

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

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Anhalt Hall
Other name/site number: NA
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 2390 Anhalt Road
City or town: Spring Branch State: Texas County: Comal
Not for publication: [] Vicinity: []

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
[n] 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 [x] C [] D

Signature of certifying official / Title: Mark Wolfe, State Historic Preservation Officer
Date: 6/1/18
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

Anhalt Hall, Spring Branch, 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	3	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
4	3	total

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: SOCIAL: meeting hall

Current Functions: SOCIAL: meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification: OTHER: Mid-to-Late-Nineteenth Century and Early Twentieth Century Vernacular

Principal Exterior Materials: Wood, Stone, Metal: Tin

Narrative Description (see pages 8 through 12)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations: NA

Areas of Significance: Social History, Ethnic Heritage/German, Architecture

Period of Significance: 1879 – 1953

Significant Dates: 1879, 1887, 1891, 1908, 1924, 1951, 1953

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 pages 13 through 19)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see page 20)

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

This project was funded in part through a Certified Local Government Grant from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, as administered by the Texas Historical Commission.

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: 25.895421 acres

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 29.814232° Longitude: -98.480281°
2. Latitude: 29.814452° Longitude: -98.478830°
3. Latitude: 29.813232° Longitude: -98.478041°
4. Latitude: 29.811958° Longitude: -98.476850°
5. Latitude: 29.811446° Longitude: -98.476643°
6. Latitude: 29.811011° Longitude: -98.478819°
7. Latitude: 29.812755° Longitude: -98.480288°

Verbal Boundary Description: The southern and eastern boundaries for parcel 77137 act as the southern and eastern boundaries for the property. The northern boundary of parcel 77137 and the northern boundary for parcel 77263 create the property's northern boundary. The western boundary of parcel 77263 and the southwestern corner boundary of parcel 77137 serve as the property's western boundary. Parcel 77132 is completely encompassed within the boundaries.

Boundary Justification: The boundaries for Anhalt Hall were drawn following the current property boundaries for all land owned by the Germania Farmer Verein. The boundaries encompass the following three parcels: 77132, 77137, and 77263 and incorporate the built resources associated with Anhalt Hall and the Germania Farmer Verein. All the land included in the boundaries retains its historic feeling and association and contributes to the setting of Anhalt Hall.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Kristina Kupferschmid/Architectural Historian
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Date: December 1, 2017

Additional Documentation

- Maps** (see Additional Documentation - pages 21 through 25)
- Additional items** (see Additional Documentation - pages 26 through 34)
- Photographs** (see Additional Documentation - pages 5-7, 35 through 68)

Anhalt Hall, Spring Branch, Comal County, Texas

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Anhalt Hall
City or Vicinity: Spring Branch, Comal County
State: Texas
Number of Photographs: 34
Photographer: Kristina Kupferschmid
Dates photographed: January 30, 2014 and June 14, 2017

Photo No. 1 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0001.tif)
View of historic farmstead east of Anhalt Hall, view facing northeast.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 2 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0002.tif)
Contextual view of drive coming in from southeast and running along west side of Anhalt Hall, view facing northeast.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 3 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0003.tif)
Oblique view of Anhalt Hall, view facing northeast.
Date: January 30, 2014

Photo No. 4 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0004.tif)
Detailed view of pressed metal sheets on main south façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing north.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 5 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0005.tif)
View of main south façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing north.
Date: January 30, 2014

Photo No. 6 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0006.tif)
View of western half of main south façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing north.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 7 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0007.tif)
View eastern half of main south façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing north.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 8 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0008.tif)
Oblique view of side east façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing northwest.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 9 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0009.tif)
Detailed view side east façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing west.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 10 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0010.tif)
View of 1951 rear addition on side east façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing northwest.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 11 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0011.tif)
Oblique view of side west façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing southeast.
Date: June 14, 2017

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Photo No. 12 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0012.tif)
View of eastern half of rear façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing south.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 13 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0013.tif)
View of seating area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing south.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 14 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0014.tif)
View inside dance hall at Anhalt Hall, view facing north.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 15 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0015.tif)
View of exposed framing and sheathing on side east interior wall of Anhalt Hall, view facing east.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 16 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0016.tif)
View of painted stage inside Anhalt Hall, view facing south.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 17 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0017.tif)
Detailed view of printed name on wood on north interior wall at Anhalt Hall, view facing north.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 18 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0018.tif)
View of original exterior wall, now separating seating area from kitchen inside Anhalt Hall, view facing north.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 19 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0019.tif)
View of posts between seating area and dance floor inside Anhalt Hall, view facing east.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 20 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0020.tif)
View of north wall separating dance hall and bar area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing north.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 21 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0021.tif)
Detailed view of roof trusses in seating area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing south.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 22 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0022.tif)
Detailed view of "From H. L. Degener" printed on wood in seating area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing south.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 23 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0023.tif)
Detailed view of "From ED Steves & Sons" printed on wood in seating area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing north.
Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 24 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0024.tif)
View of arched trusses in dance hall inside Anhalt Hall, view facing southwest.
Date: January 30, 2014

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Photo No. 25 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0025.tif)

View of arched trusses in dance hall inside Anhalt Hall, view facing north.

Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 26 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0026.tif)

View of sign hanging from ceiling, with other sign in background, in Anhalt Hall, view facing north.

Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 27 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0027.tif)

View of bar area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing northeast.

Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 28 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0028.tif)

View of cistern in bar area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing southwest.

Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 29 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0029.tif)

View of kitchen and dining area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing north.

Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 30 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0030.tif)

View of outhouse (Resource d), view facing southwest.

Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 31 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0031.tif)

View of bar stand (Resource e), view facing northeast.

Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 32 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0032.tif)

View of well house (Resource f) and cistern (Resource c), view facing west.

Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 33 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0033.tif)

View of kitchen building (Resource b), view facing southeast.

Date: June 14, 2017

Photo No. 34 (TX_ComalCounty_AnhaltHall_0034.tif)

View of historic cast iron pots inside kitchen (Resource b), view facing northwest.

Date: January 30, 2014

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.

Anhalt Hall, Spring Branch, Comal County, Texas

SECTION 7: Narrative Description

Located in rural western Comal County, Anhalt Hall is a large wood-frame building constructed in phases from 1879 to 1953. The pressed-metal-clad building has multiple front-gabled roofs and entrances. The interior generally consists of three large open rooms: a dance hall and seating area, a kitchen and dining room, and a bar area. Featured in the dance hall are the building's hallmark exposed arched wood ceiling trusses. This vernacular building lacks stylistic influences, but its large open floor plan and simple construction are characteristic of Central Texas German-built dance halls. Despite a few alterations outside of the period of significance, the hall retains excellent integrity of feeling, workmanship, design, materials, location, and association. In addition to the dance hall, the property also includes several auxiliary structures and buildings including: a cistern (contributing), outhouse (contributing), bar stand (contributing), kitchen (noncontributing), well house (noncontributing), and ticket booth (noncontributing). Located approximately 1.3 miles off State Highway (SH) 46, Anhalt Hall is surrounded by historically agricultural and rural land that remains undeveloped and thus retains integrity of setting.

Location and Setting

Anhalt Hall derives its name from the area in which it is located: Anhalt. A small rural community approximately 28 miles northwest of New Braunfels in western Comal County and 23 miles east of Boerne in Kendall County, Anhalt has a dispersed population and, without defined legal boundaries, is loosely defined by the geographic features it contains: Indian Creek, the area surrounding the Guadalupe River and Cibolo Creek divide, and Devil's and Schaefer's Hills. Anhalt's geography and land are characteristic of the Texas Hill Country: rocky and shallow soil, gently sloping hills, and native grasslands interspersed with wooded areas of oak, cedar, cypress, and elm trees. The majority of men and women who settled in the area in the mid-to-late nineteenth century made their living through agricultural endeavors, a tradition that carried on into the twentieth century and remains evident in much of the area's landscape. More recently, in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries, some of the area, particularly along SH 46 and United States Highway (US) 281, has experienced subdivision of and development on land historically used for agricultural purposes.

Anhalt Hall's setting, about a mile from SH 46, has remained largely unaltered. Situated north of the highway, at the end of Anhalt Road, a sign at the intersection of the two roads directs people off SH 46 to Anhalt Hall, and also serves as an announcement for upcoming events at the hall. A gated drive off Anhalt Road leads visitors up a slight incline to the dance hall. Consisting of three separate parcels all owned by the Germania Farmer Verein, the group that built the hall in the nineteenth century, the property is largely open, though much of the surrounding land to the north, west, and south is filled with dense trees. The open fields in front of and to the west of the hall were and continue to be used for parking. A historic farmstead occupies the property just east of Anhalt Hall (photo 1). The hall and auxiliary buildings are clustered together in the northeast corner of the property (map 5). An asphalt-paved drive comes in from the southeast and runs to the west side of the hall (photo 2). A ticket booth, built sometime around 2000, is situated southwest of the grouping, approximately 70 feet away. The outhouse, built in 1889, is west of the hall, and the kitchen building, cistern, and well house are all just north of the hall. The bar stand, built in 1951, is just east of the hall under a row of trees along the property's eastern boundary.

