

Texas Historical Commission staff (CTS), 11/8/2010
Official Texas Historical Medallion and 16" x 12" plaque without post for attachment to brick
Gillespie County (Job #10GL04) Subject (Atlas) UTM: 14515472E 3334788N
Location: Fredericksburg, 1251 Doebller Road

GRUEN-DOEBBLER HOUSE

THE EARLIEST PART OF THIS TWO-STORY, SIDE-GABLED STRUCTURE WAS BUILT IN THE LATE 1800s BY EARLY AREA PIONEER LUDWIG DOEBBLER. HE CONSTRUCTED THE HOUSE OUT OF NATIVE RUBBLE LIMESTONE FOR HIS SON-IN-LAW, FRIEDRICH GRUEN, AND HIS DAUGHTER, MATHILDA, WHOSE 1937 MEMOIR IS AN IMPORTANT HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF A PIONEER WOMAN. MATHILDA'S BROTHER, ALFRED GUSTAV DOEBBLER, PURCHASED THE PROPERTY IN 1896. A RESPECTED STONEMASON, HE ADDED DRESSED STONE, TRIPLING THE SIZE OF THE HOUSE AND MOVING THE DOOR TO THE CENTER OF THE FOOTPRINT. ALFRED'S SON, WALTER, ENCLOSED A WOODEN ADDITION AND PORCH AROUND 1971.

RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK – 2010

MARKER IS PROPERTY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

**RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS:
2010 Official Texas Historical Marker
Sponsorship Application Form**

Valid September 1, 2009 to November 30, 2009 only

This form constitutes a public request for the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to consider approval of an Official Texas Historical Marker for the topic noted in this application. The THC will review the request and make its determination based on rules and procedures of the program. Filing of the application for sponsorship is for the purpose of providing basic information to be used in the evaluation process. The final determination of eligibility and therefore approval for a state marker will be made by the THC. This form is to be used for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (building marker) requests only. Please see separate forms for either Historic Texas Cemeteries or subject markers.

Proposed marker topic (official title will be determined by the THC):
Gruen/ Doebbler Homestead

County: Gillespie

Town (nearest county town on current state highway map): **Fredericksburg**

Street address of marker site or directions from town noted above: **1251 Doebbler Road**

Marker Coordinates:

If you know the location coordinates of the proposed marker site, enter them in one of the formats below:

UTM Zone Easting Northing '

Lat: 30 8'39.54" N Long: 98 50'21.65" W (deg, min, sec or decimal degrees)

Otherwise, give a precise verbal description here (e.g. northwest corner of 3rd and Elm, or FM 1411, 2.6 miles east of McWhorter Creek):

NOTE: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers must be placed at the structure being marked.

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers definition: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) markers are awarded to structures deemed worthy of preservation for their historical associations and architectural significance. RTHL is a legal designation and comes with a measure of protection; it is the highest honor the state can bestow on a historic structure, and the designation is required for this type of marker. The RTHL designation becomes effective upon approval by the THC. Official Texas Historical Markers signify the RTHL designation, which comes only through application to and approval by the THC and must include public display of an Official Texas Historical Marker. Owners of RTHL-designated structures must give the THC 60 days written notice before any alterations are made to the exterior of the structure. RTHL status is a permanent designation and is not to be removed from the property in the event of a transfer of ownership. Only the THC can remove the designation or recall the marker. The marker must remain with the structure and may not be removed or displayed elsewhere until or unless the THC gives express approval in writing for such action. Once designated as RTHL, properties are subject to provisions of Texas Government Code, Section 442.006(f).

Criteria:

1. **Age:** Structures eligible for the RTHL designation and marker must be at least 50 years old.
2. **Historical significance:** Architectural significance alone is not enough to qualify a structure for the RTHL designation. It must have an equally significant historical association, and that association can come from an event that occurred at the site; through individuals who owned or lived on the property; or, in the case of bridges, industrial plants, schoolhouses and other non-residential properties, through documented significance to the larger community.
3. **Architectural significance:** Structures deemed architecturally significant are outstanding examples of architectural history through design, materials, structural type or construction methods. In all cases, eligible architectural properties must display integrity; that is, the structure should be in a good state of repair, maintain its appearance from its period of significance and be considered an exemplary model of preservation. Architectural significance is often best determined by the relevance of the property to broader contexts, including geography. Any changes over the years should be compatible with original design and reflect compliance with accepted preservation practices, e.g., the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.
4. **Good state of repair:** Structures not considered by the THC to be in a good state of repair are ineligible for RTHL designation. The THC reserves the sole right to make that determination relative to eligibility for RTHL markers.

Special National Register considerations for RTHL marker applications: If a structure has been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under either Criterion A or B **and** Criterion C (Architecture), the historical text compiled as part of the National Register nomination process may be submitted as part of the marker process, provided it includes the required reference notes and other documentation. Acceptance of the National Register information for the purposes of the marker process will be up to the sole determination of the THC. Listing in the NRHP does not guarantee approval for an RTHL marker. See the THC web site at <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigns/madnrcrit.html> for National Register criteria.

Check this box if the property is individually listed in the NRHP.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Any individual, group or county historical commission (CHC) may apply to the THC to request an Official Texas Historical Marker for what it deems a worthy topic. Only complete marker applications that contain all the required elements and are submitted online as required can be accepted or processed by the THC (for RTHL markers, the required elements are: sponsorship application form; narrative history; documentation; legal description of the property; site plan; floorplan; historic photograph; and current photographs clearly showing each side of the structure—please resize photographs to 1-2 MB, or approximately 1024 x 768 pixels).

- Completed applications must be duly reviewed, verified and approved by the county historical commission (CHC) in the county in which the marker will be placed.
- The sponsorship application form, narrative history and documentation must be submitted as Microsoft Word or Word-compatible documents and sent via email attachments to the THC by no later than November 30, 2009.
- Required font style and type size are a Times variant and 12-point.
- Narrative histories must be typed in a double-spaced (or 1.5-spaced) format and include separate sections on context, overview, significance and documentation.
- The narrative history must include documentation in the form of reference notes, which can be either footnotes or endnotes. Documentation associated with applications should be broad-based and demonstrate a survey of all available resources, both primary and secondary.

- Upon notification of the successful preliminary review of required elements by the THC, a non-refundable application fee of \$100 is required. The fee shall be submitted to the THC within ten working days of application receipt notification.

APPROVAL BY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The duly appointed marker representative (chair or marker chair) noted below for the county historical commission will be the sole contact with the THC for this marker application. To ensure accuracy, consistency and efficiency, all information from and to the THC relative to the application—and throughout the review and production processes—will be via direct communication with the CHC representative. All other inquiries (calls, emails, letters) to the THC will be referred to the CHC representative for response. By filling out the information below and filing the application with the THC, the CHC representative is providing the THC with notice that the application and documentation have been reviewed and verified by the CHC and that the material meets all current requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker program.

As chair or duly appointed marker chair, I certify the following:

- Representatives of the CHC have met or talked with the potential marker sponsor and discussed the marker program policies as outlined on the THC web site. CHC members have reviewed the history and documentation for accuracy and made corrections or notes as necessary. It is the determination of the CHC that the topic, history and documentation meet criteria for eligibility.

CHC comments or concerns about this application, if any:

Name of CHC contact (chair or marker chair): Doris J. Eckert

Mailing address:309 Old San Antonio Rd **City, Zip:** Fredericksburg, Tx. 78624

Daytime phone (with area code):830 997.3087 **Email address** (required):

ldjeckert@windstream.net

PERMISSION OF PROPERTY OWNER FOR MARKER PLACEMENT

Property owner: Rob and Margene Scott

Address:1251 Doebbler Road **City, state, zip:**Fredericksburg, Texas 78624

Phone:830 990.1235 **Email address:** robscott31@gmail.com

Legal Description of the property (metes and bounds, lot and block, etc.): F.Gruen Survey No. 904, Abstract No. 1444

Upon receipt of the application, the THC will provide the owner with a letter that outlines the legal responsibility of ownership under the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark statute. The letter must be signed by the owner and returned to the THC before the evaluation can be completed.

