

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Riley's Tavern
Other name/site number: NA
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 8894 FM 1102
City or town: New Braunfels State: Texas County: Comal
Not for publication: [] Vicinity: [x]

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
([x] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility) meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my
opinion, the property ([x] meets [] does not meet) the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
[] national [] statewide [x] local

Applicable National Register Criteria: [x] A [] B [] C [] D

Signature of certifying official / Title: Mark Wolfe, State Historic Preservation Officer
Date: 3/6/18
Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting or other official
Date
State or federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
[] entered in the National Register
[] determined eligible for the National Register
[] determined not eligible for the National Register
[] removed from the National Register
[] other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

Category of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	1	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	1	objects
4	2	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: COMMERCE/TRADE – Restaurant (Tavern)

Current Functions: COMMERCE/TRADE – Restaurant (Tavern)

7. Description

Architectural Classification: NA

Principal Exterior Materials: ASBESTOS

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 5-13)

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

X	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
	C	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance: 1936-1968

Significant Dates: 1936, 1942

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: NA

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 14-21)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheets 22-24)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 0.2789 acres

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 29.806265° Longitude: -98.023590°

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary is Lot 1, Block 4, Hunter, Texas as recorded by the Comal County Central Appraisal District.

Boundary Justification: The boundary is the original and legally-recorded boundary lines and includes all property historically associated with the building.

11. Form Prepared By (with assistance from NR Coordinator Gregory Smith)

Name/title: Shonda Mace/Architectural Historian and David Moore/Historian

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Date: May 30, 2017

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets 25-30)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 31-34)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 35-55)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas

PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Riley's Tavern
Hunter (New Braunfels vicinity), Comal County, Texas
Photographed by Shonda Mace
January 6, 2017

Photo 1

Façade view of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southwest.

Photo 2

Oblique view of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing west.

Photo 3

Oblique view of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing west.

Photo 4

Façade view of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing northwest.

Photo 5

Oblique view of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing south.

Photo 6

Façade view of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southeast.

Photo 7

Façade view of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing east.

Photo 8

Façade detail of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southwest.

Photo 9

Interior view of ca. 1900 saloon of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing northeast.

Photo 10

Interior view of ca. 1935 side addition of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing east.

Photo 11

View of interior of bar in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southwest.

Photo 12

View of built-in drink holders in ca. 1935 addition of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing east.

Photo 13

Interior view of ca. 1945 addition of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southeast.

Photo 14

Interior view of ca. 1945 addition towards ca. 1900 saloon of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing northeast.

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Photo 15

View of bar in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing northeast.

Photo 16

View of interior of bar and ca. 1940 coolers in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southwest.

Photo 17

Interior view of 2006 addition of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing east.

Photo 18

Interior view of 2006 addition of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southwest.

Photo 19

Interior view of 2006 addition of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing south.

Photo 20

Interior view of rear room of package store of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southwest.

Photo 21

Interior view of ca. 1935 side addition to rear room of package store in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing north.

Photo 22

Interior view of package store of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing west.

Photo 23

Interior view of package store of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing east.

Photo 24

Interior view of hall separating saloon from package store in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing north.

Photo 25

Detail of original roof truss system of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), located in ca. 1935 addition of saloon.

Photo 26

Detail of original siding of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), located between original building and ca. 1945 addition.

Photo 27

Detail of bar back in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1).

Photo 28

Detail of bar back in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1).

Photo 29

Detail of capital column of bar back in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1).

Photo 30

Detail of built-in drink holders in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1).

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Photo 31

Detail of liquor display shelving in package store of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1).

Photo 32

Oblique view of bathroom shed (Resource #2), view facing southwest.

Photo 33

Oblique view of water pump shed (Resource #3), view facing south.

Photo 34

View of well and attached cistern (Resource #4).

Photo 35

View of cistern and outdoor sculpture (Resource #s 4 & 6), view facing south.

Photo 36

View of open-air stage, formerly Riley's carport (Resource #5), view facing north.

Photo 37

Contextual view of Riley's Tavern property, view facing northeast.

Photo 38

Contextual view of Riley's Tavern property (Resource #1), view facing southwest.

Photo 39

Contextual view of Riley's Tavern property, view facing southwest.

Photo 40

Contextual view of Hunter, TX from Riley's Tavern, view facing southeast.

Photo 41

Contextual view of Hunter, TX from Riley's Tavern, view facing northwest.

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Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas

Description

Riley's Tavern in the unincorporated community of Hunter, Comal County, Texas is a one-story wood-frame building that was built in several stages through the 20th century. The core of the building is a c.1900 front-gabled building facing northeast that was enlarged with shed-roofed additions to the northwest and southeast in the 1930s.¹ The building was extended further to the rear with a barroom expansion in the 1940s and a live music space in 2006. The building has an open rectangular plan, a combination front-gable and shed roof, and a front porch. The exterior walls are finished with asbestos siding and the roof is galvanized metal. The primary façade has two separate entrances that historically led into each separate business. The interior features a large barroom with an open plan on the southeast, and two rooms that formerly served as a package store to the northwest. The tavern features an elaborate wooden back bar with carved Ionic wood columns, but otherwise the interior is rustic, with exposed rafters, and weathered wood and painted surfaces covered with eclectic signage, artwork, stickers, license plates, and graffiti. The elongated curved bar is the focal point of the barroom, while the remainder of space is filled with an assortment of tables, chairs, and billiard tables. Natural light is provided by bands of sash windows with sills that double as cup holders. The 2006 addition includes a small stage and concrete dance floor. The property includes several small outbuildings and structures, including historic detached restrooms and a small water pump shed. Despite additions and other modifications, Riley's Tavern retains a good degree of integrity to the period 1936-1968, and is representative of historic small-town bars in rural central Texas.

Setting

Riley's Tavern is in the small commercial center of Hunter, a largely dispersed rural community in northeastern Comal County, Texas. Hunter is approximately 0.5 miles northwest of Interstate Highway (IH) 35, near the border between Comal and Hays Counties, and it largely falls within an area bounded by two parallel sets of railroad tracks. These tracks are part of the Union Pacific Railroad system but previously operated under different railroad companies.² FM 1102 is the primary road through the Hunter community, and it runs perpendicular to and crosses both sets of railroad tracks. With approximately six loosely defined city blocks, Hunter is comprised primarily of single-family residences and mobile homes on relatively large lots. Besides Riley's Tavern, prominent non-residential buildings include the new Saint John's Catholic Church, as well as the church's former sanctuary, and an abandoned blacksmith shop, both of which date to the early twentieth century. The land is generally level and lies within the Blackland Prairie; the land to the west is the semi-rugged Hill Country. The most prominent topographical feature within the community is York Creek, a small tributary of the San Marcos River. On its generally southeastward path, York Creek flows behind (west of) Riley's Tavern.

Riley's Tavern is in the northwest part of Hunter, at the corner of FM 1102 and Malone Street. Adjacent to the property on the northwest side is a ca. 1935 Craftsman bungalow constructed by former tavern owner James Curtis (J. C.) Riley.³ Several historic houses, currently used for short-term rentals, are on a separate parcel behind (southwest) the tavern and its beer garden. An unpaved parking lot bounds the tavern immediately to the southeast; however, another parking lot is on the opposite of Malone Street. The street extends about a half-block further to the rental houses on the adjoining lot. Property directly across FM 1102 from the tavern has vacant lots and is unimproved. Approximately 0.5 miles northwest of the community is a large limestone quarry operated by

¹ The building actually faces northeast but to make the description less complicated, all subsequent narratives will use cardinal directions when describing façade and room orientations and be described as follows: Northeast = East, Northwest = North; Southwest = West; and Southeast = South.

² The northwestern set of tracks was originally part of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas rail system and the southeastern set of tracks historically was part of the International-Great Northern Railroad. Both now operate within the Union-Pacific system.

³ The house and associated outbuildings lie on a different parcel than the tavern and do not share a deed, survey, or plat; therefore, they are not included as part of this nomination.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas

Colorado Materials, Ltd. Throughout the day, large trucks pass through Hunter, and in front of Riley's Tavern, on their way to and from IH 35.

Riley's Tavern is set back approximately 20 feet from FM 1102 to allow for a concrete sidewalk and a graveled parking area in front of the building. A historic well and cistern are located at the northern edge of the sidewalk, between the building and the gravel parking. Outbuildings on the property include a bathroom shed at the northwest corner of property, a water pump shed directly behind (west) of the tavern, a well/cistern in front (east) of the building, an open-air stage north of the tavern, and a walk-in freezer between the open-air stage and the tavern. The beer garden to the tavern's side and rear includes wooden picnic tables and circular metal tables and chairs that are under the canopy of a large live oak tree. Most of the grounds are unpaved with crushed gravel, although concrete sidewalks extend to the stage and restroom. Other features in the beer garden include horseshoe and washer pits. A rough-cut wood fence with wood and metal gates defines the beer garden and property boundaries on the rear and sides.

Tavern (Resource #1) – Contributing building

The primary resource on the property is a one-story wood-frame building that was constructed in three distinct phases, each of which is described in subsequent paragraphs. To help understand the building's physical evolution and its current configuration and layout, *Map 2* depicts the building's footprint and estimated date of each part of the building. See *Table 7-1* in *Additional Documentation* for a summary of construction dates and alterations to the building.

Original Building – ca. 1900

The oldest part of the tavern was constructed in about 1900 as a saloon. The building faces east onto FM 1102. It comprises a one-story wood-frame building on a pier-and-beam foundation with a largely rectangular footprint. The building has no stylistic influences and its form is akin to the tradition of vernacular/popular roadhouse architecture of rural Central Texas. The original ca. 1900 building has a front-gabled roof; however, shed-roof additions were constructed on each side around 1935, dramatically changing the building's profile.⁴ On all façades, green asbestos shingles, likely dating to the mid-1940s, wrap around the exterior of the building. A low concrete foundation wall surrounds the building on the primary (east) and side (north and south) façades. The steeply pitched, front-gabled roof that extends over the original building has standing-seam metal paneling; likewise, shed-roof extensions on the side additions have similar roofing material, but are of a lower pitch than that over the main building. Originally, the section of the building containing the package store extended past the rear of the building containing the tavern.

The dominant architectural element on the primary (east) façade is a centrally located, partial-width porch. It has a shed roof with corrugated-metal covering and square wood posts at each corner. The porch extends over the single-door main entry and a large double-hung wood-sash window with one-over-one lights. The size and proportions of the window opening are similar to those of the main entrance and thus may have originally been another doorway. A secondary single-door entry and adjacent window are north of the primary entrance beyond the front porch; they serve the room now used as an office. The opposite (south) side of the front contains a set of five, double-hung windows with wood sashes and one-over-one lights. A metal awning with supporting wood brackets at each end extends across the row of windows.

