

HISTORIC WALKING TOUR



Downtown New Braunfels



Comal County Courthouse, a 3-story Romanesque-style building constructed with limestone in 1898.

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SCENES FROM AN
EARLIER WAY OF LIFE IN

Historic Downtown New Braunfels

Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels, Germany, brought hundreds of immigrants to Texas in 1844. Land originally purchased in West Texas was found to be unsuitable for cultivation and inhabited by hostile Indians. In hasty need of land to call home, and on the fortuitous advice of a stranger, Prince Solms purchased 1,265 acres in an area known as Las Fontanas, so named for the abundant natural springs bubbling to the surface.

These springs formed a river (the Comal) that flowed into the larger Guadalupe River. These rivers would provide ample water and fertile soil for agriculture and industry. The prince named the settlement after his German home on Good Friday,

March 21, 1845. By the 1850s, New Braunfels was a burgeoning center of commerce, and the fourth largest city in Texas after Houston, San Antonio, and Galveston.

We invite you on this tour to get a taste of what life was like in historic downtown New Braunfels.

*New
Braunfels*

GREATER NEW BRAUNFELS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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COMAL RIVER



New Braunfels Downtown Driving/Walking Tour

D=Driving **W**=Walking =Mural

D1. Koester House (1859)

421 South Seguin Avenue Built by the city's first physician, Dr. Theodore Koester, this is one of the city's most impressive historic homes, with three stories, 15 rooms, and 18-inch limestone walls. This mid-19th-century house, constructed in the new Anglo-American vernacular, also included a kitchen, basement, dumbwaiter, and other architectural innovations for the period. Now an office building.

D2. Eiband House (1913)

447 South Seguin Avenue The elegant, early modern home of Anselm Eiband was restored in the late 1980s and the interior redesigned to serve as office space for Hoffmann Financial.

D3. A. Eiband House (Circa 1880)

453 South Seguin Avenue This lot changed hands six times from 1852-1882, with two of those occurring at 10 a.m. on 1/2/1882. Anselm Eiband finally built a small Victorian house for his sister on the lot. No ownership changes occurred again until the late 1890s. Now an office building.

D4. Carriage & Wagon Building (Circa 1890)

480 South Seguin Avenue Wilhelm Schmidt, a wheelwright, built carriages and displayed them in this brick building. Now an office building.

D5. Jahn Building (1910)

494 South Seguin Avenue Johann Jahn was among the first settlers of New Braunfels. He became a renowned furniture maker in the ensuing decades, his reputation spreading to New York. After his death, his son and grandson built this building and continued the business of fine hand-crafted furniture until the 1930s. Some pieces by Johann Jahn are on display locally at the Heritage Village - Museum of Texas Handmade Furniture. Now an office building.

D6. Lindheimer Home (1852)

491 Comal Avenue The home of Ferdinand Lindheimer, internationally known botanist and first editor of the New Braunfels newspaper, is now open to the public by appointment. Construction is typical of the ancient fachwerk the German settlers adapted to Texas cedar and limestone. This property was given to Lindheimer by Prince Carl for guiding settlers to New Braunfels.

D7. Gramm House (1859)

480 Comal Avenue The house is an example of the small fachwerk houses made of fired adobe brick and native, hand-hewn cedar timbers built by early settlers. Restored in 1978. Now a private residence.

D8. Heinrich Voelcker House (1872)

424 Comal Avenue The Voelcker residence is one of the original fachwerk homes in New Braunfels. It is now part of the Comal Inn Bed & Breakfast, called the New Braunfels Cottage.

D9. August & Karoline Tolle House (Circa 1891)

388 Comal Avenue August Tolle (1829-1922) immigrated to New Braunfels with his parents and siblings in 1845 and established a drugstore with his brother-in-law, Dr. Theodore Koester, in 1858. In 1861, he wed Karoline Messer and had five children. In 1891, August bought this house and lot, which later transferred to his son Alfred and his wife, Emma Louise. Their three children sold it in 1969, and subsequent owners restored it. Today, the home represents vernacular Victorian design, with decorative fretwork, carved rafter tails, and shuttered four-over-four windows. Now an office building.