NOTE: The property owner will not receive any additional copies of correspondence from the THC. All other correspondence—notice of receipt, request for additional information, payment notice, inscription, shipping notice, etc.—will be sent via email to the CHC representative, who is encouraged to share the information with all interested parties as necessary. Given the large volume of applications processed annually and the need for centralized communication, all

inquiries about applications in process will be referred to the CHC for response. The CHC is the sole liaison to the THC on all marker application matters.

SPONSORSHIP PAYMENT INFORMATION

Prospective sponsors please note the following:

- Payment must be received in full within 45 days of the official approval notice and must be accompanied by the THC payment form. The THC is unable to process partial payments or to delay payment due to processing procedures of the sponsor. Applications not paid in the time frame required may, at the sole discretion of the THC, be cancelled or postponed.
- Payment does not constitute ownership of a marker; Recorded Texas Historic Landmark markers and other Official Texas Historical Markers are the property of the State of Texas.
- If, at any time during the marker process, sponsorship is withdrawn, a refund can be processed, but the THC will retain the application fee of \$100.
- The Official Texas Historical Marker Program provides no means of recognizing sponsors or property owners through marker text, incising or supplemental plaques.

Marker sponsor (may be individual or organization): Rob and Margene Scott

Contact person (if applicable):

Mailing address:1251 Doebbler Road **City, zip:** Fredericksburg, Texas 78624

Email address (required):robscott31@gmail.com **Phone: 830 990.1254**

SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

In order to facilitate delivery of the marker, neither post office box numbers nor rural route numbers can be accepted. To avoid additional shipping charges or delays, use a business street address (open 8 a.m.—5 p.m., Monday through Friday).

Name: Rob Scott

Street address:1251 Doebbler Road **City, zip:** Fredericksburg, Texas 78624

Daytime phone (required): 830 990.1254 **Email** (required): robscott31@gmail.com

TYPE AND SIZE OF RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK MARKERS

As part of its review process, the THC will determine the appropriate size marker and provide options, if any, for the approved topic based on its own review criteria, including, but not exclusive of, historical significance, replication of information in other THC markers, relevance to the Statewide Preservation Plan and the amount of available documented information provided in the application narrative. In making its determination, however, the THC will also take into account the preference of the CHC, as noted below.

The sponsor/CHC prefers the following size marker:

- 27" x 42" RTHL marker with post (\$1500)
- 27" X 42" RTHL marker without post* (\$1500)
- 18" x 28" RTHL marker with post (\$1000)

- 18" x 28" RTHL marker without post* (\$1000)
- RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque with post (\$750)
- RTHL medallion and 16" x 12" plaque without post* (\$750)

*For an RTHL marker without post, indicate to what surface material it will be mounted:

- wood
- masonry
- metal
- other (specify)

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION (via email required)

When the CHC has determined the application is complete, the history has been verified and the topic meets the requirements of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, the materials should be forwarded to the THC via email at the following address:
markerapplication@thc.state.tx.us.

- The CHC or marker chair should send an email containing the following attachments (see attachment function under file menu or toolbox on your computer):
 - This application form
 - The narrative history (including documentation)
 - Legal description of the property
 - Detailed floor plan for each floor of the structure
 - Detailed site plan of the property
 - At least one historic photograph
 - Current photographs clearly showing each side of the structure

RECORDS RETENTION BY CHC: The CHC must retain hard copies of the application as well as an online version, at least for the duration of the marker process. The THC is not responsible for lost applications, for incomplete applications or for applications not properly filed according to the program requirements. For additional information about any aspect of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, see the Markers page on the THC web site (<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigns/madmark.html>)

Texas Historical Commission
History Programs Division
P.O. Box 12276, Austin, TX 78711-2276
Phone 512/463-5853
history@thc.state.tx.us



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

Gruen/ Doebbler House



1251 Doebbler Road
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
Gillespie, County
F. Gruen Survey No. 904, Abstract 1444

Gruen/ Doebbler House

I. Context

The Gruen/Doebbler house is historic primarily due to one family, the Doebblers. They leave behind a vivid record of life on the Texas frontier. They are responsible for a number of limestone buildings, including this one, which make the German Hill Country architecture unique, even today. Broadly speaking, were it not for conditions in the German States of the 1840s, perhaps none of this would have happened. At that time, despite a prior period of social reforms, living conditions were harsh. Lich writes, “Jobs were scarce and laborers were poorly paid. Taxes were oppressive, and few people had more money than was required to buy the most essential necessities.”¹ Amidst these hard times the German rulers began a systematic repression designed to stamp out previous reforms and freedoms. In April 1842, in response to these repressions, a group of nobility formed the Verein zum Schutze Deutscher Einwanderer in Texas (The Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas) commonly known as the Adelsverein (League of Nobility). Its purpose was to settle Germans in Texas.²

The Gruens, Jost Heinrich and his son Friedrich, were some of the first pioneers to settle in Fredericksburg. Shortly thereafter in 1846, the first of three Doebbler brothers, Friedrich, arrived in Texas. Later, Ludwig Doebbler and his younger brother Wilhelm arrived in 1852. It is Ludwig, his daughter Mathilda, and his son Alfred who are of primary importance to the story of this house. Ludwig built the first two-story rock structure of what has become the Gruen/Doebbler house. Mathilda Doebbler and Friedrich Gruen homesteaded this property after their marriage. Special attention should be paid to Mathilda Doebbler for her memoir of

1937. She not only gives us insight into the homesteading of this property but also contributes to our understanding of the conditions, hardships and life in the pioneer days of the German immigrant. According to [The Handbook of Texas Online](#); Mathilda's memoir "is significant for what it reveals about life in the middle and late nineteenth-century Hill Country, for its insights into experiences particular to girls and women of that place and time, and for information about contemporary life expectancy, child labor, family structure, and marriage."³ Later, it is another of Ludwig's children, Alfred, who continued the evolution of this house. Ludwig and his sons Richard and Alfred were master masons and builders. Their lasting contributions to the unique architecture of the Hill Country can be found in Fredericksburg, Comfort, and as far away as Rocksprings.

II. Overview

Friedrich Gruen and Mathilda Doebbler made their application to homestead this property in January of 1875; however, the story of this property does not begin here. Friedrich Gruen, traveling with his parents, Jost Heinrich Friedrich Johann Gruen, born 24 Oct. 1816 in Mademuhlen, Hessen-Nassau, Prussia, his wife Katarine Wilhelmine Theis, sailed from Bremen on the brig Georg Dilius. They arrived in Galveston on 30 December, 1845.⁴ At that time all German settlers were transferred from Galveston to Karlshafen (Karl's Bay), later renamed Indianola, on Matagorda Bay. This was the staging ground for their trip to the frontier. Fredericksburg was founded on May 8, 1846, with the arrival of the first wagon train of colonists.⁵ The Gruens most probably arrived some time after the second wagon train to the new colony in June 1846. These original families received a lot in town and ten acres of farm land as temporary compensation against their claims in the Fisher Miller Grant,

between the San Saba and Llano Rivers. Jost Gruen received from the Verein town lot #308 on San Antonio Street.⁶ Soon after arriving Katarine died in childbirth.

As Friedrich and his father Jost Gruen were trying to establish themselves in Fredericksburg, the first of three brothers, Friedrich Doebbler, born in 1812 in Berlin, Prussia, his wife Auguste Matheus, and son Theodore sailed from Bremen onboard the Ship Elisa and Charlotte. They arrived in Galveston on 20 October 1846.⁷ Upon their arrival in Fredericksburg they were assigned town lot # 128 on West Austin. St.⁸ His two younger brothers Ludwig (Louis) Doebbler, born 25 April 1814, in Luckenwalde, Berlin, Prussia and Wilhelm (William), born 25 March 1824, in Luckenwalde, arrived Galveston onboard the sloop Solon in the summer of 1852. Ludwig and Wilhelm are both listed in the Gillespie Co. tax rolls of 1852, in which they both declared owning no real property.⁹ Louis Doebbler's family arrived in Galveston, consisting of his wife Mathilda Schultz and four children, on the sloop Friedrich Grosse, also from Bremen on 18 Oct. 1853.¹⁰ The 1854 tax rolls show Louis owning no real property.¹¹ Beginning in 1855 all three brothers began the process of settling land in the South Grape Creek area, which later became known as Grapetown.¹²

1856 was a busy summer for Louis Doebbler. His daughter Mathilda Marie Doebbler was born on 29 August 1856. Just a few days later Louis had 160 acres surveyed on South Grape Creek for his application of a preemption grant. This property is immediately east of Friedrich and Mathilda's homestead, the subject of this application.

