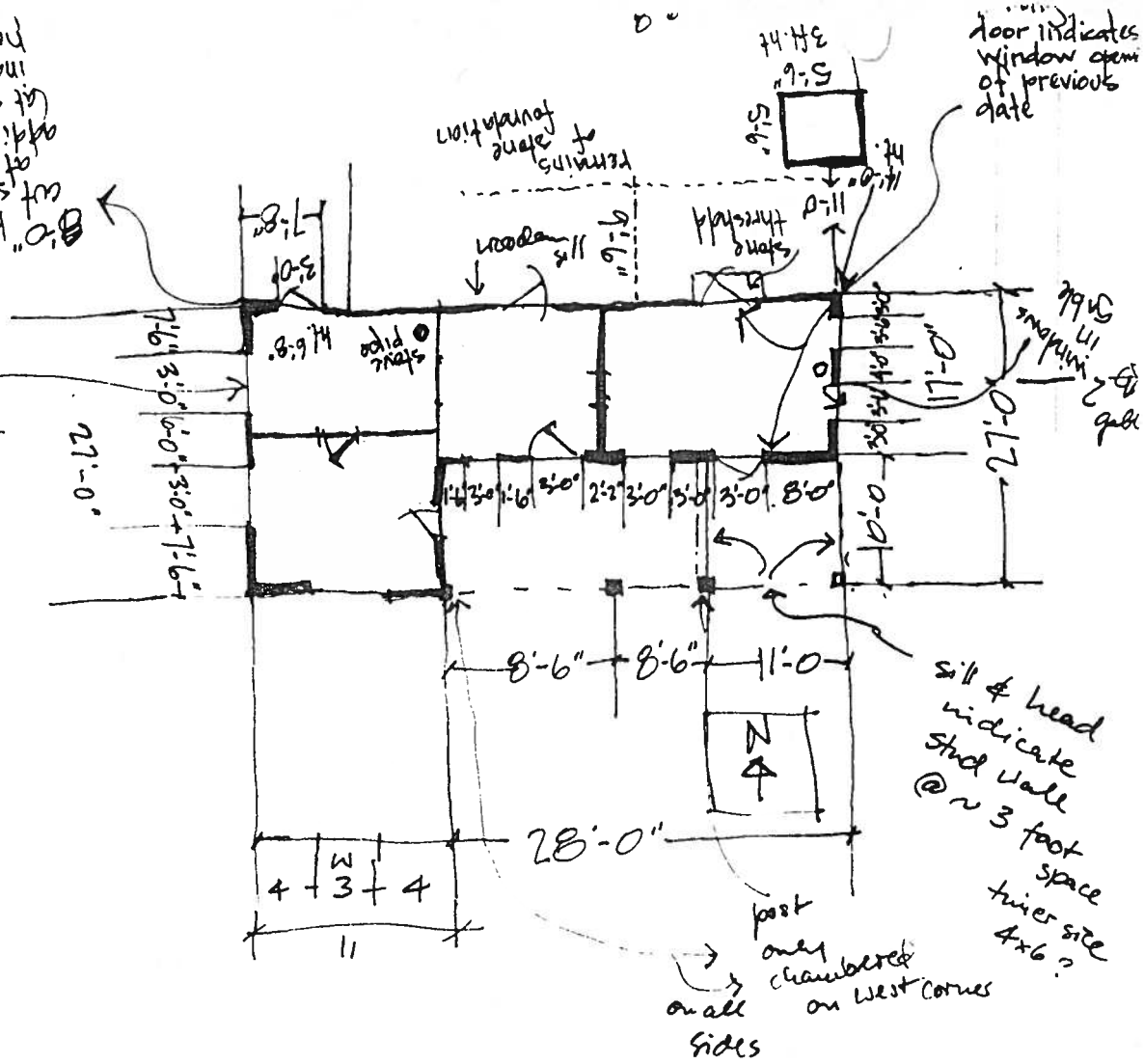
In conclusion, it is difficult to believe that the Walzem family could have accomplished all of the house, barn, cellar, rock fences, hand-dug cisterns, and chapel constructions during their approximately twenty years of ownership. Judging from the professional workmanship of the chapel for which we have documented evidence of his construction, it appears that Mr. Walzem built the west side of the current house and the barn with cellar. It is also very unlikely that any owner made structural changes during the years after the Walzem ownership. The abstracts of Survey 361 show about a dozen different owners of the land between the years of 1871 and 1934. As stated before, there is no written evidence of any ownership of the land before the Walzem ownership; however, it appears that there must have been. The above argument supports the idea that the original portion of the house etc. could be considerably more than 140 years of age.

VI Photos of the Home Site

No photos were located which might have been taken of the Walzem home site before 1934. The only available photos were those taken before and after the exterior of the house was preserved in 1988. The preservation consisted of replacing the wooden windows with new wooden windows, replacing the rotten rafters and re-pointing the rock work with lime and sand. The "before" photos shown in this packet are as the Rahe family remembers the house between 1934 and 1988. See Figures 6,7, 8 and 9.

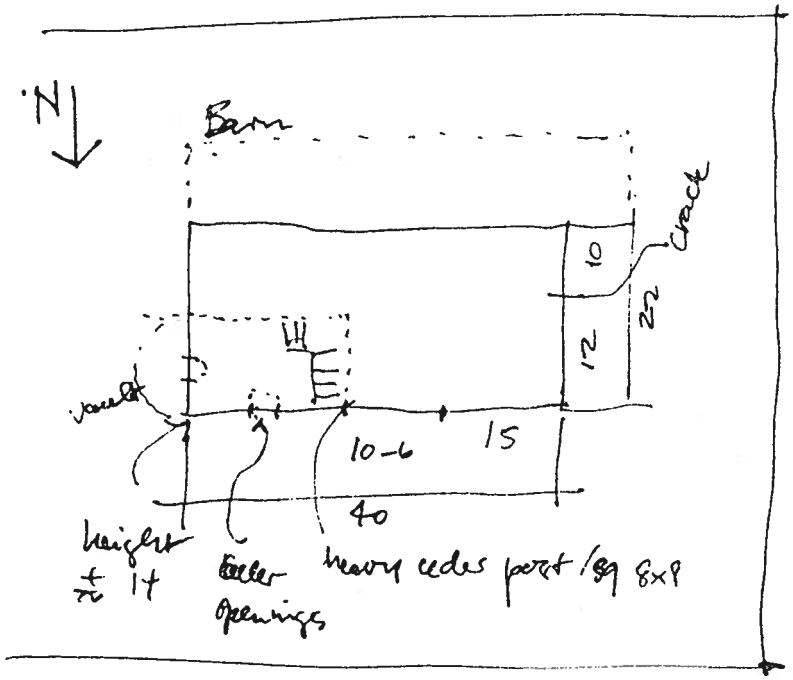
VII Location of Historical Marker

Field notes & measurements J. S. Walsem House & Barn



windows Covered

5/3



Attachment 3

Attachment 2

PATENT

The State of Texas
By H. R. Runnels, Governor.