Anhalt Hall (Resource a, photos 3-29)

Built in phases beginning in 1879, Anhalt Hall, as it stands today, is a large rectangular, pressed-metal-clad building roughly consisting of three large interior rooms. Originally constructed in three stages between 1879 and 1891 to serve as a meeting hall, the building grew from a one-room, open-floor-plan building to include a dance hall (1908), stage (1924), bar area (1951), and a kitchen and dining room (1953) (fig.1). From both the exterior and interior of the building, these rooms and areas are easily distinguishable because of their different building

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materials and construction techniques, contrasting roof and ceiling heights, and distinct interior spaces created by former exterior walls. A conglomerate of three separate rooms, each with a corrugated-metal clad front-gabled roof of varying one-story heights, Anhalt Hall occupies an approximate 86 feet by 150 feet rectangle (photo 3). Sitting atop a stone foundation, Anhalt Hall has a wood frame, made with lumber from local companies. Pressed-tin cladding cover the wood frame and wood sheathing. The metal sheets are pressed in a way that mimics rough-cut stone (photo 4). This siding was added to the exterior sometime before 1912, when it appears in a photo, but is presumed to have been added in 1908 when the dance hall was built.

Physical Evolution

When built in 1879 by Franz Erben, a Verein member, Anhalt Hall stood 26 by 36 feet. A series of historic additions increased the size of the building, essentially enclosing the 1879 meeting hall to the north, east, and south. The first addition occurred in 1887 when the Verein constructed a 60-foot addition onto the building's south side. The original south façade was left in place and remains as an interior wall separating the kitchen and dining area from the dance hall's seating area. In 1891, the Verein added an additional 20 feet onto the south side of the building (fig. 2). The main façade from this addition remains as the western half of today's main south façade. In 1908, the shape of today's Anhalt Hall took form when the Verein added the large dance hall onto the nineteenth-century building. Constructed by New Braunfels contractor Christian Herry, the dance hall changed the linear shape of the original building to an uneven L-shape by adding a 60-foot by 80-foot rectangular addition onto the building's east side. The last major additions to the building came in the early 1950s and are not visible from the building's front. In 1951, a bar room, approximately 66 feet by 60 feet was constructed onto the north (rear) side of the dance hall, and in 1953, a kitchen, approximately 30 feet by 26 feet was added onto north (rear) side of the original 1879 building. During these additions, the original 1879 building's east wall was kept intact—serving as an interior wall separating the kitchen and dining room from the bar area—but the rear north wall of the 1879 building was removed, creating one large kitchen and dining area.

Exterior

Primary (South) Facade

Anhalt Hall's main elevation faces south and consists of the front façades of the 1891, 1908, and 1924 additions, each of which has a front-gabled roof (photo 5). The western side of the main elevation, built in 1891, stands noticeably shorter than the 1908 addition. In the middle of the 1891 side, a wood-frame, wood double door provides one entrance into the building (photo 6). A stone step flanked by rounded metal railings rises from the non-historic concrete pathway to the door. Two double-hung, six-over-six-light wood windows in wood frames are located to the east and west of the door. Wood shutters seen in historic photographs of Anhalt Hall have been removed (fig. 2). A third window, at the western corner of the front façade, has been mostly covered with pressed metal sheets, leaving only a small rectangular transom-like window.

The eastern half of the front façade is distinguished by the 1924 front-gabled rectangular stage addition that projects from the center of the wall (photo 7). On the main façade, single-wood doors, both with transoms, flank the stage addition. The door west of the stage has a concrete ramp with a rounded metal railing that provides access from the ground to the door. The door east of the stage has two concrete steps with a matching railing that rises up from the ground to the door. Next to each door is a window opening. Two wood panels cover both openings, with the top panel hinged so that it can be swung open. The rectangular stage addition has two side-by-side window openings on both its east and west sides, and two sets of the same side-by-side openings on its south side. All of these openings have wood frames and are covered by removable wood panels. None of these openings contain windows, but are simply openings with wood frames that allow air in since the building has no air conditioning. Historic photographs reveal that this is an original feature of the building (fig. 3). A semi-circle louvered vent is found in the gable of the stage addition. The vent is partially covered by a sign reading "1908 Anhalt, Texas." The front façade of the dancehall has two original circular vents and two square vents higher up

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in the gable that replaced a larger vent that presumably was enclosed when the stage was built in 1924. The stage's front-gabled roof has exposed rafter tails.

Side (East) Facade

A shed-roof porch addition characterizes the southern half of the side east façade (photo 8). Added in 1994, the wood-frame, corrugated metal clad shed-roof porch has wood post supports and extends approximately 18 feet from the building. The area under the porch has a concrete floor and picnic tables. The original façade on the east side remains intact, and the hall's stone foundation is visible along the base of the building. Three pairs of wood-frame window openings are evenly spaced along the southern 1891 half of the east elevation. Window-less openings on the east wall allow air circulation during the hot summer months but also have operable hinged wood panels that can be closed. The bottom half of the openings have wood-frame screens. To the south and north of the middle set of window openings, a pair of wood-frame paneled double doors, both with a three-light transom, provide access into the hall. The southern-most doors have two concrete steps with rounded railings and the northern-most doors have new wood steps with wood railings (photo 9). The northern half of the side east elevation consists of the 1951 bar addition (photo 10). The wood-frame addition is flush to the northern half of the building, though its corrugated metal-clad roof sits at a lower height than the dance hall. The wood-frame addition also has a shed-roof porch area. The walls are not clad in pressed metal sheets, leaving the wood boards exposed. Two pair of non-historic garage doors punctuate this half of the east elevation. Rafter tails are exposed along the entire roofline of the east elevation.

Side (West) Facade

Unlike the east elevation, the different stages of construction and additions are not evident on the side west elevation. The entire west elevation consists of concrete block walls and a continuous and consistent roof line from front to back (photo 11). Presumably when the kitchen addition was built in 1953, the original wood-frame southern half was replaced with load-bearing concrete blocks walls. The 1953 half of the west elevation has four aluminum four-by-four glass light casement windows and the older southern half of the west elevation has seven non-historic metal sliding windows. Two single wood doors provide access into the building on the southern half of the elevation, while a non-historic metal double door opens into the southern half of the building. A small concrete block addition was built onto the northern corner of the west façade around 1990.

Rear (North) Facade

The eastern half of the rear north elevation is clad in corrugated metal and has a small corrugated metal clad front-gabled addition projecting from its center (photo 12). West of the addition, an overhead garage pierces the façade. A paved driveway leads up to this garage door. The western half of the north elevation is constructed of concrete blocks and has a roofline shorter than the eastern side. A non-historic metal double door opens from the middle of the western façade. In the western corner of the rear elevation is an aluminum three-by-two casement window.

Interior

Dance hall and Seating area

The southern half of Anhalt Hall serves as the dance hall and seating area. The seating area (photo 13) occupies the 1887 and 1891 portion of the building and is open to the 1908 dance hall (photo 14); together, they create a large open room. This interior space retains its original wood floors and its exposed structural framing systems. The vertical wood stud framing system, with studs placed approximately 16 inches apart, in the dance hall, stage, and the south wall of the seating area are exposed, as is the diagonally placed wood board sheathing (photo 15). All the wood is unfinished except for the stage where it has been painted white (photo 16). Some of the wood board sheathing has the lumber company name printed on it (photo 17), but it is partially hidden beneath studs or cut off, and therefore illegible. The original exterior wall of the first building (1879) now serves as the interior north wall of the seating area; this wall is board and batten (photo 18). All of the original wood framing and materials of the west wall have been replaced with concrete block. In between the dance hall and seating area are

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eight freestanding wood columns and the original chamfered posts of the 1887 building (photo 19). Eight matching chamfered posts run along the west side of the seating area. All the chamfered posts have carved wood brackets. The seating area is slightly higher than the dance floor and wood posts that span the length between the wood columns create a fence-like separation between the two. A set of stairs at both ends of the room provide access between the seating area and dance hall. Wood paneled double doors with a transom, identical to the doors described on the east elevation, open from the middle of the north wall into the bar area. A secondary opening on the north wall near the seating area also opens into the bar area. Above the door a historic hand painted sign reads, “NO SHORTS, PEDAL PUSHERS, T-SHIRTS, BLUE JEANS ALLOWED ON DANCE FLOOR. The Verein.” The window openings and louvered vents on the north wall mimic the exterior of the south elevation, as previously described (photo 20). Fans have been placed in the upper portion of the window openings. Screen double doors open in the middle of the north wall of the seating area. A secondary single screen door also opens to the kitchen area from the seating area just to the west of the double doors. Two openings above the double doors hold fans.

The seating area has an unusual variation of a Queen Post and Fink truss system, but lacks a center post (photo 21). All rafters and posts are exposed, as is the wood roof sheathing. Some of the roof joists and ties, as well as some of the sheathing have lumber company names handwritten or printed on them, including a joist with “From H. L. Degener,” printed on it (photo 22) and a joist with “From ED Steves & Sons” handwritten on it (photo 23). Both H. L. Degener Company and Edward Steves and Sons operated lumber companies out of San Antonio during the late nineteenth century. The dance hall has a series of exposed segmental-arched rib trusses spanning the large room. Above the trusses, the wood roof rafters and corrugated metal roofing are exposed (photos 24-25). Hanging from the ceiling, a historic hand painted sign reads, “NOTICE Indecent uncommonly dancing in this hall is strictly prohibited. The Verein.” (photo 26).

