

Texas Historical Commission Staff (CW), 3/7/79

Official Texas Historical Building Marker to attach to brick
Comal County (Order #5477)

Location: 295 E.San Antonio St., New Braunfels

THE EGGELING HOTEL*

*** ***
EMILIE(KUSE) (1854-1930) AND THEODOR
*** ***
EGGELING (1851-1916), WHO OWNED THE
NEARBY PLAZA HOTEL, BUILT THIS
SECOND ESTABLISHMENT IN 1898-
1900. NEW BRAUNFELS CONTRACTOR
CHRISTIAN HERRY SUPERVISED THE
CONSTRUCTION OF THE GALLERIED
BUILDING. LATER RENAMED THE COMAL
HOTEL, THE BUSINESS WAS OPERATED
BY MEMBERS OF THE EGGELING
FAMILY FOR OVER 50 YEARS. THE
HOTEL DINING ROOM WAS POPULAR
WITH TOWNSPEOPLE AS WELL AS
WITH OVERNIGHT GUESTS. **
RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARK - 1979***

*1/2 inch lettering
**3/8 inch lettering
***1/4 inch lettering

APPROVED
Truett Latimer

by Christine Reed 11-23-79

Collation of this paper was done by the
Texas Historical Commission staff (DP), December 1978-January 1979

THE EGGELING, OR COMAL, HOTEL, New Braunfels
by
Betty Mitchell and Marge Crumbaker, Houston, TX

In November of 1831, a first generation Texan of Castilian Spanish descent received from the Republic of Mexico four leagues of lands in a large grant made to him because he was a native of San Antonio and of pure Spanish blood. Three leagues of this land (13,285.2 acres) lay in what was to become Comal County, Texas. The fortunate grantee who received the land was Juan Martin Veramendi (1778-1833), who died at a comparatively young age.¹

On March 15, 1845, Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels contracted to purchase for the German Emigration Company from some of the heirs of Veramendi (Maria Antonia Veramendi Garza and her husband, Rafael E. Garza) 1265 acres of this land, and used it as the terrain upon which he founded New Braunfels. Later in March 1845, Prince Solms had Engineer Nicolaus Zink survey the land and lay out the town, preparatory to allocating half-acre lots of the settlers.²

Joseph Klein, a member of the early contingents to arrive in New Braunfels in 1845, received his allotted grant of land in the town on April 22, 1848. The legal description of his lot as it is identified in 1978 is Lot 96, New City Block 2003, New Braunfels. Klein built improvements on the lot, and the dwelling which he built was occupied for many years before it was relocated off the San Antonio and Market Street corner and replaced by the Comal Hotel in 1897. Klein sold Lot 96 on February 16, 1859, to William Kuse (pronounced Koo' sey), whose family held it for almost a century, not relinquishing ownership until September 6, 1955, when it was bought by W. H. Dillen, who sold it unsuccessfully to Jack White in 1975, had to reclaim it, and then finally sold it to the present (1978) owners, Betty Mitchell and Marge Crumbaker.³

The historic Comal (or Eggeling) hotel structure was planned in 1897 and built in 1898-1900, after the site had been cleared by removal of the dwelling built by Joseph Klein, and occupied by William Kuse as his shoe shop and residence for a thirty-eight years before the removal, and for many years afterward.

The Comal was planned as a hotel and built in Texas Victorian style. Basement footings measure 30 inches in thickness. Even as late as 1978 there are no apparent flaws and no visible settling of the structure, giving proof after three-quarters of a century of excellence in construction. The exterior walls set on the 30-inch footings are 18 inches thick. First floor ceilings were 13 feet, and second floor ceiling eleven feet high. The window sills are of white limestone fitted with cypress wood boards 20 inches wide. These wide sills give a sumptuous feeling to the interior of the building. Above a full basement there are two floors and an attic. The structure has never had fireplaces, but was fitted

with flues to pipe out the smoke from four large pot-bellied heaters that warmed the building.⁴ The chimneys or flues still remain on the roof. The major materials for the exterior included bricks made in McQueeney, Texas, especially for this structure, and cypress lumber milled in McQueeney, expressly for this structure.⁵ The tin for the roof and the structural and finish hardware were purchased by the contractor from Henne Hardware & Lumber Company in New Braunfels.

The hotel was built with several rooms downstairs and ten guest rooms on the second floor. On each level the rooms open into central halls that run the length of the building. Front and back entrances are situated in the center of the downstairs hallway. A front door in the upstairs hallway gives access to a porch, and the back door in that hallway gives access to the fire escape. Stairs mount up from the first floor hall to the second floor hall. The structure was built without clothes closets or bathrooms. Originally a hand washbasin was provided in the first-floor hallway, and private basins, pitchers and chamber-pots were doubtless used in the guest rooms, since such appointments as these were customarily provided in the early 1900s. A ~~privy in the~~ back yard was also accessible to all of the guests and staff people.

Construction of the hotel was started in 1898 by New Braunfels builder Christian Herry. Herry's father had been a professional architect in Germany, and Herry himself was a very capable builder, noted for his work in masonry construction such as the hotel erected for the Eggelings. Skilled German craftsmen -- masons, carpenters, and trim carpenters -- were regularly employed and directed by Herry.⁶

Emilie Eggeling and her husband, owners of the Plaza Hotel one block distant from the San Antonio-Market Street corner, would surely have known what they wanted when they commissioned the construction of a second hotel, as they were experienced in operation by this time. Even such a detail as the luggage hoist on the upstairs porch of the Comal Hotel is an example of the practicality built into the Comal by enlightened owners. This is a pulley, used to raise and lower heavy satchels and trunks for the hotel guests. Other examples might also be found, as the Eggelings certainly were proficient by this time in their vocation.

The structure they commissioned was handsome as well as practical. The bricks used in the walls are beige in color. The beauty of these specially-made brick was a source of pride and so was the excellent quality of the cypress wood which went into the structure. Christian Herry personally selected the large cypress trees which were felled in the McQueeney area (12 miles from New Braunfels) and supervised the milling of the timbers, including the wide boards for the handsome window sills, and other wooden parts of the structure.⁷ The porch flooring, both upstairs and down, was one inch thick. (When the downstairs porch flooring was replaced in the 1950s, lumber had to be specially milled in order to fit the porch requirements, because flooring is no longer milled in that thickness.)