D10. Guessow House (Circa 1865)

234 Comal Avenue Bought by Gustav Schmidt in 1865 for \$100, this house was sold a year later for four times that amount. In 1881, Wilhelm Guessow bought the house and lot. It was used as his home and broom/brushmaking workshop through the turn of the next century. Now an office building.

D11. Carl Richter House (Circa 1870)

202 Comal Avenue Built five years earlier than its next door neighbor, this quaint house was built of the limestone, cedar, cypress, and adobe fachwerk popular at the time.

D12. Carl Richter House (1875)

192 Comal Avenue Built by Mr. Richter five years after his first house – on the same lot. Typical of the period, the small house is built on a hand-hewn limestone block foundation, constructed with cedar joists and cypress exterior siding placed over adobe fachwerk walls.

D13. P. Mergele House (Circa 1875)

166 Comal Avenue Born in France, near the German border, Peter Mergele immigrated to the U.S. via the French Emigration Company. Upon arriving in San Antonio, Texas, in 1843 he joined Prince Solms' group from Germany. The back section of the house is the oldest, with a Victorian Eastlake addition on the front. Now an office building.

D14. S.V. Pfeuffer House (1910)

170 East San Antonio Street This beautiful Classic Revival house sits on the original site of the Senator George Pfeuffer home. Pfeuffer descendants maintain a law practice here today.

D15. Voigt House (Circa 1905)

308 East San Antonio Street This Late Victorian: Second Empire style house was built in 1870 around the original 1845 adobe home of Hermann Seele, regarded as the cultural leader of early New Braunfels. The true mansard-style roof was constructed by Dr. John Lehde, with the rear fachwerk walls of the original house still standing. The mountain laurel tree in the side yard is one of the largest of its kind in the U.S. This house was also known as the Dittlinger Lime Company & Roller Mills Office Building. Now an office building.

D16. Dittlinger Roller Mills (1887)

398 East San Antonio Street This mill was built by Wilhelm Merriwether and sold to Joseph Landa in 1859. Joseph Landa's son, Harry Landa, operated the mill until 1930, when he sold it to Hippolyte Dittlinger to operate as a roller mill. The mill used a one-of-a-kind drive system designed by Mr. Dittlinger, using the Comal River as the power source. It was renamed Dittlinger Roller Mill. Now business offices for ADM Milling.

D17. Tolle House (1893)

393 Tolle Street This is the original structure built by Herman Tolle, complete with cedar siding and square nails. It is a classic example of 1880s and 1890s architecture. Now a private residence.

D18. Eggeling Hotel (1898)

295 East San Antonio Street Originally built by businesswoman Emilie Kuse Eggeling as the Comal Hotel. The hotel was restored in the 1970s and renamed the Prince Solms Inn. No matter the name, this building has been hosting and housing visitors to New Braunfels continuously since 1898.

D19. Joseph Klein House (1852)

135 North Market Avenue This fachwerk house belonging to Joseph Klein was relocated to this site when the Prince Solms Inn replaced it on the East San Antonio Street site. Now a cottage rental.

D20. Eiband House (Circa 1870)

295 East Mill Street This home was built of native cut stone. The owner, Anselm Eiband, edited the local newspaper after Ferdinand Lindheimer retired in 1872. Now an office building.

D21. Hohmann House (1853)

273 East Mill Street Originally built in 1853 by Heinrich Hohmann of plastered stone and brick. The city's first Western Union telegraph office was housed here by 1865. Subsequent owner Wilhelm Fischer, a tailor and herb specialist, probably added the wood siding, porch, and gingerbread woodwork in the 1880s. Now an office building.

D22. August Dietz Cottage (1866)

197 East Mill Street This limestone and brick house was built with 20-inch-thick walls. The front door and windows are original. Now an office building.

D23. Old City Hall Building (1929)

202 North Seguin Avenue Local architect, Jeremiah Schmidt, designed this art deco style building. The interior is virtually unchanged since its construction, including the original lighting fixtures, tile floors, and wood interiors.

D24. Saints Peter & Paul Catholic Church (1871)

386 North Castell Street This site was originally the first encampment on the bluff, where a cannon was fired in the morning and at night to scare Indians away. The sound of cannons would soon be replaced with bells, as the cornerstone of this church was laid in 1871. The church has gone through two expansions, in 1963 and 2000. From small beginnings, the congregation has grown to over 2,750 registered families in 2011.