Other features of the room include wood benches that line the perimeter of the dance floor and benches and tables handmade by a Verein member in the seating area.

Bar Area

The 1951 bar addition is directly north of the dance hall. The area has concrete floors and a large island-like wood bar with wood floor in the middle of the open room (photo 27). The room’s south wall—originally the exterior rear elevation—is clad in the same pressed tin sheets as the exterior walls. The west wall—also originally an exterior elevation—is clad in vertical wood boards. The wood framing and exterior wood cladding are exposed on the north and east walls. A single door near the rear of the room opens into the kitchen area to the west via a set of concrete steps. Five, wood-frame, double-hung windows with six-over-six sashes line the west wall. The room’s wood roof framing and trusses are exposed, as is the corrugated metal roof materials. An old underground rain water cistern that was used before a well was drilled in 1951 remains in the bar area (photo 28).

Kitchen and Dining Room

The large room that serves as the kitchen and dining area is the only one in Anhalt Hall without exposed structural framing. The room is an open linear space and has concrete floors and wood-paneled walls (photo 29). The ceiling, much lower than the other rooms, is clad in wood panels. The former kitchen area occupies the rear of the room and long hand-built tables and benches line the room.

Integrity

The major additions to Anhalt Hall are significant in its history and do not detract from the building’s integrity. Minor additions—including the small rear addition to the bar area and the side shed porch addition and minor alterations, including the replacement of some windows on the building’s west side—have little impact to the building’s overall state of integrity and sense of the past. Character-defining features of Anhalt Hall—open interior rooms, pressed tin exterior, wood floors, and exposed framing and arched roof trusses—remain intact and

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in good condition. Over the years, the Verein has maintained the building, including repairing the roof in the mid-1990s, but these efforts have been historically sensitive and necessary for the upkeep of the building. Overall, the building retains excellent integrity of location, setting, feeling, association, workmanship, design, and materials.

Contributing Resources

In addition to Anhalt Hall, the property has three other contributing small-scale resources. These include the outhouse (resource d), bar stand (resource e), and a cistern (resource c). Built in 1889 beneath a tree, the outhouse is west of Anhalt Hall and now serves as an office. The outhouse is a small rectangular wood-frame building with a corrugated metal side-gabled roof (photo 30). The bar stand, built in 1951, is to the east of Anhalt Hall beneath a row of trees and is a linear corrugated metal-clad building (photo 31). The building’s partially open front has been screened-in. The side-gabled roof extends past from the building and is supported by split wood posts. Resource c is a cylindrical above-ground concrete cistern (photo 32). Built around 1951, it is to the rear northwest of Anhalt Hall. All three resources retain integrity.

Noncontributing Resources

Three resources are classified as noncontributing; the kitchen (resource b), well house (resource f), and ticket booth (g). All three resources were built outside of the period of significance. Both the well house (built around 1970) (photo 32) and ticket booth (built around 2000) are small buildings that have little impact to the overall integrity of the property. The kitchen, built in 2015, is a warehouse-like building, approximately 40 feet by 44 feet, clad in corrugated metal (photo 33). Built directly to the rear of Anhalt Hall, it has little visual impact on guests as they enter the property and approach Anhalt Hall. The historic cast-iron pots that were originally in the kitchen in Anhalt Hall were moved into the new kitchen (photo 34).

Inventory

Resource ID	Resource Type	Construction Date(s)	Contributing Status	Photo(s)
a	Building – Dance hall	1879 - 1953	Contributing	3 – 29
b	Building – Kitchen	ca. 2015	Noncontributing	33 – 34
c	Structure – Cistern	ca. 1951	Contributing	32
d	Building – Outhouse	1889	Contributing	30
e	Building – Bar stand	1951	Contributing	31
f	Building – Well house	ca. 1970	Noncontributing	32
g	Building – Ticket booth	ca. 2000	Noncontributing	NA

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SECTION 8: Statement of Significance

Anhalt Hall played a prominent role in much of the history of western Comal County and the surrounding counties of Kendall, Bexar, and Blanco. As the home of the Germania Farmer Verein since 1879, the hall represents this significant group who helped create, foster, and support a community in this rural section of the Texas Hill Country. Through agricultural education and guidance, a life insurance program, and entertainment, the Germania Farmer Verein touched many facets of life in the region and served as a source of support not only to farmers and ranchers, but the community at large. Originally a one-room meeting hall, the building, like the organization, grew over the years, hosting Verein festivals, dances, and countless celebrations. The building itself is also an excellent example of a Central Texas dance hall because it shares many of the physical features that are common to this building type, but also has distinct features that make it unique. For these reasons, Anhalt Hall is significant under Criterion A and C in the areas of Social History, Ethnic Heritage/German, and Architecture at the local level. The period of significance is 1879 to 1953 representing the height of Verein membership and activity in the community. While still active today, the organization's relevance waned after World War II as agriculture and rural populations declined. The period of significance also corresponds with the earliest date of construction and the last major addition onto the building.

CRITERION A – Social History and Ethnic Heritage

Settlement of Anhalt

Permanent settlement in the area of western Comal County now known as Anhalt began in the mid-1850s. Prior to this period, much of the western part of the county remained relatively unsettled, with state-owned land yet to be surveyed and claimed via land grants. As New Braunfels and the eastern portion of the county grew more populated in the decade after its founding in 1845, settlers saw opportunity in the western part of Comal County. The area had an abundance of water, including the Guadalupe River and its tributaries, and was strategically located between several commercial centers: New Braunfels to the east, Boerne in Kendall County to the west, and Fredericksburg in Gillespie County to the northwest. Among the earliest settlers to the area were the Krause and Wehe families. German immigrants Conrad and Julianne Krause lived in New Braunfels with their six children upon first arriving in Texas in 1851, resettling in western Comal County in 1856.¹ The Wehe family consisted of brothers Freidrich, Heinrich, and Carl. All immigrated to Texas from Germany in the early 1850s and settled in western Comal County in 1856.² The area, which was first known as the Krause Settlement, by 1860 consisted of the dispersed farming and ranching homesteads of Conrad Krause, Georg Krause (Conrad's son), Carl and Heinrich Wehe, and Friedrich Wehe.³ Neighbors included the Gotthard family, Haas family, and Hanz family, all listed as farmers and immigrants from Germany in the 1860 federal census.⁴ Around the same time in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, small communities of dispersed populations of farmers and ranchers formed across western Comal County. East of the Krause Settlement, German immigrant farmers and ranchers established the community known as Ufnau. In the late 1860s, several German families relocated from New Braunfels to just west of the Krause Settlement, forming Honey Creek. The Pieper Settlement (which became Bulverde), was founded approximately five miles south of the Krause Settlement in 1850. Other nearby rural communities included Spring Branch, Smithson Valley, Vogel's Valley, and Schiller (which became Bergheim).

The Krause Settlement's location midway between New Braunfels and Boerne on the New Braunfels-to-Boerne Road (today's SH 46) made it an ideal stopping place for travelers. Louis Krause, Conrad's son, operated a

¹ Texas General Land Office, Land Grant Database, File No.006215, Abstract No. 313.

² Texas General Land Office, Land Grant Database, File No.006223, Abstract No. 666.

³ 1860-1940 United States Federal Census [database online], Ancestry.com

⁴ Ibid.

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general store out of their house along the road sometime around 1856.⁵ The store had a livery stable and served as a place of respite. Heinrich Wehe also catered to travelers when he opened and operated a freighting station on his homestead across the road from the Krause store. In 1879, the first community post office opened. Located in Krause's store, Louis served as the first postmaster and held the position until 1907.⁶ When the post office opened, the community officially changed its name from the Krause Settlement to Anhalt. The name presumably stems from Anhalt Dessau, a duchy of the German Confederation where the Wehe brothers hailed. Anhalt also fittingly translates from German to English as "stop." Though it boasted a store and post office, Anhalt offered few services to its population in its earliest years, having no school, church, cotton gin, or saw mill as other small communities oftentimes did.

In the several decades after the first settlers arrived in the 1850s, Anhalt's slowly growing population remained a loosely organized community of predominately German immigrants. Scattered throughout the area, most of the families had settled on water sources and lived miles from one another. Because the land in and around Anhalt was not suited for large-scale farming, most families practiced subsistence farming and relied on ranching to make a living. Though the threat of Native Americans was lessened after an 1840s campaign to remove Apache, Comanche, and Lipan tribes, settlers still faced significant hardships, including drought, wild animals, diseases, and insect infestations that ruined crops.⁷ The biggest threat to their livelihoods, though, was probably rustlers. During this period, cattle and horses roamed freely on unfenced land—sometimes covering hundreds of miles—leaving ranchers susceptible to theft. After the Civil War, rustling was said to worsen as some returning soldiers had lost work or their farms and were unable to find a way to support themselves.⁸ Presumed to be outsiders, and not locals, rustlers would ride through the country rounding up cattle to sell to the larger cattle drives heading north. Convicting someone of cattle thievery during these years was nearly impossible because cattle were oftentimes considered communal within the community and also were unbranded. As a result, until 1875 there were no convictions for cattle thievery in Comal County.⁹

Organization of the Germania Farmer Verein

Throughout the mid-to-late nineteenth century, German immigrants across Texas banded together forming hundreds of clubs in rural areas. The United States Department of Agriculture reported that in 1880, there was a club for every three hundred German-American farmers, while only one for every five thousand American-born farmers.¹⁰ Typically agricultural in nature, there were also clubs devoted to shooting, singing, literature, bowling, mutual aid, and gymnastics.¹¹ A tradition brought over from Germany, the formation of clubs provided a means of upholding the German language and culture while also furnishing a much needed avenue of support. In Comal County, German clubs also formed in Fischer (Fischer Agricultural Society), New Braunfels (Schuetzen Verein), and Mission Valley (Schuetzen Verein). German agricultural societies also formed in nearby Blanco County (Twin Sisters Agricultural Association), Bexar County (Leon Springs Farmers' Club), and Kendall County (Blanco Farmer Verein).