To

John Joseph Walzem.

No. 527 Vol. 18

Dated April 5th, 1859

Filed for Record June 18th, 1859

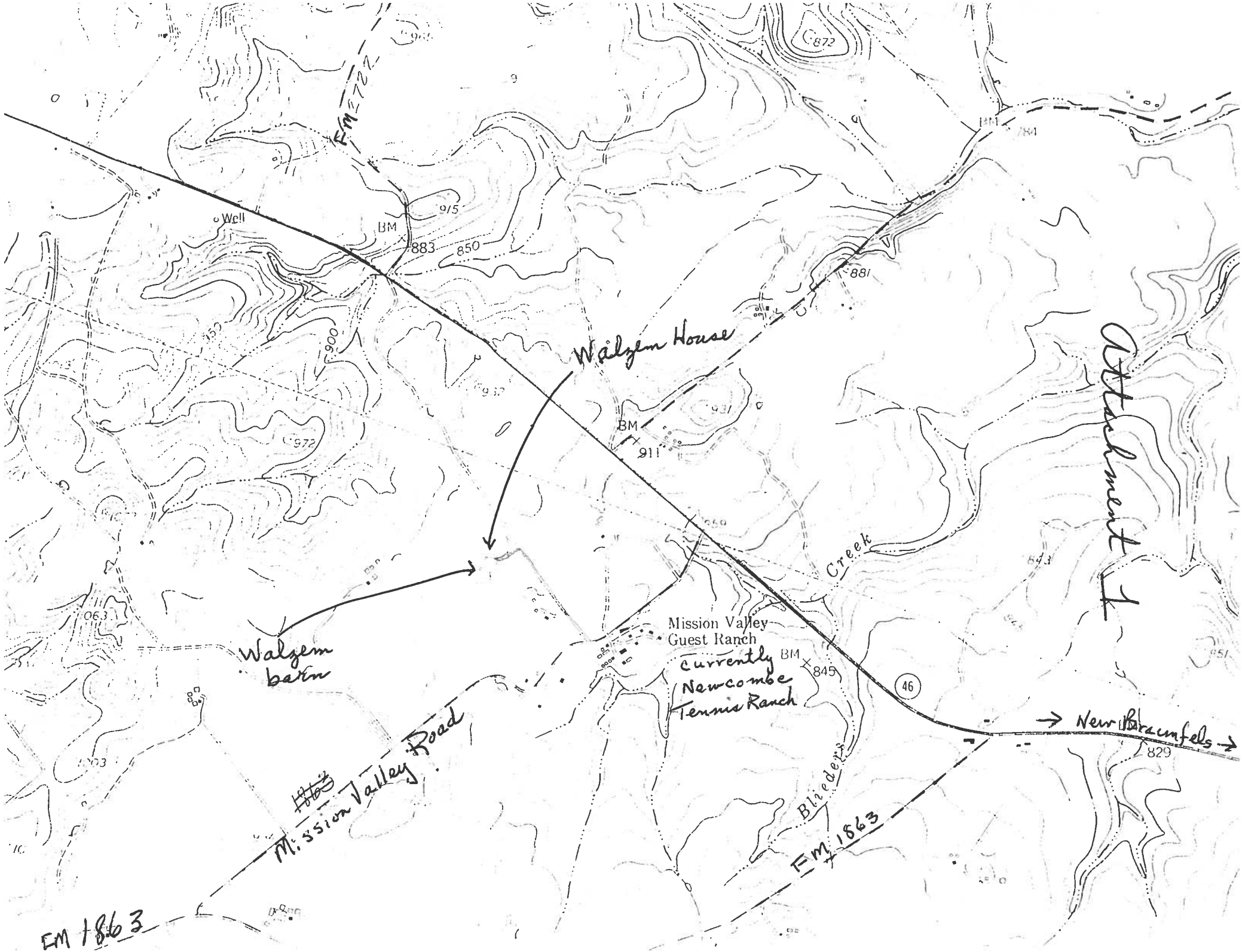
Recorded in Vol. F page 397,
Comal County Deed Records.

ATTEST: By Francis M. White, Commissioner of the General Land Office with his seal of office as well as that of the State of Texas, affixed.

DESCRIPTION

Grants 160 acres of land, situated in Comal County, Texas, on the waters of Comal, a branch of the Guadalupe River about 5 miles N. 75° W. from the City of New Braunfels, known as survey No. 361 in section No. 2 by virtue of Pre-emption Certificate No. -- issued by the chief Justice Comal County on the 1st day of January 1857.