The south (side) façade of the original building is comprised of two sets of double-hung windows that are similar in size, material, and configuration to those on the primary façade. Each set of windows—three to the rear (west) and

⁴ It is probable that the two shed roofs are additions; however, it is unknown when the additions were constructed. It is likely that they were either constructed before or soon after J. C. Riley's acquisition of the property in 1933.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas

four to the front (east)—are covered by a metal awning with wooden braces at each end. The doorway between the sets of windows is no longer operable, but remains a distinctive feature of the south exterior wall.

The building's north side has three openings: a double-hung wood-frame window with four-over-four lights on the east end and two separate doorways.

The original rear (west) side of the building has been changed due to the construction of multiple additions; however, a small area of vertical plank siding remains exposed on the interior and likely indicates the building's original exterior material.

Addition – ca. 1945⁵

According to the current owner, the tavern's original proprietor (J. C. Riley) constructed a rear addition onto the original building in the mid-1940s. This addition, which is smaller than the original building, features a distinctly different roof form. The one-story addition is attached to the southern half of the rear of the building and includes an east-facing wall that rises from the base of the ca. 1900 building's gabled roof to a point that is almost as high as the crest of the gabled roof. The shed roof over the addition then slopes down towards the rear (west) façade. This configuration creates a complicated juncture between the original building and the addition and leaves a half-story wall on the east side that has a standing-seam metal covering. The addition's south side wall has a set of five double-hung wood-frame ribbon windows that are similar to those on the original building. The north side wall has no openings at all. The addition's exterior features the same green asbestos shingle siding as that used on the original building; it is likely that the asbestos siding is contemporaneous to the construction of the ca. 1945 addition.

Addition – 2006

In 2006, the current owner constructed another addition onto the rear to house a small stage and dance floor. This extension presents proportions and a design that are largely compatible with the ca. 1945 addition; however, the amount of square footage in the 2006 extension is almost double that of the earlier addition. The more recent addition maintains the same sloping roofline as the earlier addition, and it also has similar ribbon windows on the south and north façades. The north wall has a single-door entrance that provides access to the beer garden in the back. The west (rear) façade of the addition has no openings. Like the rest of the building, the most recent addition is clad in green asbestos shingles.

Other Building Alterations

Aside from the most recent rear addition, Riley's Tavern remains largely intact to its period of significance. According to the current owner, historic windows were used in construction of the rear addition to mimic those used elsewhere in the building. The only other visible exterior non-historic alteration is a rear wood-frame covered patio behind the package store, adjacent to the ca. 1945 addition. Small in scale, this patio does not greatly alter the building's overall look, historic character, or feeling.

Interior

Based on current data from the county appraisal district, the building includes 2,204-square feet of interior space that historically (i.e. within the period of significance) housed two businesses: a tavern within the southern portion of the building and a package store within the northern part of the building. A shared interior wall separated the two activities, although a door was later opened, possibly after Texas voters amended the state constitution and allowed

⁵ Construction date provided by current owner.

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liquor by the drink.⁶ Most of the building's interior is open and contains a bar, two separate pool/billiard table rooms, and a small stage and dance floor. The former package store now functions as an office and storage space. (See floor plan, page x)

Interior – Tavern

The tavern's interior exhibits minimal alterations since the close of the historic period, is highly recognizable as a building type (roadside tavern), and retains an unmistakable old bar patina. Significant interior components include the bar, dedicated space for a pool table, carved wood drink holders, a dance floor, and built-in seating/standing areas with elevated counter space.

The interior is divided into four distinct spaces, each of which is defined by load-bearing columns or waist-high partitions. Within the building's core (the ca. 1900 saloon), the interior is open and showcases the roof trusses and rafters. Moreover, the original wood roof shingles remain intact and are visible beneath the ca. 1935 shed roof addition, a significant feature of the building that showcases its evolution over time and Riley's lack of attempt to conceal the changes. Many customers have written names and posted photos onto the exposed rafters, which greatly adds to the interior's character and ambiance. The bar—the tavern's most distinctive architectural feature—is immediately visible upon entering the building through the main entrance. The front bar has wood paneling on the sides and a laminate countertop showcasing old newspaper clippings. During or soon after construction of the ca. 1945 addition, the front bar was extended to the rear (west). The extension matches the original counter, but includes a curved corner before terminating just short of the wall that historically separated the tavern from the package store. In its current configuration, the counter presents a J-like layout that includes a large opening on the east end that serves as the main access for the bartender and a very narrow walkway on the opposite (west) end that gives workers access to the area behind the counter. The inner side of the counter includes a row of metal coolers that are used to store ice and bottled or canned beverages. Behind the counter are the original ca. 1945 built-in coolers, as well as a series of cabinets with a large bar, mirror, and finely crafted wooden columns with Ionic capitals. These columns are the building's most stylish architectural element. A small space between the bar and the outer (east) wall contains an antique mechanical cash register, as well as a wall displaying the establishment's liquor license.

The front room, opposite the bar, functions as a game room that contains a pool/billiard table and a shuffle board table. Two square wood columns with a perpendicular wood bar and metal bar stools separate the pool room from the bar and mark the connection of the original building with the side addition; it is likely that these load-bearing columns were part of the building's original exterior wall. A small carved wood shelf with holes to hold drinks extends from the interior wall below the ribbon windows on the east and south façades. Flooring in the front room in both the bar and game room is comprised of wide wood planks, and the walls are a combination of wood and green plaster siding.

The ca. 1945 addition provided room to expand the front bar and offer an additional game room with a pool/billiard table. The wood flooring and combination wood-and-plaster wall material within this room are consistent with those same elements in the front room. Unlike the front room, however, the ceiling is dropped and has a smooth plaster finish and vents that accommodate a central air-conditioning system.

In 2006, the current owner constructed another rear addition that created a much larger room. It shares many of the same physical qualities as the older addition, notably the row of windows and the plaster walls and wood wainscot. The biggest difference is the concrete floor, which is better suited for the room's use for live music and dancing. The room has a small stage in the southwest corner. Waist-high partitions with square wood posts and concrete foot

⁶ The Texas Legislature authorized a mixed beverage permit in 1971. Prior to the creation of this permit, bars and taverns were not authorized to sell liquor by the drink. For further information, see Section 8.

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rests separate this addition from the rest of the building. A rough-cut cedar post supports a single wood chord in the ceiling.

Interior – Package Store

The floor plan of the area historically used as a package store consists of two rooms separated by an interior wall and a single-entry, four-panel wood door. The smaller of the two rooms served as the liquor store, while the larger room at the rear was likely used for storage. Interior walls and ceilings are typically paneled with wide wood planks, with exception of the shed-roof addition in the front room, which exhibits beaded-board paneling along the ceiling and outer wall. A set of built-in wood shelves, originally used to display liquor, is in the northwest corner of the front room. The larger of the two rooms has an open plan with wood posts down the center, providing support at the junction of the shed roof addition. Built-in shelves line the outer wall. Flooring is typically wood planking of a consistent width.

Bathroom Shed (Resource #2) - Contributing building

A small metal shed, located to the northwest of the main building, contains several bathrooms. According to the current owner, these bathrooms were likely converted from two outhouses in the 1950s. The building is a rectangular metal-frame building with two wood doors located on the north and south sides, and a flat metal roof. The building has no stylistic influences and exhibits no alterations.

Water Pump Shed (Resource #3) - Contributing structure

Located directly behind the main building is a small wood shed for a water pump. Constructed ca.1935, it is a one-room, board-and-batten building with a front-gabled metal-covered roof and exposed rafter tails. A board-and-batten door with metal hinges provides access to the interior from the east façade. A large spotlight extends from the gabled end, above the door. The building has no stylistic influences and appears to be unaltered.

Well and Cistern (Resource #4) - Contributing structure

Located at the northeast corner of the main building is a ca. 1900 concrete-lined well and cistern. The well is cylindrical in shape and is covered by a wood plank lid with a historic metal water pump. The well is no longer in use. Adjacent to the well is a rectangular concrete cistern. It is comprised of a low concrete wall that extends from the well to the gravel drive.

Open-Air Stage (Resource #5) – Non-contributing structure

Constructed as a carport by J. C. Riley ca.1935, this structure was converted to an open-air stage ca. 2005. The structure is located north of the main building, along the northern property boundary. Alterations to the structure include the construction of a large cement foundation below the structure, and a replacement metal roof.

Outdoor Sculpture (Resource #6) – Non-contributing object

Besides the tavern itself, the large guitar-shaped sculpture is the most visible feature from public right-of-way. It is mounted on a concrete base that directly abuts the well and cistern. The sculpture is constructed of exposed aggregate concrete that gives the body a textured surface and finish. A large round-shaped opening represents the sound hole and the neck presents a smooth concrete finish that is painted brown. The sculpture also has a head-shaped element with horizontal extensions that represent tuning pegs.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas

Overall Integrity

Riley's Tavern retains six of the National Register's seven aspects of integrity: association, location, setting, materials, feeling, and workmanship. The non-historic addition to the main building built onto the rear was designed so that it does not detract from the tavern's distinctive public view. The shed-roof additions, as well as the ca. 1945 central addition, now possess significance in their own right as they demonstrate the building's evolution and continued use as a tavern. Alterations to the property, including the recent addition of a walk-in freezer, alteration of the carport, and the addition of a wood fence around the property boundaries, are minimal and do not detract from the integrity of the property, as a whole. Overall, there are seven resources on the property, including four contributing and three noncontributing; nonetheless, the property retains a high degree of historic character and a sense of the past and strongly conveys its historic use as a rural tavern/bar.

Inventory

In the following table, all resources are categorized as either contributing or noncontributing to the significance of the property. The *ID#* corresponds to a label on the accompanying map of the property (*Map 1*). The *Construction Date* gives an estimated or actual construction date based on analyses of building features and historical research.

ID #	Resource Name	Construction Date(s)	Contributing Status	Photo(s)
1	Tavern	ca.1900, ca.1935, ca.1945, 2006	C - building	1-31
2	Bathroom Shed	ca. 1935, ca. 1950	C - building	32
3	Water Pump Shed	ca. 1935	C - structure	33
4	Well/Cistern	ca. 1900, ca. 1935	C - structure	34-35
5	Open-Air Stage	ca. 1935, ca. 2006	NC - structure	36
6	Outdoor Sculpture	ca. 2005	NC - object	35

Timeline of Construction and Alterations to Riley's Tavern and Package Store.

Date	Construction/Alteration
Ca. 1900	Original building constructed
Ca. 1935	Shed roof additions to sides of original building
Ca. 1945	Middle addition constructed, building re-clad in asbestos siding, bar extended
2006	Rear addition constructed, small patio added to north side of building

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas

Statement of Significance

Riley's Tavern in the unincorporated community of Hunter near New Braunfels, Comal County, Texas, has served as a popular local gathering place since 1936. Originally constructed c.1900, the building housed a saloon, and later a residence, before Riley's Tavern and package store was established, although little physical evidence of the building's original appearance is visible on the exterior. J.C. Riley strategically established his business approximately half a mile from Hays County, a completely dry county where sale of alcoholic beverages was prohibited. The building is significant as a rural small-town tavern that supplied beverages and respite to both a local and nearby underserved population, and is typical of such establishments that sprang up at the edge of dry jurisdictions across Texas. The building retains a special quality and sense of the past that underscores its significance as a noteworthy gathering place within the rural community. Its near-continuous operation since 1936 makes it one of the state's oldest taverns, and its rustic interior and patina allows patrons the opportunity to experience a type kind of drinking establishment that once prevailed throughout many parts of Texas. The tavern's significance and reputation have grown over time and it remains a popular bar and, in recent years, has also become a venue for live music. Riley's Tavern is nominated under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation at the local level, with a period of significance beginning with the founding of the business in 1936 and continuing to the 50-year point of 1968.

