

Carl Wilhelm Rummel House
NW. edge of Round Top
(near end of 1st St.)
Round Top
Payette County
Texas

HABS No. TEX 3200

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. TEX 3200

CARL WILHELM RUMMEL HOUSE

Location: Near end of First Street, northwest edge of Round Top, Fayette County, Texas.
Latitude: 30 03" 59" N Longitude: 96 41' 53" W

Present Owner: The Real Estate Mortgage Corporation, Houston, Texas.

Present Occupant: Unoccupied; being reconditioned.

Statement of Significance: A fine example of a masonry house built by immigrant German craftsmen. Its form and the workmanship in stone and wood recall the character of houses of the German homeland.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

A. Physical History:

1. General History: As a part of the Stephen F. Austin colony, James Winn acquired 4,428 acres in 1831; the present town-site was included in this tract. Named after early settlers, the town was known as Townsend; later it was named Round Top since the postmaster lived in a house with a round tower. Portions of nearby Nassau farm were purchased by the German organization, Adelsverein, and settlement by German immigrants began in 1845 to 1847. Some of these settlers began buying up the local farms and the town lots.
2. Ownership of the Property: Some time before 1857 Charles Flack acquired 335 acres out of the James Winn holdings. In the 1860's a grist mill and cotton gin were built on Mill Creek, a branch of Cummings Creek; the mill and gin were located about 600 feet west of the present house site. In 1869 F. W. McGuire purchased 67 acres which included this site. Information on the date when the house was built is not available, but relative land costs would indicate that it was constructed about 1870. In 1871 Carl Wilhelm Rummel (Jr.) purchased for \$800.00 the 9.8 acres on which the house is located, apparently including the house. From that date until 1916 it was owned by the Rummels; it was later owned by Carl Ander and Erwin O. Schatte. It was purchased by the Real Estate Mortgage Corporation in 1963.

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3. Persons connected with the Structure: The Rummel family arrived in Texas on board the ship "Neptune" in 1848. The family included the elder Carl Wilhelm Rummel (1812-1867); his wife, Caroline; a daughter, Emma; and a son, Carl Wilhelm (sometimes known as "Junior"). They settled in Harris County near the present city of Spring Branch. In 1860 a young Lutheran minister, J. Adams Neuthard, arrived from Germany, and he spent some time at the Rummel home in Harris County. He became the minister at Round Top and there later he initiated the building of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church. In 1862 Emma Rummel became the wife of Reverend Neuthard.

The younger Carl Wilhelm Rummel, born in Germany in 1837, arrived in Texas with his parents at the age of eleven. In the 1860's he moved from Harris County to Round Top. In 1867 he signed the constitution of the newly established Bethlehem Lutheran Church. He married Clara Hildebrand; a son was born in 1873. In 1871 he purchased the stone house from F. W. McGuire, and it is known that the Rummels operated the grist mill and cotton gin for many decades. Carl Wilhelm Rummel (Jr.) died in 1915; his wife and heirs sold the property the following year.

4. Date of Erection: About 1870.
5. Builder: No definite information is available. Carl Traugott Bauer, a stone mason, son of the builder of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, was working in the area at the time the house was built.

B. Bibliography:

Our God is Marching On, a Centennial History of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Round Top, Texas, Austin, Texas: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1966.

Geue, Ethel Hander. New Homes in a New Land, German Immigration to Texas 1847-1861, Waco, Texas: The Texian Press, 1970.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: It is a good example of the work

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of the immigrant German stone masons of this area. Its high pitched roof is characteristic of the German homeland; the front porch was an American adaptation designed to meet the needs of the climate.

2. Condition of the Fabric: Good; second floor joists and stair have been replaced; loose exterior lime plaster is being removed and will soon be replaced.

B. Technical Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: One and one-half stories; rectangular in plan, 38'-0" x 33'-6", including the front porch.
2. Foundations: No cellar. Mortared stonework, apparently down to the sandstone bedrock.
3. Wall Construction: Exterior walls, 18" thick, are of ledge sandstone, variable in shape and thickness, originally plastered inside and out. Most of the exterior sand-lime plaster has loosened and is now being removed, to be replaced. There is evidence that the outside plastered walls were painted white. The heads over the door and window openings are structural masonry flat arches.
4. Chimneys: At either end of the roof there is a chimney of stone masonry that extends 2'-6" above the ridge. These chimneys served the wood-burning stoves.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and Doors: The main doorway from the front porch to the living room is a 3'-6" by 7'-0" opening with a pair of four-panel doors. The door from the porch to the dining room is four panel, 3'-0" x 7'-0".
 - b. Windows: All windows are double-hung, six lights each sash. All openings have 4" exterior wood trim, typically moulded. Window sills are heavy, 3" wood.
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape and Covering: A symmetrical ridge roof that covers the stone portion of the house and the front porch. It is covered with wood shingles. Roof pitch is 10 in 12.

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b. Framing: Rough-sawn 2" x 7" rafters are spaced 24" on center. The attic space is sealed with shiplap boarding.

c. Cornice: The squared ends of the rafters are boxed-in, forming an interesting plain bevel cornice which projects about 12" from the masonry wall.

d. Dormer: To light the second-floor stair hall there is a single dormer that faces the southeast. It has a simple ridge roof and has a double-hung window, six-over-six light sash.

C. Technical Description of the Interiors:

1. Floor Plans: The rectangular plan has a 9' x 38' front porch facing the southeast. On the first floor there is a large living room, a dining room, and at a lower level a small kitchen. Upstairs there are two small bedrooms spaced on either side of the stair hall. Off the stair hall there is a narrow low-ceilinged room which probably was used for storage; it is now a bathroom.
2. Stairway: An open stair rises from the living room. There is evidence that it was originally an "L" shaped stair with several steps below the landing. The recently built stair is a single run with a very steep rise; it is planned to reconstruct the stair along the original lines.
3. Flooring: The floors of the living room and the upstairs rooms are of cedar, about 4 to 5 inches in width. The dining room and kitchen have floors of large, squared sandstone flagging, very carefully finished and laid.
4. Wall and Ceiling Finish: All downstairs walls are stone masonry, plastered, painted white. Frame walls on the second level are vertical shiplap boarding, painted. Ceilings of all rooms have exposed joists, beaded, and stained dark. The attic space is finished in shiplap.
5. Doorways and Doors: On the lower level the doors are 2' - 8" x 6' - 10", four panel. Doors to the bedrooms upstairs are plank-type.

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6. Trim: Doorways on the first floor have 4 1/2" trim, moulded, painted white. The treads, stringers and railing of the stairs are stained, natural finish.
7. Lighting: The house is now wired for electricity. There is no evidence of earlier lighting fixtures; in the last century it was probably lighted with kerosene lamps.
8. Heating: At either end of the house there is a chimney; in the northeast wall of the living room there is an opening for a stove pipe. The rooms of the lower floor were heated with wood-burning stoves, probably no heating upstairs.

D. Site:

1. General Setting and Orientation: The house is located at the northwest edge of the town on a graveled street that is an extension of First Street. The porch and entrance doors face southeastward, not toward the street. There are several large live oak trees near the porch and to the east; there are open farm lands to the south and west. The original tract was 9.8 acres, but an area about one-half acre in size was enclosed with fences. On the northwest boundary there is a stone wall three-feet in height; on the southwest and southeast there is evidence of wire fences.
2. Outbuildings, etc.: To the west of the house there is a small wood structure (like a privy) that houses an electric pump for the water supply. To the east of the house there are two wells; the well-heads have been rebuilt with stone masonry.

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