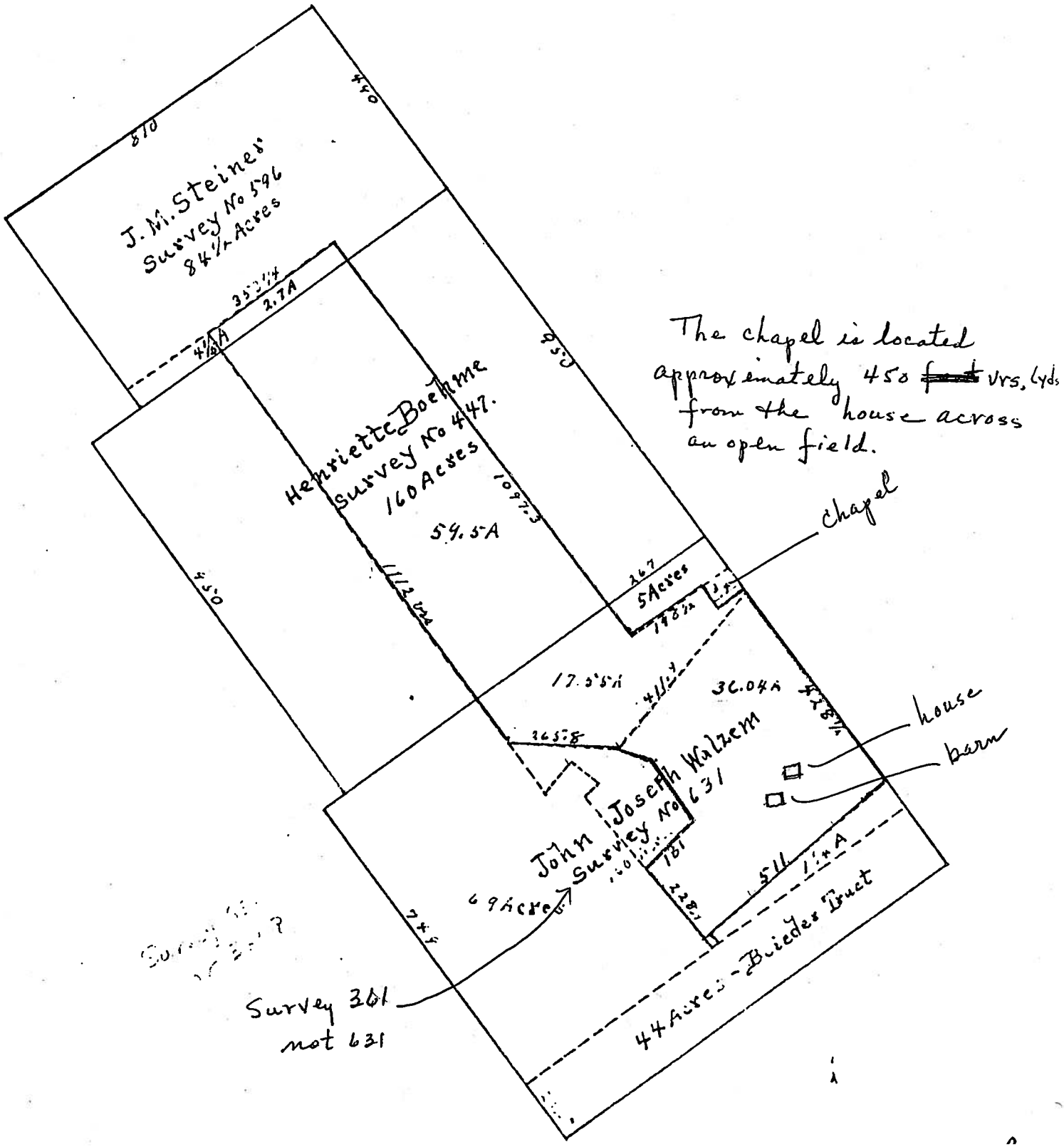
Beginning at a hackberry 4 in.dia.for the N.E.corner of survey No.360 & being the W. corner of this survey, standing in the S. E. line of G. Arnolds survey No. 436. Thence North 53° E. 58 vrs. interest the E. corner of said N. 436 or S. corner of widow Boehmes Survey at 1008 vrs. a stake and mound in the W line of survey No. 277, made for the E corner of said Boehme's survey and for the N. corner of this survey a L. O. 14 in dia brs. S. 20° W. 30 vrs. Thence South 37° E. 884, a pile of rocks in N corner of Jacob Heidrichs survey No. 284 and for the E. corner of this survey a L. O. 12 in dia brs. S 76° W. 38 vrs. Thence south 53° W. 1008 vrs. to a stake on the N. line of survey No. 358 for the E corner of survey No. 360, for the S corner of this survey an Elm 10 in dia brs. N. 24° W. 3 vrs. Thence North 37° W/ 884 vrs. with the N. E. line of survey No. 360 to the beginning.



Attachment 1
Walzem House
Walzem barn
Mission Valley Guest Ranch
currently Newcombe Tennis Ranch
Mission Valley Road
FM 1863
FM 1863
FM 2722
Creek
Blieders
New Braunfels
46
Well
BM
883
850
915
900
972
911
845
829
881
872

Figure 1a

J. J. Walzem Survey 361



Metes and Bounds

BEING 75.92 acres of land partly out of a called 79.75 acre tract of land conveyed by Gustav Vogel and wife, Ida Vogel, to Albert J. Rahe and wife, Linda Rahe, by deed dated March 16, 1933, and recorded in Volume 62, Page 184, of the Comal County Deed Records, and partly out a a called 36.04 acre tract of land conveyed by Alvin Reinarz, Guardian of Lillie Jentsch to Albert J. Rahe and wife, Linda Rahe, by deed dated November 5, 1934, and recorded on Volume 64, Page 76, of the Comal County Deed Records, in Comal County, Texas.

BEGINNING at an iron stake on the southwest line of a small land and the northeast line of the Albert J. Rahe and wife called 36.04 acre tract, placed for a lower northeasterly corner of the herein described 75.92 acre tract and for the southeast corner of a 37.96 acre tract of land apportioned to Nell Rose Rahe Kraft;

THENCE S. 34° 30′ E., with the southwest line of said small lane, 1154.2 feet to a post at the east corner of said Albert J. Rahe and wife 36.04 acre tract;

THENCE S. 48° 10′ W., with the southwest line of said 36.04 acre tract as fenced, 1452 feet to an iron stake by a post for south corner of this 75.92 acre tract;

THENCE N. 40° W., with fence 622 feet to a post at the southwest corner of said 36.04 acre tract;

THENCE N. 46° 30′ E. 432 feet to a corner post at a re-entrant corner;

THENCE N. 40° W. fence 532 feet to a post at the west corner of said Albert J. Rahe et ux 36.04 acre tract and southernmost corner of the said Albert J. Rahe and wife 79.75 acre tract;

THENCE with fence N. 73° 04′ 24″ W. 71.53 feet and N. 86° 30′ W. 711 feet to a corner post;

THENCE N.35° 58′ 21″ W., along the southwest line of said 79.75 acre tract as fenced 1449.58 feet to an iron stake set for the east corner of this 75.92 acre tract and for the upper south corner of said 37.96 acre tract apportioned by Albert J. Rahe et ux to Nell Rose Rahe Kraft;

THENCE N. 53° E., with the upper southeast line of said 37.96 acre tract, 923.11 feet to an iron stake set S. 53° W. 50 feet from the northeast line of said Albert J. Rahe and wife, 79.75 acre tract;

THENCE S. 37° E., parallel with and 50 feet distant from the northeast line of said 79.75 acre tract, 1537.7 feet to an iron stake and pile of rocks;

THENCE easterly with the boundary line of said 37.96 acre tract, S. 88° 23′ 39″ E. 512.43 feet to an iron stake and N. 58° 54′ E. 363.5 feet to the place of beginning, containing 75.92 acres of land, save and except a roadway easement 26 feet wide over and across "Tract One" given by Alton J. Rahe to Nell Rose Rahe Kraft beginning at a post at the east corner of the Alton J. Rahe 75.92 acre tract for the east corner of this roadway easement;

THENCE S. 48° 10′ W., with the southeast line of said 75.92 acre tract, 26.21 feet to a point;

THENCE N. 34° 30′ W., parallel with and 26 feet distant from the northeast line of said 75.92 acre tract, 409.31 feet to a point;

THENCE N. 4° 30′ W. 52 feet to a point in the northeast line of said 75.92 acre tract and southwest line of a lane;

THENCE S. 34° 30′ E., with the northeast line of said 75.92 acre tract and southwest line of said lane, 451 feet to the place of beginning.