Historical Background of Hunter, Texas

Andrew Jackson Hunter, for whom the community is named, first settled the area in 1867 when he purchased a thousand acres of land to grow cotton in the fertile Blackland Prairie Belt in eastern Comal County.⁷ Cotton cultivation subsequently became the foundation of the local economy for the next six decades. Hunter's land was in a strategic location because it was along a stagecoach line that ran from New Braunfels to San Marcos, which was the first of several transportation routes to pass through the area over time. The International-Great Northern Railroad, for example, laid tracks through the area in 1880, and in the following year, a townsite was subsequently established on 32-1/10 acres from the Samuel Craft League (see Figure 1). The community was named Hunter. Hunter's daughter, Loulie, married Edward Mandell House, the son of a prominent Houston businessman, landowner, and politician. "Colonel" House, as he was known, later gained considerable national and international fame as a close confidant and influential advisor to President Woodrow Wilson and was directly involved with negotiations to draft implementations of the Treaty of Versailles and establishing the League of Nations. In 1883, Gustavus A. Schleyer opened a general store, post office, and saloon in Hunter.⁸ That same year, other residents opened a cotton gin and grocery store.⁹ Hunter continued to grow, albeit at a modest pace. Much of the growth stemmed from an influx of many Mexican immigrants, who presumably came to work in the nearby fields.¹⁰ By 1890, the community's population climbed to approximately 200, up from only about 60 the previous decade.¹¹ New inhabitants brought new businesses to the area, and the 1890s saw the opening of an additional

⁷ Later known as Hunter Plantation.

⁸ Oscar Haas, *History of New Braunfels and Comal County, Texas 1844-1946* (Austin: Hart Graphics, 1968), 132.

⁹ The Hunter Gin Cotton Company (HGCC) was partially organized by the daughter of Andrew Jackson Hunter, Louise, and her husband, Edward M. House who later became a prominent and very influential political operative in the Democratic Party.

¹⁰ The impetus for the influx of Mexican immigrants to the Hunter area at that time is not known; however, several sources, including the *Handbook of Texas Online*, note this trend, as do the personal memoirs of Pablo L. Sanchez, who was raised in Hunter in the 1920s and 1930s.

¹¹ Al Lowman, "Hunter, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed February 8, 2017, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hnh50>.

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saloon (presumably called Galloway Tavern, now Riley's Tavern),¹² a barbershop, a blacksmith shop, a wagonmaking shop, a meat market, a gristmill, and a school.¹³ The Missouri, Kansas, and Texas (MKT) railroad constructed a line through Hunter in 1901; however, it did little to boost the local economy or generate any increase in the size of the population, which reportedly remained around 200.¹⁴

In the early 1910s, Hunter's location proved strategic as the state's road network evolved dramatically during the early automobile era. One of the earliest federally funded highway improvement projects in the state was the Post Road, which linked San Antonio and Austin; its path extended through Hunter.¹⁵ The project, which improved the delivery of mail through the U.S. Post Office, generated considerable attention.¹⁶ To celebrate the groundbreaking of the highway's construction, a group of prominent governmental officials, including Texas Governor O. B. Colquitt, state legislators, and county judges, among others, gathered in Hunter on October 20, 1914, to mark the beginning of construction activities. Organizers of the event chose Hunter because it was near the mid-point between San Antonio and Austin. The *New Braunfels Herald* noted that "the site of this [celebration] will remain a pleasant remembrance to all present; and it makes a historical event for the town of Hunter."¹⁷

As the cotton-growing industry in Central Texas began a slow and steady decline throughout much of the early twentieth century, Hunter's agricultural-based economy reeled from its effects, and many businesses ceased operations. By 1940, the population had dropped to 75, and in 1947, both railroad depots were abandoned and demolished. In 1949, the one-room schoolhouse also closed, and students joined the nearby New Braunfels Independent School District. Another blow to Hunter was the closing of the post office in 1953. Although the old Austin-San Antonio Post Road extended through Hunter, the re-routing of its successor—State Highway No. 2/US Highway (US) 81—in the mid-to-late 1930s bypassed Hunter and removed the rural community from the main highway between Austin and San Antonio. The construction of Interstate Highway (IH) 35 in 1957 along the existing US 81 alignment only further reinforced Hunter's isolation and distance from one of the state's primary highways. By 1993, Hunter's population was reportedly at 50, although several businesses—including Riley's Tavern, a general store, Saint John's Catholic Church, and a flea market—were still in operation. Today, the local economy relies heavily on two mining operations: Colorado Materials Crushed Limestone Quarry and the Martin Marietta Cement Plant. Both are located on the west side of FM 1102 and FM 2439. Trucks hauling materials from both quarries regularly pass through Hunter and Riley's Tavern on their way to IH 35.

Galloway Saloon/Sanchez Residence: Forerunner of Riley's Tavern

The building that houses Riley's Tavern was originally a saloon, but was later converted into a family residence, according to local history.¹⁸ Deed research indicates that the property that includes the building (lot 1, block 4, Hunter) changed hands multiple times during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many area residents believe that the original building dates to about 1895, but no primary source materials confirm that claim. Census and deed records instead suggest that the building may have been built in the spring of 1900. In April of that year, James P. Strole purchased the property and the 1900 census lists his occupation as carpenter, as of June 1, 1900.

¹² *It is likely that the "additional saloon" was Galloway's Tavern. Marriage records show that Charles (William) Galloway lived in Caldwell, Texas, at the time of his marriage in 1883. By 1900 he had relocated to Comal County and was operating a "retail liquor" establishment.*

¹³ Lowman; The building that houses Riley's Tavern is located within the former commercial hub of Hunter, on Second Street (now FM 1102). Several vacant historic-age buildings, including the former Blacksmith Shop, are extant but in disrepair.

¹⁴ *Lowman.*

¹⁵ "Historic Road Infrastructure of Texas, 1866-1965," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Bruce Jensen, E-20.

¹⁶ It is interesting to note that the Postmaster General of the time was Albert S. Burleson, originally hailed from San Marcos. He got the job largely through the efforts of Col. Edward M. House, who was an advisor to President Woodrow Wilson.

¹⁷ "Good Roads Celebration Proves Success," *New Braunfels Herald*, October 23, 1914.

¹⁸ Riley's Tavern Historical Marker.

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The next entry in the census lists Charles Galloway, who is identified as a retail liquor dealer.¹⁹ Strole sold the property in 1905 to H. C. Salge, who was later the subject of a lawsuit involving the San Antonio Brewing Association, again, strongly suggesting the property's use as a saloon. A state district court ruling in San Marcos ruled in favor of the San Antonio Brewing Association, and Salge lost control of the property. The property was sold in 1909 at a public auction to Emil Weder, who is listed in the 1910 census returns as a farmer. In the next 15 years, the property was sold four more times. On January 1, 1925, J. M. and Mollie Cochran sold the property to Bernardino Sanchez for \$1,000, along with the right to draw water from a well on the land for home use as long as the Cochrans lived in Hunter.²⁰

Much of what we know about the history of the building and Hunter during the 1920s and 1930s comes from the notes and observations of Bernardino Sanchez's son, Pablo.²¹ He stated that his father purchased the property in 1925 (confirmed through deed research) and moved his family into the building that has since become Riley's Tavern. Although the saloon had already ceased operations by that time following enactment of the Eighteenth (Prohibition) Amendment, Pablo recalled seeing racks in the attic that his father said had been used to hold beer barrels. Pablo also remembered that "Hunter was very lively in those days for it sat between the International and Great Northern Railroad, which was called the 'Linegene' by many, and the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad, also referred to as the 'El Katy.'" The town of Hunter, Pablo reported, was affectionately called, "La Mota." He also recalled that a Mr. Simon, also known as "El Simon," owned the general store at the corner of present-day FM 1102 and Antonia Street, about one block southeast of Riley's Tavern. From this building, Simon is reported to have offered all the ingredients necessary to make beer. Pablo recalls that many local residents would gather in front of the general store, relaxing while drinking homemade beer. Mr. Simon, who was also in charge of local law enforcement, would warn the men that beer was illegal and anyone caught in the process of making it was to be arrested; however, he was also known to join the men in "relaxing" in front of the store.

Bernardino Sanchez and his family lived in the former saloon until they moved to New Braunfels in 1930; however, his father-in-law remained there until 1932. Pablo stated that his father (Bernardino) later agreed to lease the property to William E. Riley (father of J. C. Riley) on March 31, 1936, for an annual fee of \$48 to be paid in monthly installments of \$4. Presumably, J. C. established the tavern at that time. He later purchased the property on November 3, 1942, for \$700.²²

Historical Factors Leading to the Establishment of Riley's Tavern

The establishment of Riley's Tavern is closely tied to the repeal of the Eighteenth (Prohibition) Amendment and the resumption of the sale of beer and alcoholic beverages in Comal County. Although efforts to ban alcohol began much earlier, the U.S. Prohibition movement attained widespread popularity and support during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and into the early 1900s. The 1876 Texas Constitution, for example, included a provision that gave counties and local political subdivisions (justice of the peace precincts, cities, or towns) the option to prohibit the sale of "intoxicating liquor" within their respective jurisdiction.²³ Voters in Jasper County in East Texas were the first in the state to ban alcohol sales later that year.²⁴ Prohibition advocates gained political clout over time and attempted to amend the state constitution to prohibit statewide liquor sales. Referendums failed in 1887 and again in 1911 by a narrow margin. However, the movement continued to gain strength both in Texas and

¹⁹ Twelfth Census of the United States, Comal County, Justice Precinct No. 5, Page 18b.

²⁰ Comal County Deed Records, Vol 45, p. 207-208; Vol 49, p. 404; Vol 50, p. 127-128; Vol. 50, p. 437-438.

²¹ Pablo L. Sanchez, "Hunter Texas in the 20s and 30s," *Texas Escapes*, 2005, February 8, 2017, <http://www.texasescapes.com/TexasHillCountryTowns/HunterTexas/Hunter-Texas-in-the-20s-and-30s.htm>.

²² Comal County Deed Records Vol. 66, pp. 130-191; Vol. 76, p. 348.

²³ The Constitution of the State of Texas: An Annotated and Comparative Analysis by George D. Braden, editor, <https://www.sll.texas.gov/assets/pdf/braden/the-constitution-of-the-state-of-texas-an-annotated-and-comparative-analysis.pdf>.

