

ALSATIAN HOME SITE, 06A
Upper Quihi Rural Historic District
No Street Address (on Farm-to-Market Road [FM] 2676)
Hondo vicinity
Medina County
Texas

HDR-AR-06A

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HDR HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY

Texas Historical Commission
1511 Colorado St.
Austin, TX 78701

HDR HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY

INDEX OF PHOTOGRAPHS

ALSATIAN HOME SITE, 06A (residence with tree on roof) HABS- HDR-AR-06A
Southwest Gulf Railroad (located in new rail line right of way)
Hondo
Medina County
Texas

Paul V. Chaplo, photographer, April 10 and 11, 2018.

HDR-AR-06A-1	General View showing context and environment looking North-Northwest.
HDR-AR-06A-2	Perspective View A: front and side looking Northwest.
HDR-AR-06A-3	Perspective View B: rear and opposing side looking Southeast.
HDR-AR-06A-4	Façade without scale stick looking North.
HDR-AR-06A-5	Façade with scale stick looking North.
HDR-AR-06A-6	Vertical Detail View showing full-height stone chimney and wooden door looking West.

HDR HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY
SEE INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS FOR CAPTION

No. HDR-AR-06A-1



HDR HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY
SEE INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS FOR CAPTION

No. HDR-AR-06A-2



HDR HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY
SEE INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS FOR CAPTION

No. HDR-AR-06A-3



HDR HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY
SEE INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS FOR CAPTION

No. HDR-AR-06A-4



HDR HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY
SEE INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS FOR CAPTION

No. HDR-AR-06A-5



HDR HISTORIC BUILDING SURVEY
SEE INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS FOR CAPTION

No. HDR-AR-06A-6



HDR-AR-06

Location: HDR-AR-06 is on Farm-to-Market Road [FM] 2676, Hondo vicinity, Medina County, Texas. The dwelling faces south and is approximately 300' northeast of the roadway. There is no extant drive or roadway that approaches the house, and the house does not have an assigned number.

The coordinates for the building are 29.428120 N, -98.993552 W. The coordinates were taken at the northeast corner of the building and were obtained in September 2017 through Google Earth using NAD 1983. There is no restriction on the release of the locational data to the public.

Present Owner/ Southwest Gulf Railroad, a subsidiary of Vulcan Materials Company.
Occupant:

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: HDR-AR-06 is a German-Alsatian dwelling built ca. 1870. The stone dwelling is a testament to Quihi settlers moving to Upper Quihi after the initial settlement of Quihi in the 1840s. Extant resources from this early period of Upper Quihi's settlement are relatively rare. HDR-AR-06 is an important example of early, permanent development in the area. Its form and style are unique to this area of Texas, and it embodies the distinctive characteristics of its type, period, and method of construction. As a partial ruin, it may also yield information important to local historical study, including an in-depth look at construction practices of settlers during the period.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: ca. 1870. This date is based upon the form and materials, which indicate the house was likely constructed before the 1880s when wood-frame homes became common in the area, as well as by the ownership history of the parcel, which indicates that owners prior to 1870 were likely land speculators.
2. Architect: Not known
3. Original and subsequent owners, uses: reference is made to the Medina County Court Deed Book [DB] and Official Public Record [OPR]
 - a. HDR-AR-06 is within Survey 126, Abstract 590, originally granted to John J. Kuykendall and sold August 3, 1846, to Jacob de Cordova, who received the patent October 5, 1846 (General Land Office, File 000185, certificate 690). Jacob

de Cordova was born in 1808 in Jamaica but was raised predominantly in England, and moved to the United States as a young man to join his father in Philadelphia (Ornish 2016). In the 1830 census, he was living in Philadelphia with his wife. He briefly returned to Jamaica in the early 1830s but settled in New Orleans in 1836, and in 1839 moved to Galveston. During the 1840s, he traveled extensively throughout Texas and acquired large amounts of land by both scrip and direct purchase (Ornish 2016). He also undertook speaking tours to major American cities such as New York and Philadelphia, even traveling as far as Manchester, England, to promote settlement in Texas. His lectures were widely published. He additionally wrote two books about Texas, and was involved in the publication of an 1849 map of the state of Texas (Ornish 2016). During the 1850 census, he and his family were living in Houston. He later lived in Seguin, Texas. De Cordova died December 26, 1868, in Bosque County, Texas (Ornish 2016).