The transactions on the deed of gift from Albert J. Rahe and Linda Klar Rahe to Alton J. Rahe are recorded in Volume 199, Page 372, Probate Records, Comal County, Texas.

Homesite of
JOHANN AND GERTRUDA WALZEM

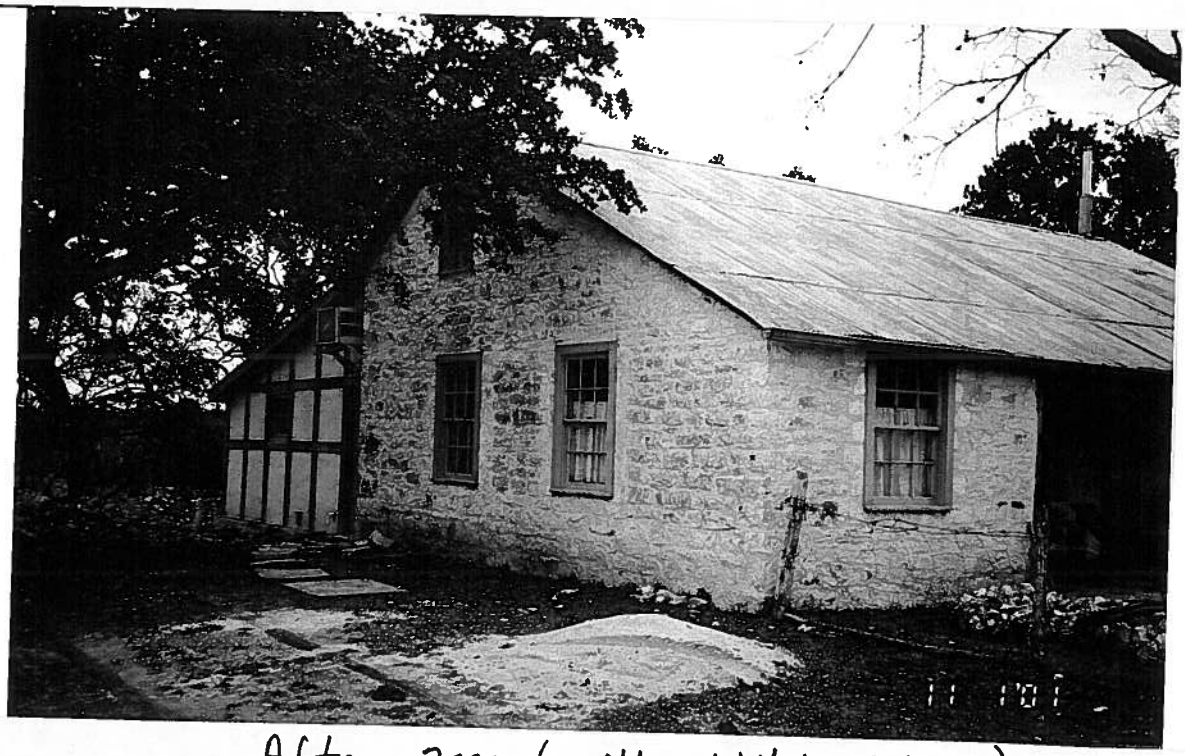
JOHANN JOSEPH AND ANNA GERTRUDA WALZEM CAME TO TEXAS FROM PRUSSIA c. 1851. IN 1859, THE STATE OF TEXAS OFFICIALLY GRANTED THEM THE LAND THEY HAD SETTLED (160 ACRES), INCLUDING THIS HOMESITE. JOHANN WAS A STONEMASON. HE AND HIS SONS BUILT THE HOME AND BARN, AS WELL AS NEARBY ST. JOHN CHAPEL. THEY ALSO DUG FOUR CISTERNS ON THE PROPERTY. STARTING IN 1871, THE LAND PASSED TO THE WALZEM'S CHILDREN: JOHANN, GERTRUDE, ANDREAS, HEINRICH AND PETER. THE HOME, BUILT IN STAGES OF STONE FROM THE SITE, SERVED AS A SCHOOL FOR THE LOCAL CHILDREN IN THE 1860s. THE BARN ALSO MAY HAVE BEEN USED AS A HOME.

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORICAL LANDMARK - 2002

02802

Figure 7
West view of House

Before 1988



After 2000 (with addition in back)