Mathilda endured terrible hardships as a child. Her mother died in 1859. Without a mother to care for his four little girls, Louis gave each girl over to the care of other families in the area. In 1863 Mathilda's father married Marie Elisabeth Alberthal, a widow, and someone

who could care for the girls. The new stepmother was as cruel to Mathilda and her sisters as she was to her own natural children. One of Mathilda's duties, for which she suffered much abuse from her stepmother, was to care for her little brother Alfred. Due to stress and hardships each of Louis's four daughters were again given over to other families, basically as child servants. Mathilda was sent to San Antonio to live in the house of a couple named Longraper. She fared no better. Mrs. Longraper treated her as poorly as her stepmother. She worked tirelessly for them in the city, and in the summer she was sent to work in the fields in New Braunfels. As she got older she was even hired out to other families as a domestic servant, working for a time for the mayor of San Antonio's wife. When she was about age fourteen, her father sent for her to come home.

Shortly after returning home, on May 11th 1872, she married Friedrich Wilhelm Gruen who was thirteen years her senior. Mathilda remembers it this way, "So we were married. We didn't have a celebration or anything. We just got married at my father's house, on a Saturday night. My stepmother didn't want us to go home that night so we stayed with her and the next day went to the home of my husband's father. It was there we lived".¹³ For a few years Friedrich and Mathilda lived at the farm of Friedrich's father, Jost Heinrich Gruen. Here, finally, Mathilda's life improved. The Gruens were a good family. Friedrich and Mathilda had their first two children here and Mathilda began to call Jost Heinrich "Grandpa". Friedrich worked the farm with his father. He also had a team of six mules and a wagon. With this team he made trips to the coast to haul goods for the merchants of Fredericksburg.

In May of 1874 Heinrich Gruen applied, under the existing preemption law, for 160 acres of land on Grape Creek.¹⁴ This was about a mile west of Mathilda's father's place. On the 10th

of August of that year Louis Doebbler received a contract from the city of Fredericksburg to build a new jail. He received \$1,645.¹⁵ Soon Friedrich and Mathilda decided to start a place of their own. On a parcel of land between his father's place and her father's place, on January 24th, 1875, Friedrich Gruen started the process of homesteading 160 acres.¹⁶

Friedrich cut trees and built their first one room log house about one half mile west of her father's house. Mathilda was a little over eighteen when this first house was built. She wrote, "Our house was at first a log cabin set among many beautiful, sturdy live oak trees. Before it was entirely finished we moved in. By this time the settler in the little towns could buy windows and doors in the larger towns. Just after we moved in my husband went to Austin to buy the doors, windows and shingles for our house."¹⁸ Seven children were born between the years 1877 and 1893. "As our family grew my father built a stone gallery at the back of the house. It had a stone chimney at one end where we sometimes cooked. The log house went up at the side. We had also added two other rooms."¹⁸ Mathilda's life continued to be difficult. Terrible injuries were common due to farm accidents, and medical help was too expensive and too far away. A tragedy happened after Grandpa Gruen came to live with Mathilda and her family.

"One Sunday when we were at church our house caught fire. Poor Grandpa Gruen was there alone and although he was unable to walk he managed to get out a lot of the furnishings in some way, but almost everything we had burned up. Years of hard work went up in the smoke in such a short while. Only the stone gallery with the chimney at one end was left standing. We lived on this gallery and cooked at the chimney while my father built a two story stone house for us. It is still standing and Alfred, the little fellow I took care of as a baby, is living there now."¹⁹

This two story structure that Louis Doebbler built for Friedrich and Mathilda is the earliest part of the present house. It is roughly 14 feet by 15 feet. Built from native limestone, the walls are about 16 inches thick. The cut limestone is axe shaped and generally larger than the field stone. The first floor served as a family room and kitchen. There is a fireplace on the west wall. The chimney displays several facets and interesting detail. A sleeping loft on the second floor was accessible by an outside staircase on the east side of the house. The present staircase, inside the house, is basically this same staircase. The small door and entrance to this second floor room, as well as the room itself, are in original condition and have never been restored. The walls are plastered and exhibit a pinkish hue. Above the entrance, on the plaster, are the writings of a child. The name "Mary Gruen" is clearly visible. Mary was the second daughter of Friedrich and Mathilda, born in 1875. Where exposed, the windows and door jamb are simply shaped oak timbers. The flooring upstairs is of pine. The roof is of cedar shingles, as was the original. One other interesting feature of this part of the house is the very large stone lintel above the first floor door on the east side. Mathilda states, "Before Otto was born we sold the farm and moved to Kerrville". Otto was their last child. He was born in Kerrville on 18 October 1896. There is a real estate transaction in the records of the sale of 152.5 acres to George Weinheimer from Friedrich Gruen on 19 April, 1895.²⁰

Alfred Gustav Doebbler was born on 29 May 1864; the son of Louis Doebbler and Marie Elisabeth Alberthal, and the little brother Mathilda cared for when she was only a child herself. Alfred married Emile Kott on 10 July 1892. They had nine children. Alfred, like his father and brother Richard, was a stone mason and farmer. On 9 Nov. 1896 Alfred purchased all the land that George Weinheimer had bought from the Gruens.²¹ Sometime in

the early nineteen hundreds Alfred began to expand the house that his father had built for Mathilda. Family oral history says that he was finished with the building soon after his son Walter was born in 1909. By 1911, all of Alfred's and Emile's children were born and the Doeblers had more than tripled the size of the original house. To the east of the original structure Alfred built a two story limestone addition. The structure is built of large hand-hewn pitch faced solid limestone. This addition created an overall floor plan of a basic L shape, which is common of architecture in the German Hill Country. The windows and doors all have large stone lintels over them. Most of the larger stones are on the first story and on the front of the house, with the smaller stones reserved for the heights of the second floor in the back. These stones were hand cut and numbered from a quarry about two miles from the house. Many contain the marks of being split from much larger stones. Holes were drilled into the rock, then a round cedar or cypress wedge was driven into each hole, the expansion thus splitting the limestone.²² Many are over 3 ft long, weighing over a thousand pounds. Most are 12 inches in depth and about 12 to 14 inches in height. Alfred used a jib boom erected in the center of each work area to hoist the stones into place.

There is quite a difference between Louis's construction and Alfred's. Although both buildings are practical Alfred used much larger stones laid in courses and his mortar joints are unique. They are raised. A tool was used to sculpt a half round bead from each mortar joint. The result is a pleasing and distinguishing detail that simply frames each stone. The ability to quarry larger stones, the sophistication of building techniques, and perhaps the lack of time constraints all contributed to the period of solid limestone construction.

Alfred's older brother Richard, like his father, was influential in teaching Alfred the art of masonry, as well as providing jobs. Richard, at age 15, decided to join the local Union supporters leaving Texas via Mexico to fight the Confederacy during the Civil War. In August of 1862 this group was massacred at the Nueces River. Richard Doebbler was the few who escaped.²³ Later in life, partly because of this celebrity, Richard became a very successful and popular mason and builder in Comfort, Texas, which is only 17 miles south of the Gruen/ Doebbler homestead. Alfred worked on many of these projects with Richard. Some of the public buildings that they helped to construct are the August Faltin Store, 1897; First Comfort Bank, 1906; the Holekamp Store, 1907; the Center Point School, 1911; the Bandera School, 1913; improvements on the Ernst Doebbler shop, 1913; the Leakey School, and the second story of the Comfort Middle School in 1922. Private homes that they helped build are the Paul Karger home in the late 1890s, the Ernst Spenrath home, the Carl Spenrath home, a one room house with a basement for Martin Heinen in 1908, and then a larger house for Martin Heinen.²⁴

Alfred also worked on several jobs that would be considered far away for the time. In 1891 Alfred helped build a school, the Edwards County Courthouse and jail in Rocksprings.²⁵ The Edwards County Court House lists the contractors as Ben Davey and Bruno Schott of Kerrville.²⁶ He worked on the Charles Schreiner ranches northwest of Kerrville. He also helped build the school in Harper, commuting on a big white mule named Pacer. Alfred earned \$3 dollars a day as a mason during these trips. He was engaged to work on the following: the Second Comfort Bank, the Arno Schwethlem Store, the Gustave Leeder home, the Henry Seidensticker home, the Edmund Marquart home, the Otto Scheele home, the Herman Langbein home, the Richard Faltin home, and of course the Richard Doebbler home.

