

Frederick MUNK House

The Frederick Munk house is located south of Elm Creek, a tributary of the Medina River. It is about 14 miles southwest of San Antonio.

Originally a part of the Ygnacio Perez Spanish Colonial grant issued in 1808, the Frederick Munk structures and site is located on the Christopher Yoacum headright grant and partially on the Jose M. Pereida headright grant.¹

The site and structures are representative of those established in the late 19th century by small farmers. The historic occupation is evidence by a modified stone home with fireplace, constructed during the late 1800's. Outbuildings are a barn and an above ground cistern, appearing to date to the early to mid-1900's. The use of stone in the construction of the house indicates a construction date prior to the arrival of the railroad, about 1883, when lumber became both readily available and economically feasible.

The 1973 Bexar County Historic Survey described the structure as being a rectangular limestone building with one chimney on the southwest end and another chimney on the northwest side at a far corner. The stone work was described as changing in the middle indicating one end of the house was older than the other and that the building had been enlarged. It is likely the house was constructed c1882-1883 due to the 1882 date of purchase of the property by Fritz Munk from Jesse and Mary Applewhite (BCDR: Vol. 19, p402

Fritz Munk was the son of Sophia and Christopher Monk (born about 1815, Hanover, Germany). Fritz was born on April 25, 1850 in Texas (probably Comal County and died on Feb. 21, 1922 in Bexar County. He is buried in the Oak Island Church Cemetery in south Bexar County. His third wife, Bertha (Merkel) was born on Nov. 25, 1867 and died on August 15, 1969. She is also buried in the Oak Island Cemetery.

Fritz Munk (Monk) appears on the 1860 Comal County census living in New Braunfels in the household headed by his father, Christopher Monk, age 45 and his mother, Sophia. His siblings are shown as Sophia (age 13), Christian (age 8), William (age 6), Christopher Gustav (age 4) and Augusta (age 2). In the 1870 census, Fritz, his mother, Sophia (age 53) and his siblings, Christian, William, Christopher and Augusta are living in Seguin, Guadalupe County. His father apparently is deceased. In the 1880 census, Fritz Monk is heading his own household in Guadalupe County with his wife, Frederika. The children in the household are Willie, Emma, Louis and Henry. Within two years, Fritz Munk moved to Bexar County where he continued to live until his death.

Fritz Munk married three times and was the father of 7 children. After his first wife, Henrietta Kutz died, Fritz married Frederika Schultz who had previously been married to a _____ Jones. His third wife was Bertha Merkel, who he married in Bexar County on

¹ McGraw and Hindes, *Chipped Stone and Adobe: A Cultural Resources Assessment of the Proposed Applewhite Reservoir*, Bexar County, Texas. Center for Archaeological Research, Archaeological Survey Report No. 163, University of Texas, San Antonio. 1987:111.

Oct. 2, 1893. Bertha Merkel was born in New Orleans, LA. on Nov. 25, 1867. (*San Antonio Express*, Nov. 22, 1968, p.4-C)

Fritz and Henrietta had two children: Willie Munk, born Dec. 6, 1872 - died on April 20, 1922 at the age of 49 and Emma. Emma Munk married Charles Velton.

Fritz and Frederika had 4 children: Louis, born Feb. 12, 1878 – died Aug 6, 1949, Henry, born Oct. 26, 1879 – died Sept 11, 1935, married Maggie Smith on Oct 31, 1900, Lizzie who married Alex Alexander and Lillie who married Fred Lehman. Frederika had a child by her first marriage, named Meta Jones who married Joe J. Sauter.

Fritz and Bertha had one child, Emil F. Munk.

On July 27, 1882, Frederick Munk paid \$2,000 to Jesse and Mary Applewhite for a tract of land from the Christopher A. Yoacum headright. The tract was 325 9/10 acres less the church property which sat on 6 acres and less the school property which sat on 3 acres. The total was 316 9/10 acres. (BCDR Vol. 19, p402+)

The 3 acres for the church had previously been donated on March 25, 1871 by Jesse and Mary Applewhite for the establishment of the Oak Island Church, “for and in consideration of our regard for the cause of Christianity and our love and esteem for the Methodist Episcopal Church South.” (BCDR Vol. 72 p30-31) The land for a school had been donated to Bexar County on Dec. 21, 1876 and was described as beginning on the northeast and northwest corner of the church lot. (BCDR Vol. 8, p219).