02802

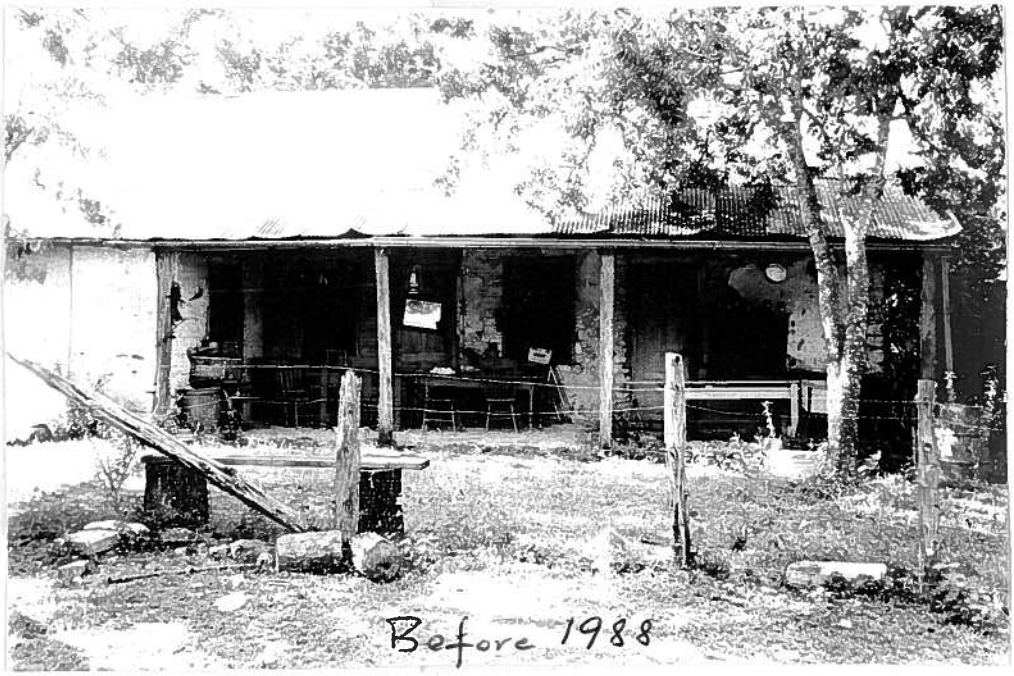
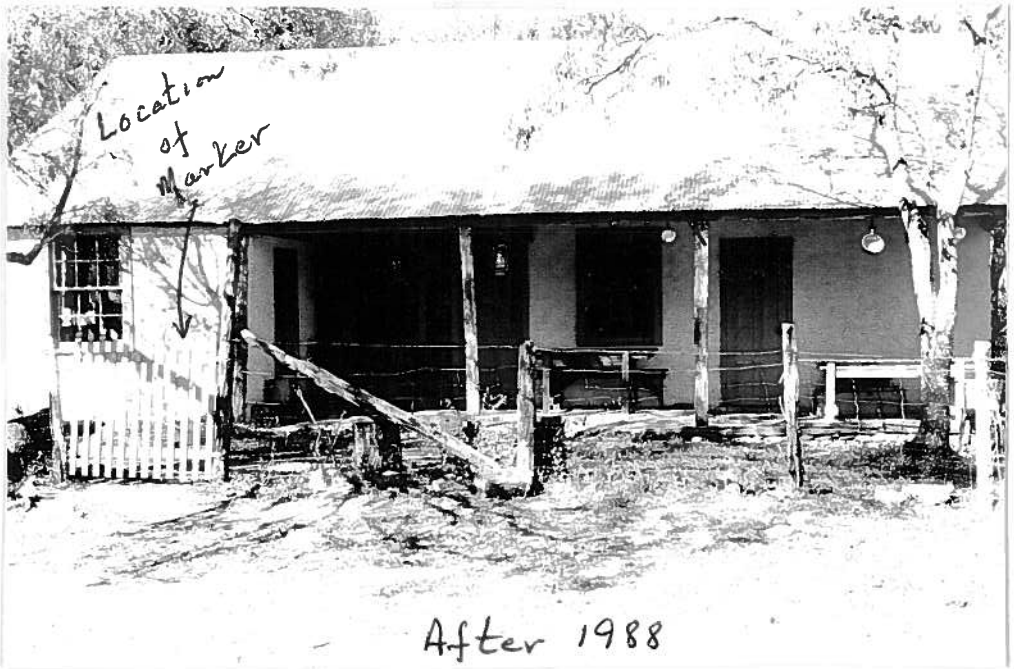
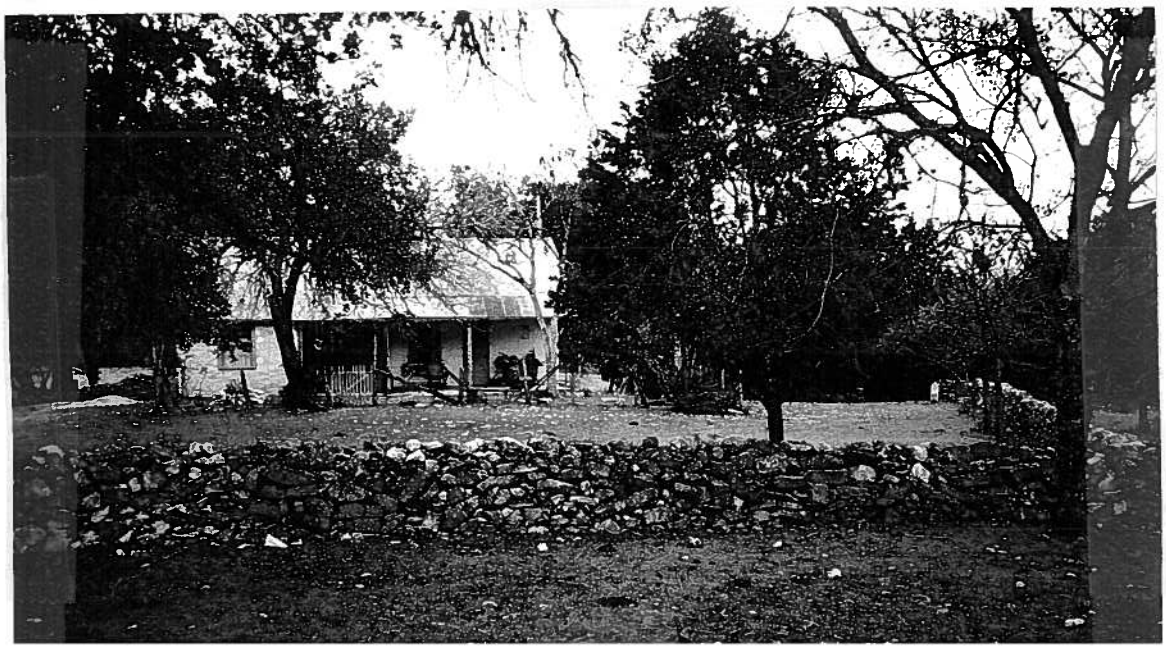