A general idea of why the Eggelings built a second hotel in 1898-1900 is suggested by an anecdote from the political and social history of the town of New Braunfels:

"In the fall of 1897 ... Miss Helen Gould, daughter of Jay Gould, the great railroad financier ... visited New Braunfels. She made the suggestion that the railroad should have a recreation ground on its line. And she thought Landa Park was the exact place for it. So ... by spring of the next year Landa Park had bloomed beautifully into existence. It was long before the days of the automobile, and thousands upon thousands of happy people visited the park from the surrounding cities on Sunday excursions, church picnics, etc....⁸

Even before the onset of park-related travel, Emilie and Theodor Eggeling had been experiencing overflow business at the Plaza, and wanted a second hotel constructed before competitive investors should come in and build another.⁹

The Eggelings' second hotel owes much of its style to the woman who was the principal instigator of the building. Emilie Eggeling was born into the family of Wilhelm and Friedricke Kuse while that family still lived in Prussia. According to the 1860 census, the Kuses had two children born in Prussia, and an infant born in Texas. The family included at that time: Wilhelm, 42, a shoemaker; his wife, Friedricke, 36; a son, Carl, 10, born in Prussia; a daughter, Emilie, 6, also born in Prussia; and a second son, Friedrich, one year old, born in Texas. Kuse was naturalized as an American citizen in 1860.¹⁰

By contrast with his wife's nativity in the old country, Theodor Eggeling (1851-1916) was born in Texas, the son of Julius and Caroline Eggeling, both natives of Hanover. When the 1860 census was taken during the childhood of both Theodor and Emilie Kuse Eggeling, the Kuse family had been in New Braunfels several years. Julius Eggeling had been mayor of New Braunfels from August 1852 to June 1856, and was serving in that capacity again, having taken office a second time in June 1858. In 1860, Julius Eggeling was 43 and claimed a worth of \$1600 in real estate and \$300 in personal property. His wife Caroline was then 35. Their children were Louise, 12; Theodor, 9; Emma, 5; and Sophie and Randolph, both aged 4. Theodor, born in 1851, grew up and married Emilie Kuse, and with her achieved business success in New Braunfels. Although the marriage date is unknown to these researchers, circumstances point to the probability of the mid-1870s as the date. Emilie would then have been just past 20, and Theodor in his mid-20s.¹¹

The couple had several children stillborn or deceased as infants.¹² In 1900, when the Comal Hotel was being completed, the family of Theodor and Emilie Eggeling consisted of a daughter, Theodora or Thea, born in December 1878; a daughter Hildegarde or Hilda, born in October 1881; a son Adolf (sometimes spelled Adolph), born in October 1888; and a daughter Ida, born in March 1890.¹²

It is understood that when the Eggeling -- later named the Comal ¹³ -- Hotel was completed, Theodor and Emilie Eggeling moved their household into the new structure -- perhaps the better to be near Emilie's aged parents.

In its original operation, the Comal Hotel had as a public room a combination parlor and dining room. This room and the kitchen were on the left side, downstairs. The dining room came to be popularly frequented by the townspeople as one of the best eating places in the region, particularly noted for its Sunday noon dinners. It was also a favored resort for tourists who arrived at Landa Park by trains which ran daily from Austin and San Antonio, in the style envisioned by Miss Helen Gould. ¹⁴

Emilie Eggeling used a large tract of land just south of the Comal Hotel as a resource to aid, abet and enhance her business of hotel-keeping. On this tract she operated a grocery and feed store, and also had a cowlot, horse barns, chicken houses and a garden. The cows, chickens, and garden produced food to be used in the kitchen and dining room of the hotel, and the horses were kept on the premises for the hauling by drays that had to be done for the hotel.

A practical and very direct woman, Emilie Eggeling is said to have catered to the needs of her hotel guests in surprising ways at some times. If a hotel customer needed fresh milk, she would take down a pail and go into the cowpen and milk one of the cows. In the manner of the turn of the century (and later) the Eggelings made a business of meeting all passenger trains and providing hack service to take guests to the hotel and a dray wagon to haul the drummer's sample cases and the guests' luggage. The son, Adolph (called Ted), drove the vehicles that met the trains for almost a lifetime.

They had at least two carriages -- one with fringe and ornate appearance, ¹⁵ another less ornamental one for the freighting of the luggage.

For a brief time, about 1910, a New Braunfels physician had his office in the Comal Hotel. Also, clinics were held in the hotel at times. Once a month, in that era, several doctors from San Antonio would arrive, rent rooms, and then see patients from the surrounding locality.

As Emilie and Theodor Eggeling grew older, they called their adult children more and more into service to help with the businesses. Their daughter Thea, born in 1878, married D. Weiss Halstead, a Civil War veteran (of Union Army service) who had been born in 1845 and was older than either of her parents. As early as 1915, Thea and Weiss Halstead had been brought into the Comal Hotel premises, to operate the facility. (On August 13, 1915, D. W. Halstead designated the Comal Hotel as the homestead of himself and his wife.) ¹⁶

Only the youngest daughter, Ida (who married a Mr. Forke), bore children, to extend the family of Emilie and Theodor Eggeling into still another generation.¹⁷ The other Eggeling offsprings were primarily engaged in business throughout their lives.

At some unspecified date, Hilda Eggeling Dunlap was living in Kansas City with her husband, Al Dunlap, and was employed in the Federal Reserve Bank. Yet in the manner of the German matriarch, Emilie wrote and asked Hilda to leave her job with the bank and return to New Braunfels and operate the Plaza Hotel. The date of this event is unknown, but the compliance of Hilda is recalled.

Thea and Weiss Halstead vacated the management of the Comal Hotel in 1919 (Halstead was then 74, and his father-in-law, although younger, had succumbed in 1916). The Halsteads moved to 307 Bridge Street in New Braunfels.

By 1919, Adolf (Ted) Eggeling had settled in California after having served in World War I. Emilie wrote to him in California and persuaded him to return to New Braunfels and operate the Comal. Complying with the request, Adolf worked with his mother until her death in 1930 and continued to operate the hotel until 1953, when he and his sister, Ida Eggeling Forke, sold the property to W. H. Dillen. From the time the structure was built until the sale to Dillen, the hotel was operated by Emilie Eggeling or her children.¹⁸

William H. and Nan Dillen bought not only the Comal Hotel but also the Joseph Klein house (for many years the home of the Kuse family), and the feed store south of the hotel.

At the time of the Dillen purchase, the hotel had remained virtually unchanged from its construction date. Commencing in February and continuing until Labor Day 1953, the Dillens refurbished the interior of the hotel. They rewired the structure to meet Southern Building Code requirements. A wooden fire escape at the rear of the building was replaced by a metal one. Four modern bathrooms were added on the first floor and eight were added on the second floor. The middle room of each row of five which had opened at each side into the central hallway was converted into bathrooms and closets, thus bringing the structure into compliance with mid-20th century standards of comfort.

In 1958 a patio area was added between the hotel and the Joseph Klein house; two stairways were opened into the basement, and a concrete slab was poured to replace the original dirt floor in the basement. The entry to the basement on the east side of the building was closed, and a stairway leading down into the basement was built on the western exterior of the building. A window opening was converted into an entry door. Air-conditioning was installed.

When Dillen took possession, he found that the basement was dry and unmarred by seepage of moisture through the foundation.

There was not a sign of mildew, rot, or settling of masonry. He was elated to find the structure in such good condition. A designer by profession and an admirer of old buildings, Dillen renamed the property "The Prince Solms Inn", in honor of the founder of the city of New Braunfels. Dillen installed an antique shop and operated it in the basement.

