

**HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY FOR VOELCKER PARK,
SAN ANTONIO TEXAS**

Prepared for

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and

Submitted to

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
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INTRODUCTION

This report includes the results of an above ground historic resource survey including architectural and historic significance statements adequate to obtain an official Determination of Eligibility (DOE) from the Texas Historical Commission (THC) regarding National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility. The purpose of the historic resource survey is to identify above ground resources on the 311-acre proposed park area and to provide data and information that can be integrated into the Voelcker Park Master Plan and for future historic preservation planning for an educational and heritage site.

The 311-acre property has been surveyed by an architectural historian to determine the integrity, age, function, alterations, and significance of the existing buildings, structures, objects and sites. The scope of services for the above ground cultural resource survey and historic site evaluation includes:

- A review of existing planning maps provided by the client
- A site visit and digital photographic documentation of exterior and interior of buildings, structures, objects and sites (conducted July 1, 2008 by Anna Mod)
- The development of architectural and historical significance statements
- Supplemental archival research including finding historic maps and photographs, and conducting a literature review
- GIS mapping of documented resources and establishment of historic district boundary with input from the City of San Antonio Historic Preservation Officer
- Inventory of historic age resources and their NRHP eligibility as “Contributing or Non-contributing” within the proposed district boundary

RESEARCH

1. SITE

The project area is roughly bounded by Military Highway on the west, Salado Creek to the north and Blanco Road (FM 2696) to the east. Housing developments (Figures 1 and 2A) are to the north and south. The park parcel is bisected by Wurzbach Parkway, creating a 106-acre parcel (Area 1) to the northeast and a 205-acre parcel (Area 2) to the southwest (Figure 2A). The property is the remnants of a larger dairy farm owned over the past century by the Voelcker family. In the northeastern most corner of the parcel is the Voelcker farmstead, comprised of a complex of barns and residential structures (Figures 2A and 2B).

The project setting is on gently sloping terrain indicative of a transition between dry upland areas and an upstream river channel. A few drainages cut through the project area, and a tall cliff face (7–10 m high) marks the edge of the Salado Creek basin. The land

surrounding the project area consists of suburban development, including planned subdivisions with single-family houses and commercial properties.

The property is one of the last areas of undeveloped ranch land in north-central San Antonio. As a result, vegetation is typical of ranch land, including stands of mesquite, cedar, and live oak. The entire parcel is bisected by several two-track roads, formerly used to access the property for agricultural purposes.

2. HISTORICAL/ARCHIVAL RESEARCH AND BACKGROUND REVIEW

In support of the historic resources survey, a detailed archival search was conducted. The historical/archival research focused on establishing appropriate historical and cultural contexts for the project area, including information necessary to make NRHP eligibility recommendations based on the four eligibility criteria. The criteria established by the National Park Service to determine NRHP eligibility was used to evaluate the subject property. To be eligible for the NRHP, the resource must be a site, district, building, structure, or object that is at least 50 years old, possess sufficient integrity and meet at least one of the following criteria (taken from 36 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Part 60):

- A. associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- B. associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- C. an embodiment of distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or,
- D. likely to yield, or have yielded, information important in prehistory or history.

SWCA staff visited the Institute of Texan Cultures at the University of Texas at San Antonio for archival photographs, and the University of Texas Libraries, including the Center for American History and the Perry Castañeda Library. SWCA staff also consulted Texas Department of Transportation's Texas Historic Overlay map collection,¹ historic aerial photographs, and historic topographic maps of the project area.

In addition, SWCA conducted a background review of the project area using the THC's Texas Historic Sites Atlas (Atlas), an online database, for any previously recorded surveys and historic sites located in or adjacent to the project area. The Atlas review included the following types of information: NRHP properties, Official Texas Historical

¹ E. R. Foster et al., *The Texas Historic Overlay: A Geographic Information System of Historic Map Images for Planning Transportation Projects in Texas*. (Austin: Prepared for the Texas Department of Transportation by PBS&J, 2006).

Markers (OTHMs), Registered Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHLs), cemeteries, and local neighborhood surveys. The results indicate that there are no historically significant properties in the immediate vicinity of the project area.

3. HISTORIC MAP REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Historic maps from TxDOT's *Historic Map Overlay* GIS database were consulted as part of the effort to document the historic use of area.

Maps of the area included in the database date back as far as 1845 (Figure 4). The 1845 San Antonio and Vicinity Map depicts the approximate course of Salado Creek and the "Nacogdoches Road," also known as the *Camino de los Tejas*, passing four miles to the southeast. The 1845 San Antonio de Bexar map provides more detail of the area, including Salado Creek and the "Road to Austin and Nacogdoches" (presumably the same *Camino de los Tejas*) approximately four miles to the southeast of the project area (Figure 5). These maps suggest that despite the location of the project area more than 12 miles north of San Antonio, the area was part of an east-west travel corridor, linking north and eastern Texas with San Antonio.

The 1850 Grants and New Braunfels Map shows the outline of both the Thompson and Caldwell land grants as well as the "Camino Pintas," a road passing long the northeastern border of the project area (Figure 6). The Camino Pintas (also known as Pinto, Pintos, Pinta, Pientas Trail, Paint Road, and The Pinta Pony Trail) was a road that extended for 180 miles northwest from San Antonio to the site of the Santa Cruz de San Saba Mission in present day Menard.² The German naturalist, Ferdinand von Roemer, describes the Camino Pintas in the mid 1840s as an old Indian trail which German settlers and teamsters had adopted as a means of accessing San Antonio from the Hill County to the northwest. It was used as a thoroughfare for stagecoaches, mail, and freight until the 1880s when the railroad first came to the region.

The 1887 map of Bexar County (Figure 7) shows development of northern Bexar County to the south of the project area. In addition to the Pinta Trail (current Blanco Road), numerous other roads as well as railroad lines now cross near the project area.

The earliest map that shows the actual development within the project area is the US Army Corps of Engineers 1922 Leon Springs Map (Figure 8). The Voelcker Ranch is clearly labeled, as well as the several structures in the general area of the present day farmstead. Additional structures within the project area are visible along the northeastern boundary. A complex road system has been developed as well as infrastructure such as U.S. Telephone Road to support the growing area.

² *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "Pinta Trail" (accessed September 24, 2008).

Finally, the 1953 Castle Hills USGS 7.5 minute topographic (Figure 8) shows the Voelcker farmstead in the northwestern section of the project area. However, the additional structures shown on the 1922 Leon Springs map are no longer visible.

4. CHAIN OF TITLE SEARCH

Chain of title research focused on the areas of known historic habitation within the project area. The majority of the Voelcker farm is located in the northern half of the P. Caldwell grant. The farmstead structures are located in the southeastern portion of J.B. Thompson's grant (Figure 3). In 1847, J.B. Thompson sold the entire grant (1,400 acres) to P.L. Buguor (Table 2). Between 1847 and 1882 the property was subdivided, however, no record of the subsequent subdivision of the land and its sale by Buguor was recorded in the available deed records in the Bexar County Courthouse records.

An 1882 sale between A.P. Maltsberger to G.W. Maltsberger made mention of the acquisition of portions of the original survey from S.M. Merchant and J.B. Moffett around 1876. Subsequent searches of the deed records for Bexar County did not reveal any records of these sales. The sale of the property from A.P. to G.W. Maltsberger was part of a consolidation of tracts within the Thompson survey by G.W. Maltsberger and Joseph Horton.

On May 5th, 1883, Horton and Maltsberger sold the northern section of the property to A.P. Gulick. Gulick owned the northern section of the land, which includes the area surrounding the farmstead until 1900. It is likely that the stone building, which dates to c. 1870, and predates the Voelcker buildings by at least forty years, was built and inhabited by Horton, Maltsberger or one of their tenants. Based on the lack of architectural detailing on the stone house, it is doubtful that it was built after the 1880s when the railroad first came to the area.