- b. When he purchased the land, de Cordova was working as a land agent. Thus, he soon sold all 320 acres of Survey 126 to Daniel D. Culp of Galveston County on December 21, 1846 (DB 1:365). Culp was born in 1821 in Kentucky and moved to Texas before 1844 when he was he was deeded land in Brazoria County as attorney-in-fact for former president Andrew Jackson (Drummond et al. 2014:45). In 1850, Culp was residing in Cherokee County, Texas, with his profession listed as farmer (U.S. Census Bureau 1850a).
- c. George W. Hanna, of Memphis, Tennessee, purchased Survey 126 on January 24, 1849, for \$320 (DB 1:367).
- d. James Bellas, a merchant in Philadelphia, purchased the land on February 18, 1850, for \$320 (DB 1:368). In the 1850 census, an Irish-born merchant named James Bellas was residing in the South Mulberry Ward of Philadelphia and was of sufficient means to have a single domestic servant in the household (U.S. Census Bureau 1850b).
- e. On March 4, 1851, Clayton Allen, a “merchant tailor” also of Philadelphia, bought Survey 126 for \$320 (DB 1:370). In the 1850 census, a tailor named Clayton Allen lived in the North Mulberry ward of Philadelphia, and was still living there in 1860, though his profession was then listed as a broker (U.S. Census Bureau 1850c, 1860a). He was born about 1815 in Pennsylvania, and by 1880 was retired, widowed, and living with his daughter’s family on Wakefield Street in Philadelphia (U.S. Census Bureau 1880a).
- f. John M. Wetherall, of Philadelphia, acquired the land on August 24, 1854 (DB 3:306) and on the same day granted his power of attorney to Matthew M. Grant, of Travis County, Texas (DB 3:305).

- g. Matthew M. Grant purchased several surveys on November 9, 1866, including all 320 acres of Survey 126, from John M. Wetherall and his wife, Mary Wetherall (DB 8:114). According to the voter registration rolls for Travis County in 1867, Grant resided in Texas since 1836 (Texas State Library and Archives 1867). He was born in 1808 in Pennsylvania and was trained as a printer, including working on the first copy of *Godey's Lady's Book* published in Philadelphia in 1830 (Brown n.d.:62). He appears in the 1870 census as a printer, living with his son in Liberty Hill, Williamson County, Texas (U.S. Census Bureau 1870a).
- h. On June 4, 1870, Grant sold Survey 126 along with Survey 129 in Medina County to Jacob Fritz of Medina County for \$200 (DB 8:118). Fritz was born in March 1826 in Wurttemberg, Germany, and immigrated to Texas in 1850 (U.S. Census Bureau 1900a). He was a farmer for most of his adult life, listed within Justice Precinct 2 of Medina County in the censuses of 1860, 1870, and 1880 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1860b; U.S. Census Bureau 1870b; U.S. Census Bureau 1880b). By 1900, he had been widowed and was living in Precinct 3, with his occupation listed as "capitalist" (U.S. Census Bureau 1900a).
- i. County records show that Fritz had already sold almost 36 acres of Survey 126 to Rolph Frerichs, also of Medina County, on April 1, 1870 (DB 8:71), so the transaction from Grant to Fritz may have been recording an earlier agreement. Frerichs was born in January 1833 in Hanover, Germany, and immigrated to Texas in 1856 (U.S. Census Bureau 1900b). In 1860, he was a farm laborer for Harm Balzen, Jr. in Precinct 2 of Medina County (U.S. Census Bureau 1860c). By 1900, he owned his own farm in Precinct 1 of Medina County (U.S. Census Bureau 1900b). He died August 18, 1913, in Medina County (Texas Department of Health, n.d.).
- j. Frerichs sold 26 acres, including the site of HDR-AR-06, in Survey 126 to Harm H. deGrodt on November 8, 1888 (DB 21:457). DeGrodt was born in Hanover, Germany, in 1849 and was the younger brother of Frerichs' wife, Anna. In the 1860 census, the deGrodt household (last name misspelled as Degroth) included Harm deGrodt, his widowed mother, an older brother, Heinrich, and an older sister, Antje (U.S. Census Bureau 1860d). In 1870, he was enumerated within the Frerichs household with the profession of laborer (U.S. Census Bureau 1870c).
- k. Following deGrodt's death ca. 1900, his widow, Catherine, and surviving children sold the land as the second tract within a larger conveyance to John Sturm on July 30, 1909 (DB 43:111). John Sturm was born August 26, 1859, in Sturm Hill (Dunlay), Medina County (U.S. Census Bureau 1860e; Texas Department of State Health Services 1939). In the 1910 census, he is listed as a general farmer living