Figure 4

Front view of House





02802

Figure 3b

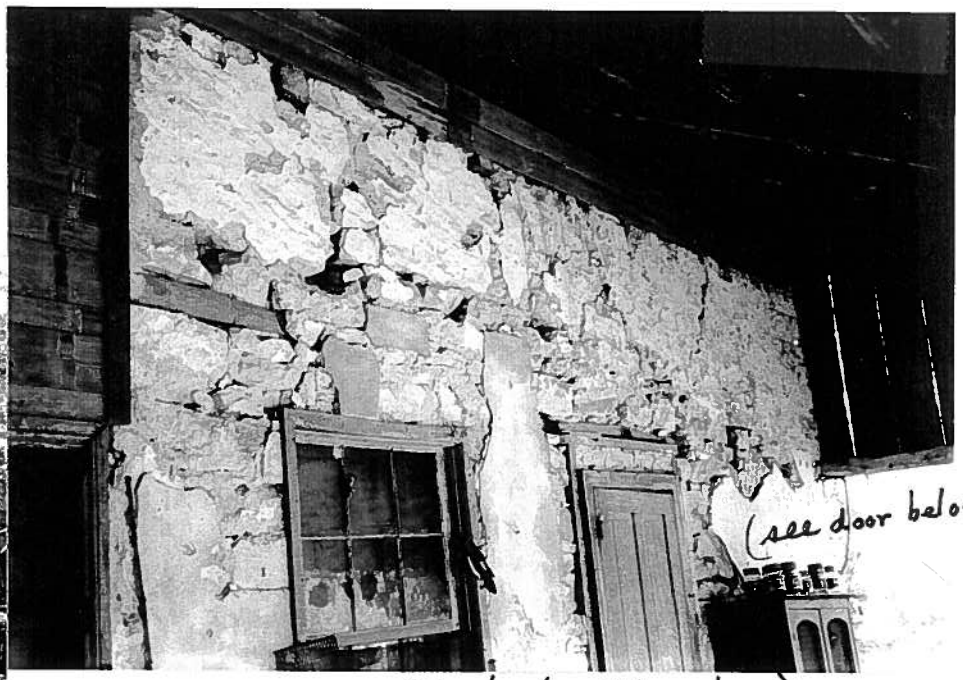
Cellar

entrance – note the ceiling

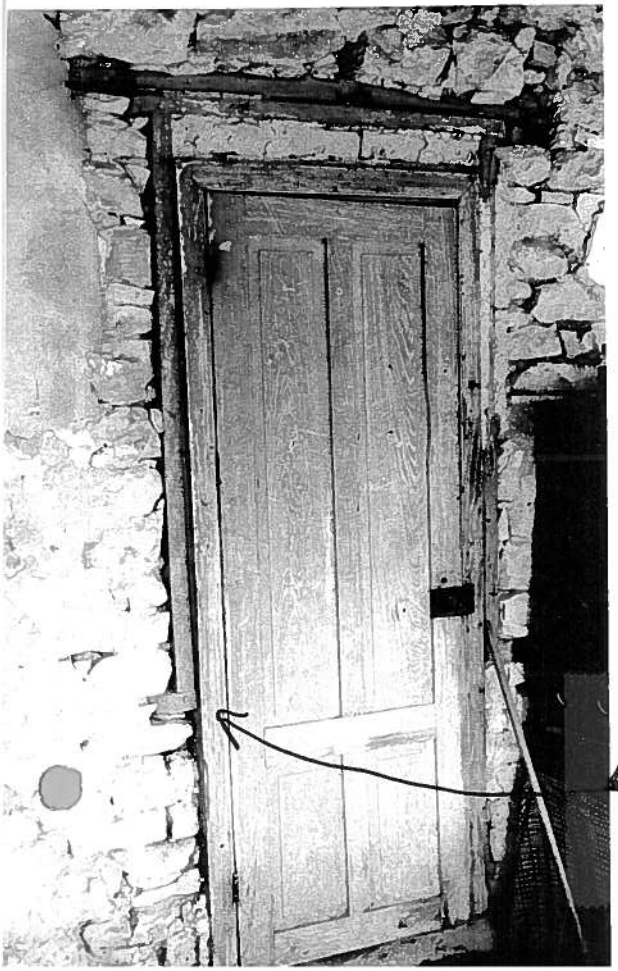
taken from the inside of cellar toward entrance – note charred wood on left of entrance

02802

South-east View



Porch (rubble stone)



There used to be a window in this location

Figure 6

East side of House

before 1988

02802

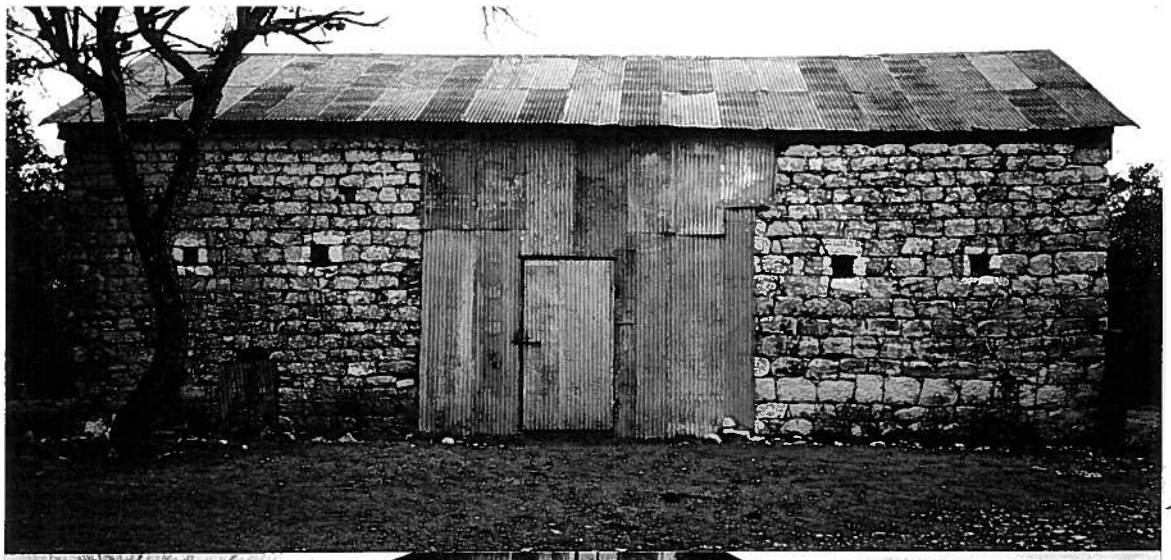


Figure 2

Barn

Top: North view of Barn
- cellar on the left (note window on bottom)
- 4 ventilation holes

