

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

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Voelcker Farmstead Historic District
Other name/site number: Max and Minnie (Tomerlin) Voelcker Dairy Farm, Voelcker Ranch, Voelcker Park, Phil Hardberger Park, 41BX1744, 41BX1776
Name of related multiple property listing: Historic Farms and Ranches of Bexar County, 1800-1970

2. Location

Street & number: [Redacted]
City or town: San Antonio State: Texas County: Bexar
Not for publication: [X] Vicinity: []

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] State Historic Preservation Officer
Signature of certifying official / Title Date 5/22/14
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

Voelcker Farmstead Historic District, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

	Private
X	Public - Local
	Public - State
	Public - Federal

Category of Property

	building(s)
X	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	1	buildings
1	1	sites
1	1	structures
0	0	objects
6	3	total

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: DOMESTIC / single dwelling / secondary structures;
 AGRICULTURAL / agricultural outbuildings

Current Functions: WORK IN PROGRESS;
 DOMESTIC / single dwelling / secondary structures;
 SUBSISTENCE / agricultural outbuildings / animal facility;
 LANDSCAPE / park;

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Texas Vernacular; Craftsman

Principal Exterior Materials: Wood, Limestone, Concrete

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7-8 through 7-15)

Voelcker Farmstead Historic District, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input type="checkbox"/>	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.
<input type="checkbox"/>	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations: N/A

Areas of Significance: Agriculture

Period of Significance: 1917 - 1947

Significant Dates: 1927, 1947

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): N/A

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): N/A

Architect/Builder: unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 8-16 through 8-28)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheets 9-29 through 9-31)

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 (*City of San Antonio Historic Preservation Office*)
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: *Texas Archeological Research Laboratory, Austin*

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

Voelcker Farmstead Historic District, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 3.05 acres

Coordinates **RESTRICTED – NOT FOR PUBLIC DISCLOSURE******

UTM References (NAD1983):

	Zone	Northing	Easting
Center of Property	14	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Coordinates expressed in Latitude and Longitude: [REDACTED]

Verbal Boundary Description: The 3.05-acre property at [REDACTED], San Antonio, Bexar County is located at the northwest corner of Phil Hardberger Park. The eastern boundary of the district is marked by a metal wire fence that runs generally north-south from the intersection of Voelcker Lane and the Salado Creek Greenbelt to a modern wooden fence. The southern boundary of the district is marked by a wooden fence along the rear property boundary of a row of modern homes. The fence continues north along the entrance to the Salado Creek Greenbelt and forms the western boundary of the district. The northern boundary follows the southern edge of the greenbelt to its intersection with Voelcker Lane.

Boundary Justification: The boundary includes the stone dwelling, dairy barn, Voelcker Bungalow, garage, and cistern that have historically been part of the Voelcker Dairy Farm and that maintain historic integrity. The additional acreage associated with the farmstead during its period of significance was excluded due to modern housing development to the south and west and current and planned development associated with Phil Hardberger Park to the north and east.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Brandy Harris, M.A.; M. Kelley Russell, M.S.; Lila Knight, M.A.; Ryan Fennell, M.A.; Nesta Anderson, Ph.D; and Karissa Basse, M.A.
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Date: August 30, 2013

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheet Map-32 through Map-36; *Map-35 and Map-36 are restricted*)

Additional items (see continuation sheets Figure-37 through Figure-50)

Voelcker Farmstead Historic District, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Photographs

Name of Property: Voelcker Farmstead Historic District
City or Vicinity: San Antonio
County, State: Bexar County, Texas
Photographer: M. Kelley Russell
Date Photographed: August 2013

Photo 1 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_0001.tif)
Stone Dwelling
South Elevation
Camera facing: North

Photo 2 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_0002.tif)
Stone Dwelling
Southeast oblique view
Camera facing: Northwest

Photo 3 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_0003.tif)
Stone Dwelling
East Elevation
Camera facing: West

Photo 4 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_0004.tif)
Stone Dwelling
Southwest oblique view
Camera facing: Northeast

Photo 5 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_0005.tif)
Stone Dwelling
West Elevation
Camera facing: East

Photo 6 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_0006.tif)
Frame Barn
East Elevation
Camera facing: West

Photo 7 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_0007.tif)
Frame Barn
West Elevation
Camera facing: East

Photo 8 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_0008.tif)
Dairy Barn
Southeast oblique view
Camera facing: Northwest

Voelcker Farmstead Historic District, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 9 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_0009.tif)

Dairy Barn
Southwest oblique view
Camera facing: Northeast

Photo 10 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_0010.tif)

Dairy Barn
South Elevation
Camera facing: North

Photo 11 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_0011.tif)

Dairy Barn
Interior of Milking Parlor
Camera facing: West

Photo 12 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_0012.tif)

Windmill and Cistern
Camera facing: South

Photo 13 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_00013.tif)

Voelcker Bungalow
Southeast oblique view
Camera facing: Northwest

Photo 14 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_00014.tif)

Voelcker Bungalow
Southeast oblique view
Camera facing: Northwest

Photo 15 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_00015.tif)

Voelcker Bungalow
East Elevation
Camera facing: West

Photo 16 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_00016.tif)

Voelcker Bungalow
Northeast oblique view
Camera facing: Southwest

Photo 17 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_00017.tif)

Voelcker Bungalow
North Elevation
Camera facing: South

Photo 18 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_00018.tif)

Voelcker Bungalow
Northwest oblique view
Camera facing: Southeast

Voelcker Farmstead Historic District, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Photo 19 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_00019.tif)

Voelcker Garage
Southwest oblique view
Camera facing: Northeast

Photo 20 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_0020.tif)

Voelcker Garage
Southeast oblique view
Camera facing: Northwest

Photo 21 (TX_BexarCounty_Voelcker_0021.tif)

Voelcker Farmstead, Site Overview
Cistern, Stone Dwelling Frame Barn, Dairy Barn
Camera facing: Northwest

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.

Voelcker Farmstead Historic District, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

Narrative Description

The Voelcker Farmstead Historic District contains a significant concentration of properties that represent the agricultural development of the dairy industry in Bexar County. The array of building types include a dairy barn with a milking parlor that accommodated 20 cows; two dwellings representing both the late nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century; various outbuildings; and one archaeological site that may potentially yield future information on the historic district. Although the setting of the district has been somewhat compromised by the intrusion of a new subdivision, this is not readily visible from the farmstead. The Voelcker Farmstead Historic District consists of a total nine buildings, structures, and sites, of which 6 are contributing and 3 are noncontributing. The Voelcker Farmstead Historic District contains a sufficient level of historic integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association to convey its significance in the area of agriculture under Criterion A at the local level of significance.

SETTING

Entrance to the 3.05-acre Voelcker Farmstead can be gained from two locations. From the east, the property is accessed by traveling west on Voelcker Lane from Blanco Road for approximately 0.4 mile to its intersection with the Salado Creek Greenbelt. Along with Salado Creek, Voelcker Lane serves as the northwest boundary of Phil Hardberger Park. The intersection forms the northeast boundary of the Voelcker Farmstead Historic District and is marked by a metal gate. The gate is located along a wire fence that generally runs in a north-south direction and forms the eastern boundary of the district. Just beyond the fence lies Max and Minnie Voelcker's circa 1927 residence along the south side of Voelcker Lane. The accompanying garage from the same time period is located on the north side of the road. The dwelling is a one-story, front-gabled, bungalow with a partial width, inset porch.

Just west of these structures along the west side of the road is the recently rehabilitated circa 1925 dairy barn. This bright red building is a one-story, side-gabled, asymmetrical dog-trot with a 10-bay milking parlor to the west and two small rooms to the east, bisected by a breezeway. A concrete cistern and remnants of a steel-frame windmill are situated south of the barn in an open field. The field terminates at a modern wood fence that forms the southern boundary of the district. Just west of the barn is a small, one-and-half-story, front-gabled barn that may have originally been a dwelling. The structure is partially collapsed. A one-story, stone and wood-frame dwelling that represents the earliest remaining building in the Voelcker Farmstead Historic District is located directly south of the barn. From here, Voelcker Lane curves to the southwest out of the boundary of the district and into a late twentieth century neighborhood.

Additional non extant buildings and structures located at the Voelcker Dairy Farm are evident on a 1955 aerial map and a 1959 topographic map of the area (NETR var.). These include one to two possible barns north of the dairy barn and three small dwellings or storage buildings approximately 150 feet north of the garage. Review of subsequent maps indicate that these structures were removed or demolished between 1993 and 2004 (NETR var.). The Voelcker Dairy Farm likely contained additional non extant elements located within and outside of the district boundary. While not identified through map review, their locations may be revealed in the archeological record.

Voelcker Farmstead Historic District, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

There are also two archeological sites located within the 3.05-acre Voelcker Farmstead Historic District. These two sites were investigated in 2007 and 2008, and one is specifically associated with the extant structures on the property. In contrast, the other site has been disturbed by recent construction activities. There have been numerous other archeological sites recorded in the vicinity of the Voelcker Farmstead Historic District.

INVENTORY OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

A. Stone Dwelling (circa 1860-1880; contributing building) (Photos 1-5)

Description:

This one-story, side-gabled dwelling represents the earliest building in the Voelcker Farmstead Historic District (Map-2; Figure-1). The building appears to have been built in several phases. The earliest phase is represented by a single pen, square-plan, dwelling with solid, random ashlar limestone walls and gable covered by a historic-age corrugated metal side-gabled roof. Additions during the historic period include a wood-framed addition and front porch. A limestone chimney was originally situated at the east gable end of this structure and now serves the wood-frame addition to the east as well.

A one-story, two-room, rectangular-plan pen with a corrugated metal shed roof and similar solid limestone wall construction is located along the length of the northern façade of the original dwelling. It features an exterior limestone chimney on the western façade and appears to have been constructed at a later date than the square pen as evidenced by thinner masonry walls and a slight gap between the western walls of the original structure and the addition. The exterior chimney may indicate that another room or enclosed space existed adjacent to this part of the dwelling.

Both structures appear to have been originally constructed with a buff-colored, silty mud used in place of mortar or a mortar with extremely fine aggregate. At least two episodes of repointing are evident. The first appears to be locally-derived, lime-based mortar with a sand and very small pebble aggregate that was applied to the entire structure likely prior to 1930; perhaps much earlier. A Portland cement mortar was applied very hastily at a later date (after 1930) in several localized areas. The stone walls are punctuated by two windows on the southern façade and one window each on the western and northern façades. All windows and doors were boarded at the time of documentation, and according to a 2008 Historic Structures Report, each is a six-over-six wood sash unit (Heck and Fisher 2008).

The one-story, double pen, wood-frame, board-and-batten addition runs the length of the eastern façade and likely dates to the early twentieth century. The southern frame addition is enveloped by a corrugated metal hipped roof, and the northern addition has a shed roof. The framed addition is punctuated by a window and door on the southern façade and one widow on the eastern façade. All windows and doors were boarded at the time of documentation, though according to a 2008 Historic Structures Report, each is a six-over-six wood sash window (Heck and Fisher 2008).

A full-length, open-sided porch supported by five cedar posts runs the length of the structure to the south. It is situated on a concrete slab and has a corrugated metal shed roof. The configuration of the porch indicates that it

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may date from the period of the wood-frame additions because the plate height of the porch aligns with the plate height of the hipped roof over the addition (Heck and Fisher 2008).

Significance:

This dwelling represents the earliest remaining building within the Voelcker Farmstead Historic District and is an example of the progressive development of the modest Texas vernacular farm dwelling. As detailed in Section 8, Louis Voelcker (Max Voelcker's father) purchased the property from A.P. Gulick in 1917. Gulick had acquired the property from Alex Maltsberger (a stock farmer and the uncle of Max Voelcker's wife Minnie Tomerlin Voelcker) in 1883. Gulick originally bought the property from G. W. Maltsberger (Minnie's grand uncle). G.W. Maltsberger purchased land containing the subject property from the estate of E. D. Somerset at a tax auction in 1873. The stone portions of the dwelling were likely constructed circa 1860-1880 and may have been constructed by members of the Maltsberger or Somerset families and/or their associated tenants.

Archival evidence suggests Max Voelcker began to occupy his father's newly acquired property in 1918 and likely the stone residence. The wood-frame additions may have been constructed while under the ownership of Gulick or soon after Louis Voelcker purchased the property. Max may have lived in the stone dwelling until his marriage to Minnie in 1927, after which the residence was likely occupied by tenants, most of whom appear to have been of Mexican descent according to review of contemporary population census records. The stone dwelling is therefore significant as one of the last remaining resources associated with a large-scale, private dairying operation that developed during a period when the industry became significant to the Bexar County economy and to the Buttermilk Hill/Coker Settlement, of which the dairy was a part.

B. Frame Barn (circa 1915; noncontributing building) (Photos 6-7)

Description:

The resource is a one-and-half-story, wood-frame barn (Map-2) with a front-gabled, corrugated metal roof and a one-story, shed-roofed addition on the southern façade. The barn appears to have been built as a one-room structure and was possibly a dwelling as it has a single door flanked by two windows on the southern side and wood flooring on a pier-and-beam foundation. The structure is clad with vertical board-and-batten that also functions as a structural support. A door opening on the eastern façade may have been added at a later date. The eastern and western façades of the barn and the eastern façade of the addition are ornamented with a horizontal saw-tooth decoration under the gables. The barn may have had an original porch on the southern façade that was later expanded and enclosed with horizontal boards on the western, northern, and southern façades. The building was most recently used as storage. It is currently collapsed and what remains is held up by a mature oak tree along the eastern façade.

Significance:

The building no longer retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship due to its extreme deterioration; however, the area surrounding the structure could be considered a high probability area for containing historic archaeological deposits associated with the dairy farm. If extant, the deposits could contribute to the property's eligibility under Criterion D at a later time.

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C. Dairy Barn (circa 1925; contributing building) (Photos 8-11)

Description:

The building consists of a one-story, linear plan, gable-roofed, concrete-and wood-frame milking barn with a wood-frame addition on the eastern façade (Map-2; Figure-2; Figure-3). The barn appears to have been initially built as an asymmetrical dog-trot with a 10-bay milking parlor and a small two-pen room bisected by a breezeway. The milking parlor and room to the east are constructed of wood-form concrete approximately 3-feet-high, above which the walls are wood-framed and clad in narrow horizontal clapboard siding. The corrugated metal gable-roof of the barn is supported by wooden trusses that are exposed in the milking parlor. A gabled monitor with wooden louvered vents is situated in the center of the roof of the milking parlor. The northern and southern façades of the milking parlor are punctuated by ten, four-over-four, double-hung, wood sash windows on pulley and weights. Two of the same window types are present on the northern and southern façades of the room just east of the breezeway. Sliding doors for wagons and livestock are located at the western end of the milking parlor and the northern side of the breezeway.