in Precinct 2 of Medina County and the head of a household including two older sisters, one younger sister, and Adolph Eckhart, the younger brother of Albert G. Eckhart who owned HDR-AR-02 and who was at the time a hired hand for the Sturms (U.S. Census Bureau 1910). Sturm married Margaret Echtle, who was forty years his junior, in 1922. He appears as a farmer in the 1930 census, living in Precinct 2 with his wife and three children (U.S. Census Bureau 1930). He died January 29, 1939, at the Medina hospital (Texas Department of State Health Services 1939). During John Sturm's ownership, the parcel had been decreased by the sale of 11 3/5 acres to Edgar Balzen (DB: 75:537), and approximately 2.7 acres acquired by the state for the right-of-way for FM 2676 (DB 283:451).

- l. Frank Sturm, John Sturm's younger son, inherited the land on which HDR-AR-06 stands as Parcel 4 within the partition deed dated November 23, 1981, following the death of John Sturm's widow earlier that year (DB 312:614). Frank Sturm was born August 30, 1925, on the family ranch in Medina County (Texas Department of State Health Services 1925). He appears to have been a lifelong resident of Medina County, and died April 5, 1999 (Texas Department of Health 2001:2412).
 - m. The parcel on which HDR-AR-06 is located was sold to Donato Rios, Jr. and his wife, Virginia Rios, on February 21, 2003, by Marie Sturm, the widow of Frank Sturm (OPR 475:558).
 - n. Richard K. McGehee purchased the parcel from Donato and Virginia Rios on May 22, 2014 (Instrument 2014032310).
 - o. McGehee sold the land to Southwest Gulf Railroad on June 11, 2015 (Instrument 2015004052).
4. Builder: Not known
5. Original plans and construction:

The house is a side-gabled, single-story, two-room cottage. It has stacked limestone walls stuccoed on the interior and exterior, a typical and character-defining feature of German-Alsatian dwellings in the Quihi area. The roof is wood frame with wood rafter tails exposed along the eaves. Wood ceiling beams at one time supported a loft space (no longer intact), which was also typical of German-Alsatian dwellings. The house has two stone gable end chimneys: an exterior chimney at the east end, and an interior chimney at the west end.

6. Alterations and additions:

The original roof of cedar shakes was covered at an unknown date by corrugated metal. Also at an unknown date, wood framing was added across the north and south elevations and at the northwest and southwest corners, apparently in an attempt to stabilize and enclose the deteriorating and severely exposed structure. Other windows have been boarded over from the interior. Exterior stucco has been partially replaced with what appears to be Portland-based material, most substantially on the east elevation.