D25. Johann George Pfeuffer House (Circa 1846)

230 West Mill Street This two-story home has a large basement built out of stone, with 8-foot-high ceilings. Johann Jahn laid black walnut floors, out of 1' wide by 20' long planks, and built a black walnut staircase to the second story. Mr. Pfeuffer was a tanner by trade and did his tanning work in the basement. Now an office building.

D26. Friedrich Geue House (1871)

256 West Mill Street This house was built by master mason Johann Friedrich Geue on a lot that was part of the original Adelsverein Public Drawing held in April of 1845. The walls are three bricks thick and have no studs. The only wood in the home is around the door and window frames. Now an office building.

D27. NBISD Administration Building (1900)

430 West Mill Street New Braunfels Academy was established around 1856 and incorporated in 1858 when the citizens of New Braunfels voted unanimously to support their school system with a self-imposed tax. This was eighteen years before the Constitution of 1876 provided for a school taxation throughout Texas. The current structure was erected in 1913 by a local contractor A. Moeller for \$50,373. It is now the administrative offices of the New Braunfels Independent School District.

D28. Buckhorn Barbershop Museum (circa 1900)

521 West San Antonio Street This early 1900s equipped barbershop contains hundreds of miniature, hand-carved circus figures and pictures made of lapidary stones. Tours are available on request.

D29. Gerlich Wagenfuehr Home (1858)

505 West San Antonio Street Purchased in 1883 by Richard Gerlich from Heinrich Hoeke (originally granted by the German Emigration Company). The wood-frame house remains intact with an addition in the rear. The standing seam tin roof and windows are original. Now a bed and breakfast.

D/W30. Old Central Fire Station (1918)

131 South Hill Avenue The New Braunfels Volunteer Fire Department was organized June 6, 1886. The old fire station is now a museum featuring antique fire trucks and fire-fighting equipment used by the early firemen. Tour appointments are made at the fire station next door. Built on original Town Lot 122, this fire station was designed by San Antonio architect Leo MJ Dielmann in 1918 and constructed by local contractor Adolph F. Moeller.

D/W31. Seekatz Opera House (Circa 1900)

265 West San Antonio Street Brothers Louis and Otto Seekatz constructed the Seekatz Opera House in the early 1900s. Home to much more than opera, the theater played host to a wide variety of traveling entertainment, quickly making Seekatz Opera House the center of entertainment and social activity. It would remain the premier event, meeting, and production center in New Braunfels until it was tragically destroyed by fire on January 21, 1941. Over the years, the Seekatz would be rebuilt and utilized for many commercial purposes. It was not until 2004 that Seekatz Opera House underwent its first full renovation since the 1941 fire. Now an event center.

D/W32. Plumeyer Bakery (1913)

239 West San Antonio Street This two-story brick building originally housed a bakery on the first floor and living quarters for the Plumeyer family on the second floor. Now the New Braunfels Art League Gallery.



D/W33. Founding - City of a Prince Mural

Located at West San Antonio Street and 100 block of Castell Avenue on the wall of the Downtown Antique Building - one block from the Main Plaza.



D/W34. Spass & Gemutlichkeit Mural

Located on the west side of Friesenhaus Restaurant known as Krause Strasse in the 100 block of Castell Avenue - next to The City of a Prince Mural. One block from the Main Plaza.

D/W35. Hinmann House (1870)

161 South Castell Avenue Listed in the 1976 Most Historic Places in America, this house was built entirely of local materials by Heinrich Hinmann, for his family of twelve. Now business offices for Communities in Schools of South Central Texas.

D/W36. Jacob Schmidt Building (1922)

193 West San Antonio Street Built over the Phoenix Saloon where alligators enjoyed an outdoor pool, where ladies drank beer in the garden shade, and where Willie Gebhardt's restaurant became the foundation of the Gebhardt chili empire. He produced the first chili powder in 1896, and in 1908 canned the first chili con carne.