The interior of the milking parlor is bisected by a raised concrete walkway. Two concrete troughs with wooden rails are situated along the northern and southern walls just below the windows. The rails feature vertical wooden slats with 10 equally-spaced larger openings to allow cattle access to the trough during milking.

A one-story, wood-frame, single pen addition with a flat corrugated metal roof is attached to the eastern façade of the building. The exterior walls are clad in horizontal wooden boards and are punctuated by louvered vents on the southern and eastern façades. A hinged door, a fixed six-light, wood sash window, and a four-over-four double-hung wood sash window are located on the eastern façade.

In June of 2013, the Voelcker dairy barn was rehabilitated in accordance with the National Park Service's Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures through the Voelcker Trust and the Associated General Contractors' Construction Forum.

Significance:

The dairy barn represents one of the most significant structures remaining of a former private dairying operation that developed during a period when the industry became significant to the Bexar County economy and to the Buttermilk Hill/Coker Settlement, of which the dairy was a part.

D. Cistern (circa 1945; contributing structure) (Photo 12)

Description:

Resource D is a cylindrical above-ground cistern composed of six, stacked concrete rings (Map-2).

Significance:

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This structure was associated with dairying operations on the property during the period of significance and represents one of the few remaining historic-age structures associated with the Voelcker Farmstead Historic District. It is significant for its associations with development on the property during a period when the dairy industry became significant to the Bexar County economy in general and to the Buttermilk Hill/Coker Settlement community in particular.

E. Windmill (circa 1945; noncontributing structure) (Photo 12)

Description:

The resource is a steel-frame lattice tower of a windmill (windpump) with a metal ladder (Map-2). The windmill appears to have once been situated on a square concrete foundation located next to the extant cistern (Resource D). It is currently collapsed, and is missing its tail, vane and wheel.

Significance:

Resource is considered noncontributing due to a lack of integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling.

F. Voelcker Bungalow (circa 1927; contributing building) (Photos 13-18)

Description:

The resource is a one-story, front-gabled, wood-frame, irregular plan, bungalow with a partial width, inset porch with separate roof, and a clipped gable (Map-2; Figure-4; Figure-5; Figure-6; Figure-7). The dwelling is situated on a pier-and-beam foundation and has thin horizontal washboard siding and a flared skirt. The bungalow has an irregular shape of a rectangular plan with a modified ell attached diagonally to the southwest corner. The ell may be an addition, but was likely built soon after the initial construction phase because it features the same cladding and the same double, one-over-one wood sash windows found on the original portion of the house. The dwelling has Craftsman detailing such as triangular knee braces, exposed rafters, wide, unenclosed eave overhangs, and square column wooden porch supports.

Significance:

Max Voelcker commissioned the construction of the bungalow on his father Louis Voelcker's property around the time of his marriage to Minnie Tomerlin in 1927 (Spencer 2010: 102). The resource is located east of the stone dwelling (Resource A) that he may have lived in up to that time (Map-2). Subsequent to their marriage, Minnie joined Max in operating Louis Voelcker's Dairy (which included their own cattle) and eventually their own dairy on Louis's property. The two were lifelong residents of the bungalow until Max died in 1980 and Minnie in 2000 (Spencer 2010: 206, 218). The bungalow thus represents one of the last remaining buildings associated with a large scale, private dairying operation that developed during a period when the industry

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became significant to the Bexar County economy and to the Buttermilk Hill/Coker Settlement, of which the dairy was a part.

G. Garage (circa 1927; contributing building) (Photos 19-20)

Description:

This one-story, wood-frame, two-car garage is situated on a concrete foundation (Map-2; Figure-8). The garage has a side-gabled roof clad in composition shingles and features exposed rafter tails on the western (primary) façade. It is clad with horizontal washboard siding. The original, wooden carriage house doors have been replaced with a single modern metal, overhead door. Although the exact construction date of the garage is not known, it was likely built concurrently with the construction of the bungalow for Max and Minnie Voelcker as it features the same type of Craftsman detailing.

Significance:

The garage housed the couple’s Model A Ford and Chevrolet truck, which allowed for faster delivery service of their milk products to market. The garage is one of the contributing properties associated with the Voelcker Farmstead Historic District, which is significant as one of the private dairies that proliferated in the area during a period when the industry became significant to the Bexar County economy and to the Buttermilk Hill/Coker Settlement.

Legend of Historic Buildings, Structures, and Objects (see Map-2)

Map Reference	Resource	Type	Status	Date / Date of Alteration(s)
A	Stone Dwelling	Building	Contributing	Circa 1860-1880; addition circa 1915
B	Frame Barn	Building	Noncontributing	Circa 1915
C	Dairy Barn	Building	Contributing	Circa 1925
D	Cistern	Structure	Contributing	Circa 1945
E	Windmill	Structure	Noncontributing	Circa 1945
F	Voelcker Bungalow	Building	Contributing	Circa 1927
G	Garage	Building	Contributing	Circa 1927

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****BEGIN RESTRICTED INFORMATION****

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Voelcker Farmstead Historic District, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

****END RESTRICTED INFORMATION****

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Statement of Significance

The Voelcker Farmstead Historic District is an outstanding representation of a family dairy farm from the area known as “Buttermilk Hill” in Bexar County, Texas. Initially identified as a significant representation of its property type in the MPS “Historic Farms and Ranches of Bexar County, 1800-1970,” the farmstead is associated with the rise of the family dairy industry in Bexar County, the introduction of refrigeration and mechanization, and the eventual demise of the small family dairy resulting from post-World War II transformations of the industry. Louis Voelcker acquired the future dairy farm in 1917 that included an existing stone dwelling from the late nineteenth century. His son, Max Voelcker, eventually took over the operation of the dairy. After he constructed a modern bungalow (ca. 1927), laborers likely occupied the late-nineteenth century stone house. Although Max Voelcker modernized the dairy in the 1930s and 1940s with refrigeration and milking machines, he maintained the wooden, 20-cow milking barn (ca. 1925).

With a herd of 100 dairy cows, the Voelcker Dairy became one of the largest dairies on “Buttermilk Hill.” The majority of the buildings within the district, including the two dwellings and the milking barn, retain more than a sufficient level of historic integrity to convey their significance. The Voelcker Farmstead Historic District is nominated at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Agriculture. The period of significance from 1917 to 1947 encompasses the acquisition of the property by Louis Voelcker and the establishment of the dairy and terminates with the final sale of the dairy herd in 1947.

INTRODUCTION

The Voelcker farmstead/dairy represents several important historical trends in the history of agricultural development in Bexar County during the early twentieth century that qualify it for NRHP inclusion under Criterion A. Most importantly, it represents a good example of a large scale, private dairying operation that developed during a period when the industry became significant to the Bexar County economy and to the Buttermilk Hill/Coker Settlement, of which the dairy was a part. It became part of the larger Louis Voelcker dairy farm in 1917; however, archival evidence suggests the property was likely used for agricultural purposes by Voelcker’s family members prior to Louis Voelcker’s association with the tract and that Voelcker himself was operating a dairy in the vicinity of the subject property by at least 1910.

Archival evidence suggests that Louis’s son Max Voelcker began to occupy and improve the property soon after his father’s acquisition of it and that he owned his own dairy cattle as early as 1918. He did not formally acquire the nominated property until his father’s death in 1935, though he was living there by the early 1920s, and together with his wife Minnie, appears to have constructed the remaining structures on the property, including their home (Resource F), a garage (Resource G), and possibly a dairy barn (Resource C) and a cistern (Resource D). Together, the buildings represent a good regional example of an early twentieth century dairy farm.

The dairy operated successfully for the next thirty years, and its evolution represents other important developments that changed the dairy industry and agriculture in general during the early twentieth century. These events include advances in technology such as refrigeration, pasteurization, mechanization, and improved milk storage options that allowed for increased production, higher quality products, and exploitation of larger

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markets. Additionally, improvement in transportation, such as roadway construction, and the advent of automobile travel promoted easier conveyance of products to market as well as emphasis on wholesaling to creameries. These facilities processed dairy products for distribution in grocery stores rather than limiting individual farmers to door-to-door delivery of their goods. Despite the advent of the Great Depression, these technological developments encouraged growth in the Bexar County dairy industry from the 1920s through World War II and are vividly represented in the history of the Voelcker dairy and its associated structures. Unfortunately this success was short-lived, and the technological advancements and increased development they promoted eventually brought about the demise of dairy farming on Buttermilk Hill.

Although the MPS for “Historic Farms and Ranches of Bexar County, 1800-1970” indicates that the Voelcker Dairy continued to operate successfully into the 1970s, additional archival research detailed in subsequent sections revealed the couple sold their entire dairy herd by 1947. What makes the farm distinct, however, is that the Voelckers, unlike many of their neighbors, were able to adapt and survive due to their large landholdings and the increased demand for land as San Antonio’s suburbs continued to expand. Through land sales and conversion from dairy to beef production, the Voelckers kept a large portion of their farm together. As a result, the nominated district remains the last surviving example of a type of historic property once prevalent throughout the region.

In addition to its Criterion A associations, it is also possible that intact subsurface archaeological deposits associated with the Voelckers and/or their tenants exist on the property. Surface scatters of historic twentieth century artifacts have been observed on the property, which has been recorded as archaeological site 41BX1744. Although limited subsurface testing did not locate any deposits, shovel tests were located “in the general area of the complex of structures” (Hartnett et al. 2009:28), suggesting that the areas immediately surrounding the structures may not have been subjected to shovel testing. If intact archaeological deposits dating to the period of significance do exist, their associations with the Voelcker farm and resident Mexican American or other farm laborers, both types of sites which are not well represented in Texas’ archaeological record, suggest these deposits would likely be eligible as contributing elements to the property under Criterion D. At present, the site contributes to the district’s eligibility under Criterion A.

Mid- to Late-Nineteenth Century Development in the Vicinity of the Coker Settlement

The Voelcker dairy farm is representative of the evolution of agricultural development in the area around the once prominent dairy-producing Coker Settlement region of Bexar County, Texas. The area, which is located approximately 12 miles northwest of the original San Antonio city center along the often dry Salado Creek, was originally settled by Texas Revolution veteran John Coker at the end of the Texas Republic Period in 1845 (Texas General Land Office Records; Bexar County Abstract 125). His receipt of a 1,476.13-acre (one-third league) land grant in Bexar County fits into a broader pattern in the region during the 1840s when the majority of land grant recipients “shifted from Spanish and Mexican grantees to native-born migrants from the American South and foreign-born immigrants predominantly from Germany and Ireland” (Dase et al 20010: E7).

The Coker settlement developed around his original land grant. Nineteenth century visitors to the region surrounding the settlement, including Frederick Law Olmstead, noted its suitability for cattle ranching. In particular, the abundance of mesquite grass, which was favored by cattle as well as other livestock, and the

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sheer amount of open land, which allowed cattle to roam at will and to access an abundant food supply, attracted early settlers to the area (Spencer 2010: 18).

Though most immigrants to Texas during the Early Statehood era intended to become farmers, those who arrived in the Coker Settlement soon realized the benefits of agricultural diversification. San Antonio and its surrounding environs had been home to large cattle ranches since the Spanish Mission period, and in order to survive, many settlers realized the economic benefits of investing in cattle. In addition to selling them as beef, settlers also adopted the practice of dairy farming during the antebellum period. For example, archival records indicate that John Coker's son James Harrison Coker regularly sold "as much as 20 pounds of butter at a time for 25 cents a pound" in 1861 (Spencer 2010: 36; Stanfield 1942: 5).

Development in the area around the Coker Settlement increased significantly after the Civil War. Growth escalated in response to population increases in San Antonio and Bexar County in general, which had 16,043 residents by 1870, and due to the city's status as an important military center in the postbellum years. Fort Sam Houston served "as the principal military post in the state" during this period "and provided a large and consistent consumer for local agricultural goods." These developments provided Coker Settlement farmers with increased access to a growing local market for their agricultural products. In addition, the Galveston, Harrisburg, and San Antonio Railroad arrived in San Antonio in 1877, opening more distant markets to local farmers who previously could not ship products long distances due to the unforgiving Texas climate (Dase et al. 2010: E7).

Earliest Settlement of the Voelcker and Associated Families in the Coker Settlement along Salado Creek

Some of the ancestors of Max and Minnie Tomerlin Voelcker arrived in the San Antonio area as early as the late 1840s; however, they did not establish a permanent presence in the Coker Settlement until after the Civil War. Their association with the area correlates with the construction of the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad in the region between 1885 and 1887 (Young 2013), which greatly increased interest and settlement in the vicinity of the small discontinuous farming community (Figure 10). In particular, Max's grandmother Elise Voelcker purchased 150 acres "of land on the Salado...for \$2,140" in 1877. It appears she began to raise cattle on the property as early as 1879 when her son-in-law registered a brand for her. The document states that she was living "on the Salado" at this time (Spencer 2010: 52), though not on the subject property.

Her relocation to the Coker Settlement area is confirmed by review of 1880 Bexar County census records. In that year, Elise Vollker [sic] (49) is listed as the head of a household containing her three adult daughters, her son Louis (12), and her granddaughters Fannie Weber (4) and Elise Rullman (3). She lived one household from her daughter Fanny, and Fanny's husband William Locke. Locke worked as a surveyor; however, his brothers, who also lived in the household, were identified as farmers and may have worked on Elise's ranch during the period.

Minnie Tomerlin Voelcker's ancestors were investing in land in the region during the same period. Specifically, Minnie's maternal grandparents, Aaron and Nancy Maltsberger, purchased 80 acres on the Salado in 1883. They continued to expand their holdings throughout the decade, acquiring an additional 50 acres the same year and 60 acres in 1886. Additionally, either Aaron or his brother Alex purchased another 155-acre

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tract from John Harrison Coker in 1885 (Spencer 2010: 50). The Maltzbergers had immigrated to the area from Missouri at the urging of Aaron's brother George (Spencer 2010: 52).

As established in the MPS for "Historic Farms and Ranches of Bexar County: 1800-1970," the Maltzberger and Voelcker families' establishment of farms outside of San Antonio proper fits into a broader pattern of agricultural development in the county during the 1870s and 1880s. There were only 266 farms reported in Bexar County in 1870. This number had "increased more than 325 percent to 1,136 farms ten years later." In addition to the increase in the number of farms, the county's population also increased over 90 percent to 30,470 by 1880 (Dase et al. 2010: E7).