In 1893, Louis Voelcker, father to Max Voelcker, began buying up the land in the J.B. Thompson survey. He purchased one part of the southern section of the survey from Minnie Koschinick in 1893. In 1896 he purchased the remaining part of the southern section from J.D. Smith. In 1901, Louis Voelcker acquired the northern section, including the land surrounding the farmstead buildings, from G.B. Frank who had bought the land from A.P. Gulick in 1900.

Louis Voelcker retained the property for the next three decades, running a dairy farm centered on the farmstead. In 1939, Louis, George, and Lorene Voelcker transferred much of the property, including the land around the farmstead, to Max Voelcker, Louis and Lorene's son.

Max and his wife Minnie owned the property and ran it as a dairy farm well into the late 1970s. In 1979, the property was transferred from Max (now deceased) to the Voelcker Estates Limited.

The farmstead remained in ownership of various trusts associated with the estate of Max and Minnie Voelcker, who died in 2000. In 2005, the Max and Minnie A. Tomberlin Voelcker Fund was established to use the Voelcker's land holdings as a source of funding for medical research. Two million dollars from the fund was used to endow the Max and Minnie Tomberlin Voelcker Distinguished University Chair in Targeted Cancer Therapy at the University of Texas Health Science Center. Another two million dollars was donated to the Cancer Therapy & Research Center to create the Max and Minnie Tomerlin Voelcker Endowed Chair in Cancer Healthcare Disparities and Outreach.

In 2007, the City of San Antonio purchased the farmstead and the surrounding land in the project area from the Max and Minnie A. Tomerlin Voelcker Fund with the intention of developing the property into a city park.

HISTORY

5. HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Historic period in central Texas begins with the arrival of Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca and the survivors of the Narváez expedition along the Texas coast in 1528. European incursions into south-central Texas were initially rare, and the first Europeans did not settle in this region until around A.D. 1700.³ Spanish incursions into the region from the late seventeenth century on left valuable information on native groups and tribes. Several scholars, including Hester⁴ and Newcomb⁵, have provided historical accounts of Native Americans and their interactions with the Spanish, the Republic of Mexico, the Texas Republic, and the United States throughout the region.

The beginning of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was an era of more-permanent contact between Europeans and Native Americans as the Spanish moved northward out of Mexico to establish settlements and missions on their northern frontier. There is little available information on aboriginal groups and their ways of life except for the fragmentary data Spanish missionaries gathered. In the San Antonio area and areas to the south, these groups have been referred to collectively as Coahuiltecan because of an assumed similarity in way of life, but many individual groups may have existed. Particular Coahuiltecan groups, such as the Payaya and Juanca, have been identified as

³ F. B. Taylor et al., *Soil Survey of Bexar County, Texas* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, 1992).

⁴ T R. Hester et al., "Historic Native American Populations." *From the Gulf to the Rio Grande: Human Adaptation in Central, South, and Lower Pecos, Texas*, (Fayetteville: Arkansas Archeological Survey, Research Series No. 33, 1990) 77-84.

⁵ W. W. Newcomb, Jr., *The Indians of Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961).

occupying the San Antonio area. This area also served as a point of contact between the southward-advancing Apaches and the northward-advancing Spanish, with native groups often caught in between. Disease and hostile encounters with Europeans and intruding groups such as the Apache were already wreaking their inevitable and disastrous havoc on native social structures and economic systems by this time.⁶

After a series of missions had been established in what would become eastern Texas, the Spanish government in the New World decided to begin settlement at a bend in the San Antonio River. The location was a convenient stopping point on the Camino Real, the newly established highway founded in 1691 by Domingo Terán de Los Ríos and Father Damián Massenet to connect Mexico to the East Texas missions. In 1719, war between France and Spain resulted in the withdrawal of the Spanish from the east Texas missions and they reestablished their mission communities near the settlement along the San Antonio River.

San Antonio became the capital of Spanish Texas in 1773. By 1778, the settlement had a population of 2,060 including those Indians living in the missions. However, conditions within the settlement were often described as poor, resulting from its location on the edge of Spanish controlled Texas. The population was comprised of a mix of Europeans, Mestizos, and a few slaves. By 1795, all the missions in San Antonio were secularized and Mission San Antonio de Valero, later called the Alamo, was converted to a military barracks.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, growing independence movements began in Texas. In 1813, an expedition, encouraged by the United States, set out from Louisiana and quickly moved through East Texas capturing Nacogdoches' Trinidad de Salcedo, La Bahía, and San Antonio. The Gutiérrez-Magee expedition quickly declared Texas independent from Spain, forming the first Texas Republic. Intendance was short lived, however, as Spanish troops quickly retook the city after a battle in Medina, just south of San Antonio. Spain reestablished control of the city, declaring martial law and severely punishing those inhabitants who had supported the insurrection.

San Antonio and Bexar County continued to be the sight of conflict between Texas and Mexico. During the Texas Revolution, several battles were fought in the county, including the siege of Bexar and the Battle of the Alamo. Following the establishment of the Republic of Texas, Bexar County was officially established in December of 1836 and the City of San Antonio was chartered a month later in January of 1837. The city continued to be a source of contention. In 1840, the Council House fight between the Comanche and city residents broke out in the streets after a failed attempt to release

⁶ T. N. Campbell, *Indians of Southern Texas and Northeastern Mexico: Selected Writings of Thomas Nolan Campbell* (Austin: Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, Department of Anthropology, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Institute of Latin American Studies, The University of Texas, 1988).

captives held by the Comanche. The city was twice captured during Mexican invasions of Texas in 1842. As result, the population of San Antonio had dropped to 800 in 1846.⁷

Admission of Texas into the Union in 1845 saw a rapid increase in the city's population, growing to 3,500 in 1850 and to 8,235 in 1860. The rapid increase in population had been a direct result of the influx of German speaking settlers. Up until 1877, German-speaking people outnumbered both Hispanics and Anglos.

After the Civil War, San Antonio continued to grow, spurred on by the arrival of the railroad in 1877. The city served as the distribution point for the Mexico-US border as well as the rest of the southwest. At the turn of the 20th century, San Antonio was the largest city in Texas with a population of more than 53,000. Much of the city's growth after the Civil War was a result of an influx of southerners fleeing the decimated reconstruction era south. An additional population increase came after 1910, when large numbers of Mexicans began moving into Texas to escape the Mexican Revolution.

Despite the city's rapid growth, it did not expand beyond its original Spanish land grant until 1940. This allowed for the establishment of several unincorporated suburbs that were later annexed by the expanding city.

6. HISTORY OF GERMAN IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT IN TEXAS

In Texas, the largest ethnic populations derived directly from Europe are those of German descent, an immigration trend that began in the 1830s and the Empresario period of Texas history. By the end of the Texas Republic and the early years of Texas' annexation by the United States, Germans made up five percent of the total population. Most of the Germans settled in the "German Belt," which stretches across south central Texas from Galveston on the east and Hondo on the west, and from the Hill County south to the Coastal Plain.

The first settlers came shortly after establishment of Stephen F. Austin's colony. Johann Friedrich Ernst, a native of northeastern German, received a 4,000 acre grant from Austin, just north of the original Austin Colony. Through letters written to friends and family in Germany, Ernst spurred the first major immigration of Germans to Texas.

By the 1840s, German immigration to Texas was in full force. At this time, a group of German noblemen began the Adesverein (*Verein zum Schutze Deutscher Einwanderer in Texas*), the German Emigration Company. Their intention was to establish German peasants in Texas and use their labor to gain wealth and political power. The Adesverein was not successful financially; however, it did succeed in bringing at least new 7,000 Germans immigrants to Texas, with many settling in San Antonio. This effort also resulted in the founding of the towns of New Braunfels and Fredericksburg.

⁷ *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "San Antonio" (accessed July 2008).