D/W37. Main Plaza (1845), Fountain (1895), and Bandstand (1905)

The Main Plaza was drawn into the original city plans in 1845. The fountain was added in 1895 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of New Braunfels. High curbs were integrated into the fountain design to keep citizens from using it to water their horses. The Bandstand, first called the Music Pavilion, was built in 1905 with public donations. Paved in 1918, the lanes around Main Plaza accommodated two-way traffic for decades but were changed to one-way in the 1950s.

D/W38. Schwarzen Wallfisch Saloon (1890)

367 Main Plaza One of 17 saloons in early downtown New Braunfels. In 1924 the original wood-frame building was replaced and housed the Herald-Zeitung, the first English newspaper in town. Today it is once again a saloon, the Black Whale.

D/W39. Moreau House (1854)

190 South Seguin Street This Texas-German style house was built for Franz Moreau, a German consul whose fortune was made in the post-Civil War cotton boom. The original house (Town Lot 54, Johann Heinrich Schulze) was constructed in 1845 and demolished in 1905. The current construction was built closer to the street. Now an office building.

D/W40. Groos House (1870)

228 South Seguin Avenue This Greek Revival home was built as a wedding gift from Franz Moreau for his daughter and son-in-law, Carl W. Groos, a surveyor who would later become Texas Land Commissioner. Now an office building.

D/W41. Faust Hotel (1929)

240 South Seguin Avenue One of the most historic inns of Texas. San Antonio architect Harvey P. Smith designed the building, which was constructed at a cost of \$120,343. This hotel was originally known as the Traveler's Hotel, built by Walter Sipple in the Italian Renaissance Revival style.

D/W42. Walter Faust House (1910)

260 South Seguin Avenue This lovely Late Victorian – Queen Anne style home was built for Walter Faust, one of New Braunfels' founders. The First Protestant Church acquired it in the 1950s and remodeled in the 1980s for use as a teaching facility. Now known as Heritage House.

D/W43. First Protestant Church (1875)

296 South Seguin Avenue The founders of New Braunfels held their first church service the first day they arrived at their new home—Good Friday, March 21, 1845. A year later the settlers built a log church on the same site. In 1875, this church of cut limestone from the Landa Quarry was erected near the 1846 site. In the History Room is a silver chalice that was presented to the congregation by Prince Carl at that first mass in the New World. The twin chalice is in the prince's family castle in Braunfels, Germany.

D/W44. New Braunfels Social Club (1910)

353 South Seguin Avenue German immigrant farmers and field workers would join together for social activities here. Duckpin bowling became quite popular. The lanes for the bowling alley still exist today, but are now used as a dance floor. Other popular activities at the social club were billiards and card games, especially the card game called "skat" which is still played today, at what is now known as the New Braunfels Elks Lodge.

D/W45. Faust House (1880)

305 South Seguin Avenue Originally a two-story home built by Senator Joseph Faust. In 1905, Senator Faust had the third story added, along with the porches and bricks. After the death of Senator Faust, the property was relocated to its current site to allow the Traveler's Hotel (Faust Hotel) to be built. The bricks had to be removed in order for the house to be rolled across the street on log rollers. Once relocated, the bricks were reapplied and the house became private lodging, as well as a doctor's office. Now a private residence.

D/W46. C.J. Ludewig Building (1929)

283 South Seguin Avenue A furniture company since its construction by local contractor, A. Moeller. This wonderful building contains original pressed tin ceilings, maple strip floors, hand-painted tile entrance, wood staircase, and a hand-operated Otis freight elevator. Now Johnson Furniture.

D/W47. Greyhound Bus Station (1929)

275 South Seguin Avenue Built by A. Moeller and owned by his brother Ed Moeller, this café and bus station features the southwestern style of stucco and hollow tile. The front façade has been remodeled with the addition of a modern canopy. Now Celebrations.

D/W48. Early Settlers Home (1850)

251 South Seguin Avenue This adobe brick and cedar beam home is situated on a lot that was deeded to colonist Christoph Luentzel. It was first built in 1850 by Heinrich Bevenroth and enlarged by later owners Heinrich C. Pohlmann, Mrs. Elisabeth Gehrung, Edmond Schramm, and August Pursch. Now an office building.