The Genesis of the Voelcker Dairy: Early Land Acquisition of Louis Voelcker (1890-1915)

In 1890, Max Voelcker's father Louis purchased 200 acres in the J. B. Thompson Survey (Bexar County Abstract 125) on Salado Creek from his older sister Ida Smith for \$1,000. The conveyance occurred shortly after his marriage to Hedwig (Hettie) Tomasini in 1889 (Spencer 2010: 52; Bexar County Deed Records; 65: 607). This tract would become his homestead, and he continued to expand his farm, a portion of which would become the Max and Minnie Voelcker dairy, through the early twentieth century. In 1895, tax records indicate Louis Voelcker's only land holdings outside of San Antonio included the 200-acre tract. It was valued at \$600 at the time. He also owned a lot in San Antonio as well as a wagon (\$30), 2 horses/mules (\$15), and 10 cattle (\$50).

Over the following decade, Louis continued to expand both his land and livestock holdings. Most of his real estate was in the J.B. Thompson Survey and the adjacent M. Guerra (Guerrera) Survey. These surveys were located to the northwest of the original John Coker land grant, and the Thompson survey was almost bisected by Salado Creek (Figure 11). Louis Voelcker purchased an additional 320 acres of the Thompson Survey from his former brother-in-law J.D. Smith in August of 1896. The grantors J.D. and P.V. Smith are listed as residents of Medina County in the record. Voelcker paid \$1,000 for the property with a vendor's lien (Bexar County Deed Records; 154: 426; Spencer 2010: 54).

The 1900 Bexar County tax rolls indicate that Voelcker owned two tracts in the Thompson Survey, including a 520-acre tract valued at \$1,400 and his original 200-acre homestead tract valued at \$600. He also owned a lot in San Antonio valued at \$600, and his livestock holdings had expanded to include 4 horses/mules (\$40) and 24 cattle (\$100). In total, his estate was valued at \$2,830. Though it is unclear if Voelcker purchased another property that enlarged the 320-acre tract, contemporary tax records only reference a 520-acre parcel, suggesting the description in the deed record may contain an error.

According to population census records, Louis Voelcker resided in an unincorporated portion of Bexar County in 1900. Secondary sources indicate he resided on his property along the Salado at this time. The household included Louis Voelker [sic] (31), his wife Hedwig (30), their sons Henry (10), George (10), Louis (6), and Max (2), and his mother Elise (69). He was listed as a farm owner and lived near several families of renters, suggesting he may have employed farm laborers even during this early period. One of the renters was Louis's wife Hedwig's (or Hettie's) relative Alfred Tomasini.

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Louis Voelcker purchased two additional parcels in the Thompson Survey in 1901 from G. B. Frank. The tracts included a 278.5-acre parcel and a 23.5-acre parcel. The record indicates that the 278.5-acre parcel was part of a larger 478.5-acre tract; however, 200 acres were reserved from the conveyance and contained the homestead of A.P. Gulick. These tracts would eventually become part of the Voelcker farm and was inherited by Max Voelcker upon his father's death. Gulick was married to Hettie Voelcker's sister, Jeanette Tomasini (Spencer 2010: 51) and may have occupied or leased out the nineteenth century limestone house (Resource A) on the Max and Minnie Voelcker dairy property during the late nineteenth century. Gulick had acquired the property from Minnie Voelcker's uncle, Alex Maltzberger in 1883 (Spencer 2010: 55), and it is possible it was constructed by either of the men or by the property's previous owner G. W. Maltzberger (Spencer 2010: 52). The Maltzbergers resided in the project vicinity during this period and had acquired interest in a 1,476-acre tract in the Thompson Survey containing the subject property from the estate of E. D. Somerset at a tax auction in 1873 (Bexar County Deed Records; W2: 404). As a result, any occupants of the property prior to its associations with A. P. Gulick would likely have been members of the Maltzberger or Somerset families and/or their associated tenants. Census data indicates that the Maltzbergers were farmers during this period, and that A.P. Maltzberger in particular was a "stock" farmer. Though this term could refer to other activities, the listed occupation does not preclude the possibility that dairy farming may have been occurring on the property.

By 1905, tax records indicate the Louis and Hettie Voelcker farm had expanded significantly both in size and value. In that year, the couple's landholdings included five tracts in the Thompson Survey and two lots in San Antonio proper. The tracts in the Thompson survey included 520 acres valued at \$1,400, 200 acres valued at \$600, 300 acres valued at \$90, 100 acres valued at \$300, and 150 acres valued at \$1,300. He also owned 4 horses (\$40), 2 wagons, and his cattle holdings had more than doubled since 1900 to 60 valued at \$300. In total, his property was assessed at \$6,320, over twice the amount attributed to it five years earlier.

The following year, Louis Voelcker purchased an additional 729.25 acres in the adjacent M. Guerra (Guerrera) Survey for \$5,240 with a vendor's lien from F. C. Davis. The tract was located east of the Jackson-Keller Road (Bexar County Deed Records; 228: 503) and constituted one of Voelcker's last main land purchases. Though he made minor land transactions in subsequent years, including sale of some of his landholdings, this purchase brought the property near its eventual 1,810-acre size. He also received two quit-claim deeds for the 150-acre tract he rendered taxes on the previous year from his sisters Fannie Locke and Clara Rullman (Bexar County Deed Records; 248: 146 and 248: 149; Spencer 2010: 51-52). This tract was likely his mother's 150-acre parcel inherited by the siblings after her death.

The Voelcker Dairy (1917-1935)

The expansion of the Voelckers' dairy farm correlated with a period of modernization and change in the dairy industry that made participation in the trade more attractive to cattle farmers in Texas in general and the Coker Settlement specifically. The expansion of dairy farming also correlated with the onset of the tick fever epidemic, known as Texas Fever, that virtually destroyed the beef cattle boom that occurred in the state during the postbellum period. Many states began to institute quarantines on Texas cattle as early as 1885, and the days of the famous cattle drives along the Chisholm and other trails quickly came to an end. This epidemic specifically affected residents of the Coker Settlement as the "first overnight stop on the drive north from San Antonio on the Chisholm Trail" was the original Coker homestead (Spencer 2010: 78). By 1880, "cattle in Bexar County had plummeted by two thirds from the previous decade with only 18,416 head" reported. Rather

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than abandon cattle raising, many local farmers adapted by switching from beef to dairy cattle (Dase et al 2010: E9).

Prior to the 1880s, Texas cattle were known as notoriously poor milkers. Families generally relied on the same cattle for both beef and milk, and issues with transport and processing made commercial sale of dairy products of limited economic benefit. If farmers sold dairy products at all, it was generally cream or butter, which were less perishable due to their high fat content (Spencer 2010: 78).

This trend began to shift somewhat after 1880 when the first purebred Jersey cattle were imported to Texas. Holsteins were bred in Texas in 1884. These cows were specifically bred to produce milk, and though Jerseys were more popular in the state at first due to their resistance to tick fever “and the high butterfat content of their milk, particularly desirable in the days before refrigeration,” Holsteins were also bred in significant numbers during the late nineteenth century (Spencer 2010: 81).

In addition to the arrival of dairy cows in the state, advances in dairy processing and storage technology as well as transport during the period also made the industry more economically viable (Dase et al. 2010: E12). Specifically, C.G. de Laval invented the first mechanical cream separator in 1880. The machines could “skim 160 to 400 pounds of milk an hour,” a process that took over 12 hours by traditional methods. Despite the advantages they offered, the machines cost from \$65 to \$125 apiece. This cost was unaffordable for many cash-strapped farmers. General access to the machinery became available in 1902, however, with their distribution through the Sears Catalog. In that year, farmers could purchase a milk separator for \$24.95, and the product “remained a mainstay of the Sears product mix until 1947” (Spencer 2010: 84-85). The technology’s availability correlates with the assessment of \$20 worth of manufacturers’ tools/implements/machinery on the Voelcker farmstead in 1910 Bexar County tax rolls. The refrigerated train car also became more common after the advent of the railroad “and, as was true across the nation, opened national markets to local farmers and ranchers” (Dase et al. 2010: E10).

By 1880, the number of dairy cows in Bexar County “had increased 165 percent from the previous decade to 4,951” and the amount of dairy products produced “increased even more precipitously “ with the amount of butter produced increasing “359 percent to 105,296 pounds, cheese up 397 percent to 2,609 pounds, and milk up 519 percent to 37,370 gallons.” By 1900, the Bexar County population had grown too much to be served solely by local sources, but local producers tried their best to keep up, producing “630,467 pounds of butter, 31,948 pounds of cheese, and 3,885,953 gallons of milk.” These production levels “remained constant” through the 1920s (Dase et al 2010: E12).

In 1910, Louis Voelcker rendered taxes on six tracts in the Thompson and Guerra/Guerrera Surveys, several of which had increased significantly in value since 1905. In particular, his 520-acre parcel had increased in value from \$1,400 to \$1,500 while his 200-acre tract had increased in value over 3.5 times from \$600 in 1905 to \$2,145 in 1910. This significant jump in value suggests considerable improvements were made to the property during this period. It may reflect the construction of the large homestead on the tract valued at over \$2,000 at the time of Voelcker’s death two decades later. While the value of his 300- and 100-acre tracts remained static at \$900 and \$300 respectively, the 150-acre parcel Voelcker acquired from his mother’s estate had increased in value from \$1,300 to \$1,825. His 729.25-acre tract in the Guerra/Guerrera Survey acquired in 1906 was assessed at \$2,190. His livestock holdings remained similar during this period and included 2 horses (\$100) and

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60 cattle (\$400). As previously referenced, this was also the year that he rendered taxes on \$20 worth of manufacturers' tools/implements/machinery, and he also owned two wagons valued at \$40. In total, his property was valued at \$9,560, an increase of \$3,200 from 1905, and his farm was significantly larger and more valuable than the average Bexar County farm during this period. As per the MPS "Historic Farms and Ranches of Bexar County, 1800-1970," the dairy's growth and success reflects a significant trend in regional agriculture, as dairy farming "flourished in Bexar County between 1880 and 1920" (Dase et al. 2010: E12).

The 1910 Bexar County population census lists Louis Voelcker (42) as head of a household in an unincorporated portion of Bexar County with wife Hettie (40) and their three sons George (18), Louis (16), and Max (12). Louis Voelcker's occupation was listed as dairy farmer and he owned his property. All of the family members were born in Texas and identified as speaking English, though both Hettie and Louis are identified as having parents born in Germany. The family lived adjacent to two households of renters, including the families of George and Ida Hissman and Edward and Elise Uecker. The family members, including Ida Hissman, worked as farm laborers, possibly on the Voelcker's dairy.

Despite the family's identification as having German ancestry in the census records, genealogical research indicates that both Max and Minnie Voelcker had a more ethnically diverse background (Spencer 2010), and that both of their parents were born in the United States. Two to three generations removed from their European ancestors, there is no evidence that the Voelckers adhered to German traditions, spoke the German language, or used typical German building forms on their property.

Tax records from 1915 indicate that the farm operation had continued to prosper and increase in value during the intervening years. In that year, Louis Voelcker rendered taxes on six tracts including five in the Thompson survey and one in the Guerra/Guerrera survey. The property in the Thompson survey included 520 acres (\$2,080), 200 acres (\$1,360), 300 acres (\$1,200), 100 acres (\$400), and 150 acres (\$2,860). He had sold a portion of his holdings in the Guerra/Guerrera Survey and rendered taxes on a 451.25-acre parcel in the survey valued at \$1,835. He still owned two lots in San Antonio valued at \$900 and \$400 respectively, and though his livestock holdings are not enumerated separately, his personal property was assessed at \$1,395. In total, the Voelcker homestead and farm was assessed at \$12,430.

In 1917, Louis Voelcker acquired the property that is today associated with the Voelcker Farmstead Historic District. He purchased the 200-acre A.P. Gulick homestead from A. P. and Jeanette Gulick as well as from Gulick's children as heirs at law of his first wife Annie for \$7,000. Gulick was living in San Antonio by 1900 and still lived there in 1910 suggesting the property may have been occupied by agricultural laborers during the early twentieth century. Voelcker later leased this property, including the limestone house recorded as Resource A, to his son Max, who was 20-years-old at the time. Max remained an integral part of his father's farming operation throughout the early twentieth century. His father suffered from tuberculosis fistulas, a very painful condition that made it impossible for him to engage in hard labor. Additionally, his brother George, who still lived with their father at the time, suffered from partial paralysis due to a bout with childhood illness (Spencer 2010: 102).

In 1918, Max Voelcker applied for exemption from military service in World War I "because he was indispensable to the operations of the [family] farm." His application provides a good summary of the character of the agricultural operation during this period. Specifically, he references his father and brother's ailments and

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indicates that his other two brothers had their own farms to attend to. He described the farm as including 50 acres under cultivation, including “20 acres in corn; 15 acres in oats; and 15 acres in cane.” These crops would have provided food for both the family and the livestock. He described the annual output from these crops as “100 tons of corn, eight tons of sheaf oats, and seven tons of cane.” He indicated that all of the land “not under cultivation was reserved as pastureland for four horses and 100 head of stock cattle.” The use of the term stock cattle, which can refer to any cattle other than beef cattle, suggests the dairy operation was continuing to expand during the early twentieth century (Spencer 2010: 103).

The form also indicates that Max Voelcker was leasing land from his father and owned his own cattle by this time. He indicated that “in addition to his labor, his rental fee to his father was half the crop and any increase in the number of cattle,” of which 50 were his (Spencer 2010: 103). His ownership of livestock and status as a renter during this period is confirmed by his enumeration in the 1922 Bexar County tax rolls. In that year, he owned no real estate, but had personal property valued at \$440. In contrast, his father still owned seven tracts, including six in the Thompson Survey of 150 acres (\$4,720), 200 acres (\$4,330), 520 acres (\$3,640), 200 acres (\$1,100), 300 acres (\$2,100), and 100 acres (\$700). He also owned 451.50 acres in the Guerra/Guerrera Survey (\$3,160), \$2,880 worth of lots in San Antonio, where secondary sources suggest he and his wife may have been living prior to her death in 1920 (Spencer 2010: 104), and \$870 worth of personal property, including livestock. His estate had increased in value again to \$23,820.

The 1920 Bexar County census records indicate that Max and his older brother Louis were responsible for running the family farm by this time. In that year, the household included Louis Voelcker Sr. (51), Hettie (47), and their adult sons George (27), Louis Jr. (25), and Max H. (21). The family lived on Blanco Road. Neither Louis Sr. nor George were identified as having an occupation, reflecting Louis’s illness and George’s disability, while Louis Jr. and Max are both identified as farmers. Again the family lived in the immediate vicinity of two families who rented their property and are identified as dairy farmers. The families include that of Max Voelcker’s relatives E. A. and Ara Gulick and that of Herman and Augusta Offer. A 1922 map of the area labels the Voelcker farmstead and shows a complex of structures, a windmill, and a series of farm roads crossing the property (Figure 12).