In 1844, the City of Castroville, west of San Antonio in Medina County, was founded by German speakers from eastern France and the Upper Plain of Germany. Castroville became the center of the Alsatian colony, causing even larger numbers of Germans to immigrate to the San Antonio area.⁸

Much of the immigration of Germans to Texas and in particular the Hill Country and San Antonio was sparked by “American Letters” and chain migration. Settlers would write back to Germany declaring the wonders and advantages of living in Texas, often these letters would be published in newspapers as a means of encouraging people to move. Chain migration is the ability of new immigrants to come to Texas as a result of relatives already with established citizenship or residency. This practice allowed for even greater numbers to come over from Germany.

During the 1850s, the official settlement efforts had ended, but the line of German immigrants continued. Between 1850 and the outbreak of the Civil War, the German born population more than doubled in Texas to 20,000. The Union blockade slowed German settlement during the war and between 1865 and 1890 their number increased to beyond antebellum levels.

The peak of German settlement occurred in the 1890s in both urban and rural populations. In San Antonio, German speaking schools and newspapers were common as well businesses geared toward German culture. German style breweries such as the San Antonio Brewing Company, producers Pearl Beer, were founded by the German immigrant Otto Koehler in 1902.⁹ The Spotzel Brewing Company, founded by businessmen eager to cater to the large German, Czech, and Austrian farming community in the Hill Country, opened in 1914. Bavarian brewer Kosmas Spoetzl eventually purchased the brewery in 1915.¹⁰

Following the two World Wars, prejudice against German culture and language caused a significant decline in immigration directly from Germany. Traditional German neighborhoods in San Antonio began to decline as third and fourth generation Germans moved away and intermarried with other ethnic groups. By 1950, the German language newspapers had stopped being published, ending the era of significant cultural expansion.

7. ETHNICITY AND VERNACULAR BUILDING FORMS IN BEXAR COUNTY

Ethnicity played a role in residential and vernacular building forms during the nineteenth century. Although outbuildings and other utilitarian structures were sometimes influenced

⁸ *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. “Germans” (accessed July 2008).

⁹ *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. “Pearl Brewing Company” (accessed July 2008).

¹⁰ *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. “Spoetzl Brewing” (accessed July 2008).

by country-of-origin, the form of these structures was more often dictated by their function. Between the 1840s and 1880s, Bexar County saw an influx of both foreign-born immigrants, primarily Germans, and a migration of Anglo-Americans from other parts of the south.

A farmstead usually began with a single-pen house—a rectangular or square, one-story, one-room building—constructed of local materials, often log or stone. A single-pen house has a side-gable roof with a chimney at one gable end. Introduced to Texas by German and Anglos, this type of dwelling was often expanded or converted into an outbuilding as farms grew in economic wealth.¹¹

8. HISTORY OF THE DAIRY INDUSTRY IN TEXAS

Between 1840 and 1880, the population in Bexar County swelled with influxes of Anglo-Americans from the South and foreign-born Europeans, particularly Germans, dramatically increasing the number of farms in the county. Anglo-Americans had average farm sizes of about 300 acres. Germans farms were considerably smaller, often less than 100 acres.

Hogs and cattle were kept by early settlers and were used primarily to sustain the family's needs. Anglo-Americans brought with them a tradition of raising corn as a staple crop, a practice quickly adapted by the Germans. Corn became a cash crop and was noted by many travelers for its prevalence in the San Antonio region.¹² Sustenance farming continued among immigrants. Germans raised sweet potatoes, melons, pumpkins, and peas, often intermingled with their corn rows.¹³ Many farmers also grew figs, pears, plums, peaches, cantaloupes, watermelons, strawberries, blackberries, cabbage, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, and onions.¹⁴

During the nineteenth century in the earliest days of the dairy industry in Texas, milk production was in general subsistence based. Families on farms and in town would produce milk and milk products from their own milk cows. From the Civil War well into

¹¹ Jordon, T.G. *Texas Log Buildings: A Folk Architecture* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1978).

¹² Olmsted, Frederick Law. *Olmsted's Texas Journey* (New York: Dix, Edwards, and Company, 1857).

¹³ *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "Ranching" (accessed September 24, 2008).

¹⁴ Belo Corporation, A. H. *Texas Almanac* (Dallas: A. H. Belo Corporation, 1910, 1912, 1925).

the 1930s, cheese products distributed in Texas predominately came from the “Cheese Belt” stretching from New York to Wisconsin.

In 1872, in Bordenville, TX, Gail Borden established one of the earliest condensed milk factories. Most of the canned milk consumed in Texas continued to be produced in the northeast. Fresh milk and butter was produced locally and by the late nineteenth century local farmers had begun their own milk routes distributing milk and butter to nearby residents.

Butter production was one of the few dairy based industries able to take hold in Texas and by 1900 twelve creameries were in operation. In 1877, the Galveston, Harrisburg, and San Antonio Railway reached San Antonio, opening Bexar County farmers to new economic opportunities. Farms were now connected to the state’s most important seaport, Galveston.¹⁵ Local farmers began to widen their distribution networks and the expansion of the railroad allowed dairymen to ship cream to distant processing plants. The advent of effective milk pasteurization machines in 1895 and the widespread adoption of mandatory pasteurization ordinances in most Texas cities by 1927 created a greater demand for milk and milk products. As a result, the production of commercially produced butter in Texas had grown to well over 14 million pounds per year by 1930.

Through the 1930s milk processing and distribution became more widespread and sophisticated. Improved road systems and rubberized vehicle tires allowed for the shipment of whole milk from remote dairy farms. Prior to this, only cream could survive the long bumpy trip. Just before the outbreak of World War II, Texas had nearly 229 dairy-product processing plants. During this same period the number of dairy cows in Texas had only grown from 1 million to 1.1 million indicating an increase in efficiency. By the middle of World War II nearly 1.5 million dairy cows were producing milk. The years following World War II saw a dramatic change in the development of the dairy industry in Texas. Cheap transportation allowed for the import of large quantities of northern milk into Texas resulting in fierce price wars throughout the state and dramatic drops in price. Another consequence was the merger of smaller regional producers into large multimarket producers. This banding together of Texas dairymen and the introduction of federal marketing to Texas in 1949 stabilized the price of milk and kept the dairy industry in Texas alive.¹⁶ Until 1950, Bexar, Harris and Tarrant counties were the major producers of milk in Texas. By the end of the 20th century, the production of milk and related products had shifted to more rural counties. The change in agricultural practices throughout eastern Texas relinquished millions of acres of land traditionally cultivated in cotton for pastureland for beef and dairy cattle. Improvements in herd management spurred on by the beef cattle industry and the advent of artificial

¹⁵ *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. “Bexar County” (accessed September 24, 2008).

¹⁶ *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. “Dairy Industry” (accessed September 24, 2008).

insemination increased the average yearly output of milk per cow from 2,820 pounds in 1920 to 11,459 in 1982.¹⁷

9. HISTORIC STRUCTURES AT VOELCKER PARK

Seven historic resources and farm equipment exist in the project area. A metal sheep feeder, paddock, corral and concrete open water tank are located directly to the south of the Jewish Community Center at Wurzbach Parkway and Military Highway (Field Survey: Resource A and Figure 2A). Additional farm equipment is located east of the Voelcker bungalow home in an adjacent former oat field that is currently fenced with wooden posts with metal wire (Figure 2B). There are two temporary open-air lean-tos, one temporary metal feeder, one wooden feeder and one metal trough on the field (Field Survey: Resource B). This farm equipment was constructed in the latter half of the 20th century and is not historic age. Therefore, it is mentioned but not analyzed for NRHP eligibility.

The seven historic resources (Figure 2B) at Voelcker Park include two houses, a barn, a garage, a shed and water cistern/windmill and the former oat field.

Resource B is the former oat field and was an integral part of the dairy farm operation. The field is fallow yet is kept mowed and visually retains its appearance of a field formerly in cultivation.

Resource 1 is a single story front gabled bungalow clad in washboard siding constructed in 1925 (Field Survey: Resource 1). The house has an inset porch supported by square porch columns and a separate jerkin head roof. There is an attic vent in the front gable. The windows are 1/1 wooden sash type and there are Arts and Crafts style decorative brackets and exposed rafter tails in the eaves. The soffit is detailed with 1x6 butt joined boards. The house has a flared skirt, with exception of front façade's horizontal metal skirting, a typical detail of houses of this era. The wooden front door has three upper lights. There is a pedestrian ramp in the front and no significant landscaping. There are two additions: a screened porch ell on the south façade and the rear kitchen to the west.