D/W49. Klappenbach Building (Circa 1890)

221 South Seguin Avenue This Victorian building has served as a general store as well as specialty retail stores and service operations. There is a private residence on the second floor. This building housed Mesker Brothers Iron Works of St. Louis, Missouri, and George L. Mesker Company of Evansville, Indiana, who specialized in ornamental sheet-metal façades and cast iron storefront elements, which were ordered through catalogs and easily shipped by rail to any interested building owner. New Braunfels has four identified buildings with Mesker architectural components. Now retail shops.

D/W50. Krause Building (Circa 1860)

173 South Seguin Avenue Master carpenter Friedrich Krause has built this eclectic Late Victorian building. From 1891-1902 it was a jewelry store, 1912-1922 a print shop, and in 1930 a photography shop. Now retail shops.

D/W51. Hoffmann Store (Circa 1890)

165 South Seguin Avenue The façade of this Victorian building is constructed of tin over wood, made to resemble stone. It has been home to a jewelry store, newspaper office, and photo shop. Now retail shops.



D/W52. Lindheimer - The Father of Texas Botany Mural Located at 165 South Seguin Avenue on the side of the Hoffmann Building (next to the Naegelin's Bakery parking lot) one block from the Main Plaza.

D/W53. Stephen Klein House (1846)

161 South Seguin Avenue One of the oldest structures in New Braunfels, this rock-filled fachwerk home was built by one of the first commissioners of Comal County.

D/W54. Naegelin's Bakery (1868)

129 South Seguin Avenue The oldest German bakery in Texas. Originally constructed of German fachwerk, it was covered by beadboard and later covered with plaster to prevent further deterioration.

D/W55. Comal County Courthouse (1898)

100 Main Plaza This courthouse was designed by J. Riely Gordon, a prolific and sometimes controversial architect of Texas courthouses. The beautiful Romanesque Revival style includes robust columns, arched doorways, and a working bell tower that sounds the hour.

Free self-guided tours of the courthouse, with museum-quality displays and convenient links to smartphone videos, are now available. Come walk the historic halls and learn about the history, restoration, and future of this prominent New Braunfels landmark.

FOR MORE INFO, VISIT COURTHOUSETOUR.COM

D/W56. Palace Theater (1924)

136 North Castell Avenue The grand opening of this short-lived theater was December 23, 1924. It closed in 1932. Ma's Café moved in, until it closed in 1982. Now Myron's Prime Steakhouse.



D/W57. Seele Mural

Located on the 100 block of North Castell Avenue (next to McAdoo's Seafood Company) one block from Main Plaza.

D/W58. New Braunfels Post Office (1915)

196 North Castell Avenue President Woodrow Wilson signed a law appropriating \$50,000 to build a post office building in New Braunfels. Secretary of State William G. McAdoo custom ordered this building. Previously, various homes and businesses had served the community as post offices. This new site served multiple purposes by renting business offices as well as the postal service, making this a very busy place. Now McAdoo's Seafood Company.

D/W59. Henne Hardware (1893)

246 West San Antonio Street This is the oldest running hardware business in Texas. Louis Henne, Jr. founded his business in 1857, which he expanded with the construction of this building in 1893. The two-story building, constructed by local contractor Christian Herry, includes a full basement with a 46-foot-deep well. Original wooden floors, pressed tin ceilings, and custom-made decorative fixtures enhance the interior and complement the ornate Victorian-style exterior. The metal cornice was purchased from the Mesker Brothers Iron Works of St. Louis. The front façade was remodeled in 1910 and paid for by Winchester Arms.

D/W60. Henne Tin Shop and Store (1856)

264/270 West San Antonio Street Edison Victrolas and other merchandise for the home were sold here. Johann Henne arrived in 1845, when his son Louis was 5. Louis ran the business after his father's death. He was 17 years old when he took over. Now a retail shop.

D/W61. Brauntex Theatre (1942)

290 West San Antonio Street The BRAUNTEX Theatre first opened in downtown New Braunfels in January 1942. Pearl Harbor had just been bombed, and the United States was at war. Harold Ward was a manager of the theatre during the 1950s. Other old-time employees included Chris Mosley, also a manager, and Florie Bush. There were other theatres in operation in New Braunfels at the time, but once the state-of-the-art BRAUNTEX opened, it was the best. A major fire in one of the other downtown theatres, the Palace, either just before or just after the BRAUNTEX opened, made the new theatre an even more welcome addition to the city. Now the Brauntex Performing Arts Theatre.