Louis Voelcker’s property holdings remained similar in value in both 1925 and 1930. In 1925, tax records indicate that he and his son Max lived at the same address (Rt. 2, Box 317). Louis rendered taxes on the same six tracts in the Thompson Survey consisting of the 150 acres (\$3,780), 200 acres (\$3,480), 520 acres (\$2,970), 200 acres (\$1,120), 300 acres (\$1,680), and 100 acres (\$560) as well as the 451.50-acre tract in the Guerra/Guerrera Survey (\$4,510). He also owned four lots in San Antonio valued at \$2,300 and \$1,080 worth of personal property. In sum, his estate was valued at \$21,420. Max also appears in the tax rolls for 1925 when he rendered taxes on \$310 worth of personal property. He still did not have any real estate holdings.

As previously referenced, Max H. Voelcker was an essential factor in the success of his father’s large dairy farming operation from his childhood on. The first reference to Max actually owning his own cattle was in his 1918 application for exemption from military service. It is unclear whether he was living with his father during this period or whether he had already moved into the small limestone house (Resource A) that his father had purchased the previous year. In either case, he paid his father rent in the form of crops, cattle, and labor and began to establish his own milk routes in San Antonio.

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Max Voelcker married Minnie Tomerlin on April 30, 1927, and the couple settled onto his father's farm. They were already interconnected via marriage and land transactions between their families and had likely known each other their whole lives as they would have attended the same small schoolhouse and local Methodist church (Historical Committee Coker United Methodist Church 1994). Shortly before their marriage, Max commissioned the construction of the "practical, cozy bungalow" (Resource F) next door to the old limestone dwelling he may have lived in up to that time. He also constructed several outbuildings, at least two of which are still standing (Resources C and G) (Map 3).

The most important of the buildings was the couple's dairy barn (Resource C). This structure appears to have been constructed in two phases, first the concrete and wood-frame, dog-trot milking barn and later a single-pen wood-frame addition to the east. The milking barn included an elevated walkway and "recessed milking stations, which could accommodate 20 cows at a time" (Spencer 2010: 114). Other buildings included a garage (Resource G) and a possible former dwelling later used for storage, which is currently in a state of partial collapse, in addition to a cistern (Resource D) and a windmill (Map 3).

Newspaper records indicate that the stone house (Resource A) may have housed farm laborers during this period and throughout the early twentieth century. The Voelckers regularly advertised in local newspapers for laborers to work on the farm. As dairying is a 365-day-a-year undertaking, and the Voelckers never had any children, additional help to milk up to 100 cows per day would have been essential. They typically advertised for married men with families, and in certain years beginning in 1931 specifically advertised for Mexican families (San Antonio Light 1927; 1928; and 1933; San Antonio Express 1929; 1930a; 1930b; 1931; and 1934). These advertisements suggest the dwelling was likely occupied by a series of farm workers during the historic period.

Census records from the same year confirm that Max and his new bride Minnie were living in their own household on his father's property and that the family employed farm laborers of Mexican descent. The record lists Louis Voelcker Sr. (62) and his son George (38) living in their own household on property owned by Louis. The record identifies Louis as a stock farmer and his son George as a dairy farmer. Max H. (32) and Minnie (25) Voelcker lived one household from Max's father on property they rented. Max was identified as a dairy farmer.

In that year, the Voelckers lived immediately adjacent to two families of renters identified as laborers on dairy farms. The first was that of George E. (40) and Ora (39) Flores and their children Mildred (15), Edward (13), Arnold J. (7), Joyce (3) and George Jr. (2). George was identified as a laborer on a dairy farm, and the family paid \$25 a month to rent their home. The other family of renters included Sam Pruitt (23) and his wife Louise (16). Their household also included Louise's mother Grace Mann (30), and Sam was identified as a laborer on a dairy farm. In contrast to the Flores family, the Pruitts paid only \$5 a month to rent their home.

In 1930, Louis Voelcker Sr., Louis Voelcker Jr., and Max H. Voelcker are all enumerated in the Bexar County tax records. Louis Voelcker Jr. lived in San Antonio and paid taxes on two lots there valued at \$510 and \$1,040 respectively as well as \$80 worth of personal property. Max still had no landholdings but the value of his personal property had increased significantly from \$310 to \$930. Their father still owned seven tracts of land, though two were smaller in size. He paid taxes on six tracts in the Thompson Survey, including 145 acres (\$3,620), 200 acres (\$3,480), 520 acres (\$2,910), 200 acres (\$1,120), 300 acres (\$1,680), and 100 acres (\$500).

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His tract in the Guerra/Guerrera Survey had been reduced in size to 351.50 acres, though its value had increased significantly to \$7,000, and he owned property in San Antonio valued at \$2,300 as well as \$510 worth of personal property. The total value of his real estate holdings and personal property was assessed at \$23,180.

Louis Voelcker Sr. died intestate in 1935 and was buried in Mission Burial Park in San Antonio. His youngest son Max was appointed executor of his estate, and perhaps due to pressures of the Great Depression gripping the nation at this time, negotiations between the Voelcker brothers regarding what property each would inherit quickly became contentious and led to litigation. By this time Max had been married for eight years and he and his wife Minnie were operating a successful dairy operation of their own on land rented from his father. Despite the Depression, tax records from the period indicate Max Voelcker had managed to acquire some additional landholdings as well. The following section details the history of the nominated property and of Max and Minnie Voelcker, who ran a dairy there throughout the early twentieth century.

Modernization of the Voelcker Dairy Farm under the ownership of Max and Minnie Voelcker (1935-1947)

The year of his father's death (1935), Max appears in tax records as the owner of two tracts in the Thompson Survey, including 200 acres valued at \$3,500 and 215.24-acres valued at \$1,200. In subsequent years, the 200-acre tract was specifically identified as the couple's homestead in Bexar County tax rolls. He also owned 427.1-acres (\$3,000) in the Pinckney Caldwell Survey (Bexar County Abstract 83) located immediately south of the Thompson Survey and 108.68-acres (\$3,170) in the M.T. Guerra (Guerrera) Survey located to the west of the Thompson and Caldwell Surveys (Figure 11). Though not enumerated individually, he also rendered taxes on \$970 worth of personal property, including livestock, and together, his holdings were assessed at \$10,850. Secondary sources indicate that he had purchased some of this property from his father prior to his death (Spencer 2010: 142).

The growth of Max and Minnie's dairy farming operation was bolstered by advances in milk processing technology and storage options during the period. In particular, pasteurization and refrigeration were making customers more confident in purchasing dairy products, and the patent of Dr. Hervey D. Thatcher's "common sense milk jar" further increased sanitation and eased transport (Spencer 2010: 116). The couple's established milk route "ran all the way south into the King William neighborhood" and required travel over 12 miles one-way on often impassable roads (Spencer 2010: 117). The route was eased somewhat by the use of an automobile for deliveries in subsequent years (Spencer 2010: 120); however, the machine was sometimes less reliable than the horse and wagon delivery method still used by many farmers in the region throughout the early twentieth century.

In addition to individual customers, Max and Minnie as well as other local dairy farmers living on what many referred to as "Buttermilk Hill" by the 1890s (Stanfield 1942: 4), sold their products to local grocery stores in San Antonio. As the city continued to expand, many residents relied more and more on grocery stores to purchase their essentials. Dairy farmers also began selling their product to corporate processing facilities or creameries. The Voelckers in particular sold milk to the Knowlton Creamery and could have sold to several other facilities in the area including Dairyland, Milam Creamery, Metzger's, and Highlands (Spencer 2010: 118 and 122).

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Despite the impact of the Depression on the agricultural industry in general, Max felt confident enough based on his projected inheritance from his father to “put \$17,000 down and sign notes totaling \$9,000 to purchase 400 acres of land bounded by Lockhill-Selma, Voelcker and Blanco roads from Nat and Mannie Goldsmith” (Spencer 2010: 142). The couple may have purchased the property as an investment as it was not assessed in subsequent tax records.

During the same period, Max and Minnie were engaged in an acrimonious dispute with his brothers Louis and George over partitioning their parents’ estate. The estate was 1,810 acres at the time, and settling it “led to bitter arguments over every dollar and cent to be divided” (Spencer 2010: 143). There was also contention over who would inherit their parents’ homestead, in which Max’s disabled brother had been living with their father before his death.

The estate was not officially divided until 1939. In addition to a 415.64-acre tract in the J.B. Thompson and M.T. Guerra/Guerrera Surveys on the Lockhill-Selma Road and Voelcker Lane and the 108.68-acre tract in the Guerra Survey at the intersection of Wurzbach Road and Lockhart-Selma Road (Bexar County Deed Records; 1673: 700), Max Voelcker received “a cash inheritance of \$1,243.33; a generous \$446.69 for his services as executor;...and a...\$400 bill from his attorney” (Spencer 2010: 145).

Max’s brother George received two tracts including 320.05 acres in the J.B. Thompson and M.T. Guerra Surveys on the Lockhill-Selma Road and 241.08 acres in the Guerra Survey at the intersection of the Lockhill-Selma Road and Live Oak Drive (Bexar County Deed Records; 1813: 433). He also received shares of cash from the sale of a lot in San Antonio, which brought in \$4,460, and their parents’ home, which he was given six months to have moved to his portion of the property (Spencer 2010: 145). The house, which is no longer extant, “must have been considerably nicer than the house in which Max and Minnie lived.” During two separate appraisals, it was valued at \$2,000 while the Voelcker’s “more modest” bungalow was assessed at only \$300 (Spencer 2010: 143). Finally, Louis Voelcker, Jr. received title to a 710.36-acre tract in the Thompson Survey. The property was situated in Bexar County on the Lockhill-Selma Road and Voelcker Lane. The boundaries between the brothers’ property were reportedly delineated by “old rock fences” (Bexar County Deed Records; 1809: 410) (Figure 13) though no remaining evidence of these structures were documented during the field survey effort. The divisions wrought by the partition of their father’s estate divided the brothers for the rest of their lives, despite the fact that their properties were immediately adjacent to each other.

Max Voelcker’s successful management of his father’s dairy and subsequently of his own dairy reflects a shift in agricultural development during the Depression era noted in the MPS for “Historic Farms and Ranches of Bexar County, 1800-1970” as “[c]ommercial dairy farming became a more significant component of agricultural production” in the region. By 1940, “the county was the third largest milk producer and seller, and the second largest butter seller in the state.” Though most of the locally produced milk products were from smaller farms, the “majority of milk sold in the county came from the 15 percent of dairy farms that had larger operations with between 10 and 49 cows and the 5 dairy farms that had 50 or more cows” (Dase et al. 2010: E16). The Voelcker Dairy was one of the largest in the county as Louis Voelcker had 60 or more cattle on the property as early as 1905 according to Bexar County tax data. Max Voelcker continued to expand his herd after his father’s death, running up to 100 cattle at a time on his dairy.

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Review of population census records from 1940 indicates that Max continued to employ laborers of Mexican descent on his dairy farm during the period. In that year, Max H. (42) and Minnie A. (35) Voelcker lived on property they owned valued at \$5,000. The record identifies Max as the owner of a dairy farm. The Voelckers lived adjacent to several households of renters identified as dairy hands. These households included that of single man Ozell J. Beard (32), the household of Santos (41) and Antonia (39) Garcia and their children Felix (15), Carmel (13), and Maria (8), the household of Pedro (30) and Ysaura (31) Rios and their children Alicia (13), Modesto (10), Fernando (7), and Rosita (1), and the household of Luciano (30) and Tomasa (27) Garza and their children Eavelia (2) and Eva (1). All families paid \$10 rent, while Ozell Beard paid \$7.

The Voelckers' dairy farm reached its peak production and profitability levels with the onset of World War II. The assessed value of their property, including both real and personal, increased from \$7,850 in 1940 to \$13,300 in 1945. During the same period, the 200-acre homestead tract increased in value from \$3,500 to \$4,200 and their personal property, including livestock holdings, increased from \$970 to \$1,320. The farm would never reach this value again and would stop functioning as a dairy only a few short years later.

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, the Voelckers were able to participate in the national trend of agricultural modernization with the acquisition of a "\$520 Frigidaire and a new three-quarter-ton Chevrolet truck." These purchases "took operations into the modern age," and the profits they facilitated enabled the Voelckers to indulge in some luxury purchases including a \$300 expenditure on new furniture and a radio, new clothing, and a \$937 Buick (Spencer 2010: 146).

The advent of World War II prompted both increased production on the Voelcker farm and exacerbated their labor shortage problems. Despite their unique solution of employing German Prisoners of War from nearby Camp Bullis, the couple still advertised for hired labor throughout the war. In contrast to their usual once a year posting, they often issued multiple advertisements during the war years. The Voelckers specifically requested married Mexican laborers with families in 1941 and 1942 (San Antonio Express News 1941a and 1942). In 1943, they issued at least five notices for help on the farm and expanded their specifications to include "colored" workers as well. They still wanted only married men regardless of race (San Antonio Light 1943a; 1943b; and 1943c; San Antonio Express News 1943a; 1943b; 1943c).

The continued labor shortage and increased profits the couple experienced prompted them to invest in even more technological advances including a "\$534 milking machine" that "upped their milk sales to more than \$23,000." This amount is "more than \$300,000 in today's dollars" based on the Consumer Price Index. They also sold a number of cows during the period, as evidenced in several newspaper ads, amassing more than \$5,500, and began to lease out portions of their large farm in deer leases and for use as a trailer park (Figure 14) (Spencer 2010: 173).

In addition to increased demand and labor shortages prompted by the war, its escalation also prompted increased infrastructure development in the vicinity of the Voelcker Dairy. In particular, the military extended a road from Ft. Sam Houston to Camp Bullis that required acquisition of 13.82 acres from Max Voelcker for \$1,105.06. The county also purchased 6.72 acres from George Voelcker as well as 12.12 acres from Louis Voelcker for \$403.20 and \$609.80 respectively (San Antonio Express News 1941b). Unlike his brothers, Max and Minnie fought the acquisition. They stated that they were forced to cede the acreage from "the best part" of their land and that based on "the cost and value of the land" they did not consider that they received any "profit

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on this transaction” (Spencer 2010: 176). The first acquisition of land signaled the beginning of a continuous battle for local residents including the Voelckers against expansion in San Antonio, the proliferation of suburban developments, and roadway construction that eventually enveloped the farms of their neighbors and family and would leave the Voelcker’s property “the last farm standing on Buttermilk Hill.”