The bungalow is served to the north by Resource 2, a two bay, side gabled garage with composition shingle roofing, washboard siding and exposed rafter tails (Field Survey: Resource 2). The garage is on a slab foundation with a shed-roofed addition in the rear. The original wooden shingle roofing is visible in places. While its exact date of construction is unknown, it can be assumed it was built at the time of, or shortly after, the construction of Resource 1.

¹⁷ Summer Chandler, et al. *Historic Farms and Ranch Houses of Bexar County*. (National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, no date).

Resource 3 is a ten bay, side gable dogtrot barn on slab foundation with washboard siding, 4/4 windows and a corrugated metal roof (Field Survey: Resource 3). There is a gabled monitor with wooden louvered vents and washboard siding on the non-louvered elevations. Wooden doors to milking area are paired with single upper lights. The interior milking area is intact including the hay troughs and wooden gates that held approximately 20 cows.

Resource 4 is a windmill and cistern structure located on Voelcker Lane (Field Survey: Resource 4). The windmill is metal frame with reinforcing bracing wires and a metal ladder. The cistern is cylindrical composed of stacked concrete rings.

Resource 5 is a wooden, gabled shed on a pier and beam foundation with board and batten siding and saw tooth decoration in the gable end (Field Survey: Resource 5). An open air shed addition was added to the west elevation at a later date. The roof is corrugated metal. The interior ceiling is wood plank. This resource was constructed sometime in the early 20th century and is in poor condition and in danger of collapse.

The oldest structure on the Voelcker Park grounds, Resource 6, is a one-story, side gabled limestone house from c. 1870 with an early 20th century wood frame addition (Field Survey: Resource 6 and Figure 9). A corrugated metal hipped roof envelopes the east gable end and addition. The windows are wooden 6/6 sash and pre-date interior pulley and weight systems. There is a double fireplace that opens to main room of the stone house and into the addition. The front porch has a slab floor and a shed roof supported by rough timbers. There is a full-width, shed roof limestone addition along the rear with an exterior chimney. The interior of the house has plastered walls and a beaded board ceiling. The addition has a beaded board ceiling and walls.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the background historic research and site investigations, it is the opinion of SWCA that the buildings, structure and site on the property associated with the c. 1870 stone house and the c. 1925 Voelcker farmstead complex is eligible for listing as a NRHP Historic District under Criteria A, B and C with significance at the local level.

The proposed historic district is eligible under Criterion A: association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, specifically in the areas of Agriculture and Ethnic Heritage, as an example of farming in Bexar County. There is a strong correlation between the Voelcker farm and German settlement in Bexar County and the farm's dairy production reflects a common necessity of early Central Texas German settlement. Supporting structures and residences, in particular the stone house (Resource 6), are indicative of vernacular construction techniques associated with German immigrant farmers.

Generations of the Voelcker family have owned the property since 1893 and it is SWCA's opinion that the district is eligible under Criterion B: association with a historic person for its association with the Voelcker family. The Voelcker's are notable as an

example of immigrant German dairy farmers in Bexar County and, in a contemporary context, for their philanthropic contributions to medical research in San Antonio.

The proposed district is also eligible for listing under Criterion C: Architecture, as the stone house is an excellent example of vernacular farm houses of German immigrants to Texas in the nineteenth century. The c. 1925 farmstead buildings represent the influence of the Arts and Crafts style on the twentieth century development of the property.

Included in the proposed NRHP historic district are five buildings, one structure, and one site; all of which are considered “contributing” to the district and are thus are considered NR eligible. The proposed district is smaller than the project area surveyed for this report and is isolated in the northeast section of the parcel. There are two periods of significance: 1870 and 1883 – 1958. The c. 1870 date corresponds to the approximate construction date of the stone house. The 1883 date represents the date when the Voelcker’s first began buying up property in the area; the latter date represents the 50-year cut off date since the Voelcker’s were actively farming on the property until the 1970s.

The Voelcker farm complex proposed NRHP historic district, although no longer in agricultural use, supports the greater historic context of nineteenth century German settlement in Bexar County. The remaining buildings retain integrity of **location, design, materials, workmanship, and feeling**. The **setting** and **association** of the farmstead complex have been disrupted by the increased suburbanization and the decline of farming in this part of Bexar County, yet once on the farmstead, the surrounding suburbanization disappears and the **feeling** of being on a farm is retained.

It is the opinion of SWCA that the stone house (Resource 6) is also individually eligible for NRHP listing under Criteria A and C.

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TABLE 1: IDENTIFIED RESOURCES IN VOELCKER PARK, SAN ANTONIO

Id #	Name	Type	Date	NR eligibility*
B	Oat Field	Site	c. 1925	C
1	Arts and Crafts Bungalow	Building	c. 1925	C
2	Arts and Crafts Garage	Building	c. 1925	C
3	Barn	Building	c. 1920	C
4	Windmill and Cistern	Structure	c. 1950	C
5	Shed	Building	c. 1920	C
6	Stone House with Wood Frame Addition	Building	c. 1870	C

* C = NRHP Contributing; NC = NRHP Non-contributing

TABLE 2: CHAIN OF TITLE

Grantor	Grantee	Date	Vol	Page	Comments
G.B. Frank	Louis Voelcker	2/2/1901	192	215	Northern section, including farmstead location
J.D. Smith	Louis Voelcker	8/6/1896	154	426	Part of southern section of original grant
Minnie Koschnick	Louis Voelcker	4/9/1893	114	444	Part of southern section of original grant
A.P. Gulick	G.B. Frank	3/24/1900	185	603	Area around farmstead
G.W. Maltsberger & J. Horton	A.P. Gulick	5/8/1883	27	540	Area around farmstead
A.P. Maltsberger	G.W. Maltsberger & J. Horton	12/28/1882	21	354	Area around farmstead
unknown	unknown	1847-1882			unknown title history
J.B. Thompson	P.L. Buguor	4/27/1847	E2	245	Original land grant

FIELD SURVEY INFORMATION SHEET: RESOURCE A

Survey Date: 1 July 2008

Resource ID: A (four components)

Location: Voelcker Park, southeast corner of Wurzbach Parkway and Northwest Military Highway

Property Type: Agricultural/rural with suburban encroachment

Form/Plan: metal sheep feeder; paddock; corral; concrete open water tank

Stylistic Influence: N/A

Construction Date: post 1950

Documentation: Historic Resource Reconnaissance Survey

NRHP Determination: Non-contributing

Comments: These are post 1950 objects observed during a survey of the Voelcker Park site.

DSC_0006.jpg



Sheep feeder – six legs, sheet metal construction

DSC_0007.jpg



Paddock – wooden posts and horizontals

DSC_008.jpg



Corral – barbed wire with wooden posts



Concrete water tank, approximately 3' deep

FIELD SURVEY INFORMATION SHEET: RESOURCE B

Survey Date: 1 July 2008

Resource ID: B

Location: Voelcker Park farmstead, Voelcker Road off Gable Village Drive

Property Type: agricultural/field

Form/Plan: Site

Stylistic Influence: vernacular/no style

Construction Date: last half of 20th century

Documentation: Historic Resource Reconnaissance Survey

NRHP Determination: NR-eligible as contributing resource of historic district

Comments: This is a former oat field that is currently fenced with wooden posts with metal wire. There are two temporary open air lean-tos, one temporary metal feeder; one wooden feeder and one metal trough

DSC_009 DSC_010



View southwest



View west

FIELD SURVEY INFORMATION SHEET: RESOURCE 1

Survey Date: 1 July 2008

Resource ID: 1

Location: Voelcker Park farmstead, Voelcker Road off Gable Village Drive

Property Type: Building/residential

Form/Plan: Rectangular with ell

Stylistic Influence: Arts and Crafts/Bungalow

Construction Date: c. 1925

Documentation: Historic Resource Reconnaissance Survey

NRHP Determination: NR-eligible as contributing resource of historic district

Comments: Single story front gabled bungalow with inset porch with separate roof with jerkin head; wash board siding, Arts and Crafts decorative brackets; 1/1 wooden windows, flared skirt with exception of front façade has horizontal metal skirt; wooden front door with three lights; square porch columns; exposed rafter tails; ADA ramp in front; attic vent in front gable; soffit butt joined 1x6 boards; no significant landscaping. Ell is a gable roofed screened patio. There are two additions: the screened porch on the south façade and the rear kitchen addition to the west.