Taking pride in keeping all the decor and appointments in the framework of the late Victorian era, Dillen made no interior alterations to the front suite on the west side of the downstairs hall. The middle room was converted, as noted above, into two closets, two full baths, and a kitchen. The fourth room was altered to include a kitchen, closet and office. Across the downstairs hallway, the 30-feet by 16-feet, ten inches parlor-dining room was partitioned to make an additional room ten feet long by 16 feet, ten inches. The space which was originally the hotel kitchen was converted into a bedroom a closet, a bath, and a kitchen of modest size.

Inside shutters for the windows were purchased by the Dillens from the late building contractor Luther Hill of San Antonio, who obtained them from the original courthouse built in Marlin, Texas. These were cypress shutters made by slave labor, and were joined together by wooden pegs.

Searching long and patiently for front and back entrance doors that would enhance the appearance of the building and still be in keeping with its era, the Dillens obtained from the Sam Bennett mansion on Dwyer Street in the King William area of San Antonio suitable double doors with accompanying cypress-framed screen doors. These handsome doors are ten feet high, with hinges, knobs, and locks of solid bronze. Covering the hinges, which themselves were case with decorative designs, are decorative cover-plates.

Other doors purchased from the same Sam Bennett house are used in the basement -- not as closures for access-opening spaces but merely for their cosmetic or decorative effect -- as panelling over the masonry walls. The tiles around the fireplace mantel in the basement were purchased in 1955 in Holland, and are believed to be more than 200 years old. Mantels which have been installed in the front hall of the first floor and in the basement were purchased in San Antonio, but their original sources are unknown.

When the Dillens constructed the patio and garden area in 1958, they used stone and wood of historical significance. The large paving stones for the patio floor, the back entryway to the hotel, and the paving on the East San Antonio Street entryway, as well as the steps down to the basement on that side, were salvaged by the Dillens when the old and original Comal County Prison was torn down. At present the First National Bank of New Braunfels sits on the old courthouse corner, and behind this corner stood the prison. The stones from the prison were so large and heavy that a heavy-duty overhead crane had to be used to lift them and place

them into their new setting. The words "Comal County Prison", carved some 125 years ago by some unknown mason, are clearly visible at the entry to the basement from San Antonio Street. (Sam Houston is said to have visited the Comal County Prison at least once, when he was touring the courthouse area.)

For the cover construction on the patio, old cypress and cedar timbers were obtained from New Braunfels' first woolen mill house. The mill once stood on the Comal River about six blocks east of the hotel site. The mill, built about 1860, had two large cypress doors which are now used as entrances from the patio's main area into a storage area. A fireplace on the sheltered section of the patio is an exact duplicate of one in the Spanish Governor's Palace in San Antonio. Two ornamental stove brackets on each side of the fireplace once stood at the entryway to the original Comal County Prison.

A wooden bracket used on the patio area as wall decor is from a very early San Antonio convent, which once sat diagonally across from the Palace. The bracket came from a covered patio in the convent. Some historians have estimated that it may have originated as early as the mid-1700s. This is unconfirmed.

The door leading from the outside basement stairway into the basement is four feet wide and four inches thick. It was bought and installed by Bill Dillen. It was once a part of the mansion of a physician situated near Fort Sam Houston. Said to be about 100 years old, it still contains the original hardware.

A slate sink on the covered patio area is also from the house of the doctor. The graceful head of a swan, which forms the spigot, was purchased from a winery in France and some historians have estimated that it may have originated in the late 1700s.

Rafters and roof planking in the covered patio area were bought by the Dillens from the original airfield hangar at Love Field in Dallas. Some of the planking is 20 inches wide. Guests have been observed as they stood for long moments gazing at this timbering, as very few people have even seen lumber of that dimension.

The ornamental iron used for the fencing, posts, and gates on the East San Antonio Street and Market Street entrances to the hotel grounds came from old houses in the San Antonio area, but their origins are unknown.

For the 1978 construction of the cocktail bar in the hotel, old lumber from a Victorian house in Comaltown was used, with the exception of the bar's framing materials. The bar, built by the hotel's present owners, Betty Mitchell and Marge Crumbaker, was designed in keeping with the hotel's architecture. Lighting fixtures are of the Victorian period, and incorporate solid brass and beveled mirrors. The metal pub tables and the oak tables in the bar were purchased in England, with care given to select only those of the Victorian age. One of the bar's tables was made in

1870 in New Braunfels, of pine from Bastrop, Texas.

In the present state of existence, the hotel is in as perfect condition as its current owners can make it. Great pains have been taken in the repainting of all interior and outside trim, in repapering the rooms which required it, and in all other care incidental to a complete refurbishing: refinishing the floors in the parlor and adjoining office, recaulking windows, painting the tin roof with rust-retardant compounds, repairing broken metal fencing, and digging away years of accumulated soil and grass to reveal the beautiful brick walk area on the front.

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The hotel has not been provided with telephones or television in the guest rooms, and will not include such unjustified amenities in the future.

Owners Betty Mitchell and Marge Crumbaker have dedicated their efforts to perfect upkeep and maintenance. Currently Gwen Burt, as manager, oversees the operation of building and grounds.

In July 1975 a man named Jack White purported to buy the former Eggeling properties from Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Dillen, but White encumbered the site with a heavy mortgage, removed some of the resources and mementoes, and did not meet his obligation to pay for the properties. The Dillens reclaimed the property in March 1977 and sold it in April to Mesdames Mitchell and Crumbaker.¹⁹

Since the Mitchell-Crumbaker assumption of ownership, four separate air-conditioning and heating systems have been installed. Two bathrooms and additional electrical work have been added in the basement, where the new owners have installed a cocktail bar called "Wolfgang's Cellar", in honor of musical genius Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Under the owners' instructions that no duct work was to be conspicuous and detrimental to the historic aspect of the property, the climate control modifications have been carefully engineered, with all equipment hidden. The necessary ducts have been placed in the upper portions of existing closets.

Since the property has been in the present ownership, there have been some distinguished guests attracted to the hotel. These have included actors Earl Holliman, Guy Madison, and Van Johnson, and actress Virginia Mayo; United States Senator John Tower and his wife, Lilla; National Foundation March of Dimes board member Mary Owen Greenwood; Texas Representative Bennie Bock of New Braunfels; and Dr. Jack Bergfeld, the son of a doctor who once had an office in the hotel for the convenience of patients in the Hill Country. The historic registers have been lost to posterity, and it is not known just who the earlier guests of distinction may have been. Only limited food service is presently available, but this is to be expanded in the future. Guest reservations are running somewhat well into the future, by a month or even a year for special occasions. Recently there have been three weddings and receptions held in the facilities, extending into the Victorian cocktail bar.

It is the hope of the owners that the inn will continue to exist throughout this d

It is the hope of the owners that the inn will continue to exist through this century and into the next as a beautiful example of the structural appointments of New Braunfels in the late 19th and early 20th century.

It is our belief that the structure should be commemorated with an Official Texas Historical Building medallion and interpretive plate because of the significance which it has for the history of this region.

Footnotes

1. Frederick C. Chabot, With the Makers of San Antonio (privately published, 1937), pp. 243-244; Virginia H. Taylor, The Spanish Archives of the General Land Office of Texas (The Lone Star Press, Austin, 1955), p. 250.