When not employed as a mason Alfred was a farmer and operated a small dairy. The milk was separated by hand and sold to the Comfort Creamery. He also went into partnership and invested in a steam tractor and threshing machine, the first of its kind in the Grape Creek Community. By 1920s the building of the solid limestone structures became financially prohibitive, so Alfred did concrete work with Bruno Schott.²⁷

Alfred Doebbler's son Walter was last to add on to the family home. Walter was born in this house in 1909. Walter married Viola Weirich in 1934 and they raised six more Doebbler children in the family home. Alfred continued to live with his son and his family until he died in 1958, at age 94. In 1963 Walter established the Doebbler Quarry on the family land about a mile from this house. Using material from this quarry, Walter enclosed what was a wooden addition and a large porch. This is now the family den. Once again construction techniques had changed. Instead of laying solid rock, Walter used a double wall technique building an inner and outer wall with rubble fill. He finished this construction sometime around 1971. He also added a large fireplace and laid a saw cut limestone floor.²⁸ Walter and Viola continued to live in the family house until Walter passed away in July of 1995.

III. Historical/ Cultural Significance

The Gruen/Doebbler house is significant in a number of ways. Architecturally it represents the evolution of building techniques from the earliest days on the Texas frontier, to the period of hand-hewn solid limestone construction, and double walled techniques still in use today. It is important to note that Jost and Friedrich Gruen, who settled here, were literally some of the earliest pioneers in Fredericksburg. Louis Doebbler contributed the earliest surviving part of the house. He is also the patriarch of the family which occupied this house for 120 years. The principal contributions, however, are from his children. Mathilda Doebbler

Gruen's memoir gives us a most authentic record of homesteading. It informs us about the hardships of pioneer women and children on the Texas frontier and has inspired subsequent works on the early days of Texas. Her memoir is found in James Michener's project archive for his novel Texas.²⁹ It is also featured in Texas Tears and Texas Sunshine,³⁰ and in The Golden Free Land, The Reminiscences and Letters of Women on an American Frontier.³¹

Alfred Doebbler's contribution is a lifetime of work. He helped build structures in Gillespie, Kendall, Kerr and Edwards counties. It was a unique time and place when solid hand-hewn limestone construction was possible. If protected, these buildings will continue to serve the many generations who follow.