²⁴ "Amendments to the Texas Constitution," Texas Legislative Council, April 13, 2017, <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/CN/htm/CN.16.htm#16.20>.

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the rest of the nation during the 1910s. Prohibition forces embarked on an effective and powerful grass roots campaign to ban alcohol over a broader territory at local and state levels. Their lobbying efforts also extended to the federal government. On December 18, 1917, the House of Representatives followed the Senate's lead and overwhelmingly supported a joint resolution to amend the U.S. Constitution to ban the "manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors."²⁵ Passage of the resolution set in motion a series of votes among the states within a brief period of time to get the necessary two-thirds majority to ratify the amendment. On March 5, 1918, Texas became the eighth state to ratify the Eighteenth Amendment. By that year, 201 out of the state's 254 counties completely outlawed the sale of alcohol. Of the remaining counties, 43 included both "wet" and "dry" areas and only 10—including Comal County—remained completely "wet."²⁶ When Nebraska became the 36th state to ratify the amendment on January 16, 1918, the country began a grand social experiment banning alcohol. Slightly more than a year later, on January 20, 1919, the Prohibition Era officially began, and saloons, bars, and taverns across the entire county, including those in Comal County, could no longer sell alcohol.

Despite the well-meaning intentions of its advocates, Prohibition introduced a new level of crime and corruption that ultimately undermined its support. By the late 1920s and early 1930s, politicians and the public at large began debating the unprecedented act of repealing a Constitutional amendment. During the 1932 election season, Franklin Roosevelt and other political candidates openly supported repeal efforts. They bolstered their argument by noting the revenue-generating potential of taxes on liquor to help balance the federal budget and offset the strain on federal coffers triggered by the economic hardships of the Great Depression.²⁷

With a landslide victory, Roosevelt and Democrats quickly moved toward repeal; however, the process was undertaken in two steps. The passage of any amendment was an arduous and time-consuming process that required the approval of two-thirds of the states. While initiating the Twenty-First Amendment to repeal prohibition, Congress took more immediate action and passed the Cullen-Harrison Act allowing the sale of beer and wine with 3.2 percent alcohol. On March 22, 1933, just 18 days after assuming office, President Roosevelt signed the bill that removed federal restrictions on the sale of 3.2 percent beer.²⁸ The bill returned the power to regulate the sale of 3.2 percent beer to the states and paved the way for Riley's Tavern to open in Hunter. A month earlier, the U.S. Congress initiated the process of repealing the Eighteenth Amendment altogether.

The state of Texas followed the same two-step process of repealing Prohibition that occurred at the federal level. The state legislature proposed an amendment to the State Constitution, subject to a statewide vote, legalizing the sale of 3.2 percent beer on a county-by-county basis. On August 26, 1933, Texas voters approved the amendment, and the tally in Comal County was particularly one-sided. As reported by the *New Braunfels Herald*, 2,310 Comal County voters supported repeal, while only 38 opposed.²⁹ Since Comal County was "wet" before Prohibition, the County automatically retained the authority to allow the sale of beer, as stated in the amendment. County Judge B. W. Klingeman held hearings on license applications just two weeks later, and as the *New Braunfels Herald* noted, Mrs. Annettie Mueller received "License No. 1 for the Prinz Solms Café." The article listed the names of other applicants, most of whom were proprietors of businesses in New Braunfels. However, the article also identified licenses for retail beer sales in Smithson Valley, Waco Springs, Sattler, and Hancock.³⁰

²⁵ "18th Amendment of the Constitution" Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/hec.14201/>.

²⁶ "Prohibition Elections in Texas," *Texas Almanac*, <http://texasalmanac.com/topics/elections/prohibition-elections-texas> and Ernest Hurst Cherrington, compiler, *Anti-Saloon League Year Book, 1917*, page 228, Internet Archive, Accessed April 13, 2017, https://archive.org/details/antisaloonleague00anti_8.

²⁷ "Beer Bill Signed by F.D.R.," *The Austin Statesman*, March 22, 1933.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ "Comal County Votes Heavily on Amendments," *New Braunfels Herald*, September 1, 1933.

³⁰ "New Braunfels Ready for Beer with Plenty on Hand to Start," *New Braunfels Herald*, September 15, 1933.

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While Comal County retained the ability to issue licenses allowing beer sales, the vast majority of Texas counties lacked such authority and had to undertake additional steps. The newly passed state amendment stipulated that counties that were dry by the time Prohibition became law needed to hold a new election to legalize local beer sales and distribution. Among the counties that fell within this category was Hays County, and its voters rejected the option. In fact, the county remained completely dry for another 36 years.³¹ The vote in Hays County also set the stage for the establishment of several alcohol-related businesses that operated within Comal County near the Hays County line. Prominent among them was Riley's Tavern in Hunter.

As the sale of 3.2 percent beer became legal in 1933, the process of repealing the Eighteenth Amendment continued to move forward. On August 26, 1933, Texas became the 23rd state to vote for repeal following a statewide referendum.³² Nonetheless, another 13 states needed to approve the Twenty-First amendment before Prohibition could be overturned. On December 5, 1935, Utah became the thirty-sixth state to support the amendment, which officially ended the Prohibition era.³³

As passage seemed inevitable, Texas legislators anticipated the need to create and implement a structure to regulate alcohol sales. The state legislature and Governor called for another vote to amend the state constitution on August 24, 1935 to allow the sale of "spirituous liquors" on a local option basis and, if approved, to require that the sale of such products "be made only in unbroken packages."³⁴ As reported in the *New Braunfels Herald*, "Texas voted overwhelming for the repeal of the state constitutional prohibition law," and the tally in Comal County was 2,107 votes for repeal and only 90 opposed. In the ensuing months, the State created the Texas State Liquor Control Board to issue permits for the "package stores" for the sale of distilled liquor. To open such a store, the proprietor had to obtain a state-issued permit from the Liquor Control Board. The state issued temporary permits for the first 90 days, but required applicants to obtain "permanent" licenses after publishing a legal notice in a local newspaper for two consecutive publishing dates. The reasoning for such action gave the public the opportunity to object to the permit and inform the control board about the character of the applicant.³⁵

Notices in the *New Braunfels Herald* for "retail package house" permits from the Texas Liquor Control Board began appearing as early as November 22, 1935. Most of the applications were for businesses in New Braunfels, although the notices extended to other parts of the county. On January 31, 1936, the newspaper included three for Hunter alone. One of the applicants was John C. Waldo, who planned to operate "John's Place." The other applicants included George Dean and H. C. Ludwig.³⁶ Based on interviews with Riley, Waldo's package store occupied a room within Riley's Tavern.

Hunter's emergence as a place for liquor retail establishments stemmed from its strategic location along a county line that served as a boundary between wet and dry jurisdictions. As noted earlier, the community lay along the main road between Austin and San Antonio, just west of the Comal/Hays county line. This route was later improved as the Post Road and soon thereafter became State Highway No. 2, following the establishment of the Texas Highway Department in 1917. During Prohibition and the repeal process, SH 2 (the forerunner of present-day IH 35) remained one of Texas's earliest and most important highways and continued to pass directly through Hunter. Its path followed FM 1102 and what is now known as FM 2439. Because of its strategic location on what

³¹ "Wet-Dry Status of Texas Counties as of August 31, 1970," Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission History of Elections, accessed April 13, 2017,

http://www.tabc.state.tx.us/local_option_elections/wet_dry_history/TABC%20Annual%20Report%20FY%201970.pdf.

³² "Texas Becomes 23rd State to Vote for Repeal," *New Braunfels Herald*, September 1, 1933.

³³ "Eighteenth Amendment is Abolished," *Galveston Daily News*, December 6, 1935.

³⁴ Proposing Amendment to Constitution Relating to Sale of Intoxicating Liquors by State Dispensary System," Legislative Reference Library of Texas, http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/scanned/sessionLaws/44-0/SJR_3-a.pdf.

³⁵ The New Liquor Law and the Present Status," *The Austin Statesman*, November 16, 1935.

³⁶ "Legal Notice," *New Braunfels Herald*, January 31, 1936.

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was then a busy highway near the Hays County line, Hunter became one of the closest and most convenient places for residents of San Marcos and other parts of southern Hays County to purchase alcohol in “wet” Comal County. Thus, by the mid-1930s, Hunter, like many other towns across the state that bordered wet and dry jurisdictions, attracted multiple business establishments that served and sold alcohol following the repeal of Prohibition. Riley's Tavern remains in operation and is an early example of a time when county lines created a clear delineation between wet and dry territories, and therefore remains an important physical, commercial, and social landmark.

Riley's Tavern: A Significant Landmark in Hunter and Surrounding Areas

The exact date of the tavern's founding cannot be confirmed, although local history and oral traditions contend that its original owner, J. C. Riley, started the business in 1933 when he obtained the first beer license issued in the state of Texas. However, no documented evidence can confirm that claim. As noted earlier, state law enacted following the legalization of the sale of 3.2 percent beer gave counties—not the state—the power to issue beer licenses. This authorization complied with the local option provision of the state constitutional amendment of 1933 allowing beer sales. Nonetheless, the most popular tradition holds that 17-year-old J. C. Riley and his uncle drove in a Model-T to Austin one morning in September 1933 to obtain a beer license. The story asserts that the pair arrived early, waited on the Capitol steps for the doors to open, obtained the first beer license in Texas.

Research undertaken for this document suggests, however, that Riley established his tavern in 1936, not in 1933 as is commonly believed. In multiple newspaper articles, Riley said that he originally worked for John C. Waldo, who operated a package store in Hunter called “John's Place.” Waldo established the package store in early 1936, based on legal notices that appeared in the *New Braunfels Herald* on January 31 and February 7 of that year. The notice informed the public of Waldo's application for a permit from the Texas Liquor Control Board and his intent to operate a “retail package house” in Hunter. In a 1988 article in the *New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung*, Riley said that Waldo's package store operated across the street from present-day Riley's Tavern.³⁷ He also stated that while working for Waldo, he traveled to San Antonio to obtain cases of whiskey for the business.³⁸ Riley later opened his own business and, with the help of his father, arranged with Bernardino Sanchez to lease the building in March 1936 that had previously been used as a saloon. The tavern's success enabled Riley to purchase the property on November 3, 1942. Riley likely remodeled and enlarged the building a few years after this purchase, probably after the end of WWII, although the date of the changes has not been confirmed. He eventually obtained his own permit from the Texas Liquor Control Board and operated a package store in the building's northwest corner. The package store had its own entrance and was separate from and independent of the tavern, in compliance with state law.