2. Oscar Haas, History of New Braunfels and Comal County, Texas, 1844-1946 (privately published, 1968), pp. 16-24, 172-174.

3. Chester William and Ethel Geue, A New Land Beckoned (privately published, 1966), p. 112; Haas, op. cit., p. 172. Also Deed Records of Comal County, Texas: Volume C, page 325, for German Emigration Company deed to Joseph Klein; Volume F, p. 261, for Joseph Klein to William Kuse; Volume 100, p. 231, Kuse descendants to William H. Dillen; Volume 229, p. 195, for Dillen to Jack White; Vol. 240, p. 518, W. H. Dillen reclaiming; Vol. 251, p. 225, Dillen to Mmes. Mitchell and Crumbaker.

4. Joyce Forke Garnett, granddaughter of Theodor and Emilie Eggeling states that the hotel never had fireplaces, but used the four large, pot-bellied stoves for heating; the stoves were vented into the chimneys.

5. Clara and Oscar Haas, New Braunfels, Texas, Sept. 8, 1978, in statement to Betty Mitchell and Marge Crumbaker.

6. Ibid.

7 7. Ibid.

8. Oscar Haas, History of New Braunfels and Comal County, Texas, 1844-1946 (Privately published, 1968), pp. 211-212, quoting As I Remember, by Harry Landa, pp. 675-76.

9. Adolph (Ted) Eggeling to William H. Dillen, date uncertain.

10. Oscar Haas statement, date uncertain, on the naturalization matter. Census statistics are from the 1860 Census of Texas, as read on microfilm in the Texas State Library and Archives; also published by Haas, History of New Braunfels, etc., p. 276.

11. Refer to census records as cited; also for the Eggeling family census, the microfilm census rolls for 1860, page 1, Dwelling 3, Family 3, as read at the Texas State Archives. Oscar Haas, History of New Braunfels, etc., p. 299, shows that Julius Eggeling was the ninth mayor of New Braunfels, "Aug. 1852 to Jun. 1856" and "Ad. Eggeling, Jun. 1858 to Jun. 1861", but the census return affirms that "Ad." was Julius Eggeling.

12. The statement about the loss of children at birth or in infancy comes from Joyce Forke Garnett (Mrs. Horace Garnett), 307 E. Bridge Street, New Braunfels. The statistics of birth dates, etc., come from Film 1622, Enumeration District 11, 1900 Census for the United States, as researched by J. Michael Moon.

13. Although it seems to have been the impression of Joyce Garnett that the hotel was never called "the Eggeling Hotel", but always the "Comal Hotel", the statements of Clara and Oscar Haas, as cited above show that "the hotel was first named the Eggeling Hotel, then the Comal Hotel".

14. See the Haas quote from Harry Landa; also statements of Joyce Garnett.

15. Joyce Garnett statements.

16. Comal County Deed Records, Volume 35, page 539.

17. Statement of Joyce Garnett.

18. Ibid. Adolf Eggeling died in 1970; Ida Eggeling Forke died in 1976.

19. Deed Records of Comal County, Volume 251, page 225.

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Dillen, William H. Communications to Betty Mitchell and Marge Crumbaker at various times, 1977.

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Forke, Ida Eggeling. Communications to Joyce Forke Garnett (Mrs. Horace) and Marjorie Forke Alford (Mrs. Buck), her daughters, regarding the Kuse and Eggeling families and their properties, at various times prior to 1976.

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5477

The Historic Eggeling Hotel

by

Marge Crumbaker and Betty Mitchell

The historic hotel structure, according to the signed statements from historians Clara and Oscar Haas of New Braunfels, was started in 1898 and completed in 1900. Removal of dirt for ~~the~~ basement area was done by horse ^(drawn) fresnos.

The footings of the basement measure 30 inches in thickness. Proof of the hotel's excellent construction is evidenced today. There are no cracks. There has been no settling of the structure. It retains a fresh and young appearance inside and out.

The exterior walls, set on the 30-inch footings, are 18 inches thick. The height of the ceilings on the first floor are 13 feet, they are 11 feet high on the second floor. Each window sill is 20 inches wide, made of cypress. The wide sills give a wonderful feeling of majesty to the interiors.

The original structure is exactly as it was built except for the addition of a stair entry to the basement and the replacing of its original wooden fire escape with one made from metal.

The hotel was built to be a hotel. The two original porches, up and down, on the front, remain unchanged except for new cypress flooring added to the downstairs porch.

The style is classic Texas Victorian. It contains a full basement, the first and second floors and an attic. The structure has never had fireplaces, although chimneys built on the roof still remain. The outbuildings, which included the Joseph Klein House and the Feed Store, remain unchanged in architecture. The main materials on the exterior include bricks made for the job at McQueeney, Texas, and cypress milled for the job at McQueeney. The hardware, and tin for the roof, was purchased by the contractor from the Henne Hardware and Lumber Company of New Braunfels.

In the original interior, the hotel contained 10 rooms downstairs, five on each side of the hall; and 10 rooms on the second floor, five on each side of the hall. There were no closets and no baths, with the exception of a hand basin in the first-floor hallway.

Entry into the hotel was through the front or back doors, situated in the center of the downstairs hallway which runs the entire length of the building.

Construction on the hotel was started in 1898 by New Braunfels builder Christian Herry, Sr. Just prior to the hotel's planning, the Joseph Klein House, constructed in 1852, was moved to another location on the property so that the hotel could be situated on the corner of East San Antonio and Market Streets, two of the original streets laid out in the city at its founding on Good Friday 1845 by Prince Carl Solms of Braunfels, Germany.

According to the accompanying signed statements by New Braunfels historians, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Haas, Christian Herry, Sr. was capable of the task. His father was an ~~architect~~ ^{architect} in Germany, and in New Braunfels. Mr. Herry was a popular builder, noted for his brick construction. German craftsmen, masons, carpenters and trim carpenters were regularly employed by him.

Following the excavation of the basement, the important brick footing for the building's foundation was laid. It is 30 inches thick, recently re-established in 1977 when a plumbing line had to be repaired.

After Mr. Herry's footings were in place, the walls were built to the thickness of 18 inches. Exact instructions from the owner to the builder are unknown, but the owner was in 1898 the owner and operator of the Plaza Hotel one block distant, and the iron pulley installed on the upper porch is an exact duplicate of the one which was then in use at the Plaza Hotel. The pulley was used to raise and lower heavy luggage and trunks of the hotel's guests. The pulley is seen in early photographs of the Plaza Hotel, currently being restored by a federal grant. The Prince Solms Inn pulley is attached to the building exactly as it was placed there by Mr. Herry during construction.

The beige-colored bricks used in the hotel's exterior covering are from a brickyard and kiln in nearby McQueeney, Texas. Clara and Oscar Haas remember the kiln and the delivery of the brick by horse-drawn wagons. Mr. and Mrs. Haas report they also recall that Christian Herry, Sr. was proud of having personally selected the large cypress trees from the McQueeney area of the Guadalupe River, and of having them milled at McQueeney for use at the hotel.

