

BRAUN-ROUSSEAU COMPLEX – DEMOLISHED 2009

Former Address: 9861 Braun Way/10475 North Loop 1604
(near Loop 1604/Braun and Leslie Roads)

Summary/Overview:

The property previously identified as the Braun/Rousseau Complex was an integral part of an early German settlement in northwest Bexar County. It had been identified as a potential Landmark for the City of San Antonio and was potentially eligible for a nomination to the National Register of Historic places.

The Braun/Rousseau Complex was located on a 160 acre tract which was part of the J.G. Braden survey, #203, Abstract #71.

There were three buildings of significance...two residences and one smokehouse. The larger residential structure was oriented north/south. It was two stories and had a tin roof over the original shingle roof. The second story was a finished attic. It had 6/6 windows, a porch on the south side, and five bays across the front, three windows and two doors. The smaller structure seems to have been a one room living place in which the roof was raised to add a second story at some point. This had a tin roof and a shed added to the north side and a frame garage added to the east side, as well as 6/6 windows. The smokehouse was to the north of these houses. It was less than one story in height but was partially constructed below ground level. These structures were stone and log and built in the mid 19th century by Wilhelm Braun, who likely had help from his family and other German families who had settled in the area. The structures were demolished in 2009.

Wilhelm Braun (1844-1907) had been born in Germany to Phillip and Maria Susannah Braun and had immigrated with his family to the U.S. in 1855. (U.S. Census, Bexar County, Texas, 1900). The Phillip and Maria Susannah Braun family first located in the German settlement of New Braunfels and then moved to the Helotes area in the mid-1860s. They accumulated several thousand acres in the southwest portion of Helotes which includes the present-day Braun, Leslie and Galm Roads. (Massey, Cynthia Leal, *Helotes, Texas, Where the Texas Hill Country Begins*, Old American Publishing, Houston, Texas, c2008, pgs. 34-35). On August 10, 1867, Wilhelm Braun purchased 160 acres on Los Reyes, a

branch of the Leon from Joseph Braden. (BCDR: Vol. 262, p235). He began establishing his home and initiated farming activities.

On Sept. 27, 1869, Wilhelm [William] Braun and Caroline Wilhemine Nickel (1847-1928) were married by Justice of the Peace, Anton Gugger. (Certificate #3327, Bexar County Marriage Book as found in the Marriages of Bexar County, Books E & F, San Antonio Genealogical And Historical Society, May 1998, p. 38). Carolina had been born in Germany and immigrated to the U.S. in 1868 (U.S. Census, Bexar County, Texas, 1900). On Oct. 14, 1872, William Braun became a naturalized citizen. (District Court 23, Civil Minutes) In 1889 William Braun had 5 horses valued at \$125 and 15 cattle valued at \$75. In 1890, he had 6 horses valued at \$120 and 15 cattle values at \$75. (Bexar County Texas Tax Assessment Rolls, 1889, 1890.)

William and Caroline Braun had 10 children, 8 of whom were living at the time of the *Proof of Heirship* document filed for the Estate of William Braun in 1928: Ida Weyel, Anna Weimer, Marie Weimer, Louis Braun, Ernestine Braun, Theodor Braun, Lina Tezel and Robert Braun. Matilda Braun Weimer was deceased . An earlier child had died in infancy. (BCDR: Vol. 1051, p.190, 1928). William Braun was one of the founders of the Zion Lutheran Church located near their farm. William Braun died at his farm on August 13, 1907 at the age of 65 and is buried in the Zion Lutheran Cemetery #1. His obituary stated he was a prosperous farmer. (*San Antonio Light*, Aug. 15, 1907, p12)

On Oct 24, 1921, Caroline Braun sold to her youngest son, Robert, her portion of the property and "all old implements and personal property of every description" with the exception of the livestock. She reserved the right to continue to live on the premises and use any room in the residence as she desired. In addition, Robert was granted immediate and complete use of the premises. (BCDR: Vol. 653, p.23+) Robert Braun had married Marie A. Skolaut on April 15, 1914 (Bexar County Marriage Book, Certificate #37180) and they had established their own home not far away on the Braun Road. They had two children at this point, Malinda, age 5, and Arthur, age 1. (U.S. Census, Bexar County, TX, 1920) Caroline Braun died on January 11, 1928 at the age of 80 years and is buried in the Zion Lutheran Church Cemetery #1. (Bureau of Vital Statistics, Texas State Board of Health, Death Certificate for Caroline Braun)

One year after the death of his mother on Jan. 24, 1929, Robert Braun, sold the property to S.E. Knowlton and L.M. Knowlton. (BCDR: Vol. 1081, p275) According to the Northside Independent School District website that provided a brief history of Lloyd M. Knowlton (born March 5, 1912), Lloyd Knowlton grew up on a dairy farm and at the age of 16 began his own dairy farm at the corner of Braun and Leslie Roads. (https://nisd.net/schools/info/138) It is likely this first Knowlton dairy farm was located on the same property that the Knowlton's purchased from Robert Braun in 1929. On July 31, 1968, the Knowlton's (Lloyd M., Robert M. Edward H. and Wendolyn A. Knowlton, members of the partnership known as Knowlton's Creamery) sold a 22.362 acre tract out of the original 160 acre survey to Ruby Rousseau. (BCDR: 6013, p.957). In 2004 Ruby Rousseau sold the property to the Salvation Army of Atlanta, GA. (BCDR: Vol. 10123, p.1818)

A Salvation Army Store and Donation Center with the address of 10203 West Loop 1604 North is now located on the front of the original property adjacent to the frontage road of Loop 1604.



Carolina Nickel Braun
(Oct. 25, 1847–Jan. 11, 1928)



Wilhelm [William] Braun
(March 11, 1844–August 13, 1907)

Photo Source of Carolina Nickel Braun: Find a Grave website posted by Laura V... who gave permission for use of the photos she had posted on the site.

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=7307136&ref=acom>

Photo Source of Wilhelm [William] Braun: Zion Lutheran Church,
San Antonio, Texas, Charter Members -
<http://www.zionheloteshistory.org/charter.html>

Both photos seem to be extracted from Cynthia Massey's book,
Helotes, Where The Texas Hill Country Begins, p.35, Old
American Publishing Company, Houston, Texas, p.35. Ms.
Massey has credited the photos to Frank Wendt.

Compiled by:
Pat Ezell, Vice-Chair
Historic Farm and Ranch Complexes Committee
San Antonio Conservation Society
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