B. Historical Context

Quihi, New Fountain, Vandenburg, and Castroville were colonies established in present-day Medina County (officially organized in 1848) in the mid-1840s by empresario Henri Castro. Castroville was the first of these settlements, and Quihi followed soon after, chosen for its advantageous location on Quihi Lake. At the time, Castro's colonies stood on the far western edge of the Texas frontier and were the furthest settlements west of San Antonio. Castro recruited German and French immigrants, many of whom came from the region of Alsace-Lorraine (Ochoa 2010). Ultimately, Castro's land grant would bring some 2,500 settlers into Medina County, and the settlers of Quihi were most often Lutherans or Methodists of German origin.

Quihi originally included 27 families—among them the Muennincks, Brucks, Heyens, Pichots, Schweers, Schuehles, Saathoffs, Schneiders, Riedens, Brinkhoffs (Brinchoff), and Boehles. The immigrants traveled by ship to Galveston and crossed Texas on foot, toting carts, to their newly allotted territory west of San Antonio. Along the way, they met with considerable violence from hostile Comanches. In Texas, the European settlers encountered a climate and terrain that was severely hot, dry, sparse of vegetation, and rocky—environmental elements considerably unlike those of their homeland. Additionally, the German and French Alsatians, many of them trained as craftsmen or merchants, were not entirely prepared to assume an agricultural lifestyle and struggled to acquire adequate implements, livestock, and expertise (Iruegas and Penick 2005:25–26).

Despite these serious obstacles, the immigrants developed Quihi into a successful farming community. Agriculture was the mainstay of the settlement, as land grant terms stipulated that colonists cultivate 15 acres within three years. Initial crops included wheat, corn, rye, and oats, with corn gradually taking precedence as the grain best suited to the climate and conditions. Turnips, squash, and beans also did well in the area. Farmers nearly always raised livestock, typically dairy and beef cattle or hogs, as well as smaller numbers of sheep and goats. In the late 1840s, a military road linking San Antonio to the Rio Grande was built through Quihi, giving the nascent community access to Castroville and San Antonio, as well as to Forts Inge, Lincoln, Duncan, and Clark on the western frontier. These

connections provided the settlement with a steady market for its agricultural products. As families established more permanent farmsteads, initial adobe and brush homes gave way to one-story houses built with local timber, sandstone, and limestone in a fashion derived from the settlers' homelands. By 1850, Quihi consisted of sixteen households. Residents were from Germany, Hungary, and Switzerland—as well as one Virginian and one Mexican—and trades included farming, stone masonry, blacksmithing, shoemaking, and mechanics. The town had a post office (built 1854), a Lutheran church (1852), and a private school (1856) (Iruegas and Penick 2005:29).

The 1870s in Quihi saw increased diversification in professions, with teachers, ministers, a postmaster, merchants, and grocers now supporting the growing town (Cassedy 2006:33). Quihi was on a path of expansion during the 1870s, both in population and in farm acreage. However, the construction of the Galveston, Harrisburg, and San Antonio Railway through the county in 1881 brought about the establishment of Hondo and LaCoste, causing the subsequent and gradual decline of Quihi, which was bypassed by the new railroad. As central Quihi's status as an economic center diminished and businesses closed, farmers began establishing homesteads farther north of the original town site, following Quihi and Elm Creeks. These newer, northern farms that developed after the arrival of the railroad became known as Upper Quihi. In November 1880, Christian Eckhart and Margaretha Sturm bought 320 acres from a San Antonio real estate firm and divided the land between them (DB 13:331). Eckhart established a farm on the northern 155 acres, part of the trend of settlement that expanded into Upper Quihi. The Quihi Gun Club (or Quihi Schuetzen Verein) was built in 1890 and hosted the community's first social organization, which continues to offer dances, picnics, and other community events.