D/W62. Railroad Depot (Circa 1890)

302 West San Antonio Street This station was an active passenger and freight depot for the International & Great Northern Railroad until it was abandoned in 1982. It is now a city-owned building. The New Braunfels Historic Railroad & Modelers Society restored it and now operates a museum here. The museum currently has a locomotive, dining car, boxcar, and caboose.

D/W63. Boenig/Maurer House (1869)

475 Butcher St In 1869, this building served as a home for dairy farmer Wilhelm Boenig. Braddock Street was originally called Boenig Street until the city changed the name in 1991. From Boenig, the residence passed to three more German families — Hartmann, Maurer, and Schneider — some of them original New Braunschweigers. Many believe the Boenig/Maurer house was built in the mid-1850s, as its foot-thick lime and sand plaster walls were the style of the day. The sturdy building sits on a continuous foundation of cut stone. The interior walls are made of adobe with straw plaster laid onto hand-split oak laths.



D/W33. Founding -
City of a Prince Mural



Gruene Historic District Walking Tour

G1. Gruene Bridge (1909)

During the early days of Texas history, the current site of the historic Gruene Bridge was the best option for a low-water crossing within 100 miles in either direction. The ford became a popular crossing point, utilized by wagon trains, cattle drivers and stagecoaches following the El Camino Real de los Tejas trail during westward expansion. Despite this easy access, the dirt road leading up the bank on the Gruene side was formidable, and often a dedicated mule team was held on standby to assist travelers up the muddy bank.

Seasonal flooding was as much a problem then as it is now, and pioneers could be delayed up to three days at a time as they waited for the waters to retreat to safe levels. The advent of the automobile made it evident that a better form of crossing was required, so the first concrete span was erected in 1909. Improvements to the bridge continue to this day, as flooding remains a consistent environmental hurdle.

G2. Cantina Del Rio (Circa 1900)

1299 Gruene Road The building which currently houses Cantina del Rio was not originally constructed in Gruene. It was built in the early 1900s in Martindale, Texas, and was relocated to its current riverside vantage, overlooking the Historic Gruene Bridge, in 1983.

G3. Gruene Water Tower (Circa 1900)

Above Gruene Hall In the early 1900s, it became evident that the burgeoning town of Gruene needed a standing supply of water for industry and irrigation. The original tower was built of cypress and served the locals well until it was destroyed by fire in 1922. The same fire also destroyed the nearby cotton gin, which was the center of the town's prosperity and revenue. The current steel tower was erected as a replacement by the Pittsburgh-Des Moines Erectors in 1924. The famous "ding" in the roof of the tower happened during a real estate dispute in the 1970s, while a crane was being used to dismantle the tower and sell it for scrap.

G4. Gristmill Restaurant (1878)

1287 Gruene Road This historic building went up in 1878, in order to save local cotton farmers from the pain-staking task of separating seeds out of their bales. This steam-powered technological wonder was kept in motion by water from the Guadalupe River and provided reliable jobs to those not already employed in the farm fields. The efficiency of the gin was a boon for the region and was vital to the economic development and prosperity of both the town of Gruene and the tenant farmers.

Prosperity reigned until a mysterious fire broke out in the heart of the gin and destroyed everything except the boiler. The fire also destroyed the original Gruene water tower, which had been made of Cypress logs. The property was revitalized in the late 20th century and is now home to the thriving Gristmill restaurant.

G5. H.D. Gruene Mercantile (1850)

1601 Hunter Road Henry D. Gruene (1850-1920) was a visionary merchant who helped bring about the prosperity and notoriety of this historic town. It was on this spot in 1878 that he chose to begin his mercantile business, having come back to the town of Goodwin after a stint selling goods in nearby Wimberley, Texas. The current structure was built in 1904, to accommodate the growth of H.D.'s thriving business and served as the heart of the community. The edifice's corbelled cornices and other touches reflect influences of both Classical Revival and Richardsonian Romanesque stylings. The building currently houses an antique store and bar.