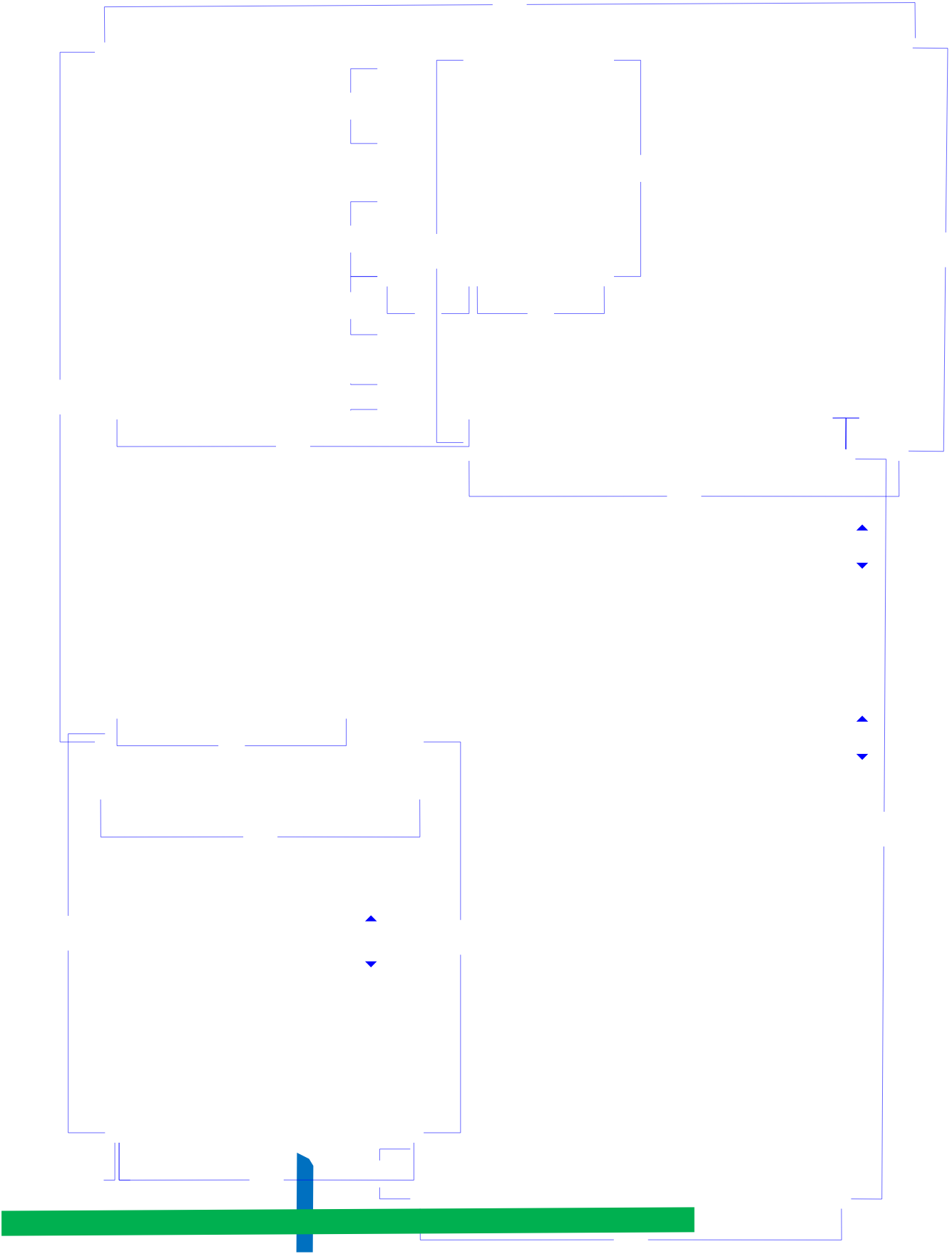
Respectfully Submitted

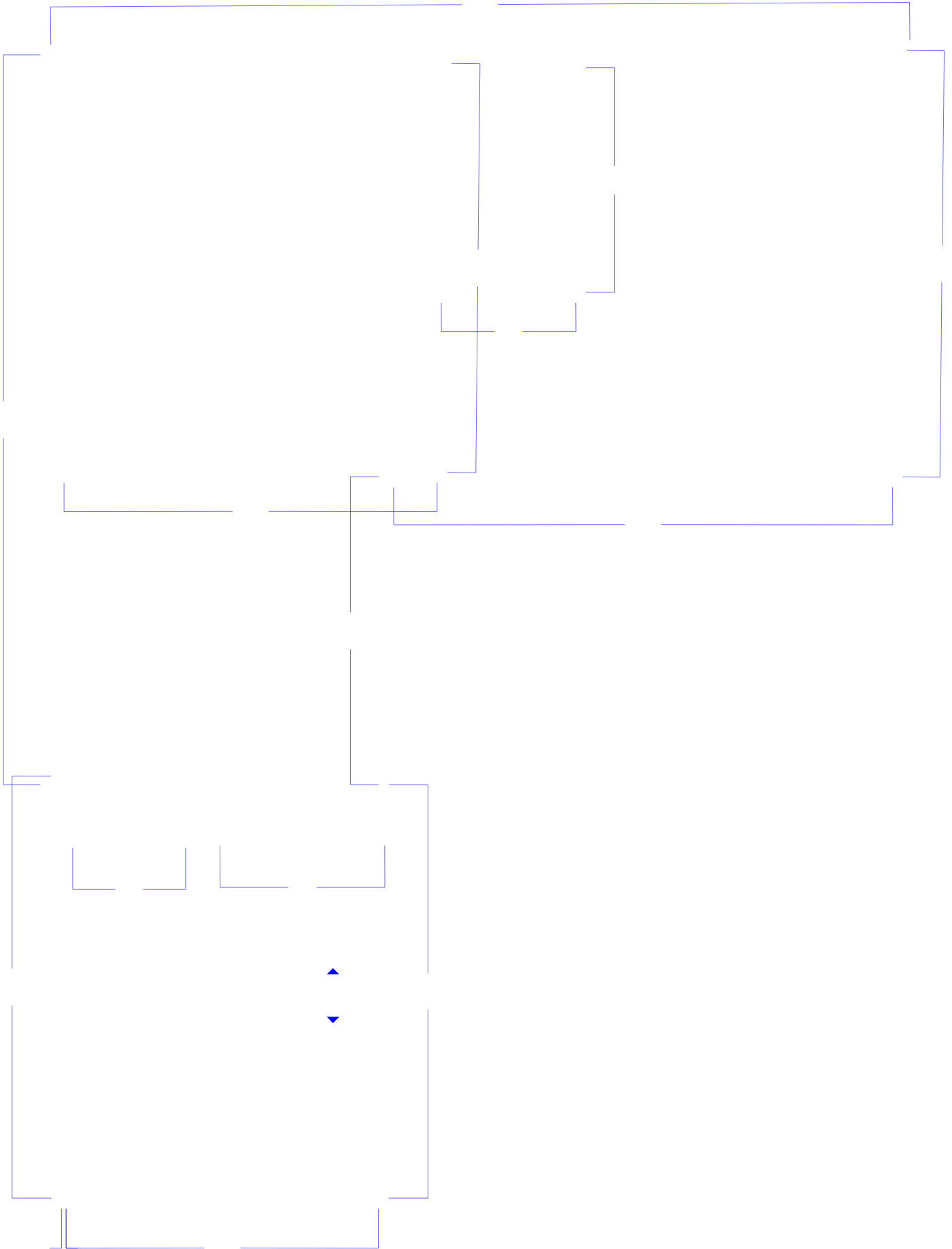
Rob and Margene Scott

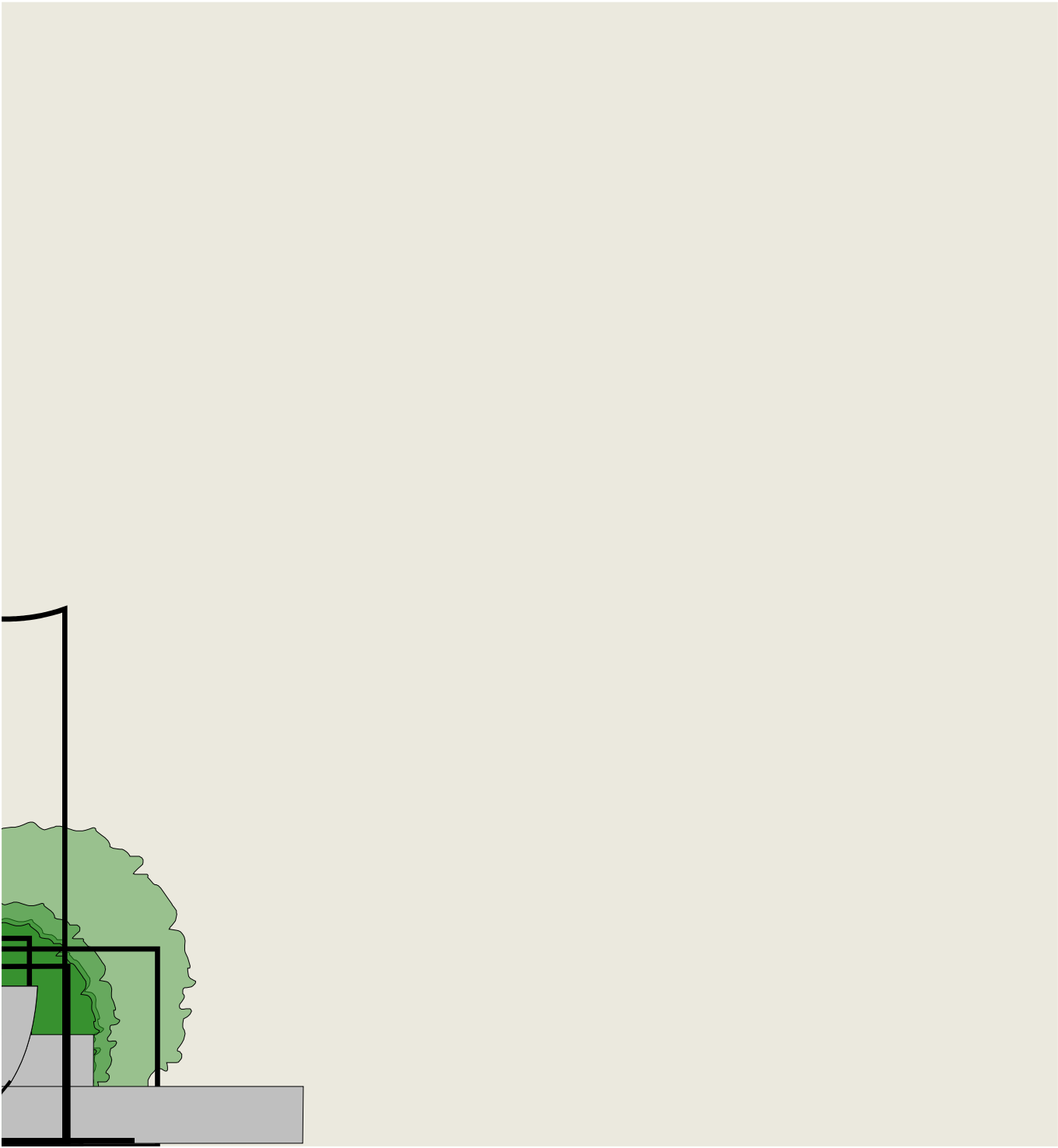
IV. Documentation

1. Glen Ernest Lich, Balthasar Lich, German Rancher in the Texas Hills, (Texana 12, 1974) p. 102.
2. Glen E. Lich, *The Germans Texans* (San Antonio: University of Texas Institute of Texas Cultures at San Antonio, 1981), p. 22-24.
3. The Handbook of Texas Online, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/WW/fwaab.html>.
4. Gillespie County Historical Society, *Pioneers in God's Hills Vol. I*, (Eakin Press, Austin, Texas, 1960), P 246-247.
5. *Pioneers in God's Hills*, p. XI.
6. *Pioneers in God's Hills*, p. 263.
7. *Pioneers in God's Hills*, p. 254.
8. *Pioneers in God's Hills*, p. 261.
9. *Tax Rolls Gillespie County, Texas 1848-1892*.
10. Ethel Hander Geue compiler, *New Homes in a New Land: German Immigration to Texas, 1847-1861*, (Waco Texas, Texian Press, 1970, Reprinted by Genealogical Publishing Co., 1982), p. 64.
11. *Tax Rolls Gillespie County, Texas 1848-1892*.