During the same period that the Voelckers began to experience significant profits from their dairying operation, the industry itself changed (Dase et al. 2010: E19). In particular, infrastructure and transportation improvements prompted by the war “allowed for the import of large quantities of northern milk into Texas.” This influx of out-of-state products caused “fierce price wars throughout the state” eventually resulting in “dramatic drops in price” and “the merger of smaller regional producers into large multimarket producers” (Spencer 2010: 173). As a result, farmers who sold their products wholesale, such as the Voelckers, were virtually “at the mercy of those buying their products.” Specifically, the couple’s milk sales dropped from approximately \$19,000 in 1943 to “near \$12,000 in 1944” (Spencer 2010: 173).

The World War II era and its immediate aftermath signaled the end of the Voelckers’ dairy business. In 1945, the couple sold 60 cows, including “45 milking, 15 springing” for \$5,400 (San Antonio Light 1945a and 1945b; Spencer 2010: 174). In that year, they only sold \$3,500 worth of milk, and they “continued to thin the ranks on the farm throughout the next year, selling another 50 cows and two bulls.” The same year, their milk sales dropped to \$2,500 (Spencer 2010: 174). The end of the couple’s dairy business occurred the next year when their milk sales plummeted to a mere \$244.31. They continued to sell off the herd while at the same time purchasing beef cattle. Receipts from the late 1940s and early 1950s indicate the couple was selling beef cattle to several large companies including “Swift, Roegelein, Armor, Acme Meat and Wolf Meat Company” (Spencer 2010: 174). They never invested in dairy cattle again and eventually leased their land to other cattle owners rather than running their own herd. This enabled the Voelckers to keep their agricultural tax exemption and thus to keep a large portion of their farm together.

CONCLUSION

Max and Minnie Voelcker continued to live on their homestead tract through his death in 1980 and her death in 2000. Due to a lifetime of frugality, wise investments, and wealth from land transactions, they had amassed a sizeable fortune, including the property itself. The couple dedicated their life to the farm, and in order to protect it after her death, Minnie created a charitable endowment known as the Voelcker Fund. This endowment was to manage the property with all profits from its sale going to fund medical research.

The trustees of the fund received numerous offers for the property upon her death, mostly from private entities “who hoped to develop the farm into housing, apartments and retail centers, just as every other dairy farm in the area had been developed.” Instead, they “resisted pressure to sell the land immediately” so that the City of San Antonio could hold a bond election to acquire the property for conversion into a park. The bond was “overwhelmingly approved” (Spencer 2010: vi), and Phil Hardberger Park Conservancy was established. The 311-acre park includes the nominated property, which is being preserved as a heritage farmstead. The dairy barn was recently rehabilitated, and future plans include preservation of other buildings on the property as well as establishment of interpretive and educational activities there to share the unique history of the Voelcker Dairy and the larger Buttermilk Hill region with the people of San Antonio.

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1943b No Title (Job posting for “Experienced dairy hand with small family;” Max Voelcker); July 26, 1943.

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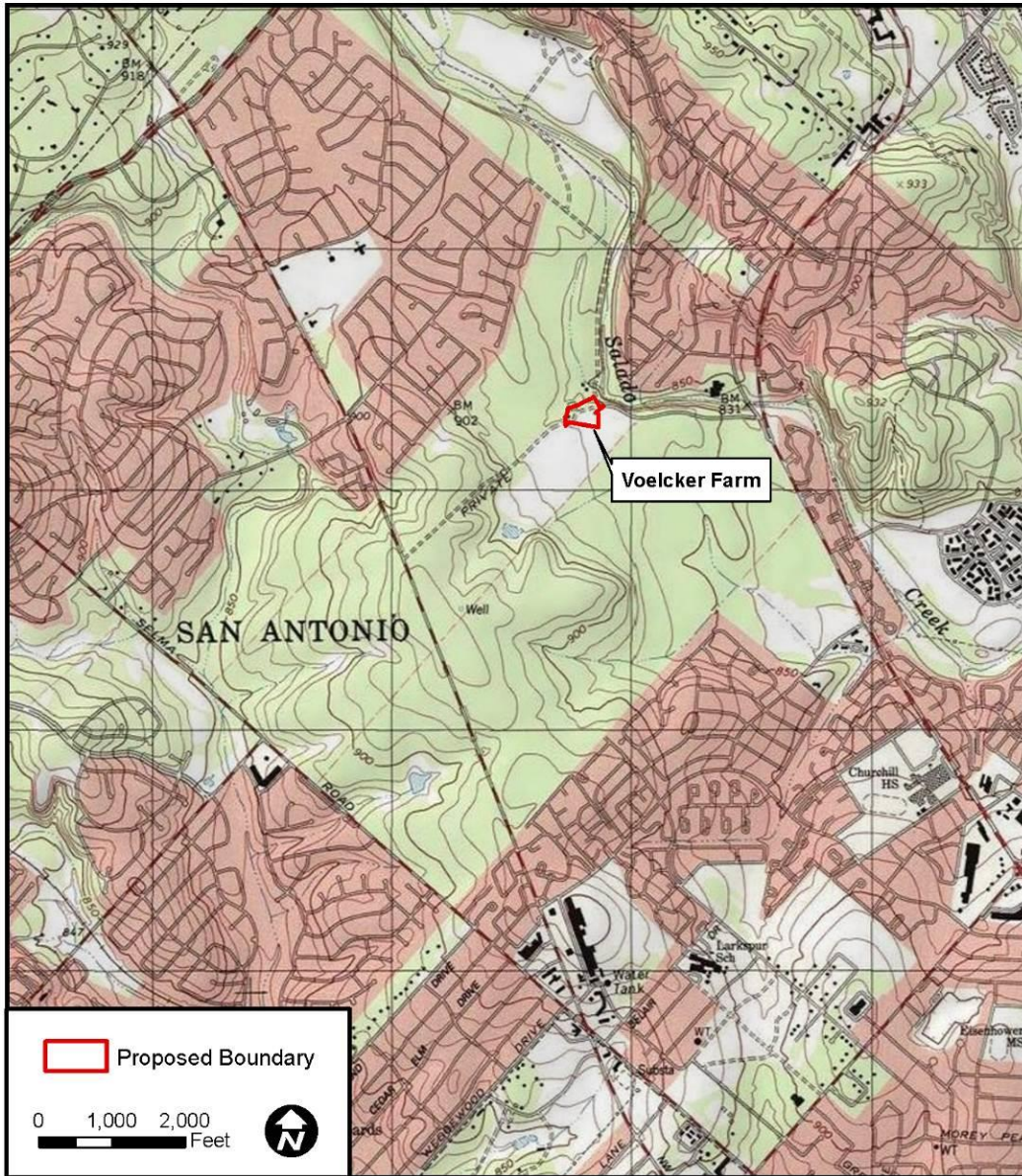
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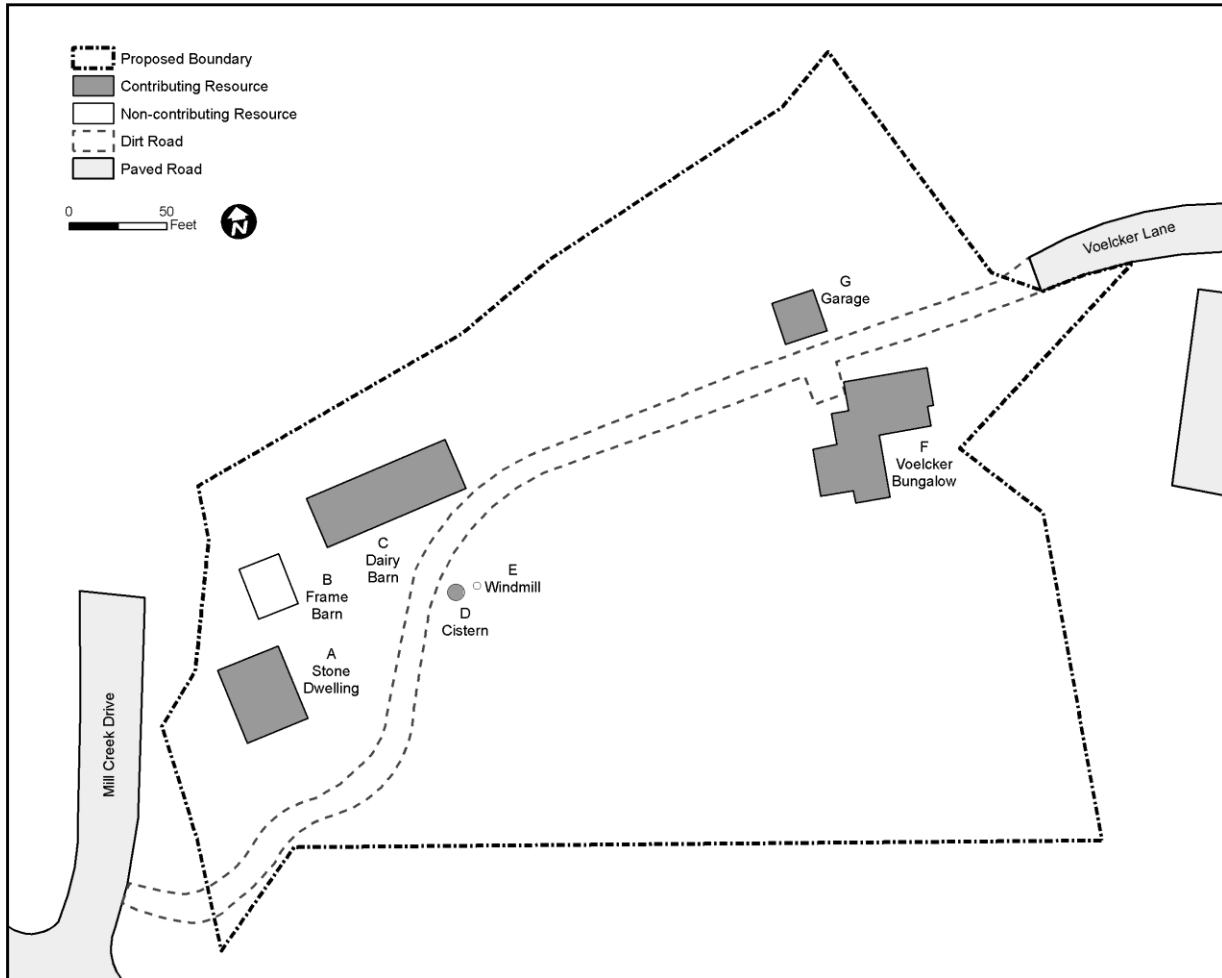
Map 1. Voelcker Farmstead Historic District Location Map.



Source: United States Geological Survey, "Castle Hills Quadrangle," [map]. Photorevised 1992, Denver Colorado: Department of the Interior, USGS, 1998.

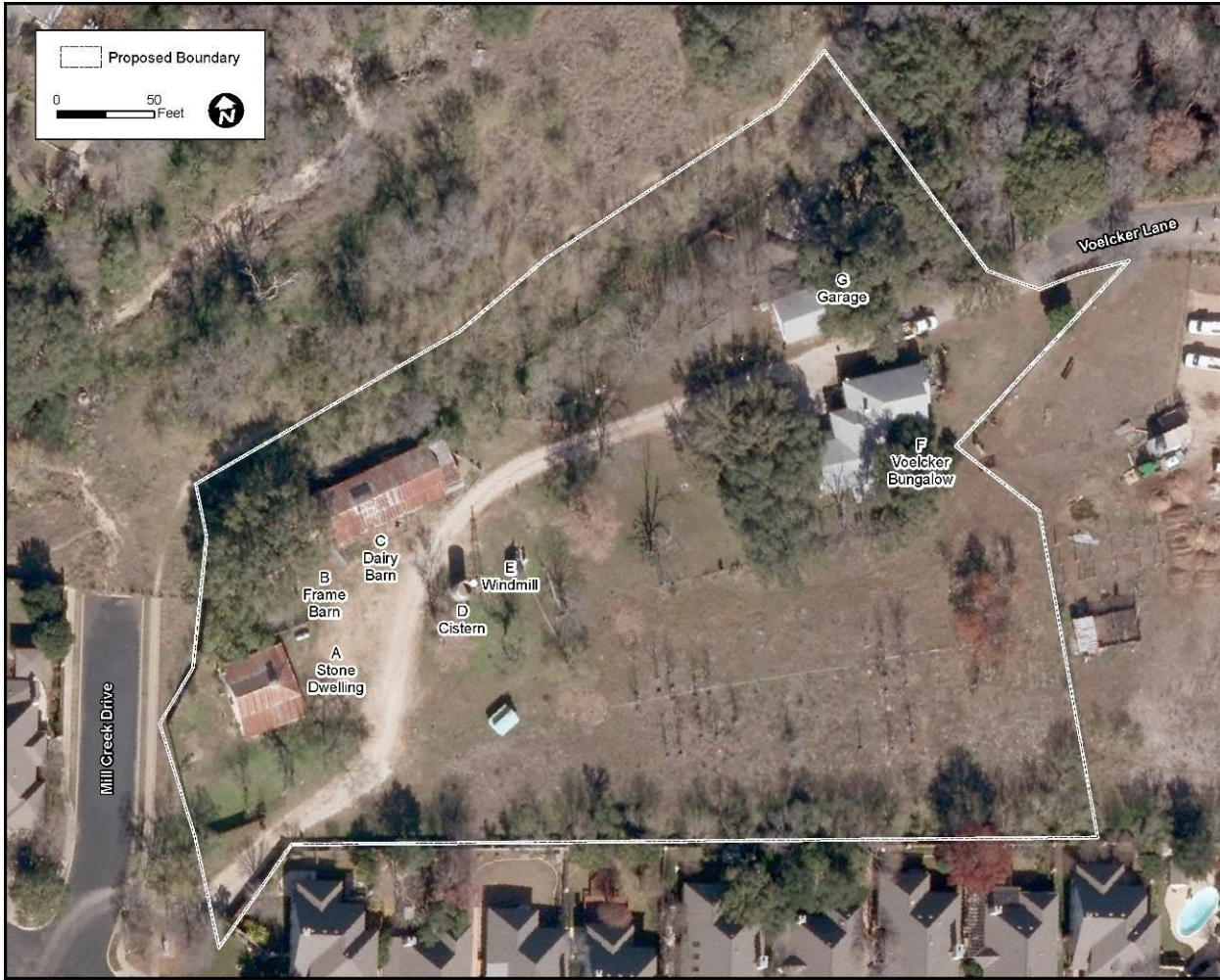
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Map 2. Voelcker Farmstead Historic District Site Map