G6. Gruene Outfitters (1914)

1629 Hunter Road By 1914, automobiles were replacing horses on the dusty roads of Texas. In order to facilitate these thirsty new contraptions, the Gruene Brothers opened a garage on this spot. When the boll weevil plague killed the local cotton industry and left Gruene as a ghost town, this and many buildings lay dormant and rotting. In the 1970s, a San Antonio resident saw the potential in these old buildings and bought, restored, and reopened a number of them. The garage now houses Gruene Outfitters.

G7. Black Swan Antiques (1896)

1640 Hunter Road This southern-style home was a wedding gift for H.D.'s daughter, Paula Gruene, when she wed Fritz Hampe, Jr. in December of 1886. The lovely home was resultantly known as "The Hampe House" for decades to come. It now houses the Black Swan Antique Store.

G8. Dancing Bear (1897)

1632 Hunter Road This beautiful Victorian, restored in 2008 by the current owners, Beth Fuselier and Oscar Duenas, was constructed as a wedding gift in 1897. H.D. Gruene bestowed the building and property to his daughter, Ella, on the advent of her marriage, and it went on to be known as the Ella Ogletree House. The historic spot now houses a trendy gift boutique called Dancing Bear.

G9. Gruene General Store (1897)

1632 Hunter Road Built in 1878, this store served the families working in H.D. Gruene's cotton fields, supplying food, clothing, and household goods as well as farming implements and feed. Travelers aboard the Brown and Tartox stage line also turned to the store as a rest stop for refreshments and supplies. When H.D. became postmaster in 1890, his mercantile also served as the post office and later as a bank and distillery. H.D.'s Green River Brand whiskey sold for 10¢ a shot and was known as "The whiskey without a headache."

G10. Gruene Mansion Inn (1878)

1275 Gruene Rd The beautiful Eastlake Victorian buildings that make up the Gruene Mansion Inn served as the home and plantation of H.D. Gruene himself. The house and outbuildings have been restored to their former elegance and now offer unique accommodations to visitors.

G11. Gruene Hall (1878)

1281 Gruene Road The legendary Gruene Hall opened its doors in 1878 and has served the community continuously since that time, earning the right to be named the oldest dance hall in Texas. The 6,000-sq. ft. building you see today stands much as it did in the nineteenth century, when it served as the social and entertainment heart of the city. It holds that role to this very day. Numerous iconic country music artists cut their teeth at Gruene Hall, and several of them come back regularly to entertain a new generation of fans. From actual badger fights to carpet baggers, pickers, gridders, and legends, Gruene Hall has played host to it all and is still going strong.



HISTORIC WALKING TOUR

GRUENE HISTORIC DISTRICT AT THE WATER TOWER



HD Gruene's General Store

Take the tour on your smart phone:

GrueneWalkingTour.com



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THE HISTORY OF Gruene Historic District

Arriving in Texas in the mid 1840s, German farmers became the first settlers of what is now known as Gruene, Texas. Ernst Gruene, a German immigrant, and his bride Antoinette had reached the newly established city of New Braunfels in 1845, but acreage was scarce. Thus, Ernst and his two sons purchased land just downriver, and Ernst built the first home in Gruene in early fachwerk style. His second son, Henry D. Gruene, built his home (now Gruene Mansion Inn) and planted his surrounding land with cotton. Having become the number one cash crop, the cotton business soon brought 20 to 30 families to Henry D.'s lands.

Henry D. built houses in various styles — a Victorian cottage (now Lone Star), a large brick home, and a frame house (now Gruene Haus) for the foreman of his farm. The first mercantile store (now Gruene General Store) was built in 1878 and a cotton gin (now Gristmill River Restaurant and Bar) powered by the Guadalupe River was added soon after. Further construction during this profitable time included a dance hall and saloon (Gruene Hall), which became the center of the community's social life.

As the town continued to prosper, a new mercantile building (now Gruene Antique Company) sprang up in 1904. However, the death of Henry D. in 1920 marked the downfall of Gruene's development and good fortune. In 1922, the original cotton gin burned and was replaced by a modern electric model down the road (now Adobe Verde). Yet the economic disasters of the boll weevil and the Depression were too much for the family businesses and they went under — except for Gruene Hall, which never closed.

HISTORIC WALKING TOUR Gruene Historic District