12. Preemption File 4372 of F. Wilhelm Doebbler 1855, Preemption File 5965 of Louis Doebbler 1856, (Texas Land Database Archives & Records), <http://wwwdb.glo.state.tx.us/central/LandGrants/LandGrantsSearch.cfm> *Tax Rolls Kendall County, Texas* (Survey 300- Section 1 shows Ferdinand Doebbler owning 160 acres).
13. Mathilda Doebbler Gruen Wagner, *I think Back: Being the Memoirs of Grandma Gruen*, (1937 Self Published), p. 25-26.
14. Preemption File 670 of Jost Heinrich Gruen, 1874.
15. Don H. Biggers, *German Pioneers in Texas*, (Compiled for the Fredericksburg Wochenblatt and Fredericksburg Standard, Fredericksburg Publishing Co., 1925), p. 118.
16. Preemption File 1491 of Friedrich Gruen, 1875.
17. Wagner, p.27-28.
18. Wagner, p.30-31.
19. Wagner, p.38-39.
20. *Deed Records*, Gillespie County, Book 4, p.410-411.
21. *Deed Records*, Gillespie County, Book 5, p.137.
22. Lloyd Murphy, *A tour Through Comfort History*, (Comfort News, 1984), p.4
23. Guido Ransleben, *A 100 Years of Comfort in Texas; A Centennial History*, (Naylor Company, 1954), p. 86,89-93.
24. Ester Wiedenfeld, *The Doebbler's Stonemasons 1851-1958*, (Compiled for the Comfort Historical District Files, Comfort Heritage Foundation, Comfort Texas), p. 2-A-5
25. Interview with Louis Doebbler, Alfred Doebbler's grandson, Oct. 2009. "He traveled to Rocksprings by train, carrying with him a forty foot pole for a jib boom".
26. Edwards County Court House, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, 1973.
27. Wiedenfeld, p. 2-A-6-8.
28. Walter Doebbler, *Advertisement for Doebbler's Quarry*, (Fredericksburg Radio Post, May 6, 1971)
29. James A. Michener, (*Texas Project Archive*, 1981-1992, Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin), Box 2.325/G116d.
30. Jo Ella Powell Exley, ed., *Texas Tears and Texas Sunshine: Voices of Frontier Women*, (College Station; Texas A&M Press, 1985), p.107-123.
31. Crystal Sasse Ragsdale, ed., *The Golden Free Land: Reminiscences and Letters of Women on an American Frontier*, (Austin, Landmark, 1976).







JOB # 10GL04

Authorization for Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Designation

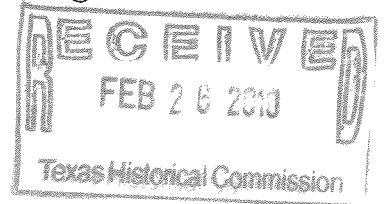
Property considered for designation:

Name of House, Address of House, Name of County, Texas:

Gruen-Doebbler House, 1251 Doebbler Rd., Fredericksburg, Gillespie County

Legal Description (Lot and Block or Metes and Bounds):

F. GRUEN SURVEY NO. 904, ABSTRACT 1444



The Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) designation is awarded to historic structures deemed worthy of preservation for their architectural integrity and historical associations. Authorized by the Texas Legislature under Texas Government Code, Chapter 442, RTHL is the highest honor the state can bestow on historic structures in Texas. Designated properties are afforded a measure of legal protection and become part of the recorded history of the state's built environment.

Benefits of the RTHL designation:

- Recognition that a property is of local, regional or state significance.
- Protection for up to 90 days from exterior alterations, including demolition or relocation.
- Ad valorem tax exemptions, where granted by local taxing authorities.
- Inclusion in the Texas Historic Sites Atlas.
- Technical preservation assistance through the THC.

Responsibility of the property owner under the RTHL provision, as noted in Texas Government Code, Chapter 442.006 (f):

A person may not damage the historical or architectural integrity of a structure the commission has designated as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark without notifying the commission at least 60 days before the date on which the action causing the damage is to begin. After receiving the notice, the commission may waive the waiting period or, if the commission determines that a longer period will enhance the chance for preservation, it may require an additional waiting period of not longer than 30 days. On the expiration of the time limits imposed by this section, the person may proceed, but must proceed not later than the 180th day after the date on which notice was given or the notice is considered to have expired.

Additionally:

- The designation requires the public display of the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark marker. The marker is the property of the State of Texas and may not be removed or relocated without the prior permission of the Texas Historical Commission.
- RTHL status is a permanent designation which is retained with the property even upon transfer of ownership. Only the Texas Historical Commission may remove the designation.
- Structures designated as RTHLs do not have to be open to the public, but the marker must be accessible to the public.
- RTHL designation does not imply eligibility for federal tax incentives for rehabilitation.

I, the property owner or legal administrator of the property noted herein, signify below that I have read the information regarding Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks and that I voluntarily seek the designation for the property. I further promise to comply with the provision noted in the Texas Government Code.

Name (print) ROB & MARGENE SCOTT

Mailing address: 1251 DOEBBLER RD.