DSC_0001



Southeast (front) and NE façades, view southwest

DSC_017



Northwest (rear) and side ell, view east

FIELD SURVEY INFORMATION SHEET: RESOURCE 2

Survey Date: 1 July 2008

Resource ID: 2

Location: Voelcker Park farmstead, Voelcker Road off Gable Village Drive

Property Type: Building/garage

Form/Plan: Rectangular

Stylistic Influence: Arts and Crafts

Construction Date: c. 1925

Documentation: Historic Resource Reconnaissance Survey

NRHP Determination: NR-eligible as contributing resource of historic district

Comments: Two bay, side gabled garage with composition shingle roofing, wash board siding and exposed rafter tails. Garage is on a slab foundation with a shed roofed addition in the rear. The original wooden shingle roofing is visible in places.

DSC_014



Southwest (front) façade, view NE

DSC_016



Northwest (side) and front facades, view SE

FIELD SURVEY INFORMATION SHEET: RESOURCE 3

Survey Date: 1 July 2008
Resource ID: 3
Location: Voelcker Park farmstead, Voelcker Road off Gable Village Drive
Property Type: Building/barn
Form/Plan: rectangular
Stylistic Influence: Arts and Crafts
Construction Date: c. 1920
Documentation: Historic Resource Reconnaissance Survey
NRHP Determination: NR-eligible as contributing resource of historic district
Comments: Ten bay, side gable dog trot barn on slab foundation with wash board siding, 4/4 windows and a corrugated metal roof. There is a gabled monitor with wooden louvered vents and wash board on the non-louvered elevations. Doors to milking area are paired wooden with single upper lights. Interior milking area is intact and accommodated approximately 20 cows.

DSC_0024



Southwest (front) and southeast facades, view NE

DSC_0026



Detail, southwest façade

DSC_0032



Paired doors to milking room

DSC_0028



Barn Interior

FIELD SURVEY INFORMATION SHEET: RESOURCE 4

Survey Date: 1 July 2008

Resource ID: 4

Location: Voelcker Park farmstead, Voelcker Road off Gable Village Drive

Property Type: Structure/windmill and cistern

Form/Plan: Structure

Stylistic Influence: No style

Construction Date: c. 1950

Documentation: Historic Resource Reconnaissance Survey

NRHP Determination: NR-eligible as a contributing resource of historic district

Comments: Windmill is metal frame with reinforcing bracing wires and a metal ladder. Cistern is cylindrical composed on concrete rungs.

DSC_0021



View north

FIELD SURVEY INFORMATION SHEET: RESOURCE 5

Survey Date: 1 July 2008

Resource ID: 5

Location: Voelcker Park farmstead, Voelcker Road off Gable Village Drive

Property Type: Building/shed

Form/Plan: rectangular

Stylistic Influence: vernacular

Construction Date: early 20th century

Documentation: Historic Resource Reconnaissance Survey

NRHP Determination: NR-eligible as contributing resource of historic district

Comments: Wooden gabled shed with pier and beam foundation, board and batten siding and saw tooth decoration in the gable end. Roof is corrugated metal. Open air shed addition on side. Interior ceiling is board and batten. Building is in poor condition and about to collapse.

DSC_0035



Southeast façade, view northwest

DSC_0039



Saw tooth detailing in gable end

FIELD SURVEY INFORMATION SHEET: RESOURCE 6

Survey Date: 1 July 2008

Resource ID: 6

Location: Voelcker Park farmstead, Voelcker Road off Gable Village Drive

Property Type: Building/residential

Form/Plan: Rectangular

Stylistic Influence: Vernacular

Construction Date: ca. 1870

Documentation: Historic Resource Reconnaissance Survey

NRHP Determination: NR eligible individually and NR-eligible as contributing resource of historic district

Comments: One story, side gabled stone house with early 20th-century wood frame addition. Corrugated metal hipped roof envelopes east gable end and addition. Windows are wooden 6/6 sash and pre-date interior pulleys and weight systems. There is a double fire place that opens to stone house main room and into the addition. Front porch has a slab floor and a shed roof. There is a full length stone shed roofed addition along the rear with exterior chimney. Interior of stone house has plastered walls and beaded board ceiling. Addition has beaded board ceiling and walls.

DSC_0048



Southwest (front) and northwest elevations, view E

DSC_0053



southeast façade (wooden 20th century addition)

FIGURES

- Figure 1: Vicinity Map
- Figure 2A: Site Layout Map – Overview
- Figure 2B: Site Layout Map – Area 1
- Figure 2C: Site Layout Map – Area 2
- Figure 3: Early Land Grants
- Figure 4: San Antonio and Vicinity 1845
- Figure 5: San Antonio de Bexar Map 1845
- Figure 6: Grants and New Braunfels Map 1850
- Figure 7: Bexar County Map 1887
- Figure 8: Leon Springs, US Army Corps of Engineers 1922
- Figure 9: Old Stone House (Resource 6)