As part of this trend, the men in and around Anhalt met at the Krause Store on October 4, 1875, and organized the Stock Raising Club to combat rustling and support one another agriculturally.¹² Thirty-five men—including Georg and Louis Krause and Heinrich Wehe from Anhalt; Michael Bechtold and Georg Kunz from Honey Creek;

⁵ Brenda Anderson-Lindeman, *Bridging Spring Branch and Western Comal County, TX* (San Antonio: Omni Publishers, Inc., 2014), 207.

⁶ Harvey Schaefer, "Germania Farmer Verein, Anhalt, Texas, 1875-2000," 20.

⁷ Martha Doty Freeman. "A History of Guadalupe River State Park and Honey Creek State Natural Area, Comal and Kendall Counties, Texas." For Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Austin, TX. October 1997, 16.

⁸ Harvey Gus Schaefer, interview by Iris Schumann, *Reflections*, 1420 KGNB, 2001.

⁹ Schaefer, 34.

¹⁰ Terry G. Jordan, *German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth-Century Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966) 106.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

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Friedrich Scheel from Ufnau; and Carl Koch from Bulverde—attended the charter meeting. At this first meeting, the men elected the club’s first officers: Carl Koch, president; Fredrich Hoffeinz, secretary; and C. H. Sueltenfuss, treasurer.¹³ At a second meeting two weeks later, the men established that meetings would be held the first Sunday of each month at the houses of different members. At this meeting, they also elected a vice president, a second secretary, and a second treasurer. By 1876, the organization, which had grown to 50 members, voted on and passed a resolution officially changing its name to the Germania Farmer Verein.¹⁴ Within its first two years, the organization adopted a constitution and bylaws establishing its goal—protecting livestock and providing members with farming and ranching education—and outlining its rules and regulations. Because the organization consisted primarily of German immigrants and the sons of German immigrants, meetings were held in German, and minutes were taken in German. The 1910 translated revised statutes are similar, yet organized slightly differently than an 1896 printed pamphlet of the “Statuten des Germania Farmer-Vereins.” The 20 statutes outlined the purpose and organization of the Verein—president, vice president, chairman, treasurer, and secretary—and set rules for: attendance, electing of officers, amending the constitution, meetings, use of association monies, membership and monthly dues, and acceptance into and expulsion from the association (fig. 4). Key requirements included that members be men and reside in Comal, Kendall, Bexar, or Blanco counties. Men must also be between the ages of 21 and 50, and be of “blameless character, in good mental and physical health.”¹⁵ In addition to rules regarding agriculture—men had to report on any unusual success in farming or ranching—another key purpose of the Verein outlined in the constitution was its support of bereaved families of its deceased members.

Instituted in 1878, the benevolent insurance program would pay the widow, or legal heirs, upon the death of the Verein member. When first joining the organization, members would receive a certificate indicating who should receive the payout from the Verein (fig. 5). The money, not to exceed \$500, came from each Verein member paying a one-time fee of \$3.10 to the treasurer. The family of the deceased member would receive \$3 of \$3.10 paid by each living member and the \$.10 paid by each living member was split between the treasurer and secretary.¹⁶ The first record of payment, in the translated meeting minutes, occurred in November 1888. Notice of C. F. Bergmann’s death was posted in the meeting hall, and in January 1889, his widow received \$177 from the Verein.¹⁷ By 1935, the Verein had paid out over \$250,000 in benefits to past members’ families.¹⁸

The Verein continued to meet at different member’s houses until 1879, when the organization constructed its first meeting hall. Signing a lease with George Krause, the Verein built their first meeting hall on the leased land, paying members for their work. Franz Erben received \$344 to build the hall and Willhelm Specht received \$10.50 to it while Henry Fink received \$5 to build benches, tables, and utensils.¹⁹ In May 1896, the organization, with Henry Fink as president, purchased the 4 7/8 acres of land from Krause for \$100.²⁰ At that point, they had already added onto the building two times and they continued to increase the size of the building, adding a dance hall in 1908, stage in 1924, and two rear additions in the early 1950s.

Role in the Community

In addition to its support of the families of passed members, the Verein based its operation on the betterment of agriculture, which initially meant curtailing cattle thievery. Small-scale efforts to end the problem included working with the Blanco Farmer Verein to share information about rustlers, and expelling any members caught informing suspected thieves of Verein activities. The most important action taken by the Verein to deter rustling

¹³ Ibid, 36.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Schaefer, 130.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, 41.

¹⁸ *New Braunfels Herald*, “Allred to Speak at Anhalt Fete; Bands Take Part,” October 18, 1935, pg. 1.

¹⁹ Schaefer 42, Comal County deed record Vol. X: 398-400.

²⁰ Schaefer, 42.

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was the adoption and registering of an official cattle brand. At its April 2, 1876, meeting, the group appointed Valentin Fuhrmann, a member and blacksmith from north of Anhalt, as the association's blacksmith. The Verein brand, a "G" (fig.6) was registered in Comal County as well Kendall, Bexar, Blanco, and Gillespie counties in 1876. Ranchers were to brand their cattle on the left shoulder with the "G," and brand the right shoulder with their ranch brand.²¹ Henry Fink, who would become Verein president in 1893, also recommended ranchers brand their colts. These combined actions promoted by the Verein were said to have effectively stopped rustling in the area by the end of the nineteenth century.

After effectively dealing with the rustling problem, the Verein continued its focus on agricultural education and support. At meetings, men would show off crops and share information on agricultural output. The group also adopted new techniques, such as vaccination to combat the spread of diseases that harmed the local agricultural-based economy, including vaccines that prevented blackleg and Texas cattle fever caused by ticks. Meeting minutes are full of accounts of guest speakers who discussed issues ranging from the prices for wool, pasture grass seeding, meat preparation, poultry and turkey raising, and pecan harvesting.²² Accounts of building cattle guards and fences on members' properties also appear in meeting minutes. The Verein interacted with the Department of Agriculture, ordering seeds from them and dispersing information provided by them at meetings. Delegates of the group would attend various events, including the Farmer's Congress in College Station in 1913 and other agricultural fairs. Representing the Germania Farmer Verein, members attended the Fredericksburg Fair, New Braunfels Fair, Center Point Fair, and the Gillespie County Fair. Adam Shattenberg, a Verein member who attended the 1894 Gillespie County Fair, reported at the group's October meeting on the "extra large pears, beautiful peaches and grapes exhibited by Mr. Nimitz... There was a complete assortment of cereals... a giant cotton plant, tobacco, and also flowers of many varieties," and urged members to fully participate in their upcoming fair, "thereby proving what we can accomplish in agriculture for the mutual information and encouragement for the general welfare of our community."²³

A large part of the Germania Farmer Verein was its annual fairs and festivals. A way to display members' agricultural successes and achievements, both crops and stock, these events also created an important social activity for members and their families and fostered the community. The Verein's first Maifest was held in 1880 and open only to members and their families. Meeting minutes record that they ordered six kegs of Boerne beer, six kegs of St. Louis beer, and 12 gallons of wine in preparation for the event.²⁴ In 1886, the Verein hosted their first Oktoberfest as well as their first agricultural fair. Members would show off their field and garden crops and their wives and daughters would display canning and sewing crafts. Prizes were awarded in a variety of categories, including: biggest watermelon, best bouquet of flowers, embroidery, butter, and biggest eggplant. Soon after their inauguration, the Verein opened up their events to the community at large to attend. The group would advertise their festivals in the local newspaper, "everybody cordially invited" (fig. 7). The festivals were known for home cooked food, plenty of drinks, live bands (local bands, various orchestras, and traditional German music), games, and dancing and were advertised as "one of the outstanding affairs of this section of the state."²⁵ The serving of drink and plentiful food has long been the talk of the whole county. Great crowds flock annually to the celebration" (fig. 3).²⁶ These events were well attended, considering most had to travel some distance on unimproved roads to reach Anhalt Hall. Harvey Schaefer, a former member and historian, recounted "families had to prepare for the event, such as bedding for the children since many families stayed overnight because it was too far to travel in the dark. Feed had to be brought along for the horses and they had to be unhitched and tethered out... A mile or so from the hall... all the children changed into their festive starched clothes. The people arrived in horse drawn hacks, buggies, wagons or on horseback from all over the countryside.

²¹ Ibid, 90.

²² Ibid, 36-62.

²³ Ibid, 43.

²⁴ Ibid, 39.