The establishment and operation of Riley's Tavern, as well as other businesses involved with the sale of beer and alcohol reflected a trend common throughout many parts of Texas following the end of Prohibition and continues to the present day. Riley's Tavern operated near the boundary line that separated a “wet” Comal County that allowed liquor sales from Hays County that remained “dry.” Hunter thus became one of the closest and most convenient places for residents of San Marcos and the rest of Hays County to drink or buy alcohol. Riley's Tavern and John's Place were among several such businesses established on major roads in Hunter, near the county line. Another contemporaneous local bar was the Country Tavern, which was established in 1933 at present-day IH 35 and FM 1102. An article in the *New Braunfels Herald* noted that Emil Preusser planned to serve free barbeque to celebrate its opening on “New” Highway No. 2 (present-day IH 35) on Sunday, August 16, 1936.³⁹ The old building that once housed the Country Tavern survives, but it has been altered and is completely unrecognizable to its original construction. Other alcohol-related businesses in Hunter from the 1930s were operated by George Dean and H. C. Ludwig.⁴⁰ The only business from the period to survive is Riley's Tavern.

³⁷ Tim Waits, “Riley's Place in History,” *New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung*, July 17, 1988.

³⁸ “Legal Notice,” *New Braunfels Herald*, January 31, 1936.

³⁹ “Legal Notice,” *New Braunfels Herald*, August 14, 1936.

⁴⁰ “Legal Notice,” *New Braunfels Herald*, January 31, 1936.

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Besides running his tavern, Riley also sold food, which provided an additional source of revenue. In an interview, Riley reminisced that, "I made hamburgers and chili and stuff like that. We had two railroads here, two depots, and a post office. Children going to low school here, they would come by to get hamburgers, stuff like that. We had two General Merchandise stores, whatever you wanted they had, and two cotton gins."⁴¹ The package store remained in operation until 1971, when Texas laws changed to allow the sale of alcohol in a bar. After it closed, the store became an office for the tavern.⁴²

During the 1930s and 1940s, the tavern offered many Texas beers, including Pearl, Shiner, Bullfrog, Travis, Blue Ribbon, Southern Select, Monte Carlo, Magnolia, Sabinas, and Grand Prize, for only 10 cents each, or 3 for 25 cents. Premium beers, including Budweiser and Travis (a Texas premium beer), cost 15 cents. The beer was kept cold from 300 pounds of ice that was replaced eight times a day, until electricity reached Hunter in the 1940s when Riley installed the coolers that remain in place behind the bar.⁴³

During World War II, Riley received a beer ration of 400 cases per week, which he always sold (although he saved a few for his regular customers and soldiers). Until the start of the war, the bar was always open and the building never locked; however, the end of the war brought a curfew, and for the first time, Riley's closed overnight. According to Riley, "We never did close, never did have to lock up in those days. No curfew – that tickled me to death, curfew. World War II came in and then they put a curfew on these places, they had to close. That tickled me, I got some sleep that way."⁴⁴

Riley's Tavern continued operation enabled it to evolve into an important social center for all residents in the Hunter area. In one newspaper interview, Riley stated that "I had all races here and all male. It was a long time before any females came in, long time. After a while, it wasn't long till the women folk came down to get their husbands some beer for dinner time and in the evening and found these places weren't as bad as they thought."⁴⁵ By June 1954, Riley's Tavern was selected to be a polling place for local and county elections.⁴⁶ The selection of the business for such a public function signified the tavern's status as an important focal point in northeastern Hays County. It remained a polling place into the 1960s.

Riley operated the tavern until his passing on October 28, 1992.⁴⁷ Upon Riley's death, his widow, Elizabeth, sold the property on June 1, 1995, to Rick and Donna Wilson, who re-opened the business under the same name. The deed also includes an extensive list of items including the antique cash register and other items and memorabilia that were conveyed to the Wilsons.⁴⁸ In May 1996, Comal County Judge Carter Casteel denied the tavern's liquor license renewal, after nearby residents filed multiple complaints about loud music, parking issues, and large crowds. Once the decision was rendered, the Wilsons closed the tavern and surrendered their liquor license to the Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission (TABC). Nonetheless, they sought to regain their license through the court system and about a month later, District Judge Charles Ramsey ruled in their favor. They reopened the business in October of that year.⁴⁹ In 2000, in an interview with the *San Marcos Daily Record*, Donna Wilson states that "the coolers are still there chilling the goods. Nothing keeps the beer colder. Antique beer cans and bottles still

⁴¹ "Riley's Place: A Last Chance Saloon That's Lasted," *Austin Chronicle*, September 16, 1983.

⁴² On the current free-standing Riley's Tavern sign, the imprint of the sign for the Package Store remains visible (see Figure 6).

⁴³ "Riley's Place: A Last Chance Saloon That's Lasted," *Austin Chronicle*, September 16, 1983.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ "Legal Notice: Order and Notice of Election," *New Braunfels Herald*, July 22, 1958

⁴⁷ "James Curtis Riley Sr.," *New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung*, October 20, 1992.

⁴⁸ Comal County Deed Records, Document No. 467323.

⁴⁹ Christina Minor, "Taste of Days Gone by: First Texas Tavern Licensed after Prohibition Still Serving Comal," *New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung*, December 9, 1999.

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line the walls among countless photos of patrons and various mementos collected over the decades. The old cash register is still there and Riley's hat still hangs behind the bar right next to Rick Wilson's."⁵⁰

Long-time Hays County resident Joel Hofmann purchased Riley's Tavern in 2004, making him the third owner of the tavern since its opening in 1933. He reports that many of his clientele are third-generation customers. The only change Hofmann has made is the addition of live music every night. Several original signs, as well as countless old photos and autographs fill up the walls. One framed sign, handwritten by Riley's father at an unknown date, states:

DON'T SHOOT OUT OF THESE TWO WINDOWS, DANGER FAMILIES LIVE OUT-THAIR.
THANK'S—CATTLE ALSO HORSES – J.C. RILEY. DON'T FIRE OUT OF HERE.⁵¹

In recent years, Riley's Tavern has gained considerable attention as a popular bar and music venue in rural Comal County, and has been the subject of numerous articles in local and regional newspapers.⁵² The building's interior presents a homey and rustic quality that gives patrons a strong sense of the past and allows them to experience a rare surviving example of a truly authentic Texas bar from the 1930s. It retains much of its historic character and remains an important local landmark. As noted by Sami Devillier and Karen Boyd of the Comal County Historical Commission, "stepping into the tavern is truly like stepping back into time."⁵³

⁵⁰ "Lost in Time: A Look Back at a Real Turn-of-the-Century Saloon," *San Marcos Daily Record*, January 2, 2000.

⁵¹ This sign was supposedly written by Riley's father, who ran the stage-coach depot "just up the road" from the tavern.

⁵² Leigh Tedford, "Neighbors," *San Marcos Record*, January 2, 2000.

⁵³ Sami Devillier and Karen Boyd, Personal Narrative, November 2002.

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MAPS



Aerial photograph showing Riley's Tavern.
Source: Google Maps. Accessed Aug. 30, 2017.

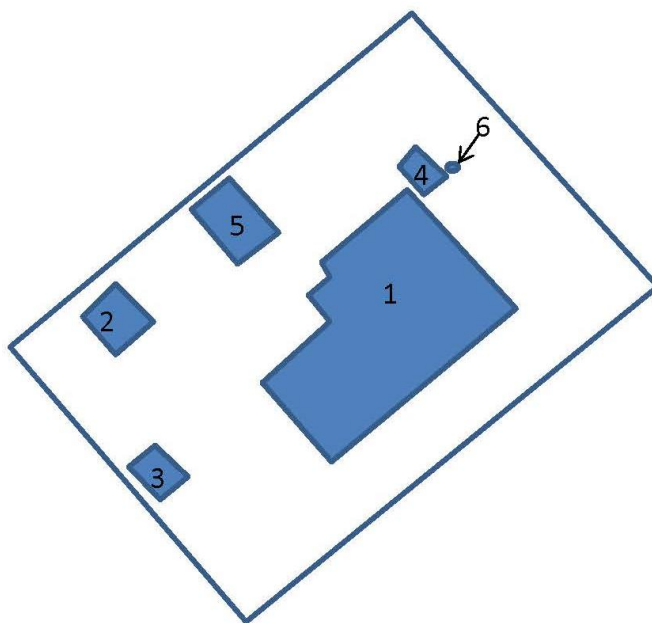
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Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



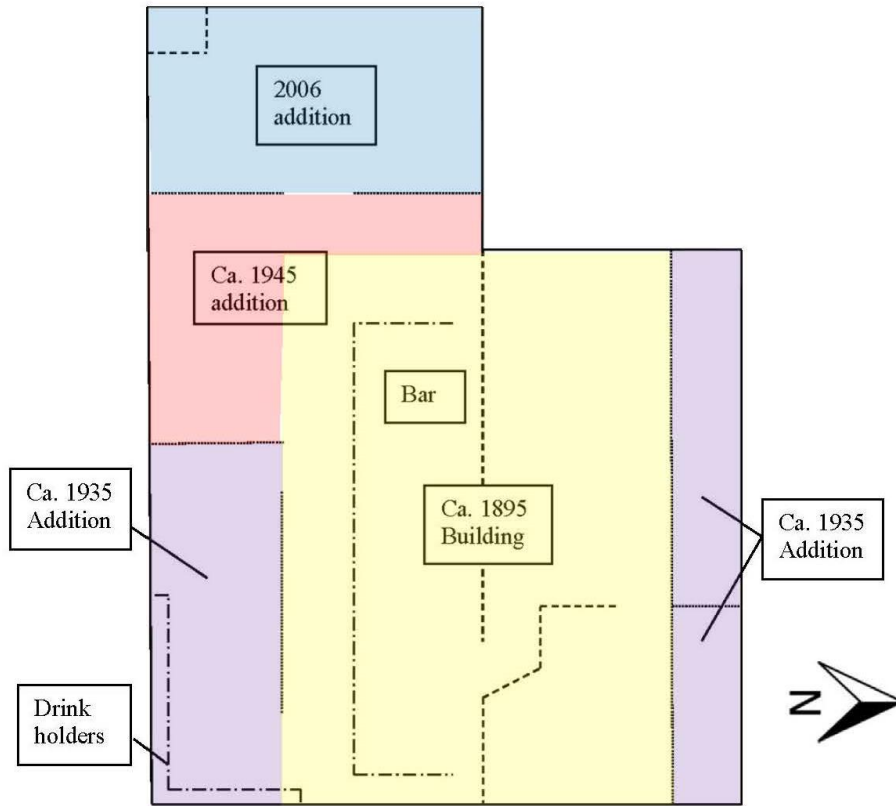
The boundary of Riley's Tavern, including contributing (yellow) and noncontributing (white) resources. Resource numbers correspond to *Table 7-1, Inventory of Resources at Riley's Tavern*. The site boundary follows the boundary definition from the Comal County Central Appraisal District, "Lot 1, Block 4, Hunter, Texas." (See *Map 5* for the aerial photograph without labels.) Source: HHM, 2017; aerial image from Google Earth.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Sketch map showing the parcel boundary of Riley's Tavern, along with the footprint of each building and structure.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