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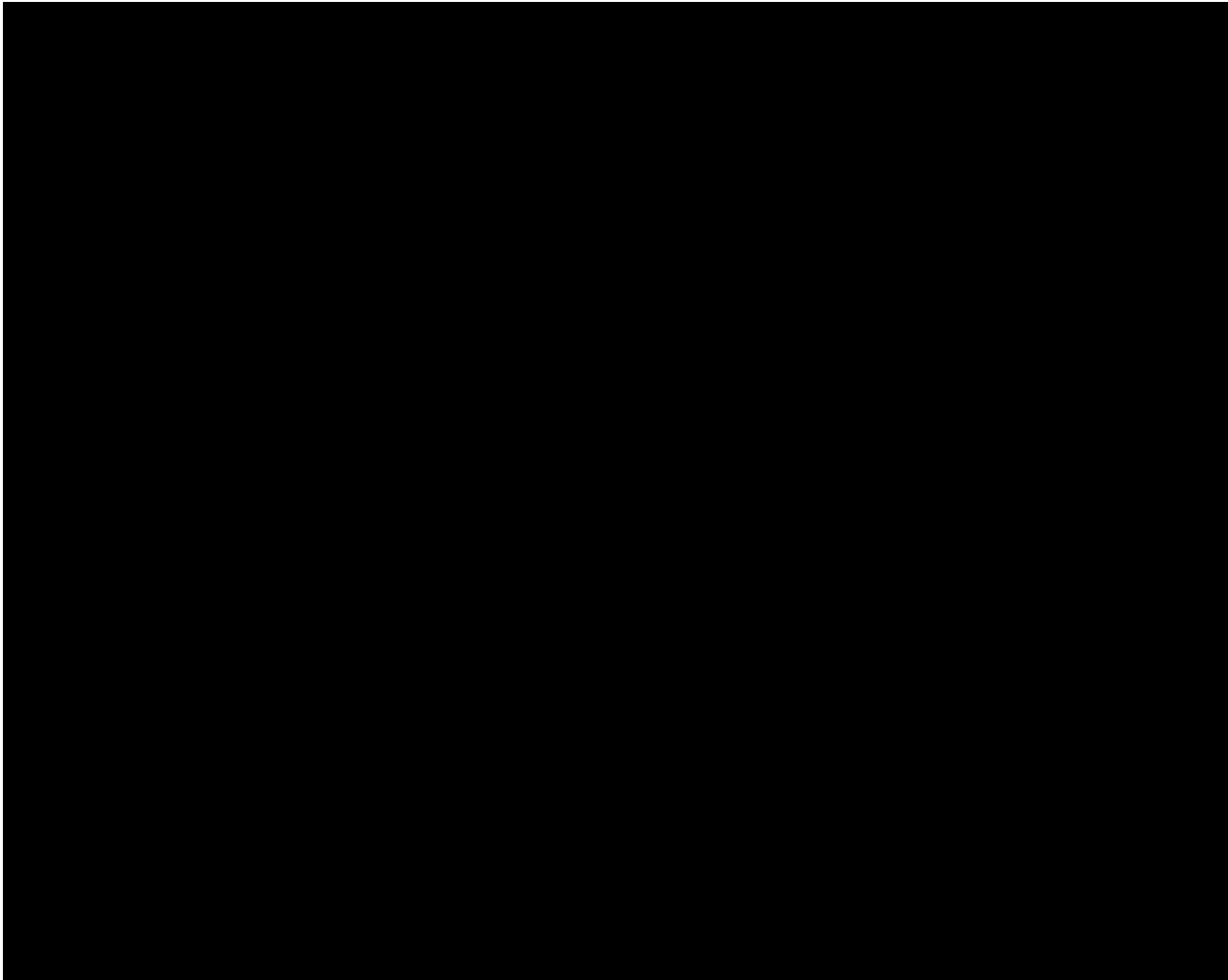
Map 3. Voelcker Farmstead Historic District Resource Location Map



Source: City of San Antonio. Castle Hills [aerial photograph]. 1: 600. San Antonio, Texas, 2011.

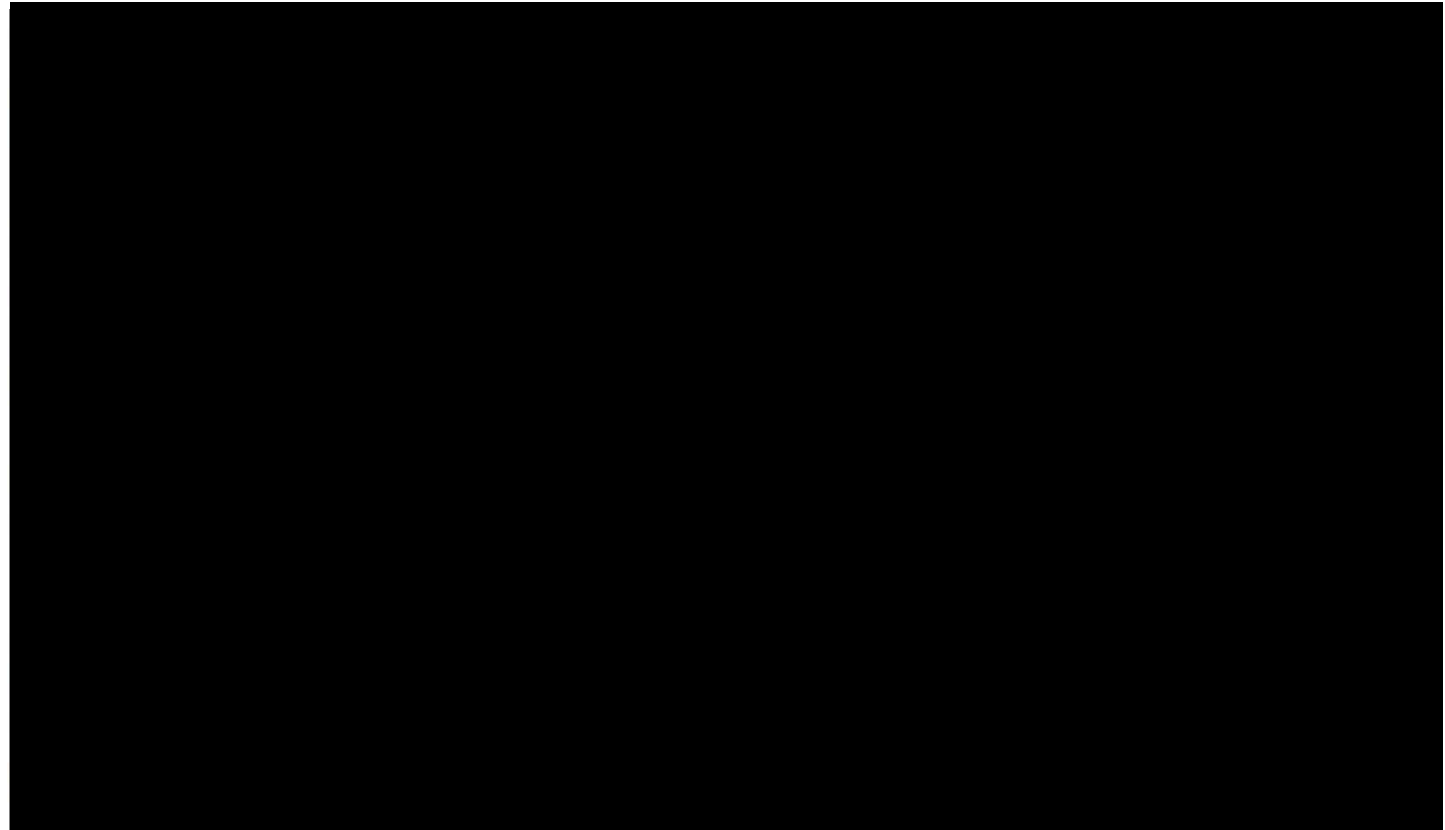
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****RESTRICTED MAP****



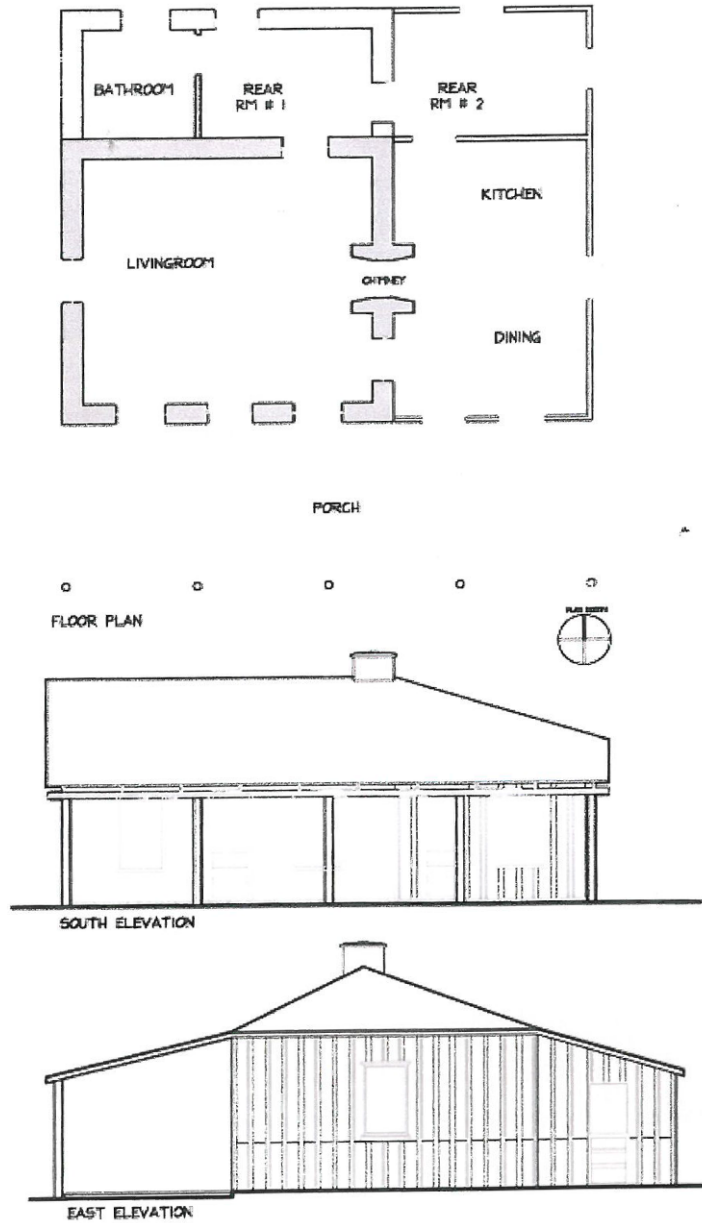
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****RESTRICTED MAP****



Voelcker Farmstead Historic District, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

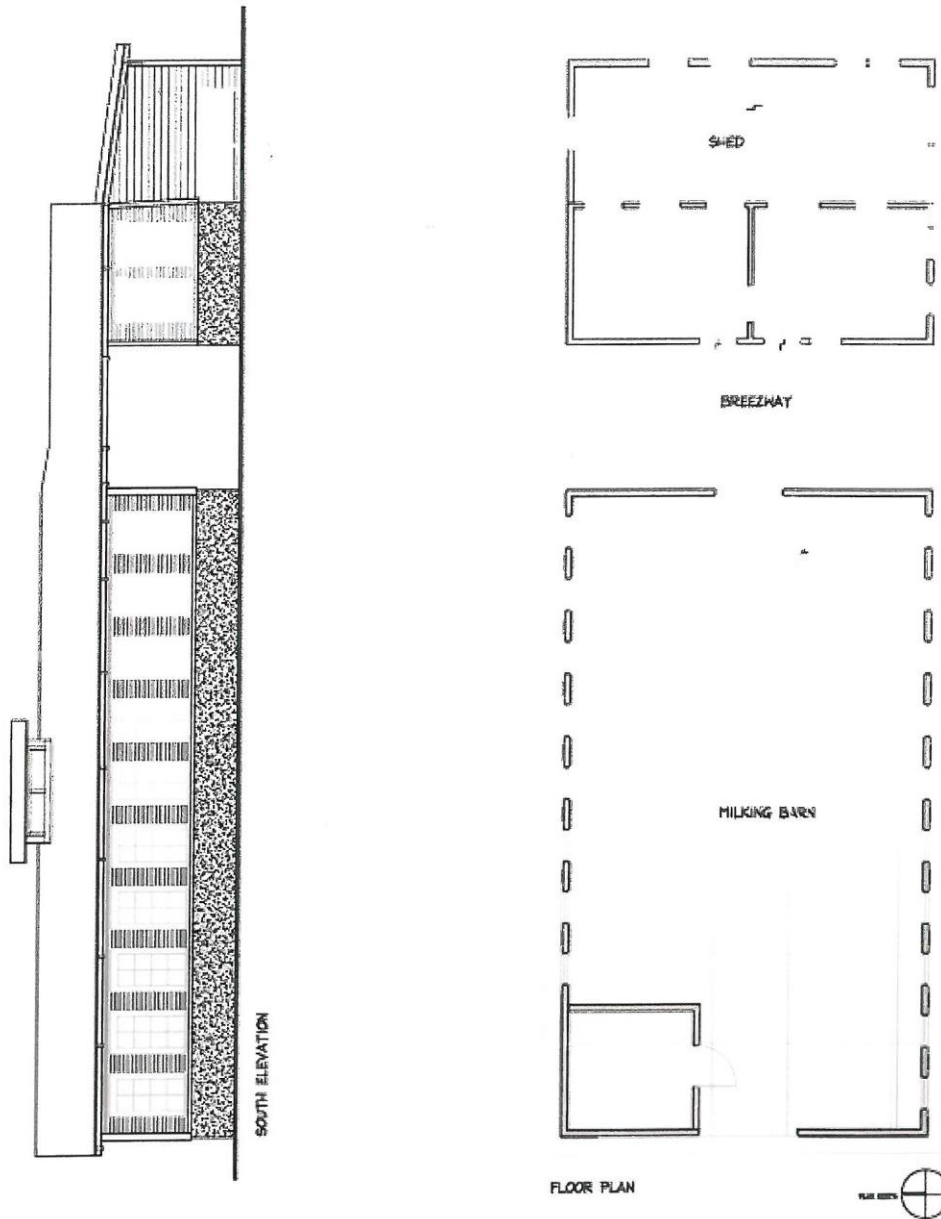
Figure 1. Resource A Floor Plan and Elevations



Source: Fisher Heck Architects, *Voelcker Park: Historic Structures Report*, Prepared for Stephen Stimson Associates for Submittal to the City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department.