The porch flooring, both up and down, has a one-inch thickness. When the downstairs porch flooring was replaced in 1953, lumber had to be specially milled in order to exactly duplicate it because porch flooring is no longer made in that thickness.

A general idea of why the Eggeling Hotel was constructed in 1898 is suggested in the following excerpt from the History of New Braunfels and Comal County, Texas, 1844-1946, by Oscar Haas (privately published, 1975), pages 211-212:

"In the fall of 1897..., Miss Helen Gould, daughter of Jay Gould, the great railroad financier ... visited New Braunfels. She made the suggestion that the railroad should have a recreation ground on its line. And she thought Landa Park was the exact place for it. So ... by spring of the next year Landa Park had bloomed beautifully into existence. It was long before the days of the automobile, and thousands upon thousands of happy people visited the park from the surrounding cities on Sunday excursions, church picnics, etc.... (From As I Remember, by Harry Landa, 75-76).

With travel to New Braunfels developing in such volume, it is no wonder Mrs. Eggeling wanted a second hotel to take the overflow from the Plaza, which she and her husband already operated.

The structure owes much of its style to the woman who had it built--Emilie the daughter of Wilhelm and Friedricke Kuse, who immigrated to Texas about 1859. According to the 1860 census, the Kuses had children Carl (10) and Emilie (6), born in Prussia, and an infant born in Texas. Legal records show that Wilhelm Kuse bought a house from Joseph Klein in 1859, and became a naturalized American citizen in 1860.

The hotel, according to the information passed to former owner Bill Dillen, was built by Emilie Kuse Eggeling on property owned by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Kuse. Emilie Eggeling was recognized as one of the early entrepreneurs of New Braunfels.

At the time the Prince Solms Inn was being built, Emilie was already operating the most successful hotel in the city, the Plaza Hotel.

Bill Dillen reports that Emilie's son Ted Eggeling told him Emilie had overflow business at the Plaza and wanted the new hotel constructed ^(and competitive) before outside investors built one. Her original plan was to assume ownership from her parents on the land and the new hotel after its completion.

Emilie Eggeling also operated a thriving grocery store across the street to the South from the Prince Solms Inn, and was very energetic. If a hotel customer needed fresh milk, Emilie Eggeling often would take a pail, go to the cowpen next to the store, and milk a cow. One of the services provided by her hotel was that of meeting guests at the railroad station* Her son Ted Eggeling worked for his mother until her death in 1930, and

one of his tasks was to drive the horse and buggy to the train

*This was standard operating procedure for hotels and innkeepers in the 19th and early 20th centuries. All did this, so Emilie was creating no innovation.

It Larnilee, 10-2-78

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depot.

Emilie Eggeling's husband Theo was the son of the ^{an early} ~~first~~ Mayor of New Braunfels, Joseph Eggeling*. Mayor Eggeling was drowned when he slipped from a footbridge across the Comal River and fell into the water.

The Prince Solms Inn, originally called The Eggeling Hotel, then the Comal Hotel, always has been operated as an inn. The registers have been lost to history and the guests who stayed there are not known.

Since its purchase in 1977 by Betty Mitchell and Marge Crumbaker, guests have included actors Earl Holliman, Guy Madison, Van Johnson, ^{and} actress Virginia Mayo; U. S. Sen. John Tower of Texas and his wife, Lilla; National Foundation March of Dimes board member Mary Owen Greenwood; and Texas Rep. Bennie Bock of New Braunfels; in addition to Dr. Jack Bergfeld, who is the son of a doctor who once had an office in the hotel for the convenience of Hill Country residents.

*According to Oscar Haas, History of New Braunfels and Comal County, Texas (Privately published, 1975), p. 299, the first mayor of New Braunfels was Gustav Hoffmann, who served from June 1847 to March 1848. No man named Eggeling served until five years later, when Julius Eggeling served from August 1852 to June 1856. An Ad. Eggeling served even later, 1858-1861. The statement concerning the father-in-law of Emilie Eggeling is therefore inaccurate, according to this usually impeccable source. One wonders if possibly Julius Eggeling instead of Joseph Eggeling was the father of Emilie Eggeling's husband, Theo. Debra Parmelee, 9-29-78

Additional information about the life of Emilie Kuse Eggeling and her family and their ownership of the Comal Hotel:

Two grand-daughters survive Emilie Eggeling. The grand-daughters are Joyce Forke Garnett (Mrs. Horace Garnett) of 307 E. Bridge Street in New Braunfels, and Marjorie Alford (Mrs. Buck Alford) of Austin. Mrs. Alford works in the Library Science Building at the University of Texas.

Emilie Eggeling is buried in the Comal Cemetery in Comaltown, a section of New Braunfels. Her tombstone lists her birthdate as May 30, 1854 in Germany, her death on Feb. 24, 1930 in New Braunfels.

Joyce Garnett regrets that when her mother, Ida Eggeling Forke was living, she did not pay more attention to the family's history, but she has been very helpful and has used a written family history given her by her mother to supply the following information about Emilie Eggeling and Emilie's family in connection with the Comal Hotel, now called the Prince Solms Inn:

Emilie Eggeling and her store-keeper husband Theodor had several children. Two, and maybe more, died in childbirth. Those who grew to adulthood were Thea, Hilda, Adolf (called Ted by his family) and Ida.

Adolf was much younger than his sisters.

Emilie Eggeling did indeed call upon her children to assist in the operation of both the Comal and the Plaza hotels. Hilda Eggeling Dunlap was living in Kansas City with her husband Al when Emilie wrote asking Hilda to leave her job with the Federal Reserve Bank and return to New Braunfels to operate the Plaza Hotel. The date they returned and managed that hotel is unknown.

Thea Eggeling had married a Civil War veteran named Weiss Halstead. He served in the Union Army. He was older than Theodor or Emilie Eggeling.

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Thea Halstead always lived in New Braunfels. Thea died in 1952 and is buried in the Eggeling family plot in Comal Cemetery. Her husband Weiss, born in 1845 and died in 1923, operated the Comal Hotel with Thea for Emilie Eggeling.

Joyce Garnett says the hotel never was called the Eggeling Hotel, always the Comal Hotel. She also says her grandmother was very firm, and when she asked a family member to do something, it seldom was refused.

Thea and Weiss operated the Comal Hotel until they began to tire from age. They moved to 307 East Bridge in New Braunfels, where Joyce Garnett now lives.

At the time Thea and Weiss vacated the managing of the Comal Hotel, Emilie Eggeling called upon her son Adolf to take over. That was in 1919, and he had just been released from service in the Army during WWI. Emilie wrote to him in California, where he had decided to settle, and summoned him to return to New Braunfels to manage the Comal Hotel. Adolf did as his mother requested, and ran the hotel until it was purchased by Bill and Nan Dillen.

Adolf Eggeling died in 1970.
Ida Eggeling Forke died in 1976.

From the time the hotel was built until it was sold to the Dillens it was operated by Emilie Eggeling or her children. It always made a living for the family members.

Of all of Emilie Eggeling's children, only Ida Forke gave birth to children.