City, state, zip: FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS 78624

Phone: 830 990.1235 Email: robscott31@gmail.com

Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

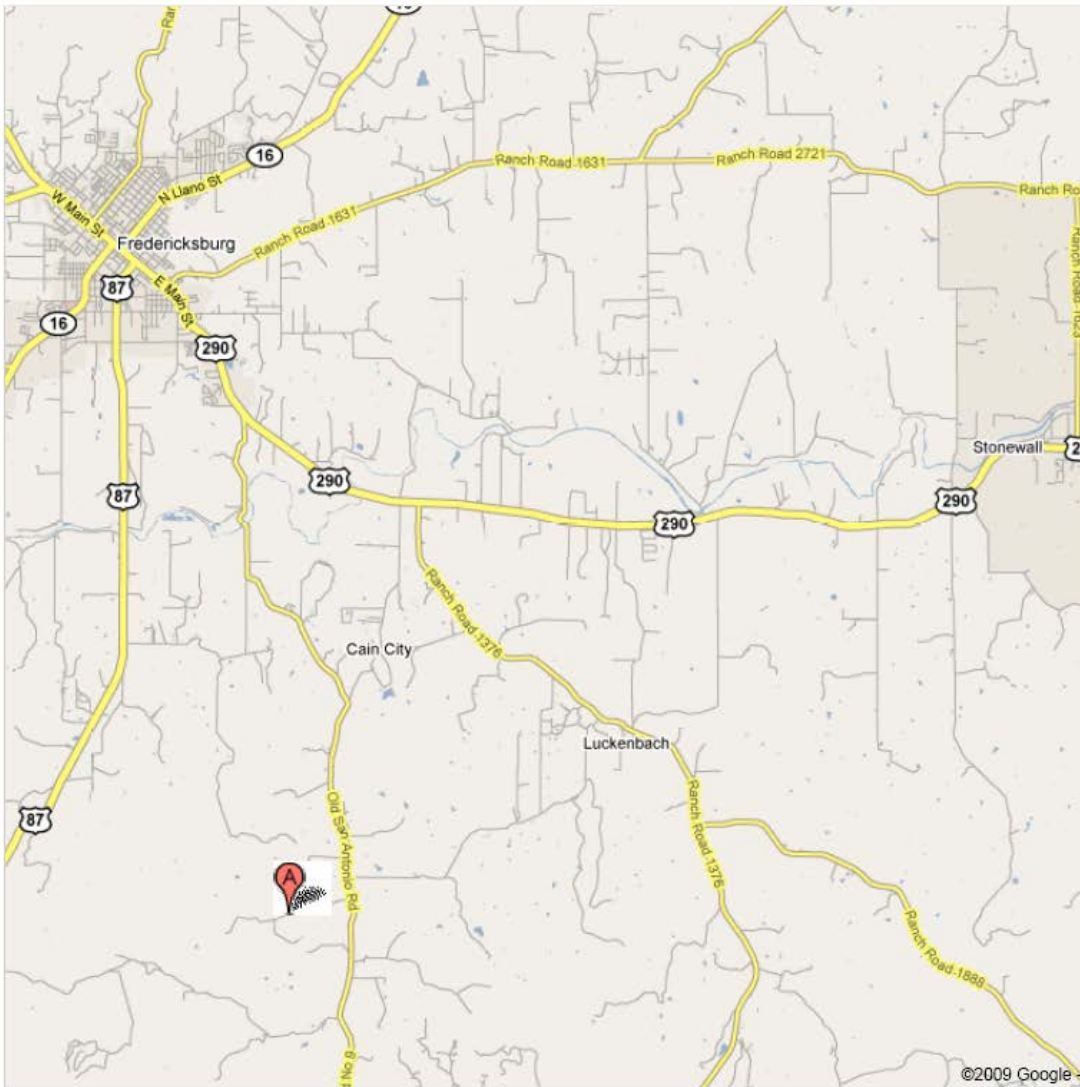

CH# 678
\$1000.00
cd





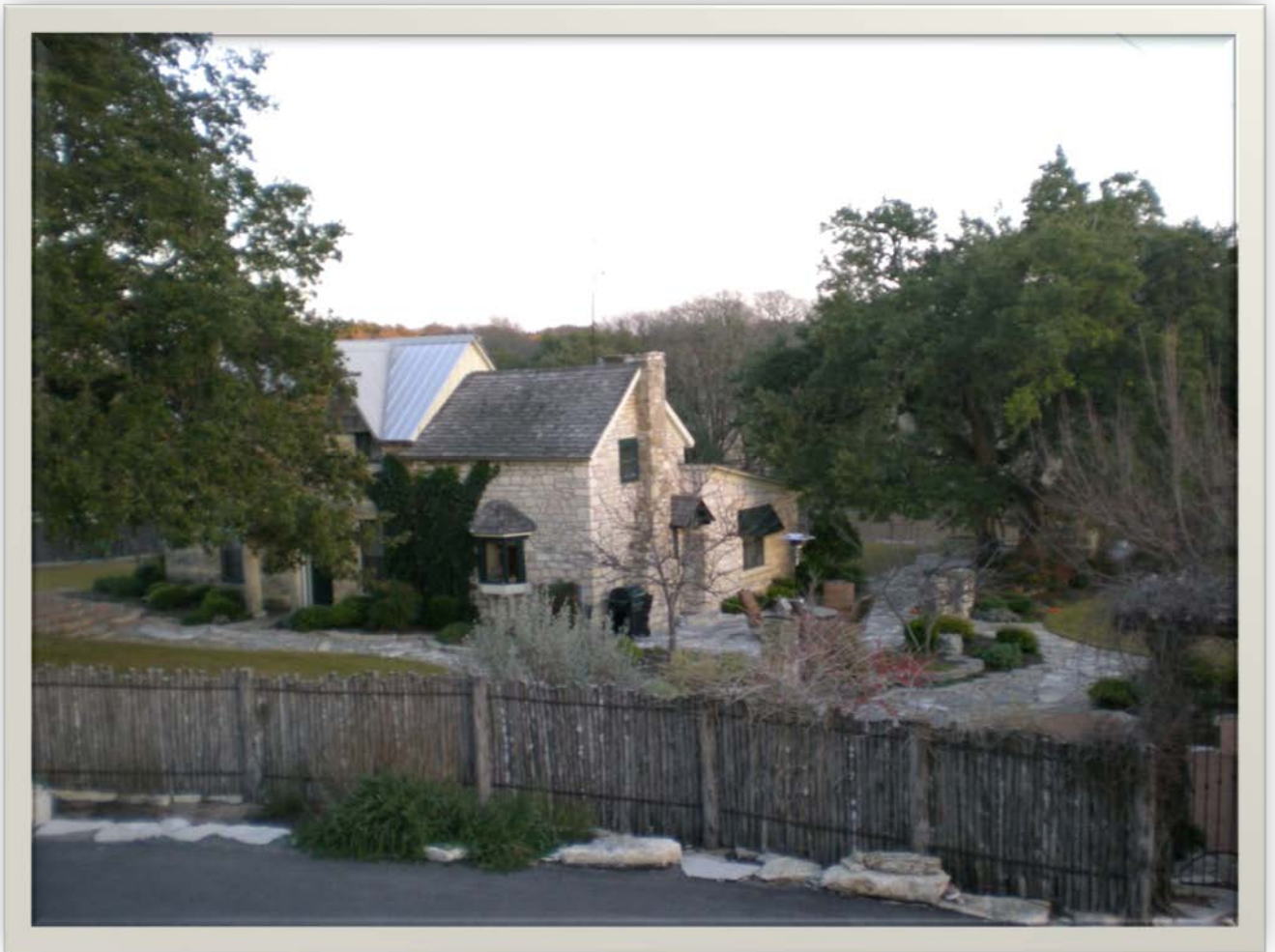
Address **Doebbler Rd**
Fredericksburg, TX 78624