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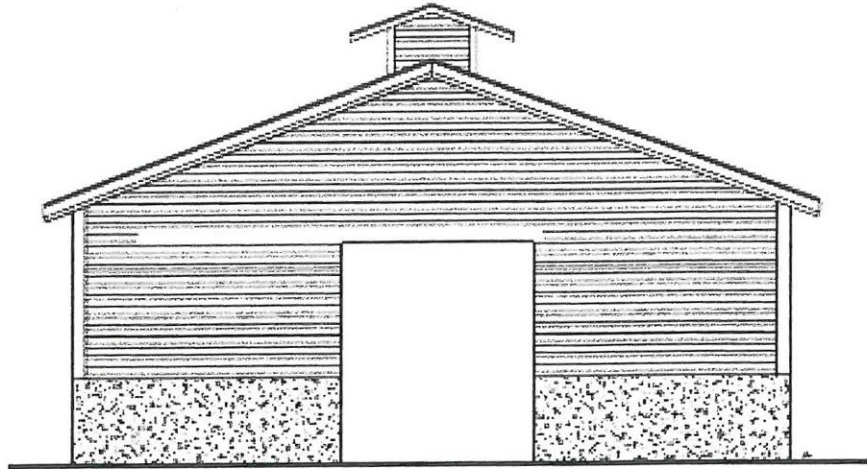
Figure 2. Resource C Floor Plan and Elevation



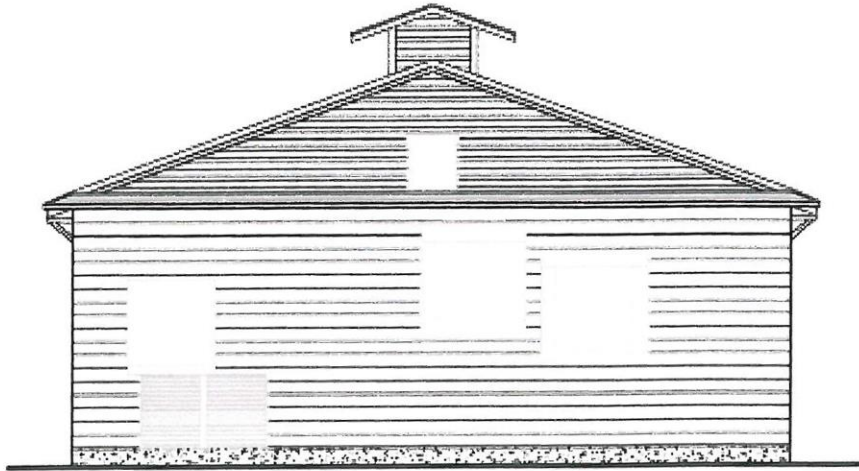
Source: Fisher Heck Architects, *Voelcker Park: Historic Structures Report*, Prepared for Stephen Stimson Associates for Submittal to the City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department.

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Figure 3. Resource C West and East Elevations



WEST ELEVATION

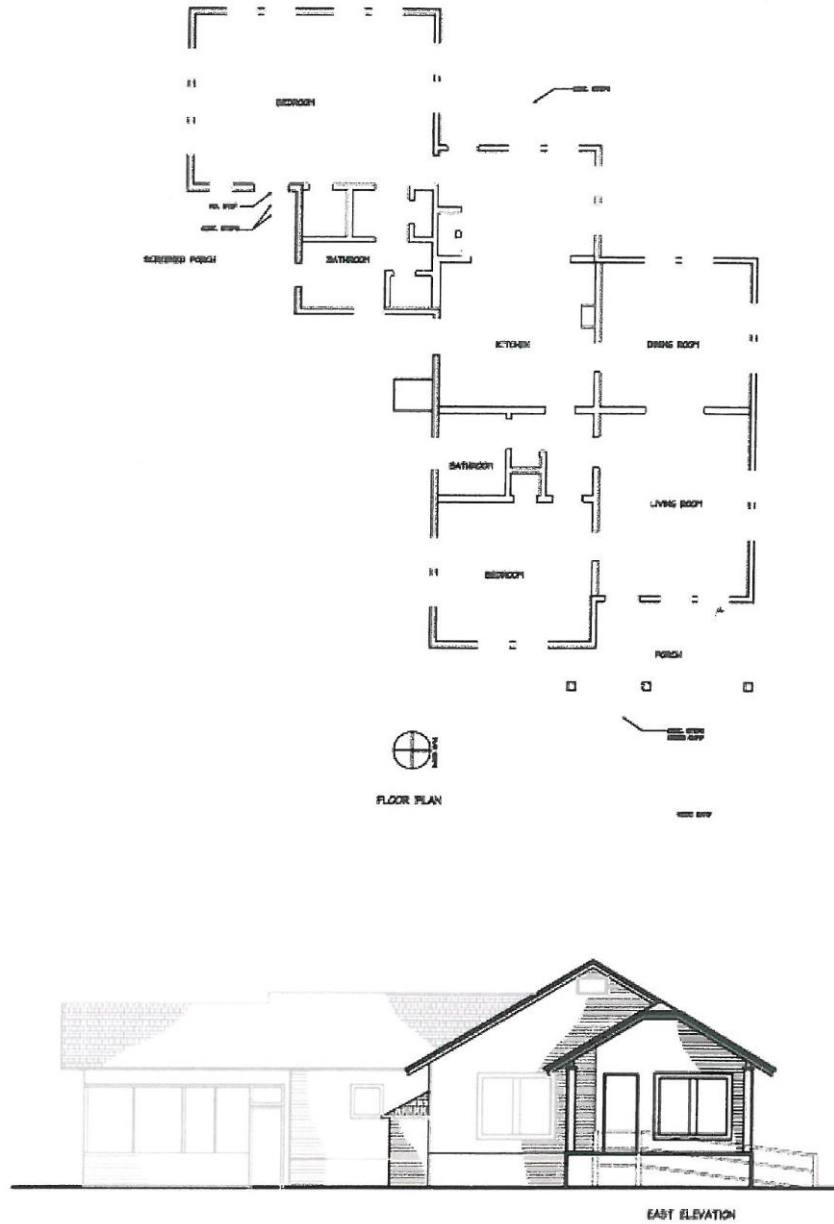


EAST ELEVATION

Source: Fisher Heck Architects, *Voelcker Park: Historic Structures Report*, Prepared for Stephen Stimson Associates for Submittal to the City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department.

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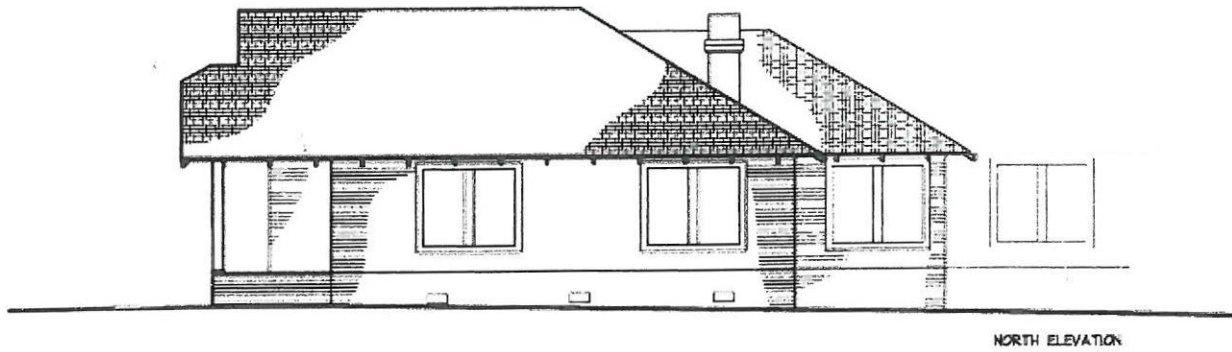
Figure 4. Resource F Floor Plan and Elevation



Source: Fisher Heck Architects, *Voelcker Park: Historic Structures Report*, Prepared for Stephen Stimson Associates for Submittal to the City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department.

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Figure 5. Resource F North Elevation



Source: Fisher Heck Architects, *Voelcker Park: Historic Structures Report*, Prepared for Stephen Stimson Associates for Submittal to the City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department.

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Figure 6. Resource F Construction Photograph



Source: Phil Hardberger Park Website (<http://www.philhardbergerpark.org/>)

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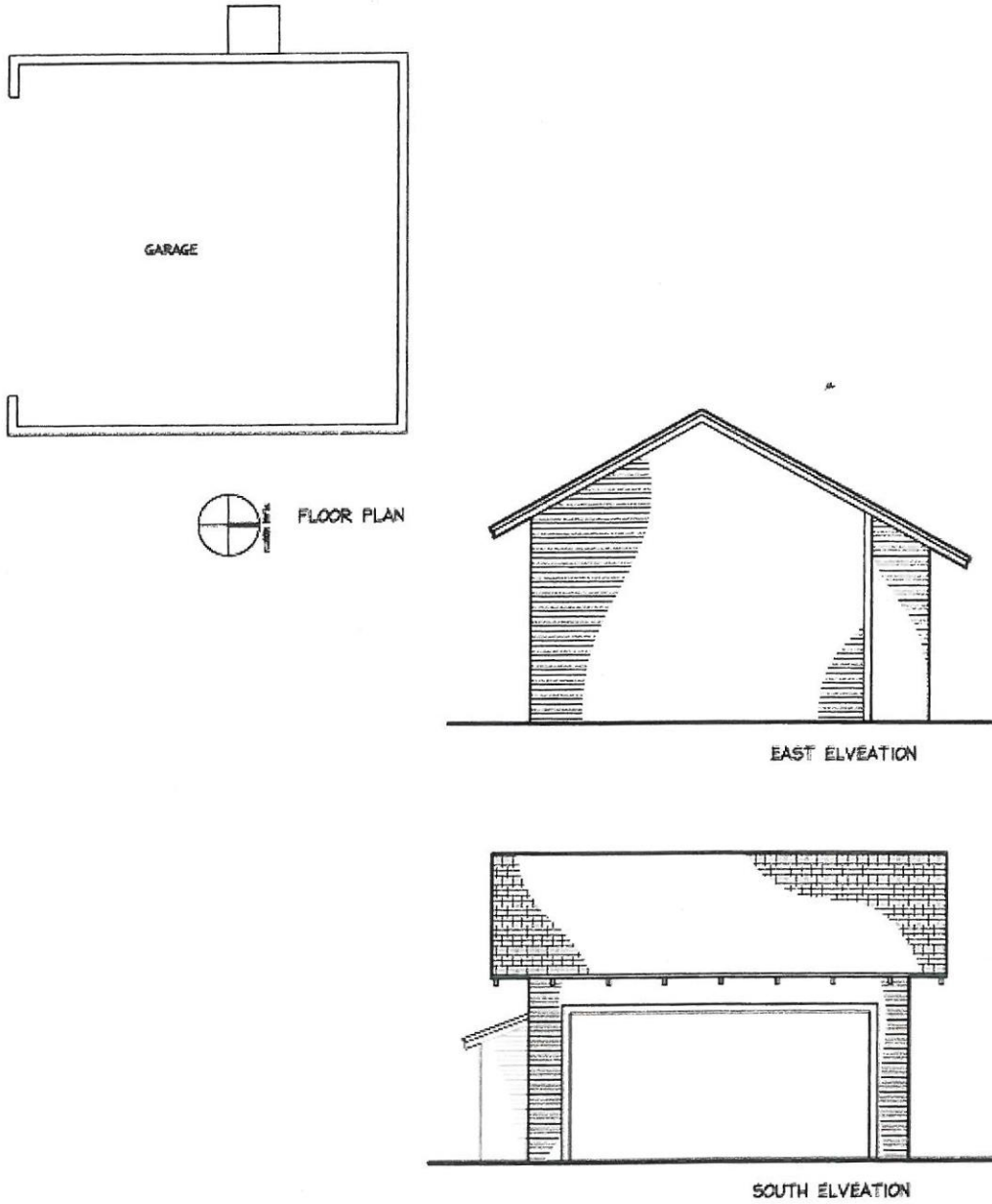
Figure 7. Resource F Historic Photograph



Source: Phil Hardberger Park Website (<http://www.philhardbergerpark.org/>)

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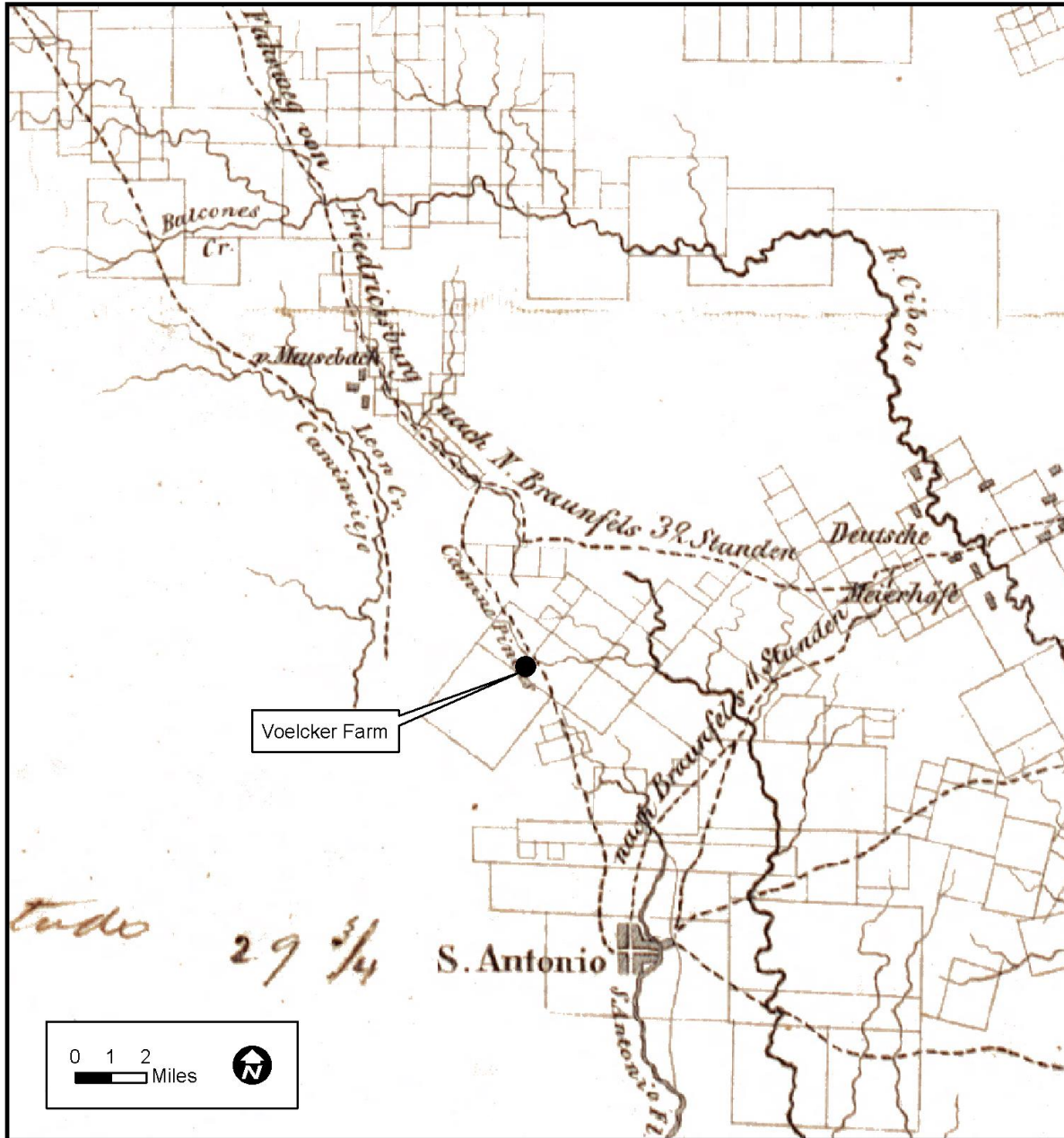
Figure 8. Resource G Floor Plan and Elevations



Source: Fisher Heck Architects, *Voelcker Park: Historic Structures Report*, Prepared for Stephen Stimson Associates for Submittal to the City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department.