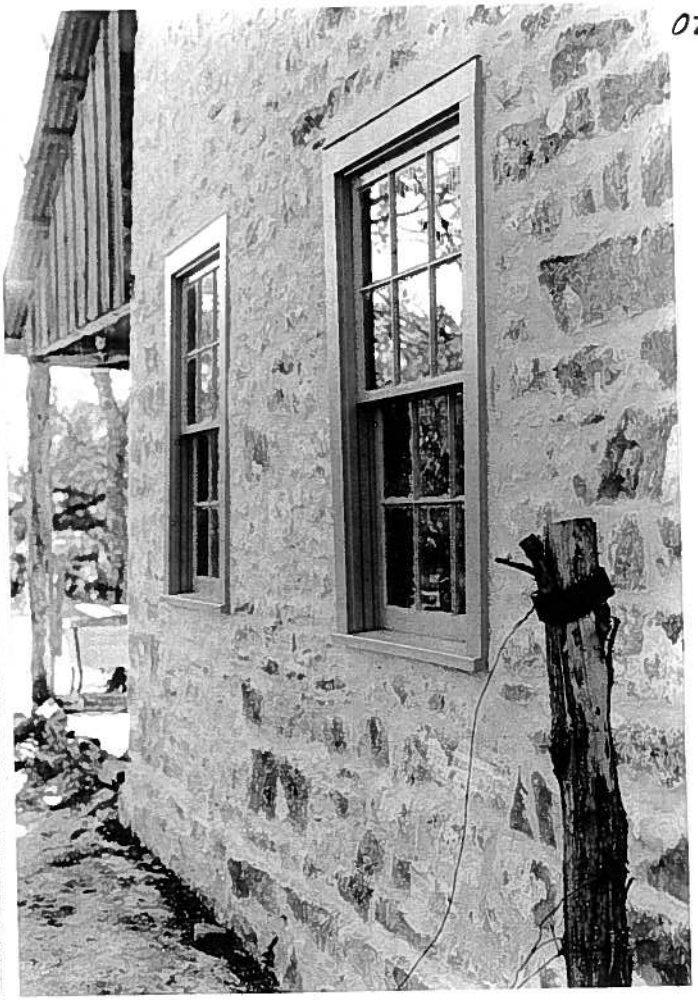
← West View

← East View

02802

Figure 8
East View of House

Before 1988



After 1988

It appears that the east side was originally plastered

02802

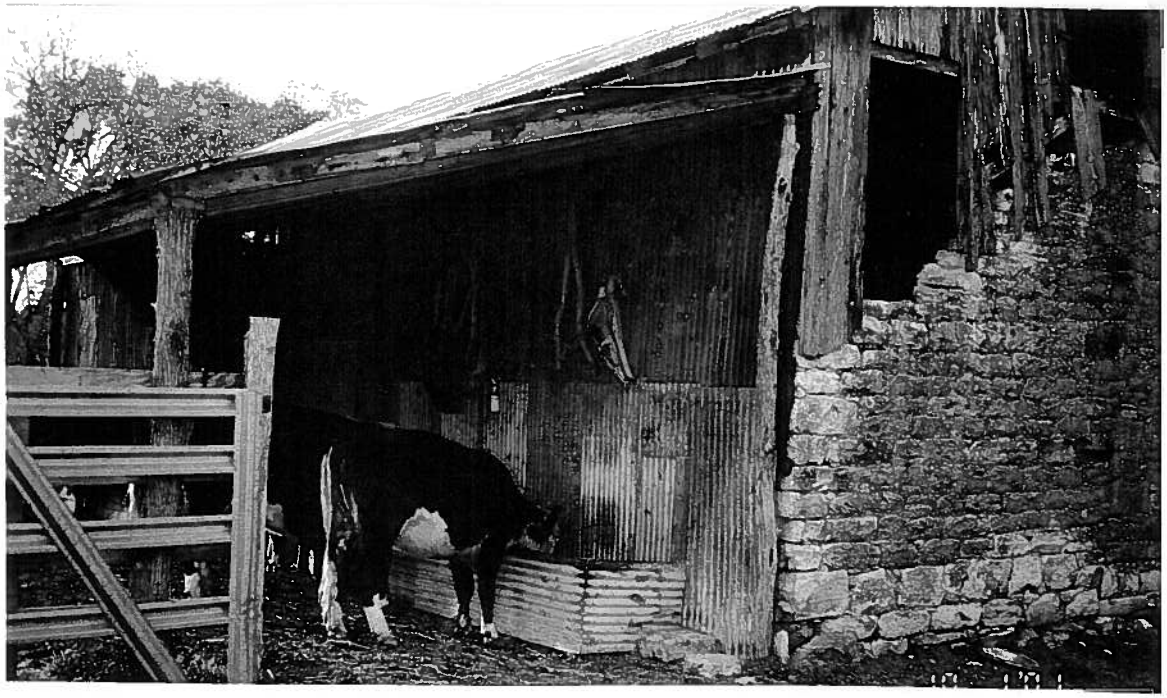
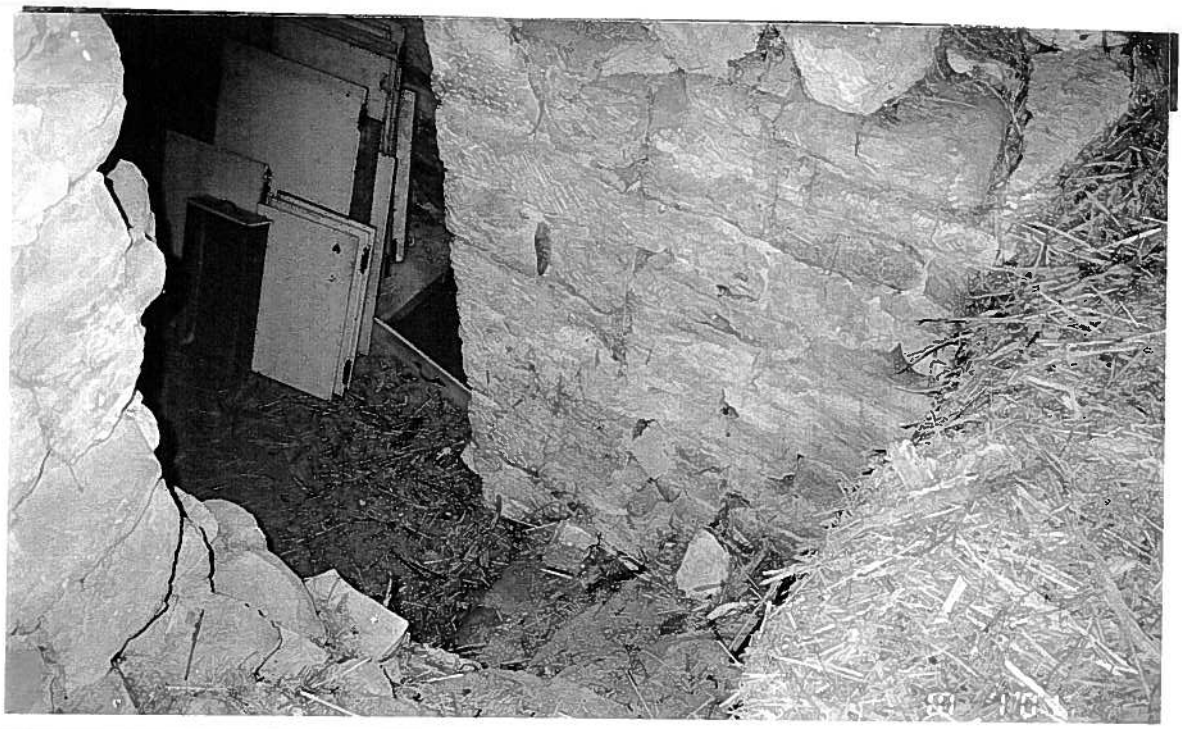