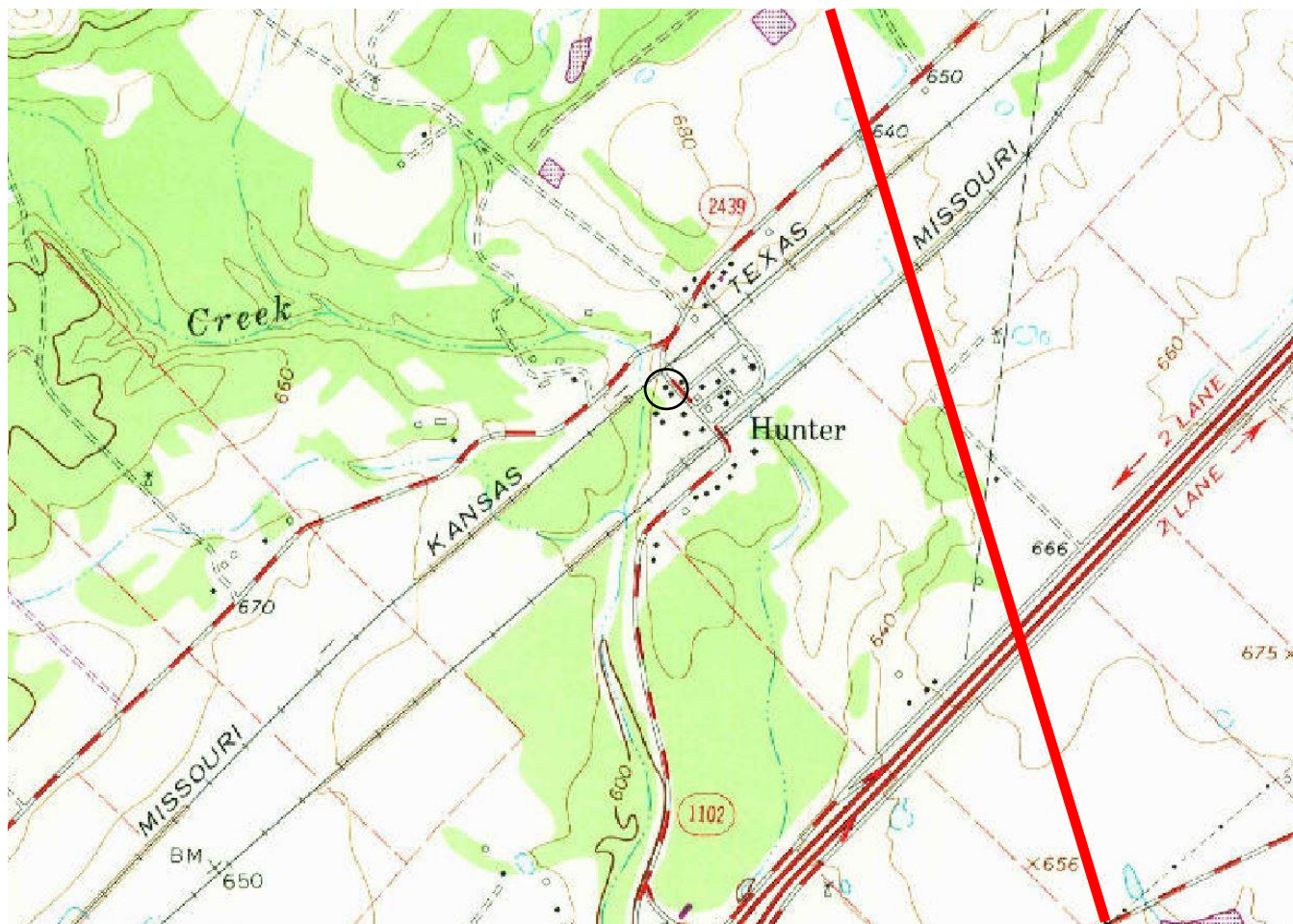
Floor plan of Riley's Tavern, with dates of additions. The room at the northeast corner was historically used as a Package Store, but currently houses the tavern's office. Several additions were constructed between ca. 1935 and ca. 1945 and a further addition was constructed in 2006. Riley's Tavern continues to retain sufficient integrity to convey its significance, despite the non-historic addition. See Statement of Significance for further explanation and sources of additions and alterations. Source: HHM, 2017.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



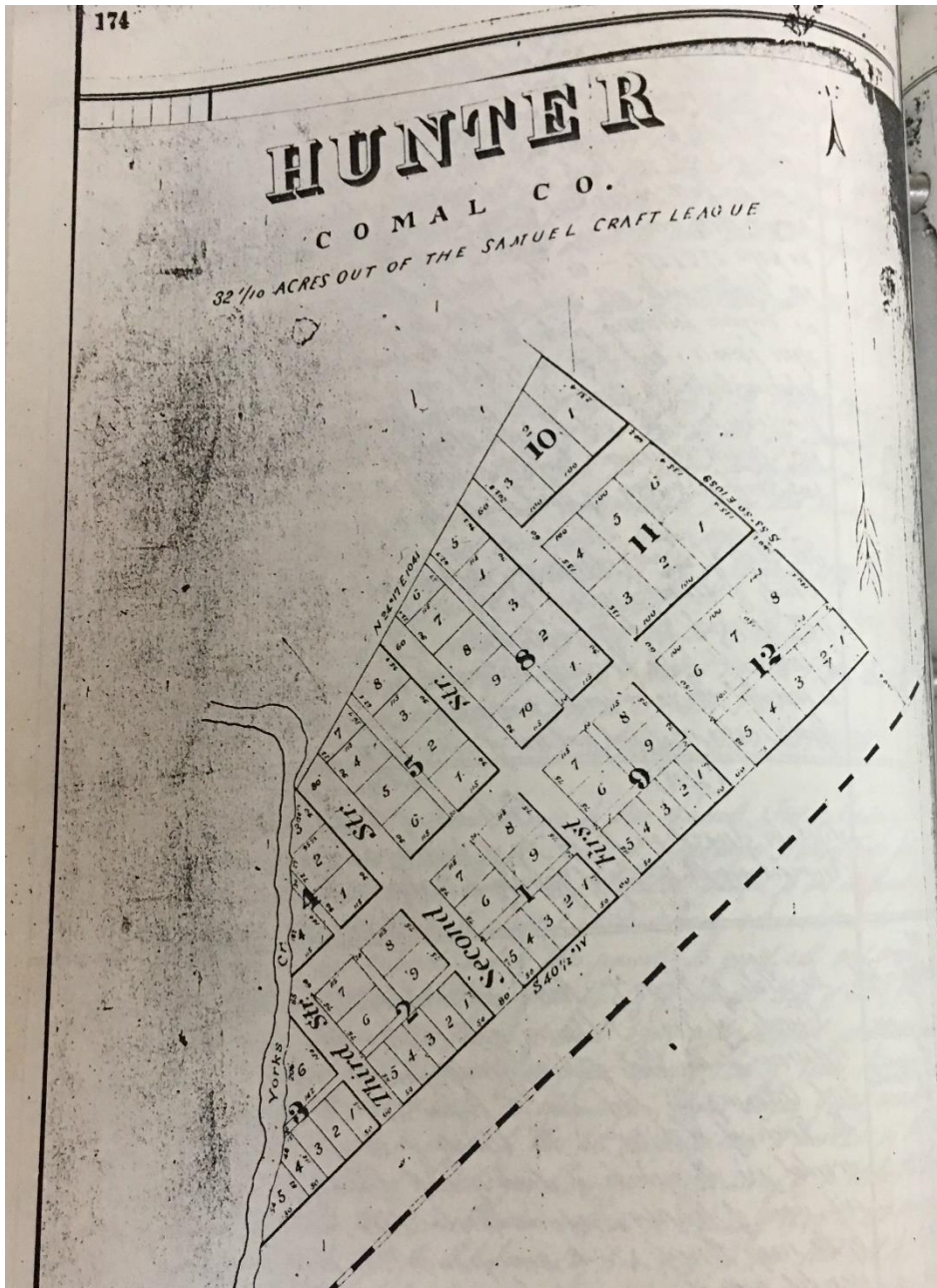
Excerpt from a 1940 General Highway Map showing a close-up of the town of Hunter. The arrow points to the location of Riley's Tavern. Source: Texas State Highway Department, *General Highway Map, Comal County, Texas* (Austin: 1940), available online at <http://www.glo.texas.gov/history/archives/map-store/index.cfm?Customer=11400011-14156#item/79055>, accessed February 13, 2017, edited by HHM, 2017.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



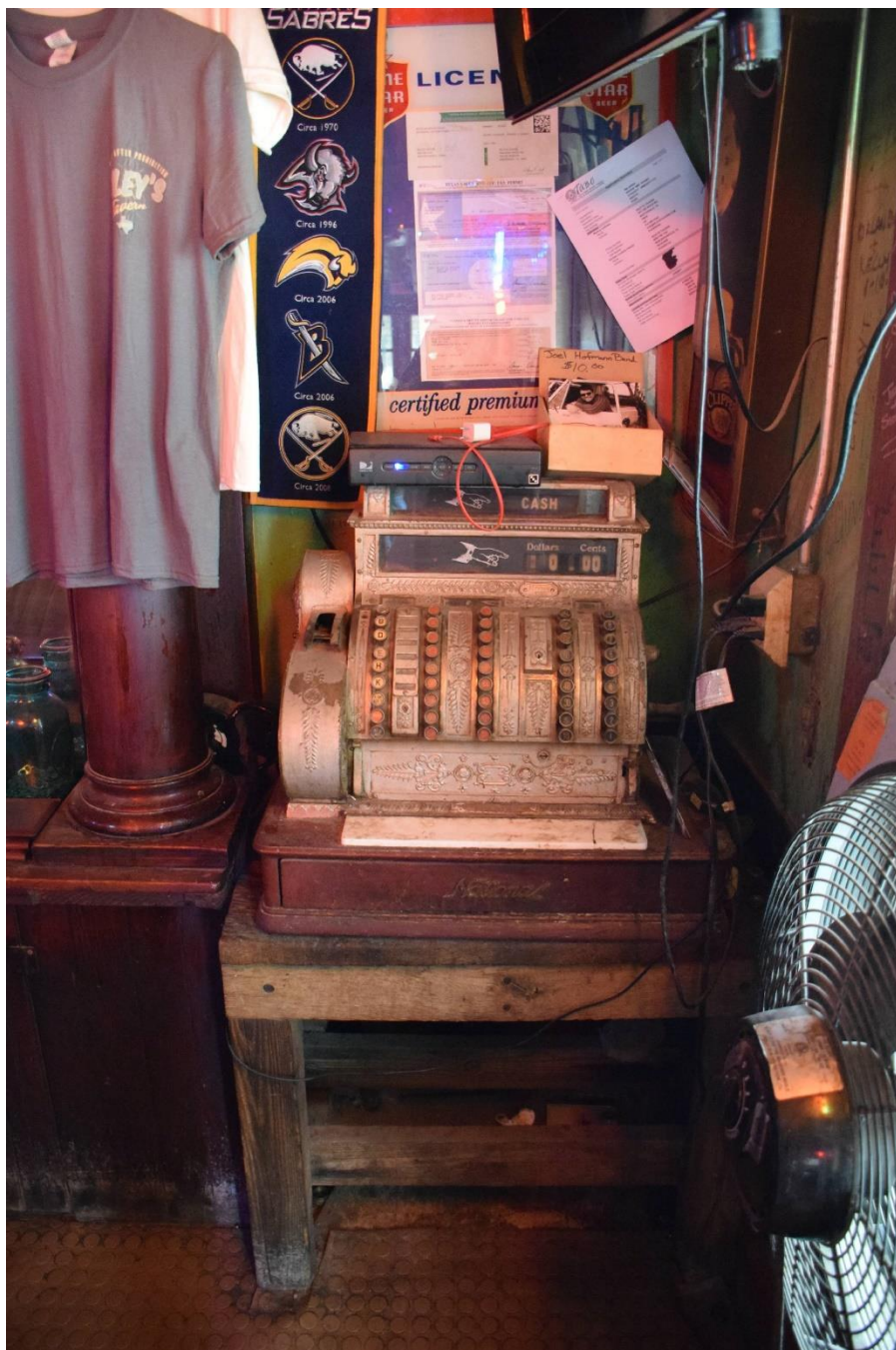
1964 USGS map of Hunter Quadrangle; black circle denotes location of Riley's Tavern and red line delineates the county line (Comal to the left and Hays to the right). Source: USGS.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Plat map of Hunter, Texas.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Original ca. 1900 cash register and current permits and licenses.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo of J. C. Riley, taken at an unknown date. Photo located in Riley's Tavern.