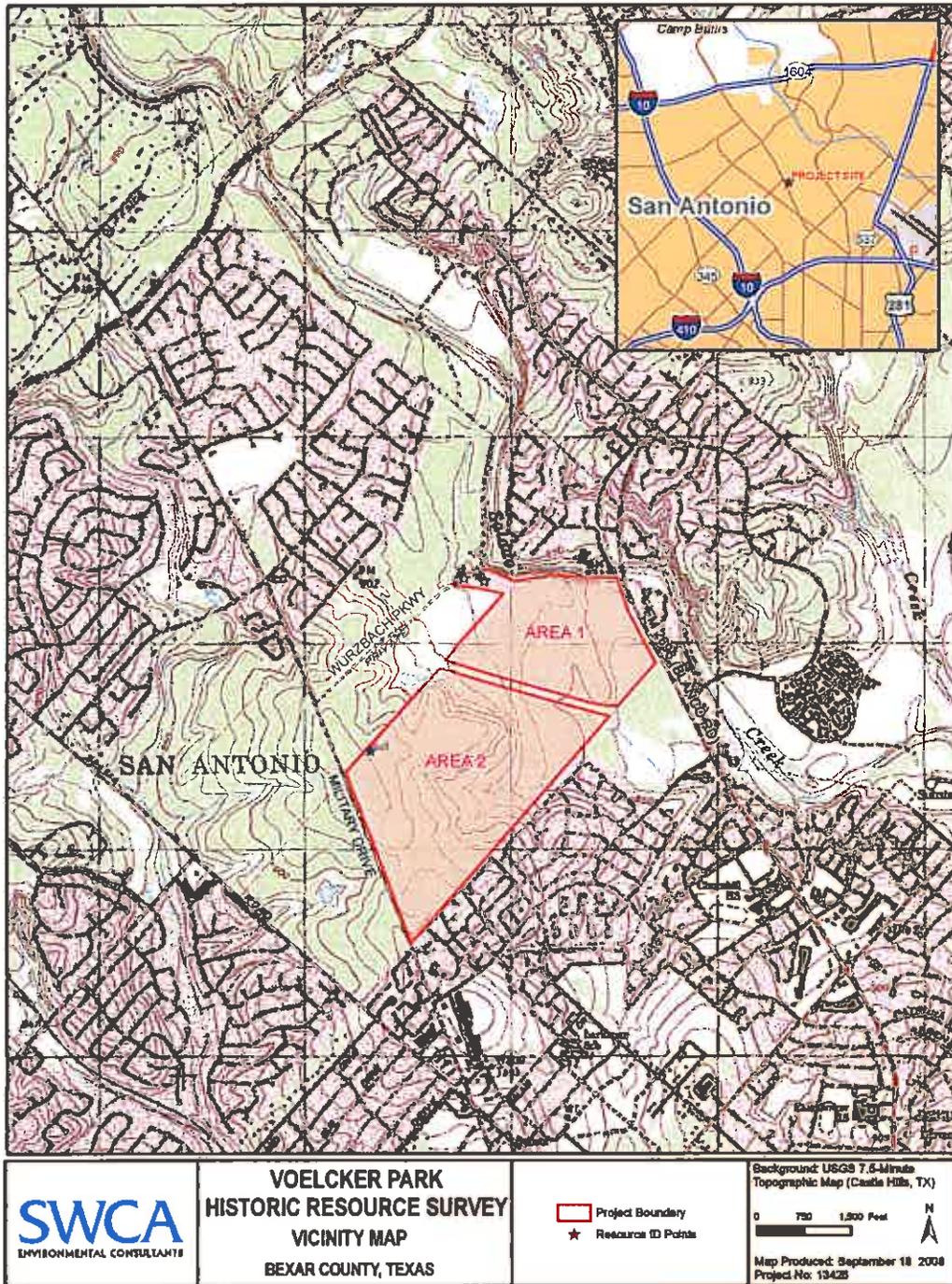


Figure 1: Site Vicinity Map



Figure 2A: Site Layout Map Overview

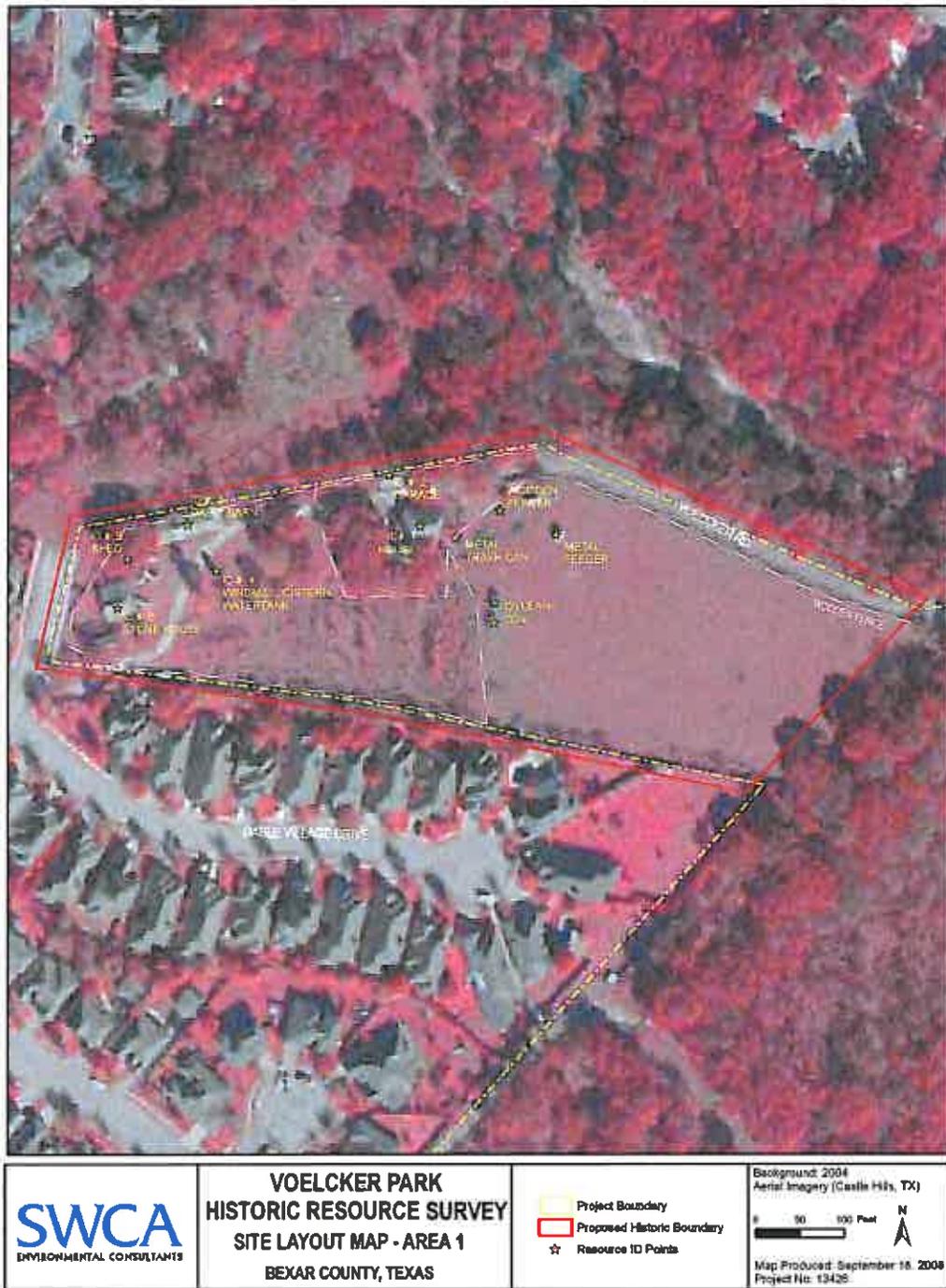


Figure 2B: Site Layout Map Area 1



Figure 2C: Site Layout Map Area 2

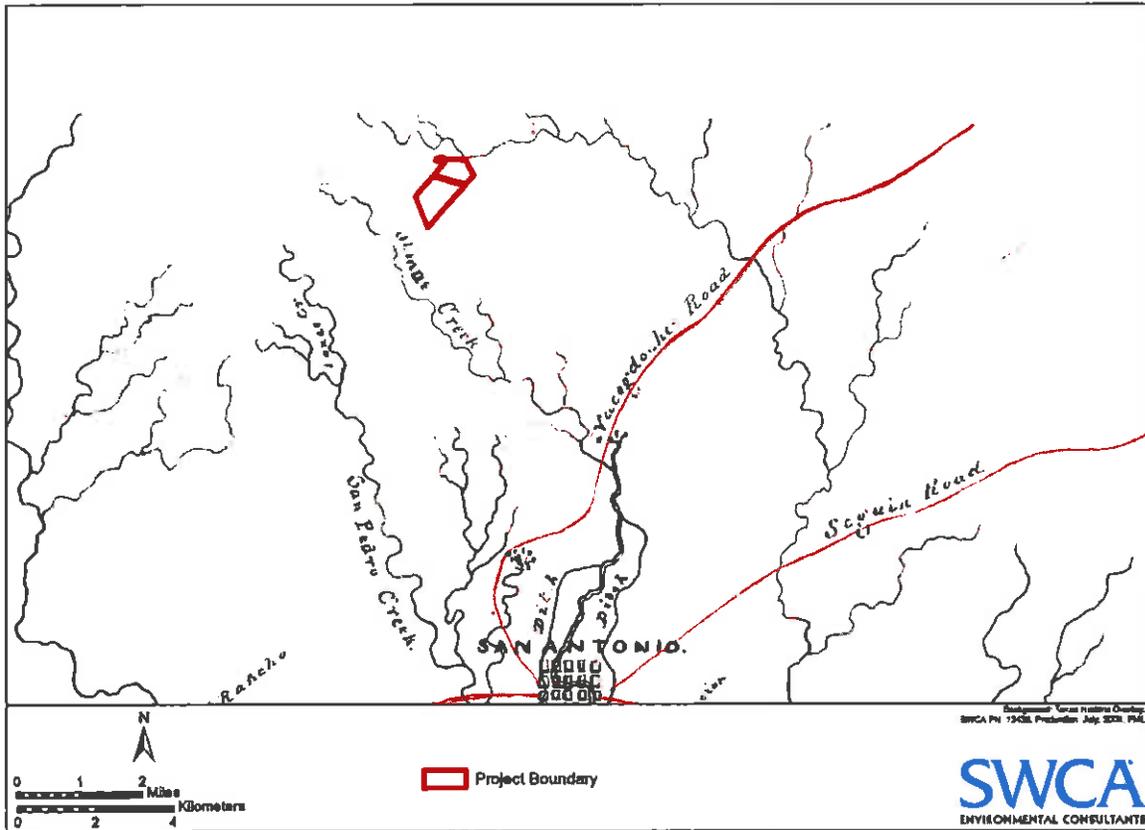