²⁵ *New Braunfels Herald*, "Germania Farmer Verein Schedules Annual Oktoberfest," Sept. 30, 1932, pg. 1.

²⁶ Ibid.

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After the dancing stopped at midnight, a meal was served that had been packed from home. The families bedded down on the Anhalt grounds either on their wagons or under them. At daylight, they made the trip home again.”²⁷ Probably the biggest event held at Anhalt Hall was the 1908 dedication of their new dance hall where around 2,000 people attended to see the “largest hall in the county” and attend the grand ball.²⁸ The 1936 celebration for the Texas Centennial also drew a large crowd and boasted Governor H. V. Allred as their guest of honor. The celebration included a procession of Verein officials, its oldest members, and the celebration’s anointed queen and duchesses, as well as bands and an Indian War Dance (fig. 8).²⁹

Despite being a men’s only organization, the Verein managed to create a community that supported women, children, and the community at large. Women, though not allowed to join, formed a “Ladies Committee” to help plan events, and were encouraged to participate in Verein fairs and festivals (fig. 9). The Verein also organized a Kinderspiel—children’s play and parade—and had an area of the hall—the Kinder Stube—dedicated for children to sleep in during events. The organization also donated money over the years to a variety of organizations, including: the Pioneer Memorial in Landa Park; the Deutches Verein; the German Red Cross; the Red Cross; the Texas League of Equal and Uniform Taxation; the United Services Organization; the Infantile Paralysis Fund; the March of Dimes; and the Community Fund Organization in New Braunfels. The group also sent money to Germany and Austria in 1920 for war relief. In addition, the Verein opened Anhalt Hall to other organizations, including the Honey Creek Liederkrantz, Comal County Wolf Club, and the Comal Post of the American Legion.

The Germania Farmer Verein is one of the few agricultural societies that prevailed into the twentieth century, as many of the organizations disbanded as agricultural activity declined, rural populations decreased, and event attendance dwindled.³⁰ Since its founding in 1875, the Germania Farmer Verein has had over 2,000 members, paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to the families of deceased members, improved the livelihoods of farmers and ranchers, and supplied the community with entertainment and social opportunities. Though the organization has become smaller and has evolved over the years—they now allow hats in the hall, offer men from outside the bordering counties of Comal membership, and conduct business in English—and agricultural has become secondary to planning and hosting social events, the role the Verein has played in creating a community in western Comal County cannot be denied, and they continue to serve that community today from Anhalt Hall. Anhalt Hall has and continues to serve as both a meeting place and community center, carrying on the traditions and culture of its early German settlers. Oktoberfest and Maifest are still hosted by the Verein every year at Anhalt Hall.

CRITERION C – Architecture

Across Central Texas, large halls sprung up in the mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, oftentimes in locations that mimicked the early settlement patterns of that time. Built mostly by German and Czech immigrants, though there are examples of Polish, Swiss, African American, and Mexican-built halls, the buildings often served multiple purposes. Various groups, including church, benevolent, sports, and agricultural groups and clubs oftentimes constructed the halls initially as meeting places, but their purposes evolved to include a social aspect, such as dances, hosting bands and singing groups, and festivals.

²⁷ Karen Boyd, Sami Devillier, Myra Lee Goff, and Alton Rahe, “Anhalt Halle and the Germania Farmer Verein,” Official Texas Historical Marker application, 2013.

²⁸ *New Braunfels Herald*, “Anhalt Erntefest,” Oct. 16, 1908, pg. 1.

²⁹ Boyd, Devillier Goff, and Rahe, 5.

³⁰ Jordan, 106. Fischer Agricultural Society also still exists.

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These buildings were built quickly and efficiently, and generally follow the same basic design. Some of the common character-defining features shared among Central Texas halls include:

- One-story in height
- Free-standing
- Pitched roof
- Built using local materials – wood board siding and tin roofs
- Use of thin wood boards rather than heavy timber
- Simple wood-frame construction
- Large, open interior floor plan
- Exposed framing – wall and roof
- Simple fenestration of large window openings/shutters for cooling and ventilation
- Vents near roof or on roof for ventilation
- Lack ornamentation
- Auxiliary buildings (beer stand, outhouse, kitchen)
- Fields used for parking
- Built before 1910³¹

Another aspect shared among these buildings is that they each have unique variations. Stemming from differences in locale, climate, geography, ethnic association, and the availability of materials and buildings, these variations distinguish one hall from another. Halls can take on a square or rectangular form, or be six-, eight-, or twelve-sided. Roofs can be gabled or hipped, or in some cases have a front parapet, and heights among these buildings vary considerable. Placement on the land also varied, as builders wanted to ensure adequate breezes for ventilation.

Anhalt Hall, a meeting and dance hall in western Comal County is an excellent example of this type of building. Built in phases—1879, 1887, 1891, and 1908 are among the most important—Anhalt Hall shares all the common character-defining features of Central Texas dance halls, though with some slight variations. Whereas most dance halls have no additional siding over their wood board siding, Anhalt Hall is clad in distinctive pressed-metal sheets. Built for the Germania Farmer Verein, an agricultural society made up of German immigrants and their sons, the building also has clear German characteristics. The oldest nineteenth century half of the building was constructed by Verein member Franz Erben. Erben, from Bexar County, was the son of German immigrants—his father was a farmer and also a Verein member—was a “house carpenter” and 23 at the time.³² A feasible explanation for the use of lumber from San Antonio rather than New Braunfels in construction of the nineteenth century portion of the building is likely because Erben was from Bexar County. In 1908, the Verein hired New Braunfels contractor Christian Herry to build a dance hall addition onto its meeting hall. Herry, born in Germany in 1854 and immigrated to Texas in 1880, was an active contractor and homebuilder in and around New Braunfels.³³ Prior to the dance hall addition, Herry built Gruene Hall (1878), the Henne Hardware store building (1893), and the Comal Hotel (1898).³⁴ The Verein paid Herry \$2,512.37 to furnish plans and build the dance hall.³⁵ One of the most distinct features of Herry’s addition is the segmental-arched wood trusses. Spanning approximately 60 feet, they are considered to be distinctly German, having only been documented in German-

³¹ Stephanie White, “Dance Halls of Central Texas: Pre-World War II Wood Structures,” (Austin: Centerline 1, School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin), 5-11.

³² *1860-1940 United States Federal Census* [database online], 1900, Ancestry.com.

³³ *1860-1940 United States Federal Census* [database online], 1910, Ancestry.com.

³⁴ Library of Congress. *Built by Christian Herry in 1878, Gruene Hall in New Braunfels is one of the oldest dance halls in Texas. Gruene was a communal farming community. The one-story structure features a false-front entryway with asymmetrical window and door arrangements.* New Braunfels Texas United States, 2014. -04-11. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2014632381>.

³⁵ Schaefer, 48.

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built halls.³⁶ To achieve their shape, builders soaked the wood beams in water to bend them and then let them dry. This type of truss can support wide spans, was economical, and also aesthetically pleasing. Similar arched trusses are found in nearby Fischer Hall in Comal County (ca. 1897), and the former Uhland Club/Club 21 between Bastrop and San Marcos in Hays County (1893) that burned down in 2010. Both the Twin Sisters Dance Hall (1879) in Blanco County and Turner Hall in Schulenburg in Fayette County (1886) share similar shapes and roof forms as Anhalt Hall, but Twin Sisters has a lower barrel ceiling that consists of side-lapped lumber rather than trusses and Turner Hall has a nail-laminated arched ceiling.³⁷ All of these buildings were constructed by German-immigrant builders for German-immigrant organizations.

By the mid-twentieth century, as rural populations declined and the succeeding generations of immigrant settlers assimilated or moved away, the relevance of the organizations who built the halls, and the halls themselves also lost popularity. Additionally, as entertainment options expanded with the changing technology, the need to attend events at the local hall lessened. With the changing times, some halls fell into disuse and disrepair. Others were sold, moved and repurposed (Turner Hall). Some have been demolished (Livestone Lodge #152 in Dallas County) and some destroyed by fire (Uhland Club). Of those that remain, some have been “updated” with air conditioning and dropped ceilings, fluorescent lights, and new exterior siding. The Germania Farmer Verein, though, has weathered declines in membership and the costs of upkeep of a 138-year-old building, ultimately preserving Anhalt Hall’s integrity and its place in the community.

Summary

When Stephen Dean, co-founder of Texas Dance Hall Preservation Inc., said, “Dance halls were the lifeblood of small communities as immigration spread across Texas, and were an integral point of the town’s social fabric,” he easily could have had Anhalt Hall in mind.³⁸ Built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for the Germania Farmer Verein, the hall served as both a meeting place for the group and a social center for the larger community, and it represents the role the organization played in providing agricultural support and entertainment to the people of Comal and its surrounding counties. As host to countless meetings, dances, festivals, fairs, and celebrations, Anhalt Hall has been an essential piece in the livelihood of the small, rural community in which its located. Anhalt Hall is nominated to the National Register of Historic places under Criterion A in the areas of Social History and Ethnic Heritage at the local level. The hall is also architecturally significant under Criterion C at the local level for being a well-preserved example of a once common and slowly disappearing building type that is significant within the Central Texas landscape.