Get Google Maps on your phone
Text the word "GMAPS" to 466453



1251 Doebbler Road
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624

Gruen/ Doebbler House Photographs



1251 Doebbler Road
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
Gillespie, County

West Side



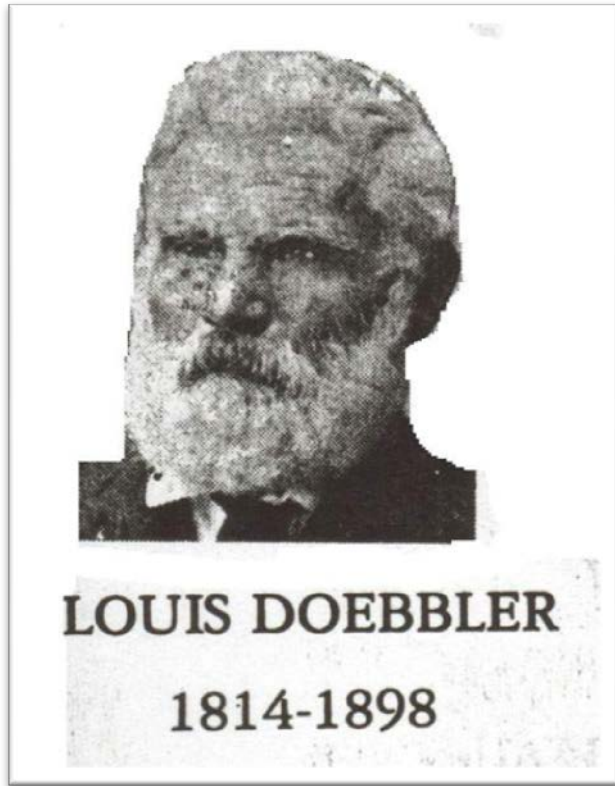




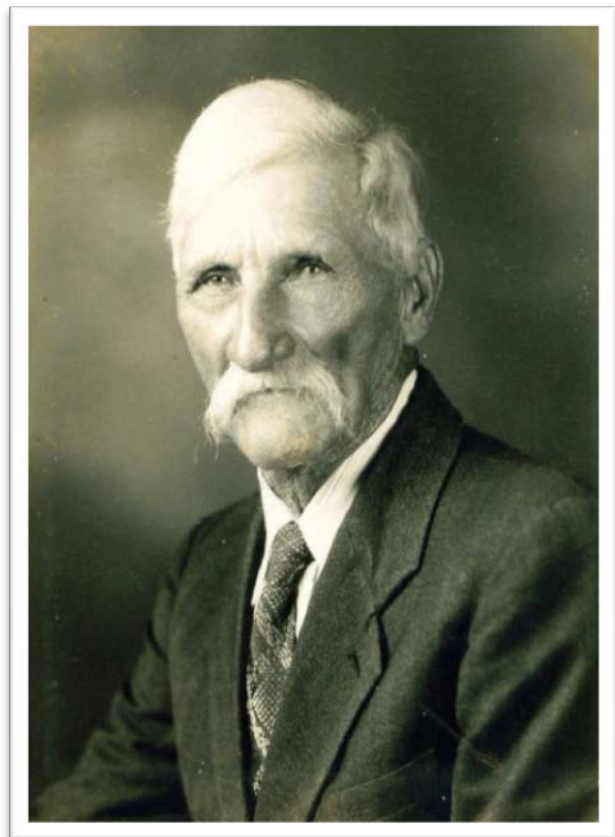


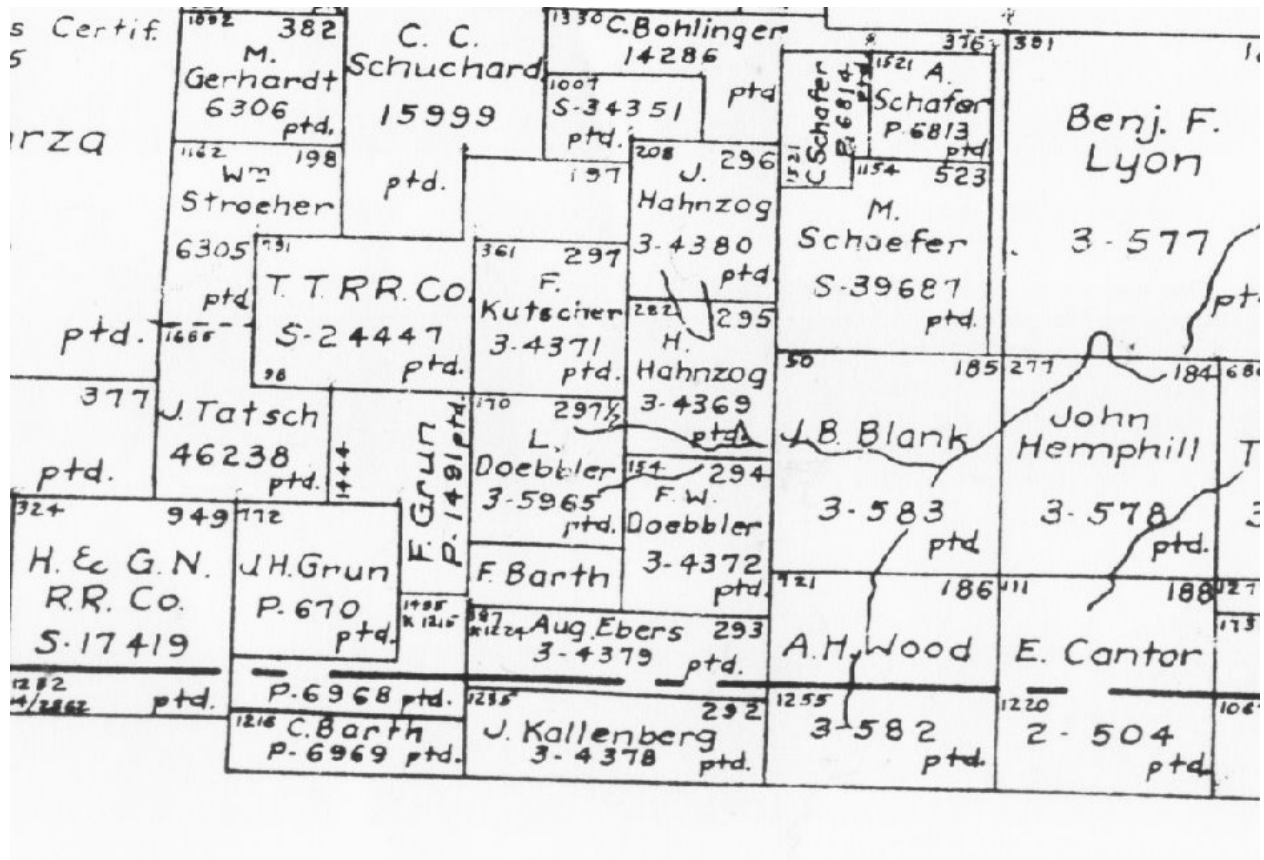


Friedrich, Wilhelm and Ludwig (Louis) Doebbler



Louis Doebbler
Mathilda Doebbler Gruen Wagner
Alfred Doebbler





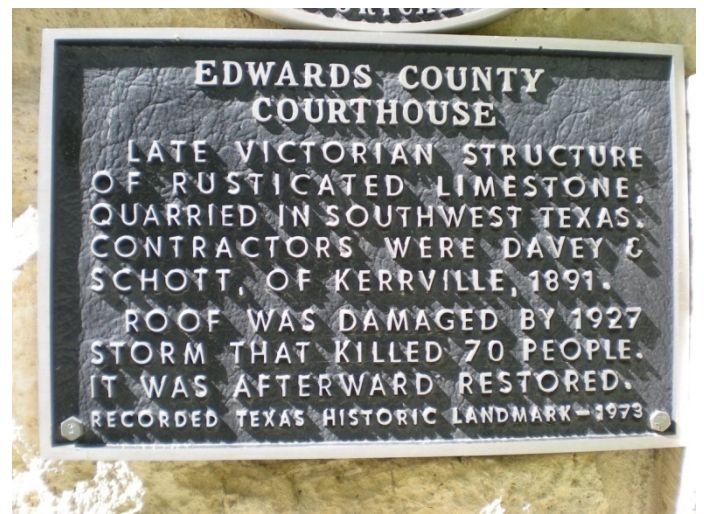
South East Portion of Gillespie County
Original Preemptions:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------|
| Jost Heinrich Grun | #772 |
| Friedrich Grun | #904 |
| Louis Doebbler | #297 1/2 |
| F. Wilhelm Doebbler | #294 |

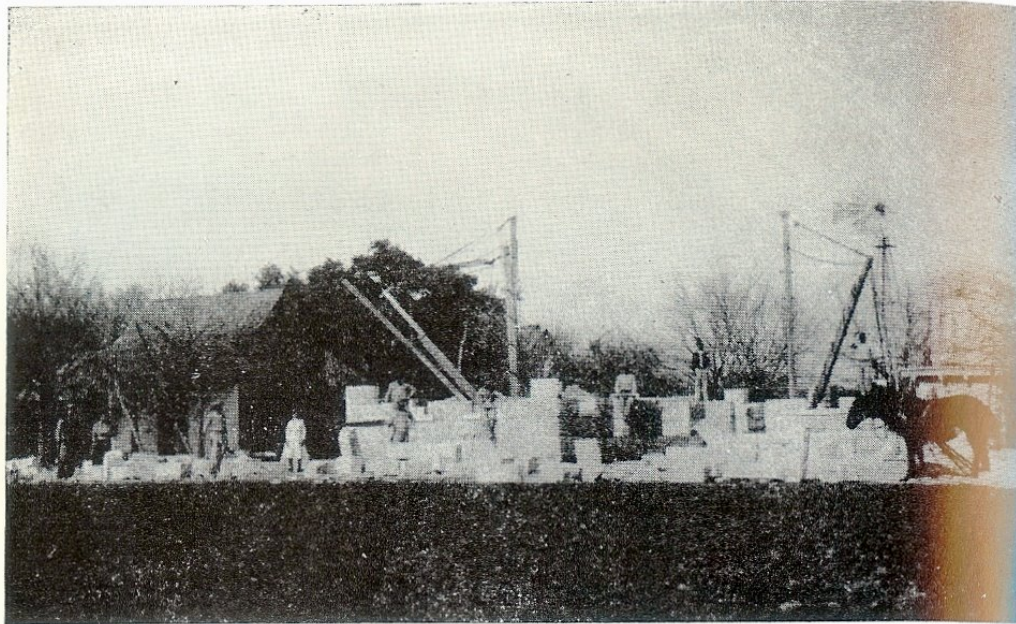
Alfred Doebbler Works



Edwards County Court House Rocksprings, Texas



The
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In time, the settlers (or, as in the instance of this scene, the first local-born generation) have found the necessity of a larger and more sturdily-built home. Local stone-masons and workmen are here seen erecting the new residence of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Heinen. This scene is typical of those taking place on most of the country homes in the vicinity of Comfort during its second and third quarter-centuries.

The Henry Seidensticker Home



Walter Doebbler Ad from the Fredericksburg Radio Post
May 6, 1971

Center photo shows laying floor in the Gruen/ Doebbler House

Wir sind stolz!

*Radio Post
May 6, 1971*

We are proud of our **German Forefathers** who founded Fredericksburg and settled near by. We are happy to be on the same place on which they settled 125 years ago and to be in the same occupation as they were . . .

BEAUTIFUL BUILDING STONE

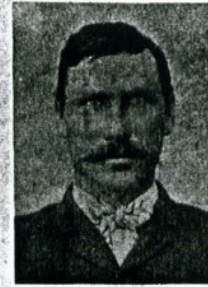
Natural or Custom Cut



LOUIS DOEBBLER
1814-1898



LAYING STONE FLOOR



ALFRED DOEBBLER
1864-1958

DOEBBLER'S QUARRY

Rt. 2 Box 380 — Old San Antonio Rd. at Grapetown
FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS 78624

Mr. & Mrs. Walter Doebbler
Phone (512) 997-5042

VISITORS ALWAYS
WELCOME