

HEF-3233
FD 34824
Received 11/19/07

November 9, 2007

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
395 E Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20423

Attention: Diana Wood, Section of Environmental Analysis
Re: STB Finance Docket No. 34284

My ancestors came from Germany in the 1800's (see attachment). The railroad going through our Quihi/New Fountain Historical District would be completely devastating including my house which is over 100 years old (it is registered as a Texas Heritage Farm); also the 4-mile waterhole which the soldiers used to water their horses which was located 4 miles from their camp at Verde Creek. They protected the early settlers from the Indians. The 4-mile water hole has never been known to go dry.

The railroad would cause more flooding down stream, destroying our Historic District, when blockage from the railroad would break. Wild life (hunting and fishing) will discontinue due to disruption of their habitat, which will cause loss of revenue for Medina County.

A survey needs to be done before the railroad route is approved. Thanks for giving us an opportunity to voice our opinion.

Archie Gerdes

Archie Gerdes, 450 Cr 351, Hondo, Texas 78861-6423

Medina County

* Gerdes T4 Ranch

1881

Ten miles northeast of Hondo

Founder: Paul Oefinger, Sr., of Germany

1986 Owner: Archie R. Gerdes, Hondo

Paul Oefinger, a German emigrant, purchased 320 acres from Jean Baptiste Schmidt in 1881. He ran a cattle and cotton ranch and had several encounters with Indians. During one raid, all the horses were stolen. Paul, Jr., the oldest son, was hidden under the bed for protection. Paul, Sr., and his wife, Anne Marie, had nine other children besides Paul. They were: Jacob, who died in early childhood, Sophia, Anne Marie, Kathrena, Christina, Louisa, Jacob, Ada, and Carl.

Paul, Jr., acquired the ranch in 1899. He raised corn, as well as cotton and cattle. He and his wife, Marie, had five children: Elsie, Minnie, Ernest, Emilie, and Bertha.

Emilie and her husband, William Saathoff, acquired 170 acres in 1910. They raised goats and cattle. The couple had three children: Pauline, Eilleen, and Freida. In 1923, the property passed back to Emilie's parents, and then in 1928, Emilie's sister, Elsie, and her husband, Herman Gerdes, acquired the title. They raised cattle, maize, and corn. Elsie and Herman

had three children: Archie Ray, Mary Bell, and Margie Lou.

In 1969, Archie acquired 630 acres, including 320 of the original ranch. He operates the land and continues to raise cattle, maize, and corn. Archie and his wife, Linda, live on the land today. A barn and part of the founder's house, which are at least 100 years old, are still standing and still in use.