Period of Significance

Anhalt Hall has a period of significance that begins in 1879 and ends in 1953. The year 1879 represents the year when the oldest portion of the building was constructed. The year 1953 marks the date of the last major addition onto the building. This period also captures the peak of membership and vitality for the Germania Farmer Verein as well as the importance of Anhalt Hall in community life. Still owned by the Germania Farmer Verein, Anhalt Hall continues to host festivals, bands, and celebrations.

³⁶ Patrick Sparks, email message to author, November 10, 2017.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Gail Folkins, “Come Together: A Cultural Tour of Texas Dance Halls,” *Texas Highways*, August 2013. <http://texashighways.com/culture-lifestyle/item/394-come-together-a-cultural-tour-of-texas-dance-halls>.

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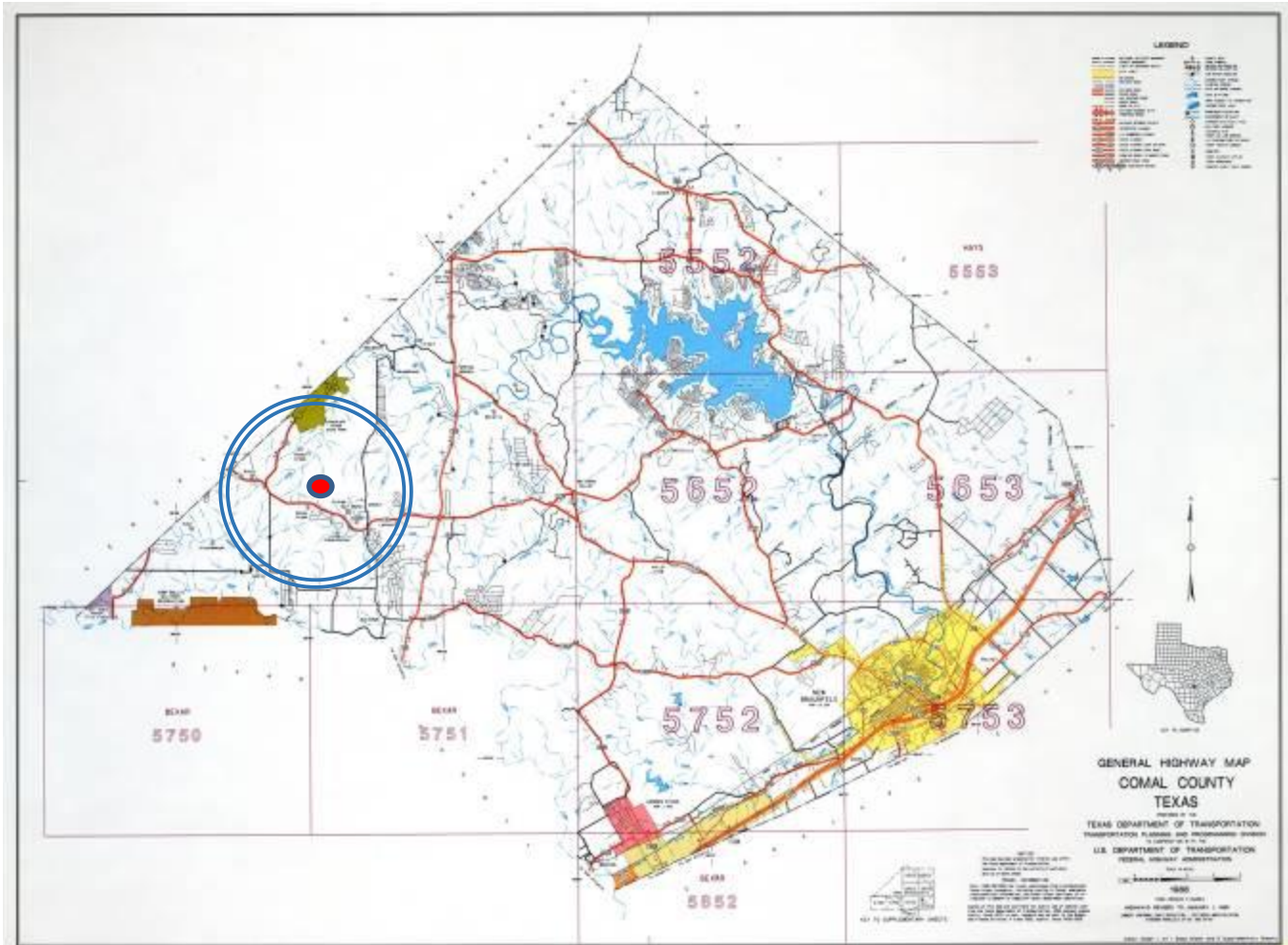
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Maps



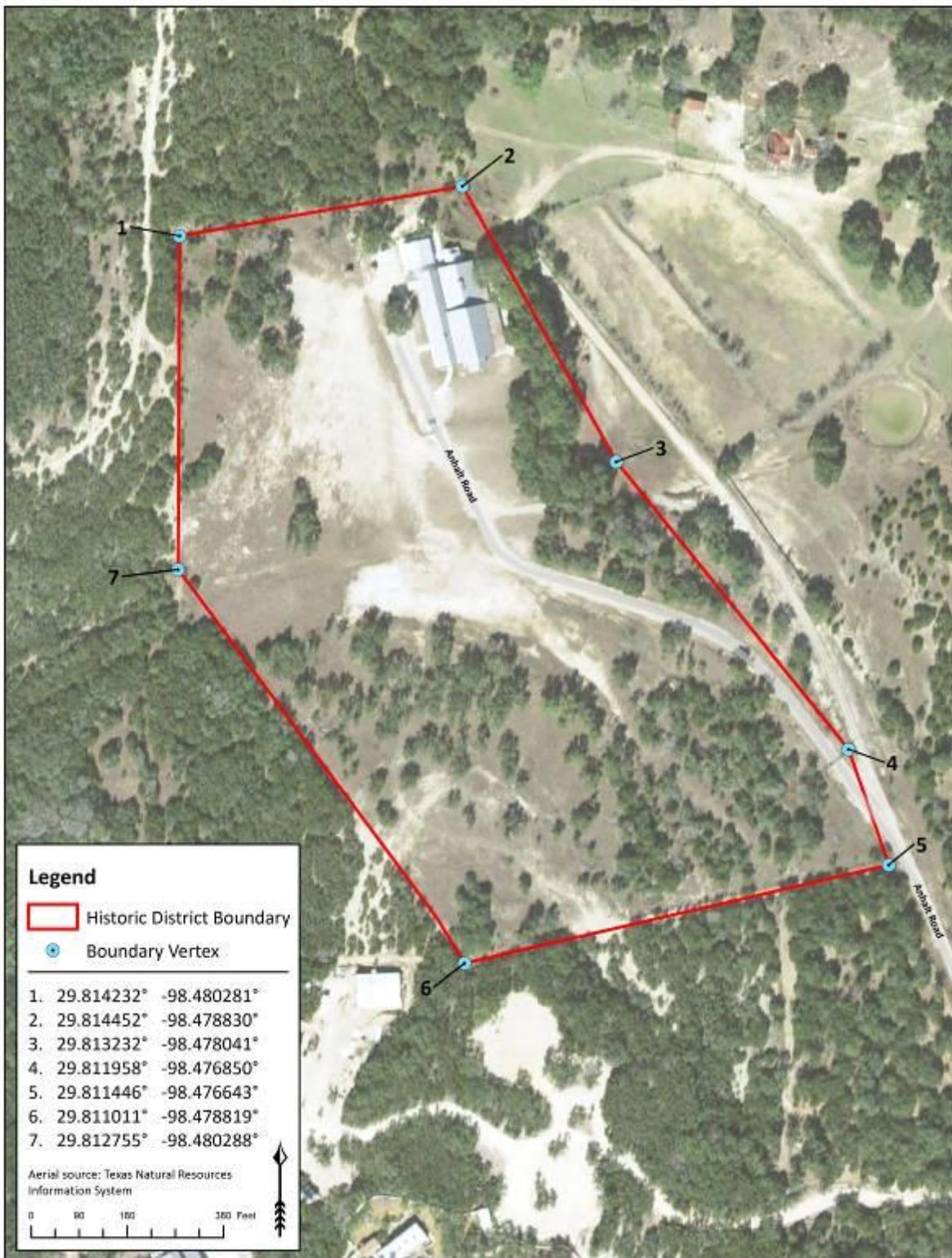
Map 1. Comal County, Texas – highlighted in red.