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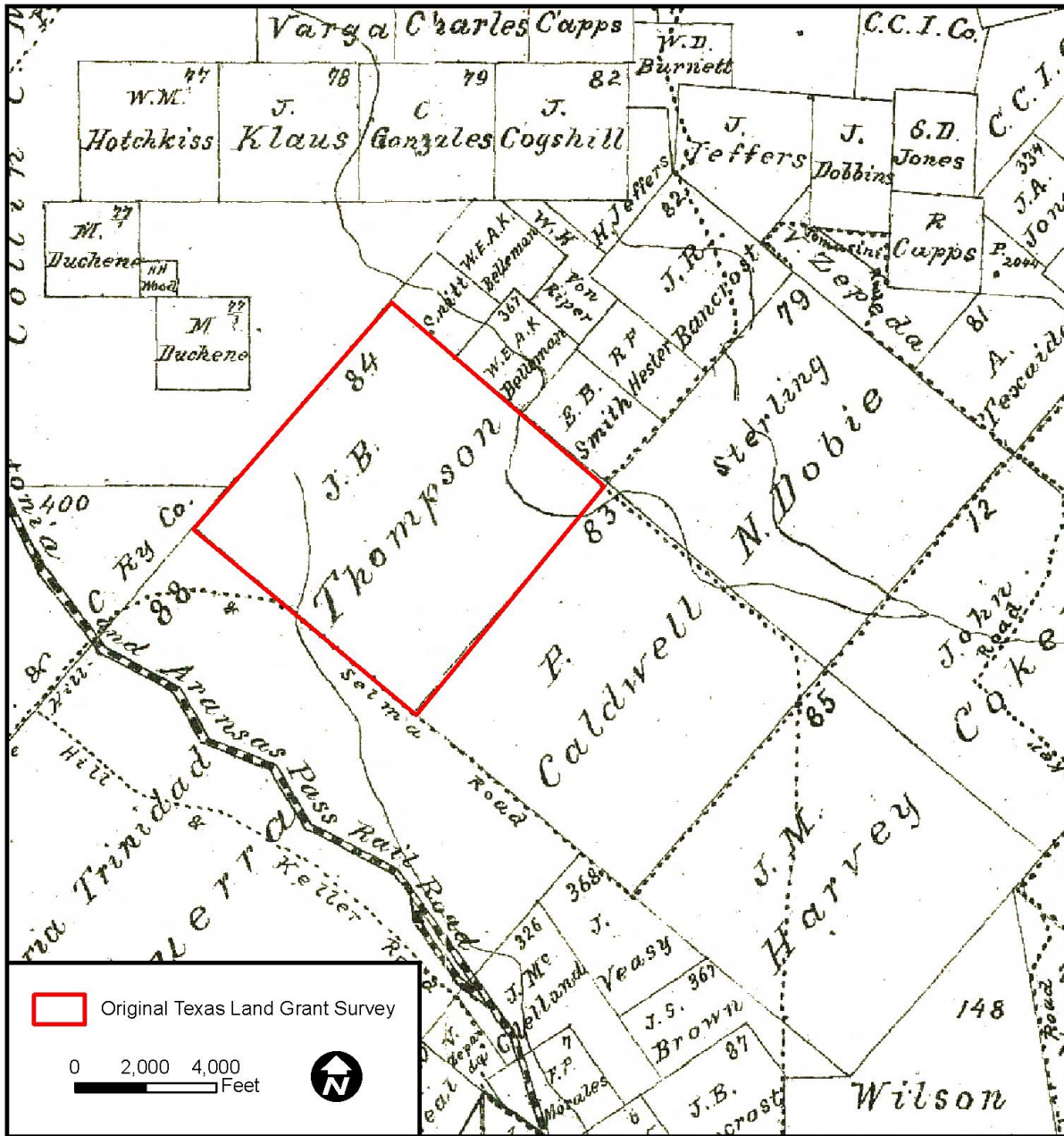
Figure 9. H. Willke Map of New Braunfels Vicinity (1850)



Source: H. Willke. "Karte von den Vermessungen im Grant und in der Gegend Zwischen Demselben und Neu Braunfels" [map]. Scale not given. New Braunfels: Mainzer Adelsverein at Biebrich am Rhein, 1850.

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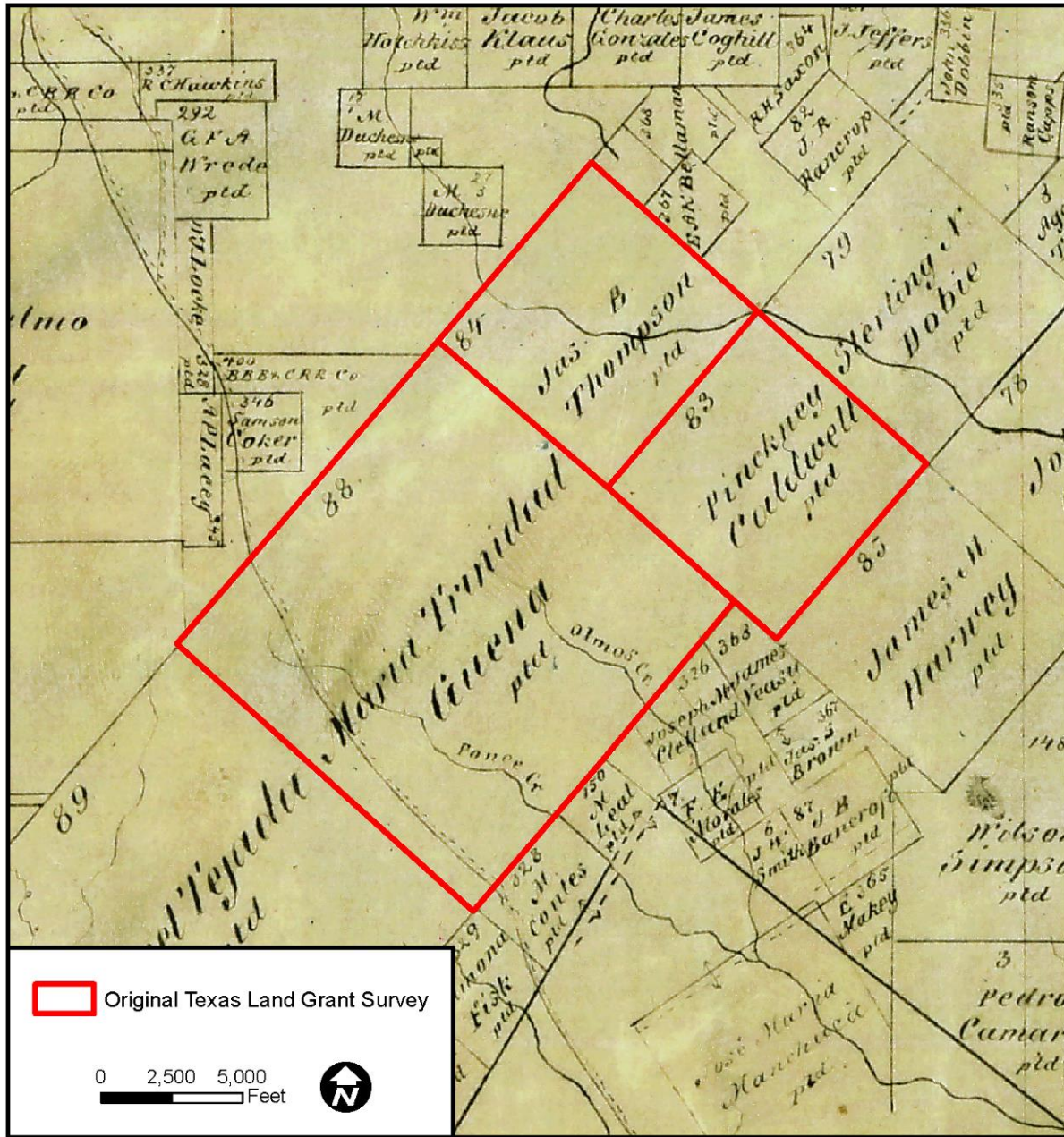
Figure 10. Rullman Map of Bexar County (1887)



Source: Rullman, John D. "Map of Bexar County" [map]. 1" = 2,000 varas. Cincinnati, New York & London: The Strobridge Lithograph Company, 1887.

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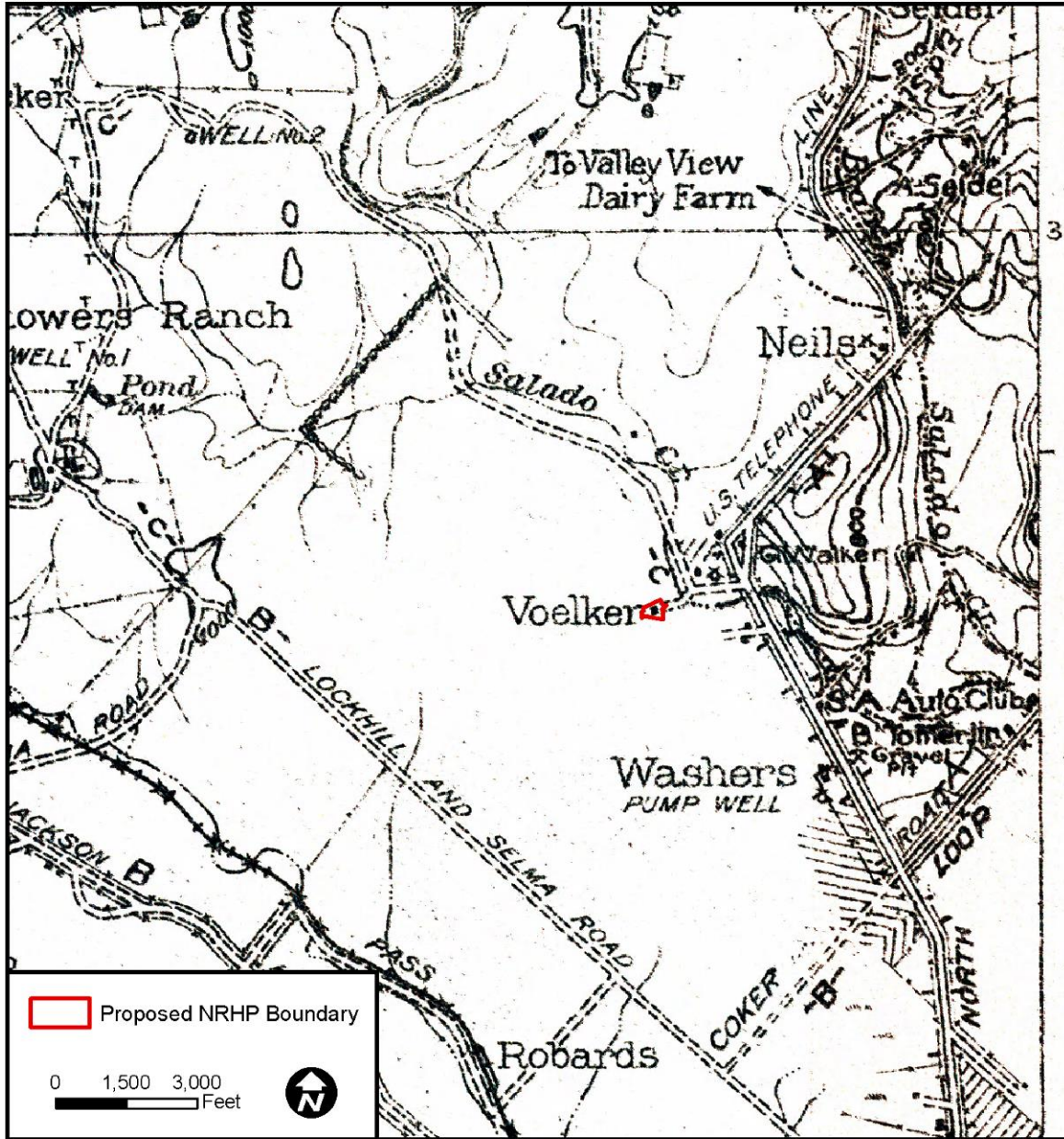
Figure 11. GLO Map of Bexar County (1871)



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Figure 12. USACE Leon Springs Quadrangle (1922)



Source: War Department, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. "Leon Springs Quadrangle" [map]. 1:62,500. San Antonio: Eight Corps Area Engineer Reproduction Plant, 1922.

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Figure 13. Historic Photograph of Stone Fences



Source: Stephen Stimson Associates and D.I.R.T. Studio, *City of San Antonio, Texas Voelcker Park Master Plan Final Report*, Adopted by San Antonio City Council on May 8, 2008.

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Figure 14. Voelckers with Trophy Deer



Source: Stephen Stimson Associates and D.I.R.T. Studio, *City of San Antonio, Texas Voelcker Park Master Plan Final Report*, Adopted by San Antonio City Council on May 8, 2008.