Joyce Garnett says the hotel never had fireplaces, but contained four large pot-bellied stoves used for heating. The stoves were vented into the chimneys.

Julius Eggeling, Emilie's father-in-law, was the 9th Mayor of New Braunfels.

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structure
The structure was built as a hotel, with
a dining room and a kitchen which served food to the public.

For a brief time in about 1910, a doctor
~~from~~^{of} New Braunfels had an office there. Once a month, during that
time, several doctors from San Antonio would arrive, rent
rooms, then see patients in the area.

The hotel has always been a hotel open
to the public. Following its purchase in 1953, Bill Dillen
used the basement as an antique shop.

In 1977 Betty Mitchell and Marge Crumbaker
purchased the hotel, had it refurbished with choice antiques
of its age, or earlier, and continued its use as an inn.

The Prince Solms Inn is gaining in popularity
and is becoming a favored place to vacation. Reservations are
running from one month to one year ahead. Recently there have
been three weddings and receptions held at the hotel and its
Victorian cocktail bar, Wolfgang's Cellar.

Limited food is served at this time but
an extensive food service is now being planned.

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The hotel, the Feed Store and the Joseph Klein House were purchased Feb. 20, 1953, by Bill Dillen and his wife Nan from Theo Eggeling.

At the time of the Dillen purchase, the hotel had remained unchanged from its beginning. Commencing at the purchase date, continuing until Labor Day, the Dillens upgraded the hotel's interior. The entire structure was re-wired to meet the Southern Building Code requirements. A wooden fire escape at the rear of the building was removed and a metal one added in its exact place. Four modern bathrooms were added on the first floor, eight were added to the second floor.

On both the first and second floors the same plan for creating bath and closet space was used: five rooms went down each side of the halls. The room at the center of each row was converted into baths and closets.

In 1958 a patio area was added between the hotel and the Joseph Klein House, two stairways were opened into the basement and a slab was poured to replace the original dirt basement floor. The entry to the basement on the East side of the building was closed, and a stairway leading down to the basement was built outside of the structure on the West side. A window opening was converted into a door. Air conditioning was installed.

To the hotel ⁱⁿ 1977, under the ownership of Betty Mitchell and Marge Crumbaker, four separate air-conditioning and heating systems were installed. The Guada Coma Air Conditioning and Heating Company engineered the installation, following the instructions from Mitchell and Crumbaker that no duct work was to be done which would alter the interior. All installation of equipment and ducts were placed in the upper portions of existing closets.

In 1978, two bathrooms, plumbing and electrical work was added to meet the New Braunfels City Building Codes for the addition of a cocktail bar in the basement. The bar was named Wolfgang's Cellar in honor of composer Wolfgang Mozart.

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Following the completion of the hotel in 1900, no interior or exterior changes were made until its purchase in 1953 by designer and admirer of old buildings, Bill Dillen. Although there were no bathrooms, and no closets, with out-moded electrical services, Bill Dillen was extremely pleased to purchase the structure because of its unusually fine condition.

Although the basement floor was of dirt, it was totally dry and clean. There were no seeps of moisture through the foundation. There was not a sign of rot, of mildew or settling.

On the first and second levels, the floors and walls and all rooms were very clean. Bill Dillen became dedicated to perpetuating the use of the hotel. He renamed it the Prince Solms Inn in honor of the city's founder, Prince Carl Solms of Braunfels, Germany. He set about ~~moving~~ ^{remodeling} the structure into the 20th Century, but only through plumbing and electrical ~~requirements of~~ additions. He adhered with pride to all updates by keeping decor within the framework of the Victorian era.

Downstairs on the West side of the hallway, the front suite was left unaltered. The middle room was altered to include two closets, two full baths and a kitchen. The fourth room was altered to include a kitchen, closet and office. Across the hall, the parlor, originally a room 30 feet long by 16'x10", was partitioned to make an additional room 10' long by 16' x 10'. Originally the parlor served as a public dining room and was a favored ~~spot by~~ ^{resort for} tourists who arrived at Landa Park by trains which ran daily from Austin and San Antonio. The remainder of the East side of the hotel's downstairs rooms were converted from the hotel's original kitchen into a bedroom with a smaller kitchen, one bath and a closet.

Inside window shutters on the first floor were added by Bill and Nan Dillen. The shutters have historical significance: they were made by slave labor and were first installed on the original courthouse built in Marlin, Texas. The shutters are made of cypress, joined together by wooden pegs. The Dillens purchased the shutters from the late Luther Hill of San Antonio, a contractor.

The front and back doors were changed by the Dillens after a long and patient search to find something suitable in order to continue to enhance the hotel's appearance. Beautiful front doors acquired from the Sam Bennett mansion on Dwyer Street in the King William area of San Antonio were selected for the entry. The double doors have matching cypress screen doors. The doors and screens are 10 feet high. The hinges, knobs and locks are of solid bronze. The hinges have a decorative design cast into them. Covering the hinges are decorative plates.

Portions of the brick walls in the basement have been covered with thick doors from the Sam Bennett home, and now serve as paneling.

The tiles around the fireplace mantel in the basement were purchased in 1955 in Holland and are believed to be more than 200 years old. The mantels, both in the first floor hall and in the basement, were purchased in San Antonio and are from early but unknown homes of that city.

The hotel's patio and garden area was constructed by the Dillens in 1958 and all of the stone and wood used is of historic significance. The large stones which comprise the patio floor, the back entryway to the hotel, the front entryway from the front on East San Antonio Street, then form the steps down to the basement, were saved by the Dillens when the old and original Comal County Prison was torn down. The present First National Bank of New Braunfels sits on the old courthouse corner. Directly behind the old courthouse stood the Comal County Prison. The Prison site is now a part of the First National Bank's parking lot. The stones taken from the Prison, now at the Prince Solms Inn, were so large and heavy a giant overhead crane had to be used to lift them and set them in place. The words "Comal County Prison," carved about 125 years ago by some unknown mason, are clearly visible, se at the entry to the basement from San Antonio Street. Sam Houston once visited the Comal County Prison and the courthouse.

For the patio cover construction, old cypress and cedar timbers from the first woolen mill built in New Braunfels were used. The mill was built on the Comal River about six blocks East of the hotel site. The woolen mill was built in about 1860 and is on the 1881 Birdseye View of New Braunfels. The mill's two large cypress doors are now used as doors from the patio's main

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area into a storage area. A fireplace on the covered section of the patio is an exact duplicate of one in the Spanish Governor's Palace in San Antonio, and two ornamental stove brackets on each side of the fireplace once were at the entryway to the original Comal County Prison.

A wooden bracket used on the patio area as wall decor is from a very early San Antonio convent. The convent sat diagonally across from the Palace. The bracket came from a covered patio in the convent. Historians have dated it back to the mid-1700's. *[This is questionable as a date. D. Farmer, 10-2-78]*

The door, leading from the outside basement stairway into the basement, is four feet wide and four inches thick. It was purchased and installed by Bill Dillen. The door was once a part of a doctor's mansion near Fort Sam Houston. It is about 100 years old and contains the original hardware.