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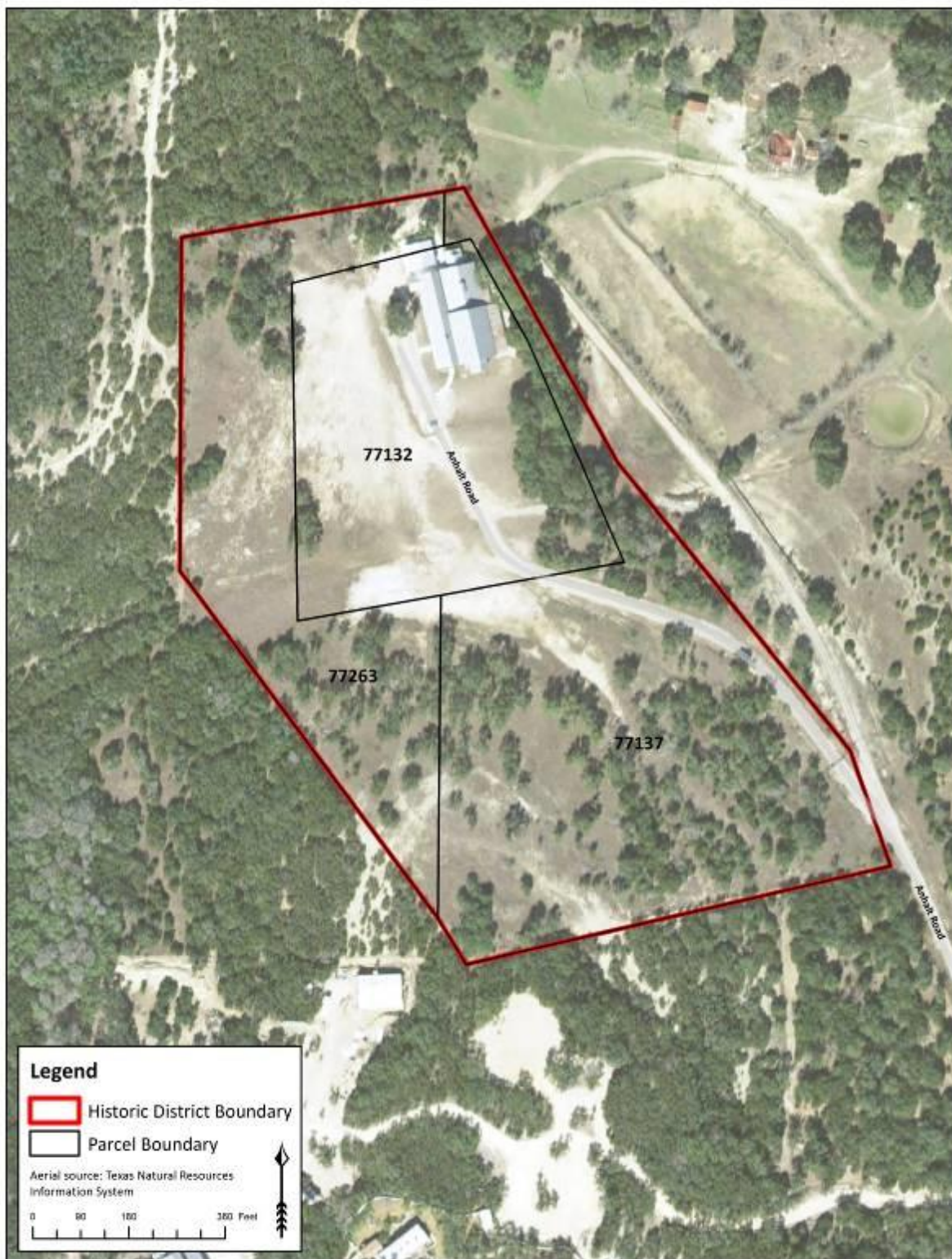
Map 2. Comal County Highway Map (Source: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/txdot/tccoma01.jpg>). The red dot represents the approximate location of Anhalt Hall.

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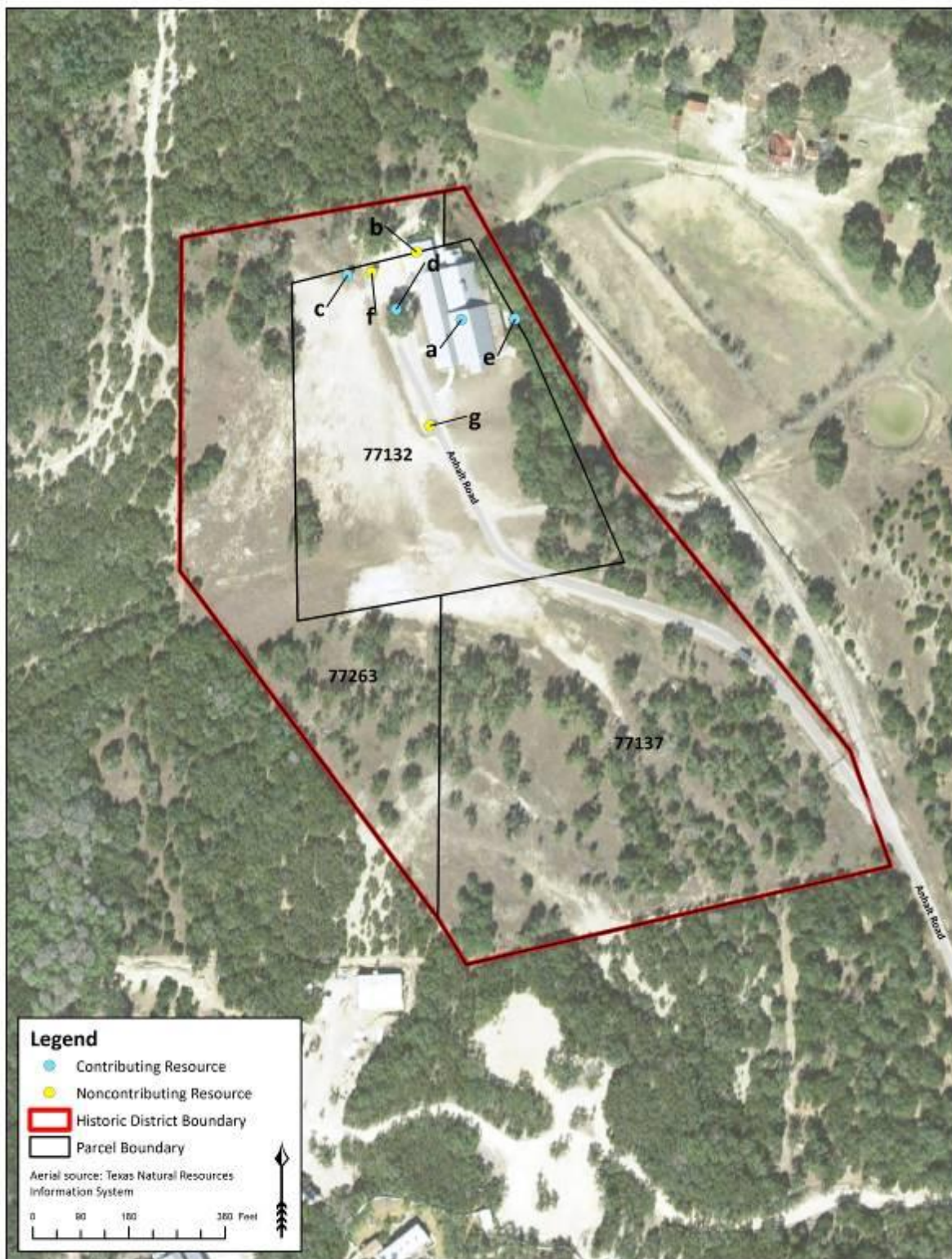
Map 3. Anhalt Hall with boundaries in red and latitude and longitude coordinates in blue.

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Map 4. Anhalt Hall with boundaries in red and parcel boundaries in black.

Anhalt Hall, Spring Branch, Comal County, Texas



Map 5. Anhalt Hall with boundaries in red, parcel boundaries in black, contributing resources in blue, and noncontributing resources in yellow.

Anhalt Hall, Spring Branch, Comal County, Texas

Figures

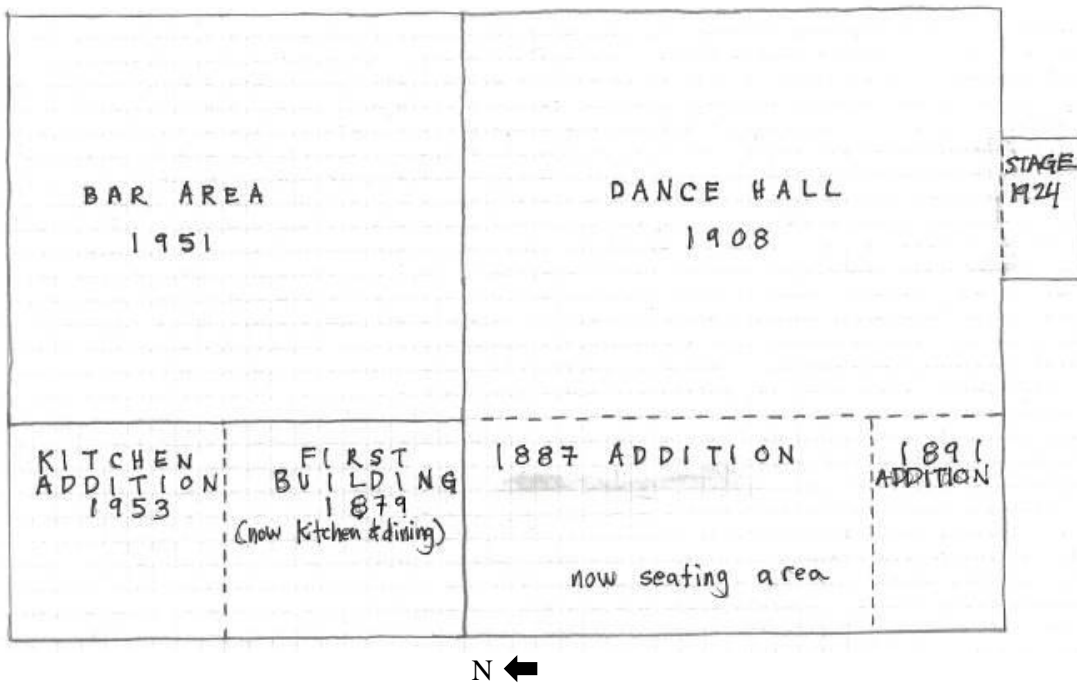


Figure 1. Rough sketch of the floor plan Anhalt Hall with dates of construction. Source: HHM.