Fritz Munk was a general farmer and specialized in growing vegetables on his land. Although his death certificate reflected his occupation as a farmer he also owned 12-15 cattle and 5 horses/mules as reflected on the 1895 and 1900 Bexar County Tax Assessment Rolls.

On two separate occasions, Fritz and Bertha Munk entered into lease arrangements with companies to explore oil, gas and coal fields on their acreage. The first lease was with N.L. Josey and Hamill on March 6, 1903. The agreement specifically stated that no drilling was to be done near the house or the barn. (BCDR Vol. 279, p235+). The second lease was with Van A. Petty, Jr. et. al. on Sept. 13, 1915. (BCDR Vol. 463,p.156+)

On August 28, 1915, Frederick and Bertha Munk mortgaged their 316 9/10 acres to Wimer, Richardson and Company, Kenneth Wimer, President. After several extensions, the lien on the property was released on Jan. 23, 1919. (BCDR Vol. 553, p.103+). However, records reflect that on this same date, a new lien was put on the same property as 216 acres were conveyed to W.W. & G.W. Whitaker. Unfortunately, Frederick Munk died before this lien could be released. On Feb. 27, 1924, this property was transferred to the Whitakers as partial payment on a promissory note of \$8232.00. (BCDR Vol. 761, p263)

When Frederick Munk died on Feb. 21, 1922 the remaining 160 acres of the original tract were divided into 8 tracts for each heir to receive 20 acres. Bertha Munk received the tract with the dwelling house and the improvements on the property. (BCDR Vol. 707, p490) Bertha Munk lived until August 15, 1969, celebrating her 101st birthday at a party

given in her honor at the home of her sister, Mrs. Augusta B. Hensch of San Antonio. During her 80s, Mrs. Munk lost her vision but was able to continue crocheting, one of her favorite pastimes. (*San Antonio Express*, Nov. 22, 1968, p.4-C)

In August 1989, a five-person crew from SMU spent three days mapping and shovel testing the site. The site was dated to the early 1880's with occupation continuing up to the early 1980s. The house structure exhibited several additions and alterations with most changes being made after 1920. A determination was made that no notable persons or significant events were associated with the property, nor did the physical remains and standing structures have any special merit or architectural value.² It was not recommended for further work due to the following:

- The alterations and additions to the original 1880s structure had impacted its integrity and rendered the present structure of little architectural value and merit.
- The majority of buried archaeological remains and identifiable subsurface features were 20th century in origin.

Sources:

Bexar County Cemetery Records published by the San Antonio Genealogical and Historical Society

Bexar County Deed Records

Bexar County Tax Assessment Records, 1895, 1900, Microfilm.

Bexar County Marriage Records published by the San Antonio Genealogical and Historical Society

McGraw, A. Joachim and Kay Hindes. *Chipped Stone and Adobe: A Cultural Resources Assessment of the Proposed Applewhite Reservoir, Bexar County, Texas*. Center for Archaeological Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio, Archaeological and Survey Report, No. 163, 1987, pgs. 107-108.

San Antonio Express, Nov. 22, 1968, p.4-C, 101st Birthday Celebration.

San Antonio Light, Feb. 24, 1922, p.13, Obituary for Fritz Munk, 72.

U.S. Census records for Bexar, Comal and Guadalupe Counties, Texas

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² Green, Melissa M, Hindes, Kay and Randall W. Moir, "Testing Investigations and Results for Historic Properties," as found in Adovasio, J.M. and Melissa M. Green. *Historic Archaeological Investigations in the Applewhite Reservoir Project Area Bexar County, Texas*. Texas Antiquities Permit No. 1589, Center for Ecological Archaeology, Texas A & M University, Reports of Investigation No. 6, 2003, p.76.