A slate sink on the covered patio area is also from the doctor's home. The graceful head of a swan which forms the spigot, was purchased from a winery in France and is dated by historians to be of the late 1700's. *[D. Farmer, 10-2-78]*

Rafters and roof planking in the covered patio area were purchased by the Dillens from the original airfield hanger at Love Field in Dallas. Some of the planking is 20 inches wide. Guests have stood for long moments looking up at it. Most of the guests have never seen lumber of that dimension.

The ornamental iron used for the fencing and gates and posts on the East San Antonio Street and Market Street entrances to the hotel's grounds came from old homes in the San Antonio area, but ownership is unknown.

For the 1978 construction of the cocktail bar in the Prince Solms Inn basement, old lumber from a Victorian house in Comaltown was used, with the exception of the bar's framing materials. The bar, built by the hotel's present owners, Betty Mitchell and Marge Crumbaker, was designed in keeping with the hotel's Victorian architecture. Lighting fixtures are of the same age, of solid brass and beveled mirrors. The metal pub tables and the oak tables in the bar were purchased in England, with care given to select only those from the Victorian age. One of the bar's tables is made of pine from Bastrop, Texas. It was made in New Braunfels in 1870.

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The Prince Solms Inn is in as perfect shape as its current owners can make it. Great attention has been given the repainting of all inside and outside trim, re-wallpapering the rooms which were in need of it, refinishing the floors in the parlor and adjoining office, re-caulking windows, painting the tin roof with rust-retardant materials, repairing broken metal fencing, and digging away years of dirt and collected grass from the front walk to reveal a beautiful brick area.

The Prince Solms Inn does not have telephones or television in the rooms of guests and will not include them in the future.

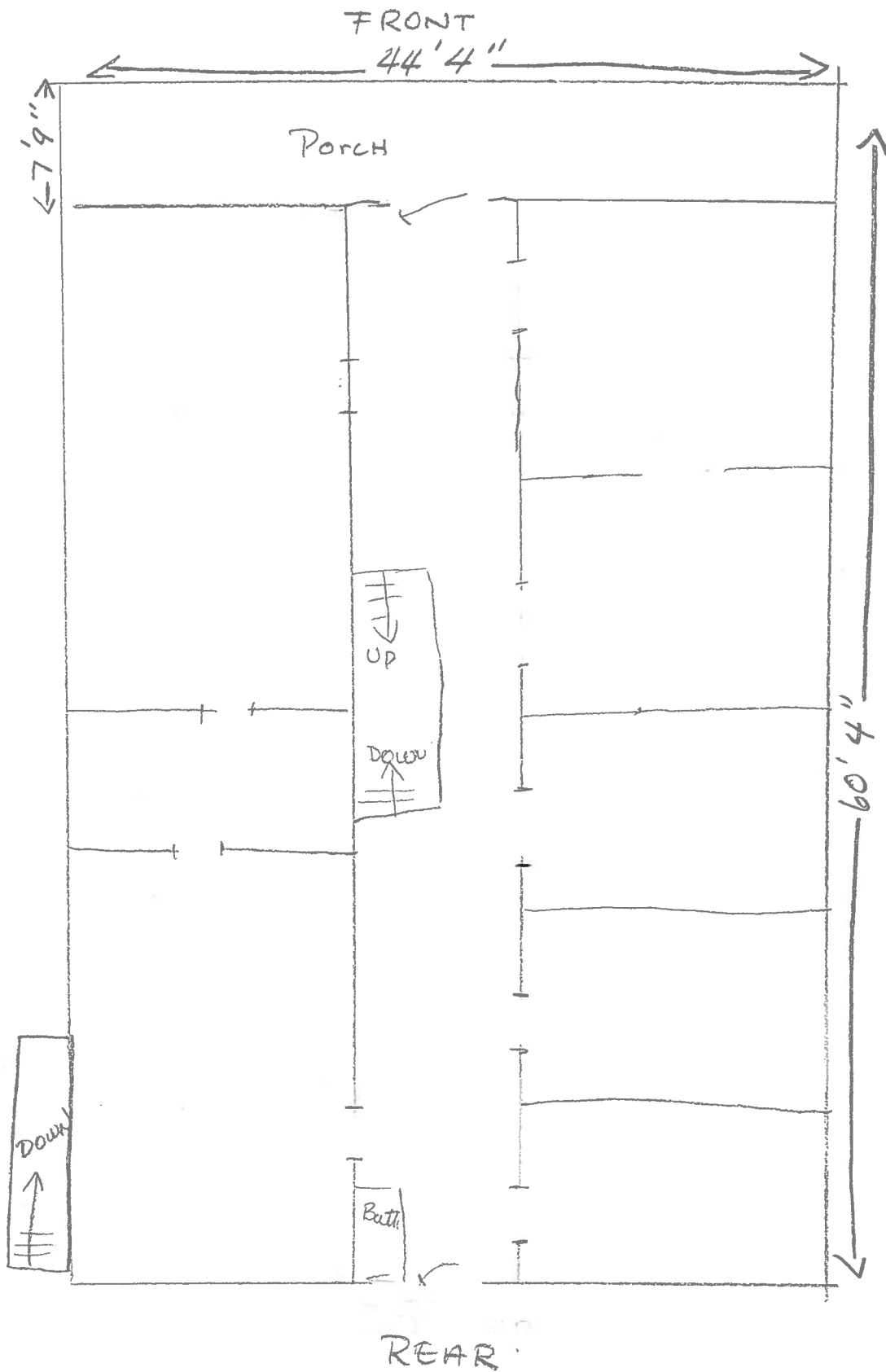
All up-keep is the dedication of its owners Betty Mitchell and Marge Crumbaker. All repairs to the hotel are made under their supervision. The hotel is currently under the management of Innkeeper Gwen Burt, responsible for its appearance and management. The grounds also are under Ms. Burt's supervision.

It is the hope of the owners that the Inn will continue through this century and into the next as a beautiful example of how things were in the early days of New Braunfels.

Immediate and future plans are to keep it as an Inn with the cocktail bar, food services to be added by 1979.