Framed sign handwritten by Riley's father at an unknown date. Currently located in Riley's Tavern.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



The imprint of "Package Store" remains visible under the Riley's Place sign.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas

Photographs



Photo 1. Façade view of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southwest.



Photo 2. Oblique view of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing west. January 2017.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 3. Oblique view of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing west.



Photo 4. Façade view of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing northwest.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 5. Oblique view of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing south.



Photo 6. Façade view of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southeast.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 7. Façade view of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing east



Photo 8. Façade detail of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southwest.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas

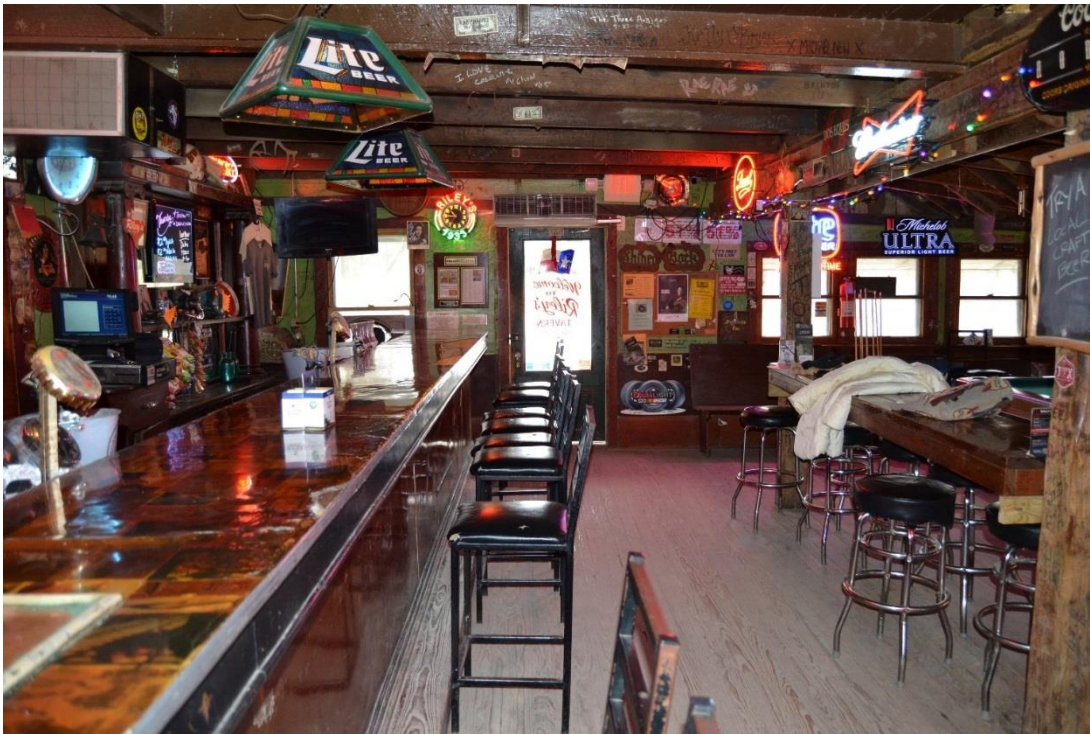


Photo 9. Interior view of ca. 1900 saloon of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing northeast



Photo 10. Interior view of ca. 1935 side addition of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing east.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas

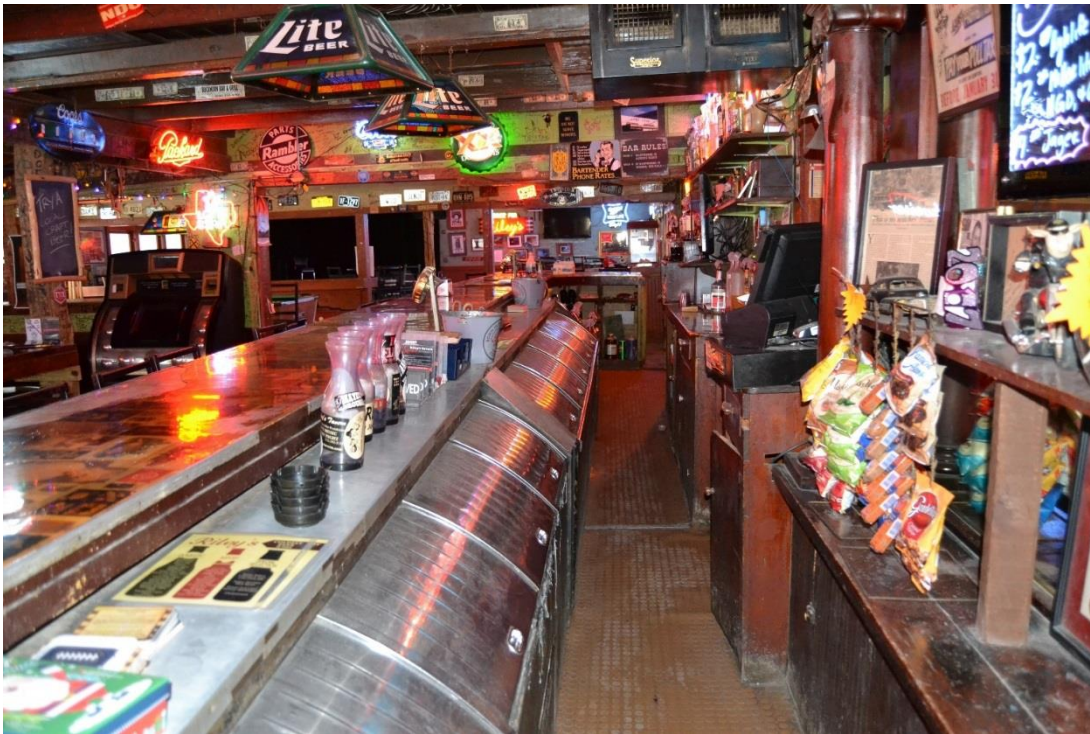


Photo 11. View of interior of bar in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southwest.



Photo 12. View of built-in drink holders in ca. 1935 addition of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing east.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 13. Interior view of ca.1945 addition of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southeast.

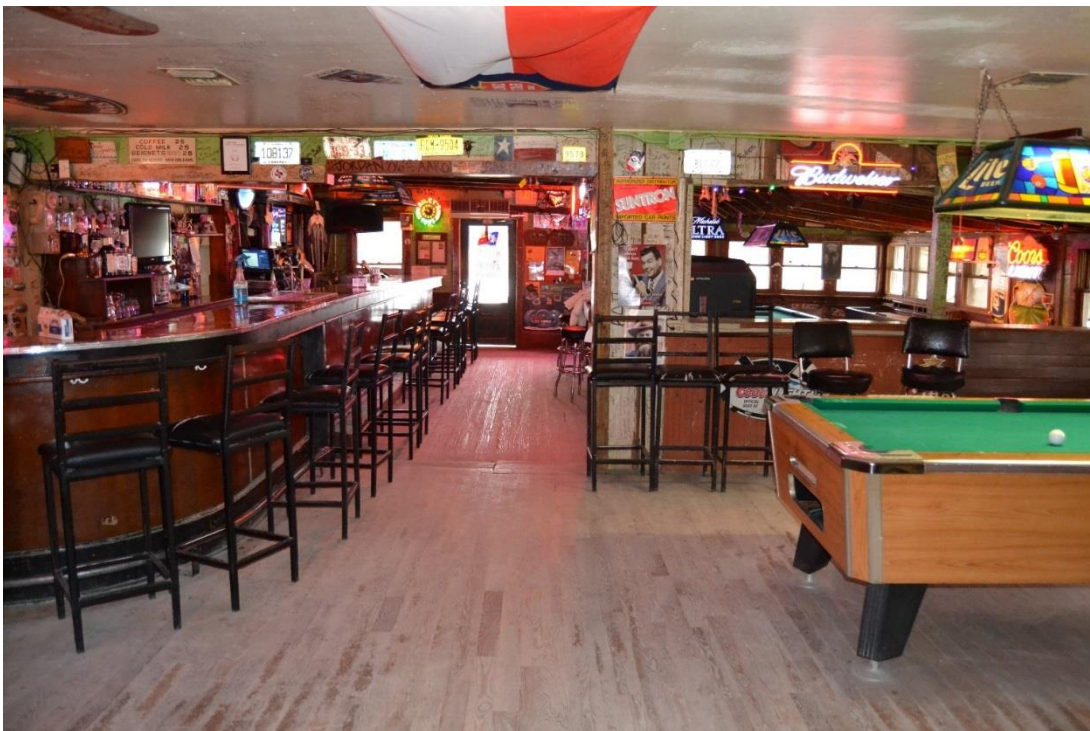


Photo 14. Interior view of ca. 1945 addition towards ca. 1900 saloon of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing northeast.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas

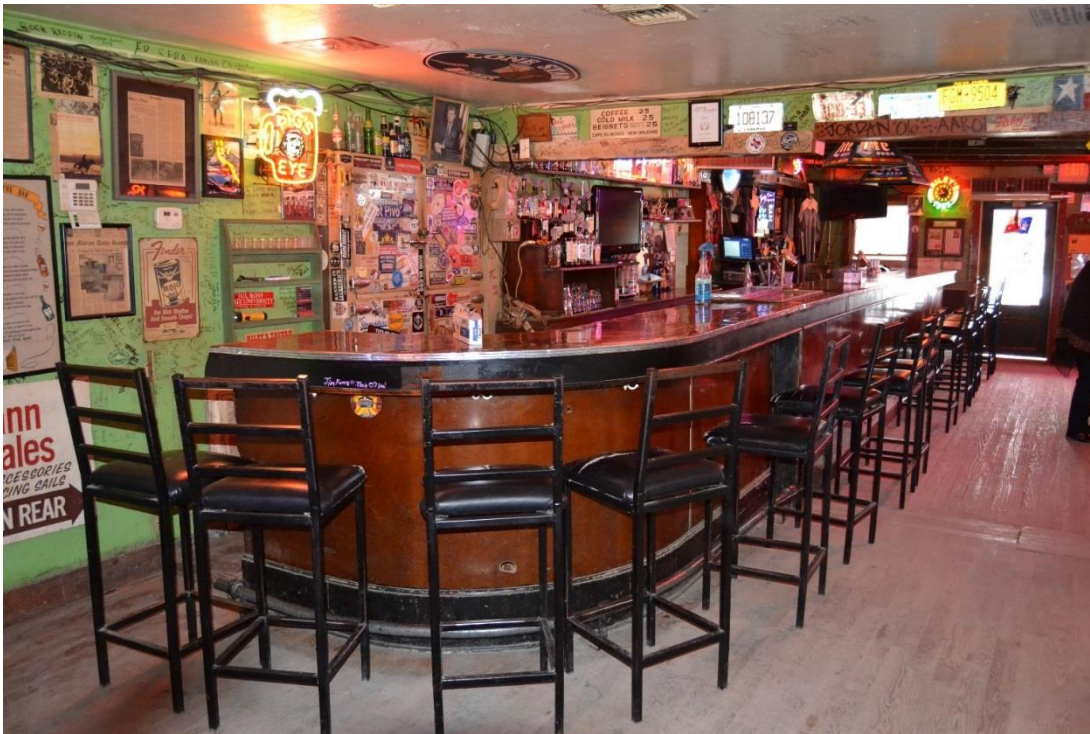


Photo 15. View of bar in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing northeast.

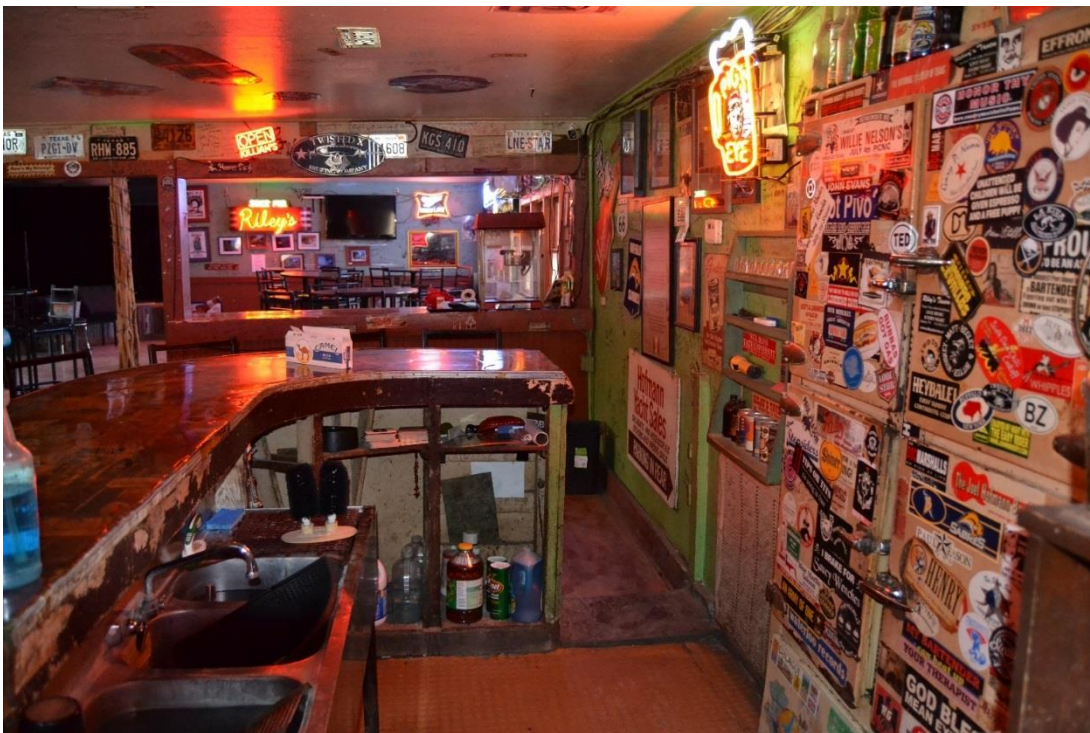


Photo 16. View of interior of bar and ca. 1940 coolers in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southwest.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 17. Interior view of 2006 addition of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing east.



Photo 18. Interior view of 2006 addition of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southwest.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 19. Interior view of 2006 addition of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing south.



Photo 20. Interior view of rear room of package store of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing southwest.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 21. Interior view of ca. 1935 side addition to rear room of package store in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing north.



Photo 22. Interior view of package store of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing west.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 23. Interior view of package store of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing east.



Photo 24. Interior view of hall separating saloon from package store in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), view facing north.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 25. Detail of original roof truss system of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), located in ca. 1935 addition of saloon.



Photo 26. Detail of original siding of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1), located between original building and ca. 1945 addition.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 27. Detail of bar back in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1).

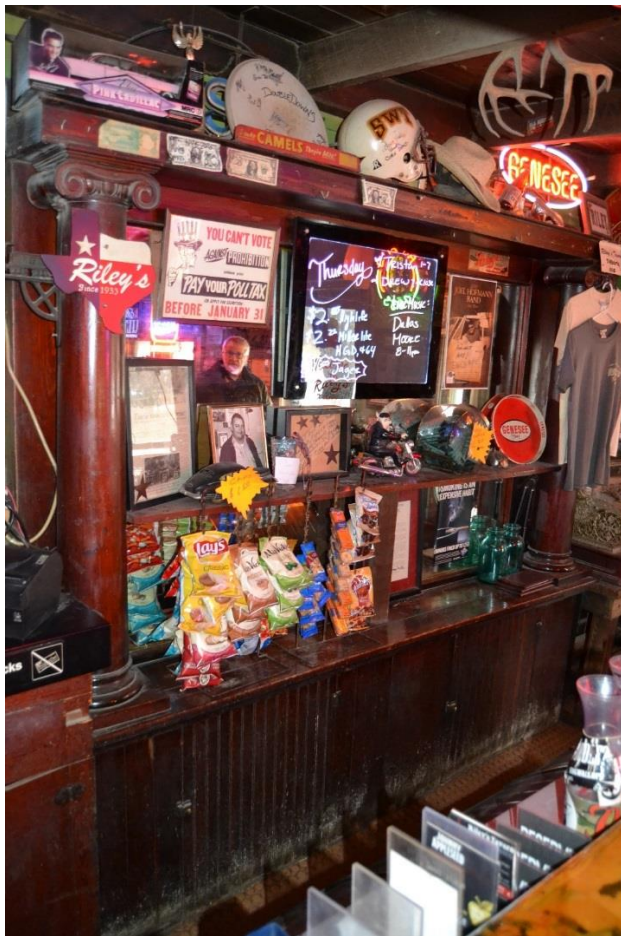


Photo 28. Detail of bar back in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1).

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 29. Detail of capital column of bar back in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1).

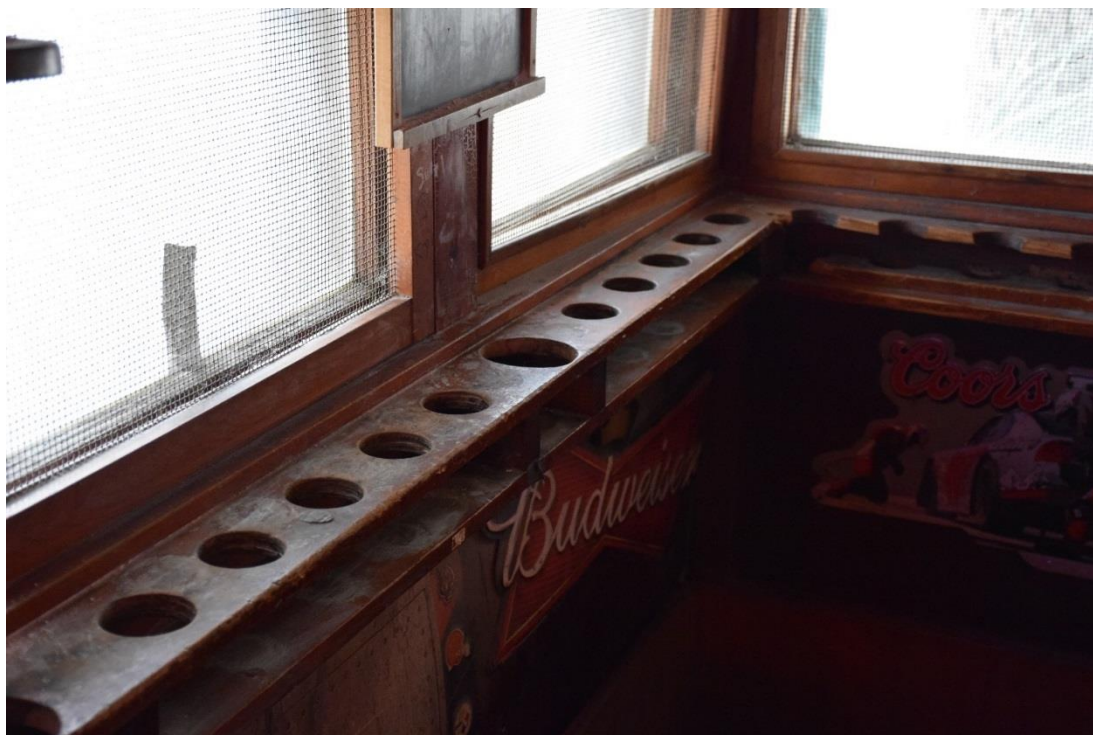


Photo 30. Detail of built-in drink holders in Riley's Tavern (Resource #1).

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 31. Detail of liquor display shelving in package store of Riley's Tavern (Resource #1).



Photo 32. Oblique view of bathroom shed (Resource #2), view facing southwest.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 33. Oblique view of water pump shed (Resource #3), view facing south.



Photo 34. View of well and attached cistern (Resource #4).

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 35. View of cistern and outdoor sculpture (Resource #4 and #7), view facing south.



Photo 36. View of open-air stage, formerly Riley's carport (Resource #5), view facing north.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 37. Contextual view of Riley's Tavern property, view facing northeast.



Photo 38. Contextual view of Riley's Tavern property, view facing southwest.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 39. Contextual view of Riley's Tavern property, view facing southwest.



Photo 40. Contextual view of Hunter, Texas, from Riley's Tavern, view facing southeast.

Riley's Tavern, New Braunfels vicinity, Comal County, Texas



Photo 41. Contextual view of Hunter, Texas, from Riley's Tavern, view facing northwest.

- end -