Figure 4: San Antonio and Vicinity 1845

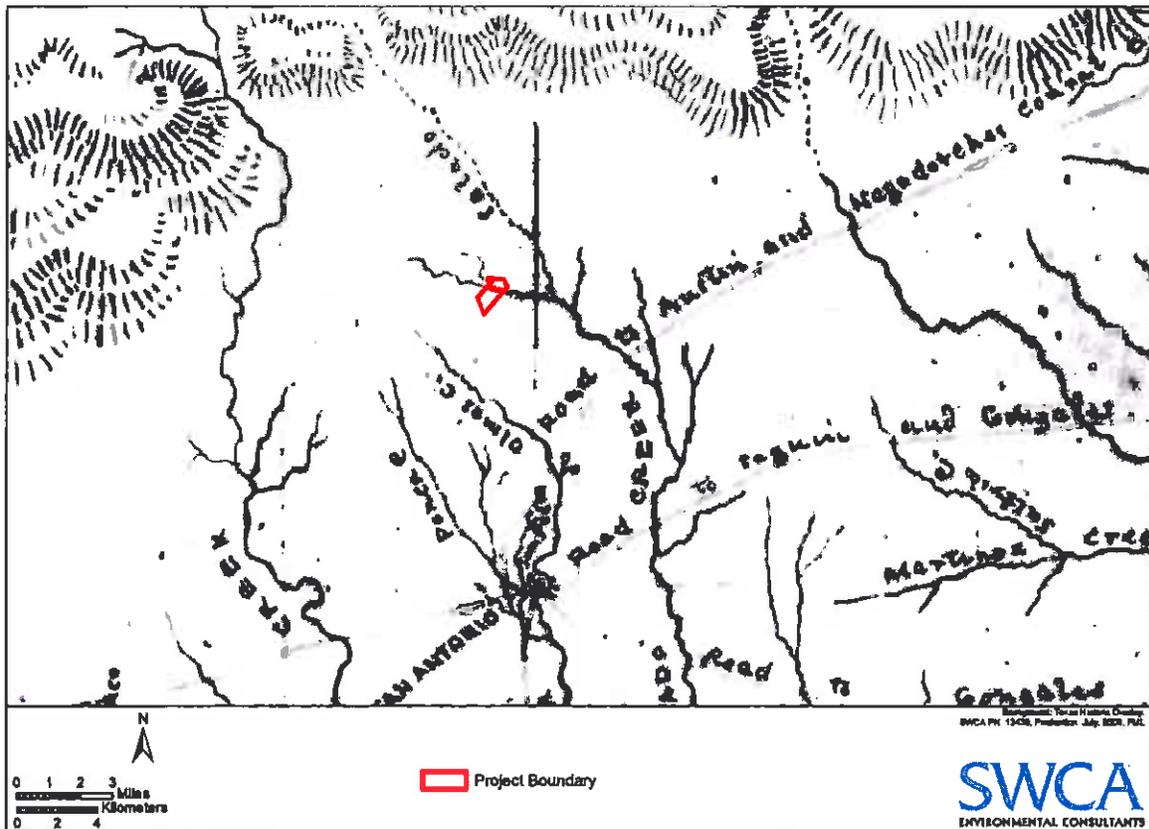


Figure 5: San Antonio de Bexar 1845

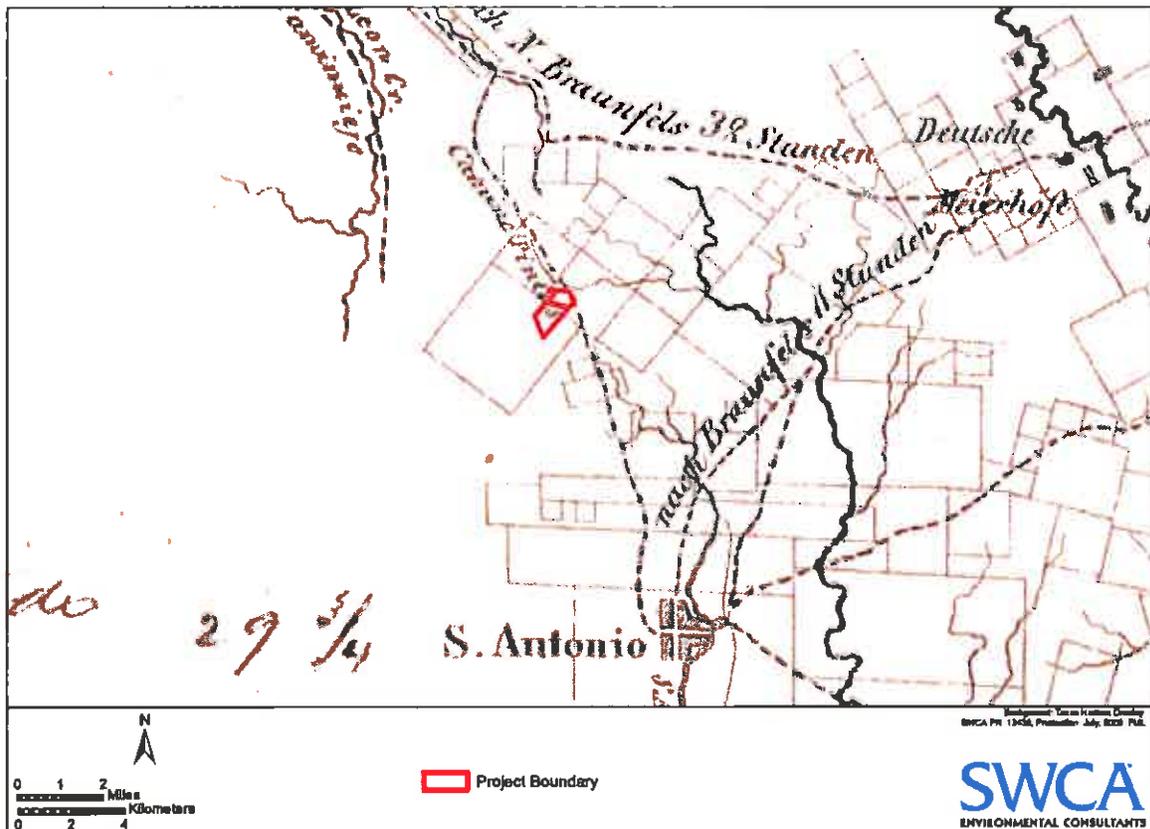


Figure 6: Grants and New Braunfels Map 1850

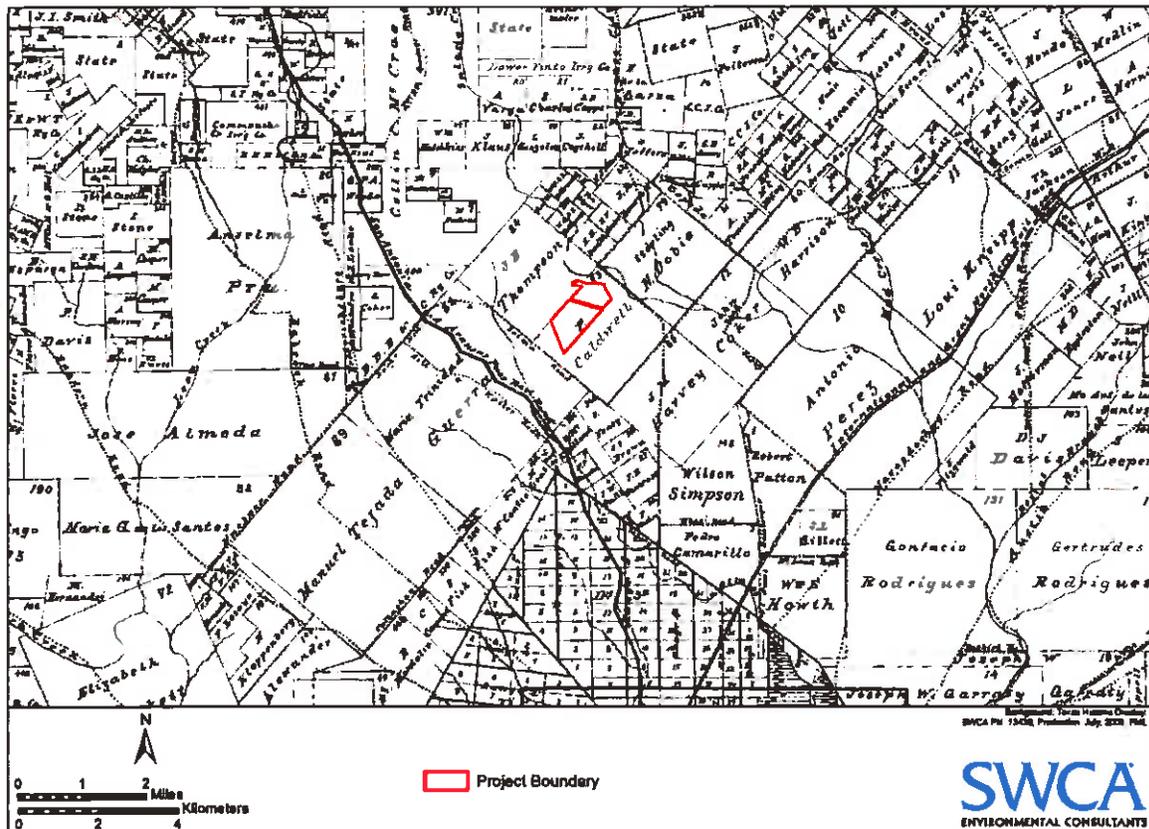


Figure 7: Bexar County Map 1887