ORIGINAL Room Arrangement
of PRINCE SOLMS 1st floor

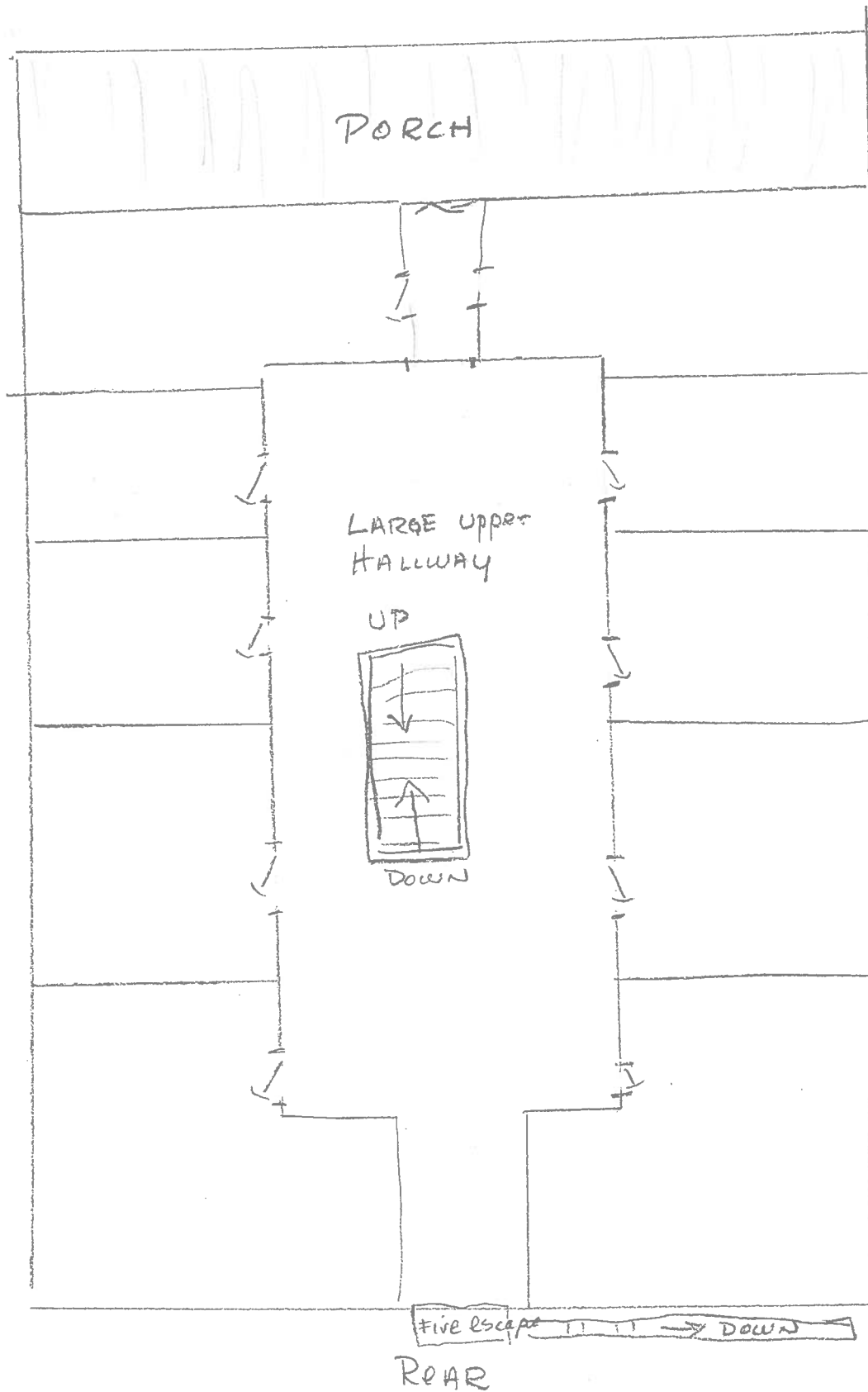
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ORIGINAL ROOM ARRANGEMENT
of PRINCE SOLMS INN 2ND floor

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FRONT

















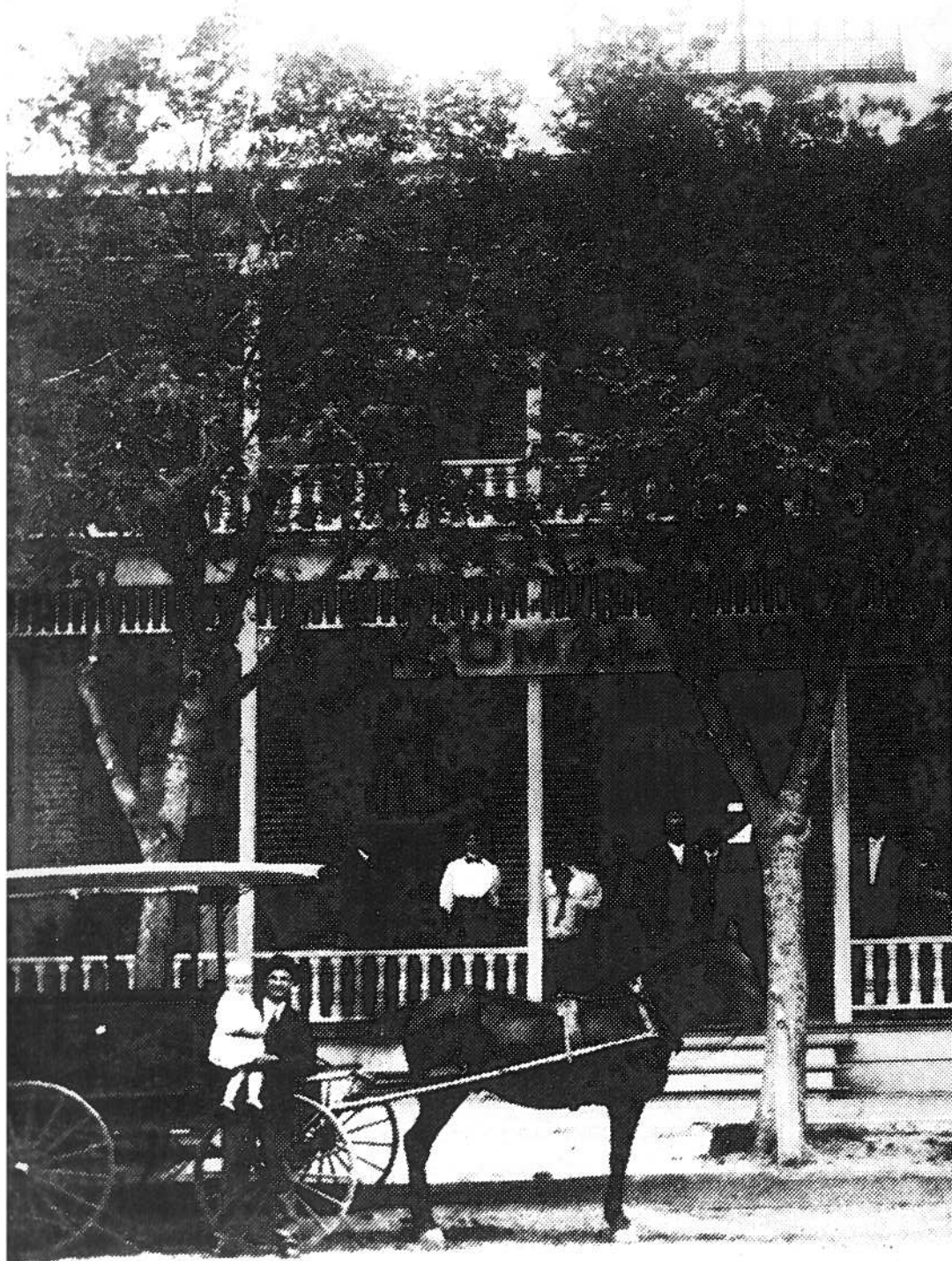












COMAL HOTEL, NEW BRAU