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Figure 2. Historic photograph of Anhalt Hall taken between 1891 and 1908 showing building without metal siding and dance hall addition. Source: Henry Schmidt and Harvey Schaefer.

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Figure 3. Historic photograph, undated, of south elevation of Anhalt Hall. Source: Germania Farmer Verein.

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Figure 4. Historic photograph, undated, of officers of Germania Farmer Verein posing at Anhalt Hall. Source: Henry Schmidt and Harvey Schaefer.

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No. 223 **Certificat der Mitgliedschaft des
Germania Farmer - Vereins.
Anhalt, Comal County, Texas.**

Es wird hiermit bescheinigt, daß

Moritz Koch

als vollberechtigtes Mitglied in den Germania Farmer-Verein aufgenom-
men wurde. Wenn er seinen Verpflichtungen wie die Constitution
des Vereins es vorschreibt nachkommt, ist bei seinem Tode an die hier
unten genannten Hinterbliebenen die in der Constitution bestimmte
Unterstützungs-Summe auszahlbar.

Chas. Erben Secr. *Henry Fink* Präs.

Anhalt, Tex., den *Oct. 2. 1910*

Ich bestimme hiermit, daß nach meinem Tode die Unterstützungs-
Summe des Germania Farmer-Vereins an *maxim*

Frau Ida Koch

ausgezahlt werde.

Moritz Koch

Zeugen:

Chas. Erben

Henry Fink

Figure 5. Membership certificate indicating intended recipient of money upon death. Source: Mrs. James Mayer and Harvey Schaefer.

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Figure 6. The “G” brand of the Germania Farmer Verein. Source: Harvey Schaefer.

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Figure 8. Historic photograph from 1936 at the Centennial celebration. Photo showing the Queen, her Duchesses, and Page Boys. Source: Herbert Laubach and Harvey Schaefer.

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Figure 9. Historic photograph from 1900 of women celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Verein. Source: Gloria and Odean Gass and Harvey Schaefer.

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Photographs



Photo No. 1. View of historic farmstead east of Anhalt Hall, view facing northeast.

Anhalt Hall, Spring Branch, Comal County, Texas



Photo No. 2. Contextual view of drive coming in from southeast and running along west side of Anhalt Hall, view facing northeast.

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Photo No. 3. Oblique view of Anhalt Hall, view facing northeast.

Anhalt Hall, Spring Branch, Comal County, Texas



Photo No. 4. Detailed view of pressed metal sheets on main south façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing north.

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Photo No. 5. View of main south façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing north.

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Photo No. 6. View of western half of main south façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing north.

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Photo No. 7. View eastern half of main south façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing north.

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Photo No. 8. Oblique view of side east façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing northwest.

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Photo No. 9. Detailed view side east façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing west.

Anhalt Hall, Spring Branch, Comal County, Texas



Photo No. 10. View of 1951 rear addition on side east façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing northwest.

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Photo No. 11. Oblique view of side west façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing southeast.

Anhalt Hall, Spring Branch, Comal County, Texas



Photo No. 12. View of eastern half of rear façade of Anhalt Hall, view facing south.

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Photo No. 13. View of seating area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing south.

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Photo No. 14. View inside dance hall at Anhalt Hall, view facing north.

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Photo No. 15. View of exposed framing and sheathing on side east interior wall of Anhalt Hall, view facing east.

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Photo No. 16. View of painted stage inside Anhalt Hall, view facing south.

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Photo No. 17. Detailed view of printed name on wood on north interior wall at Anhalt Hall, view facing north.

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Photo No. 18. View of original exterior wall, now separating seating area from kitchen inside Anhalt Hall, view facing north.

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Photo No. 19. View of posts between seating area and dance floor inside Anhalt Hall, view facing east.

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Photo No. 20. View of north wall separating dance hall and bar area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing north.

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Photo No. 21. Detailed view of roof trusses in seating area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing south.

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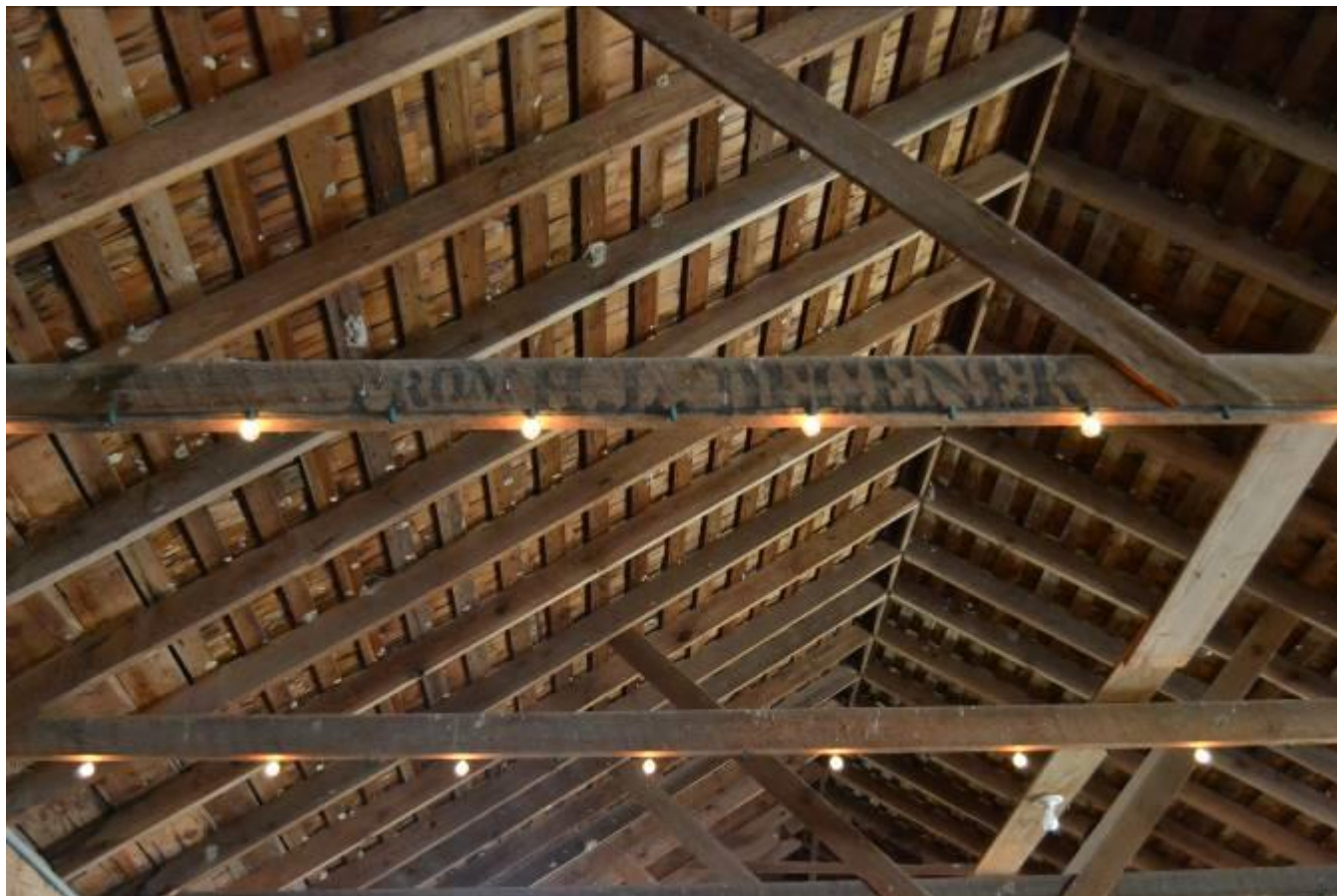


Photo No. 22. Detailed view of "From H. L. Degener" printed on wood in seating area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing south.

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Photo No. 23. Detailed view of "From ED Steves & Sons" printed on wood in seating area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing north.

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Photo No. 24. View of arched trusses in dance hall inside Anhalt Hall, view facing southwest.

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Photo No. 25. View of arched trusses in dance hall inside Anhalt Hall, view facing north.

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Photo No. 26. View of sign hanging from ceiling, with other sign in background, in Anhalt Hall, view facing north.

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Photo No. 27. View of bar area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing northeast.

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Photo No. 28. View of cistern in bar area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing southwest.

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Photo No. 29. View of kitchen and dining area inside Anhalt Hall, view facing north.

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Photo No. 30. View of outhouse (Resource d), view facing southwest.

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Photo No. 31. View of bar stand (Resource e), view facing northeast.

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Photo No. 32. View of well house (Resource f) and cistern (Resource c), view facing west.

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Photo No. 33. View of kitchen building (Resource b), view facing southeast.

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Photo No. 34. View of historic cast iron pots inside kitchen (Resource b), view facing northwest.