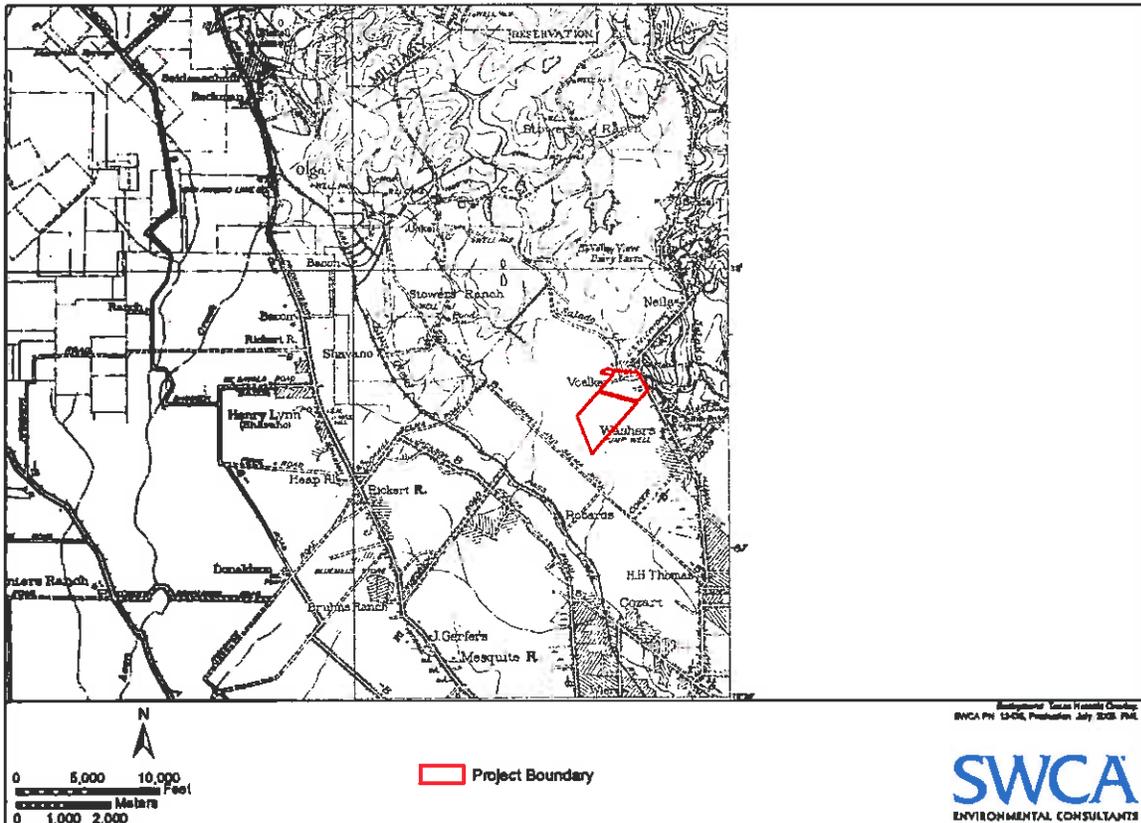
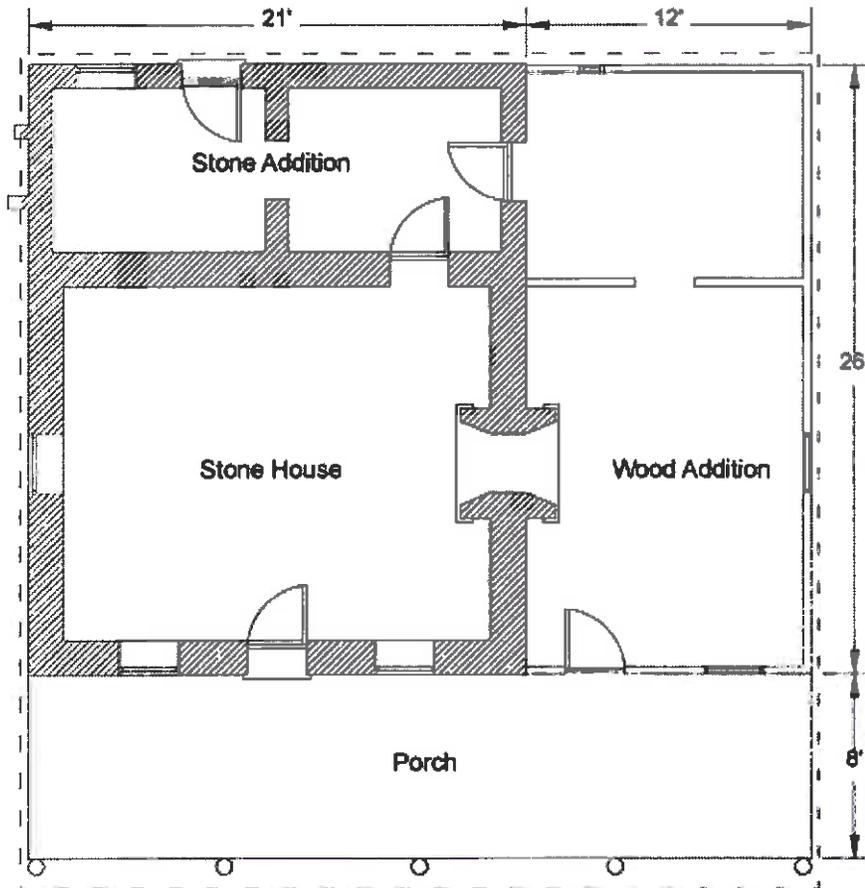


Figure 8: Leon Springs, US Army Corps of Engineers 1922



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Drawn by: JH

Figure 9: Old Stone House c. 1870 (Resource 6)