Figure 3
Barn

← South View



Entrance to cellar in the barn

02802

Figure 5
Porch

column chamfered on all four corners

column chamfered only on the two exterior sides

mortice holes

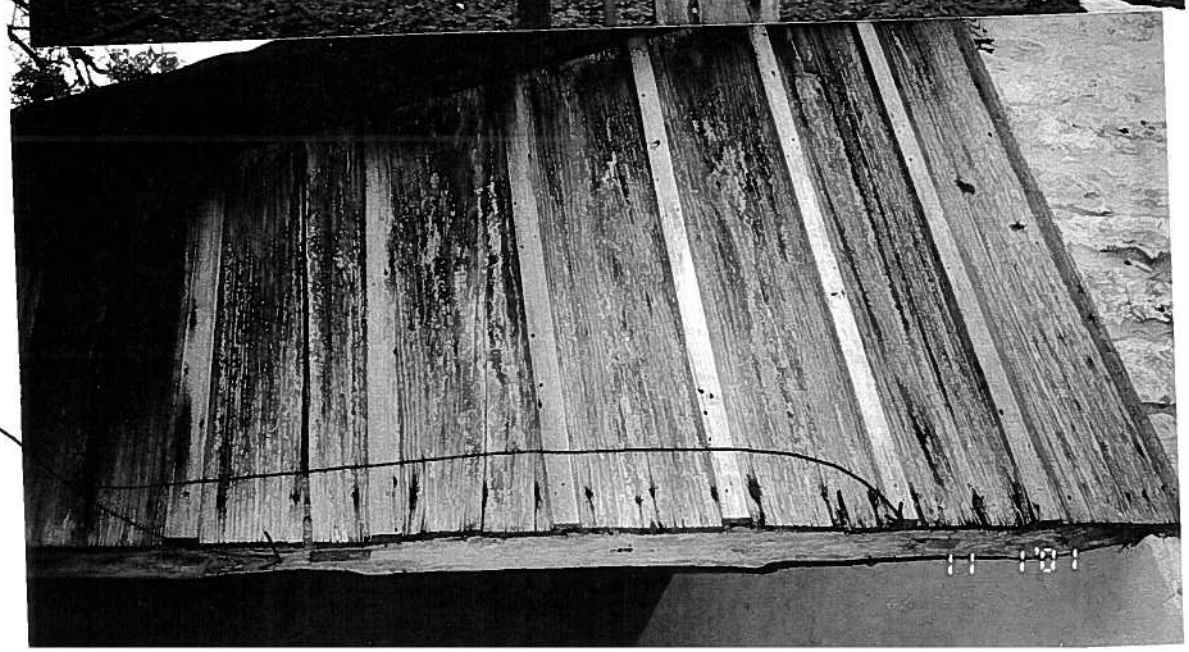


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Figure 9

Before (no after shown)

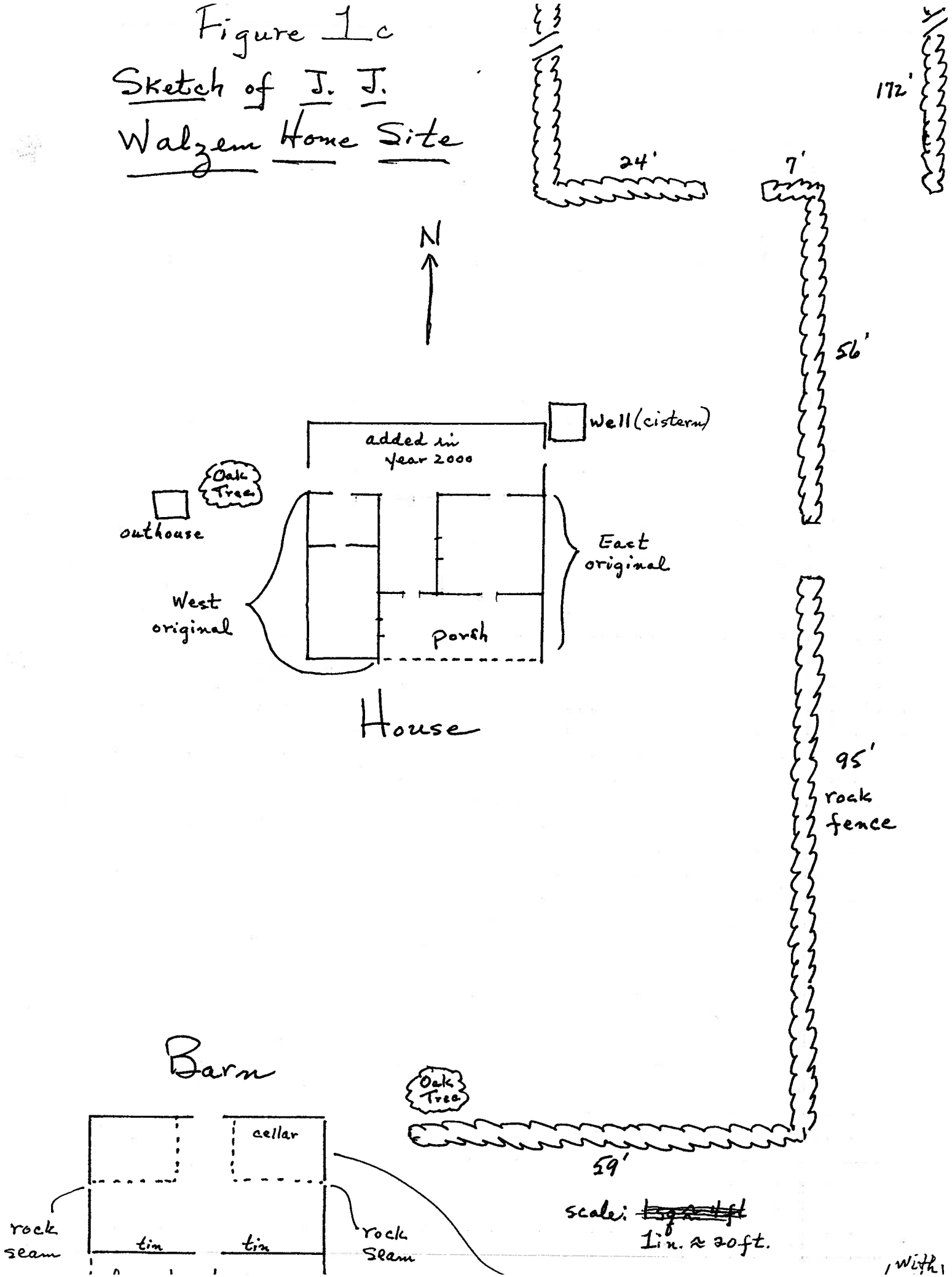
Rock Fences

Before

after

Figure 1c

Sketch of J. J. Walzem Home Site



with