Upper Quihi was distinct from the earlier settlements in the type and style of its buildings, which adhered more to the wood frame, Victorian, or Classical Revival styles current at the time. Late nineteenth century homes in Upper Quihi were often built from plan books, L-shaped in plan, one or two stories in height, and typically constructed with manufactured wood and iron components. They were built as early as the 1880s, and as late as the 1920s. In 1916, when Christian Eckhart's son, Albert G. Eckhart, built his home on Sturm Hill in the Upper Quihi district, he constructed a typical wood-frame, plan-book house, illustrating the prevailing style of the period and the move away from the earlier German-Alsatian stone house form.

Growth in Quihi throughout the remainder of the twentieth century continued to center on Upper Quihi. The original school in Quihi closed in 1920, replaced by the newer Upper Quihi School—built in 1910 and in operation until the early 1950s when it was consolidated with the Hondo school district. After declining to a population of twenty residents in the 1940s, Quihi (including Upper Quihi) rebounded to a population of approximately 100 in the late twentieth century (Cassedy 2006:38–39). This population

growth may be an effect of the general growth of the San Antonio metropolitan area, in which all of Medina County is included. Despite this growth, Quihi today is home to only a few residences, a church, and a cemetery. Quihi continues to function as a communal center for surrounding farms and ranches but no longer provides commercial or governmental services for area residents, who instead travel to Castroville or Hondo for these purposes. Upper Quihi remains in character much as it was when it was first settled: a collection of farms north and east of Quihi, with many residents related to original Castro Colonies settlers.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character:

HDR-AR-06 is a side-gabled, single-story, two-room cottage constructed in the typical method of German-Alsatian stone houses built in the Quihi area. The house is constructed of stacked limestone and mortar walls covered with stucco on the exterior and the interior. A steeply pitched roof extends beyond the exterior walls creating deep eaves as well as lowering the profile of the walls in a manner common to German-Alsatian houses. There is no visible foundation, indicating the house was built at grade-level, consistent with similarly aged buildings in the Quihi area. There is no architectural ornamentation on the existing structure, which is also consistent with German-Alsatian architecture.

2. Condition of fabric:

The current condition of the exterior fabric of HDR-AR-06 is poor. North and south elevation walls are missing on the west half of the building, leaving the building interior almost entirely exposed. The stucco is deeply cracked and missing in large portions on the interior—the west stone wall is almost entirely exposed—and is severely deteriorated on the exterior—nearly half of it is missing. The metal roof is rusted, with large portions of panels missing off the southern slope, leaving the historic wood sheathing and rafters exposed and badly weathered. Wood window casements and some wood window frames are extant on remaining openings, but all windows are missing the panes. The interior flooring and ceiling are both entirely absent.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall Dimensions: Measured drawings were not able to be completed for HDR-AR-06 due to the condition of the house, which was deemed unsound after the initial survey for this project. Approximations from field documentation—the house's rectangular foot print and dimensions are similar to those of HDR-AR-05—indicate the north and south elevations are approximately 25 feet wide, and the east and west elevations are

approximately 20 feet wide. The roof ridge is approximately 12 feet above ground level.

2. Foundation:

There is no apparent foundation, with the walls installed directly into the soil.

3. Walls:

Exterior walls are of stacked limestone and mortar, approximately one foot thick, and covered with whitewashed stucco on both the interior and the exterior. The interior wall dividing the two rooms is no longer extant.

4. Structural system, Framing:

The stone walls provide structural support for the house and the wood frame roof. The remaining wood ceiling beams extend through the upper section of the stone walls, and once supported the floor of the loft.

5. Chimneys:

The house has two fireplaces, one centered on the east wall and one directly opposite on the west wall. Both chimneys are constructed with limestone and mortar, and were most likely stuccoed to match the walls of the house, though the stucco is no longer present. The west chimney is interior, and the stack is collapsing. The east chimney is exterior and remains mostly intact.

6. Openings:

- a. There is an entrance on the east (side) elevation on the north bay. The single-leaf, board-and-batten door swings out of a wood frame, though the door is collapsing off of its metal hinges. The primary entry was likely located at the approximate center of the house on the south elevation, as indicated in photographs of the structure taken in 2006 for the *Rural Historic Landscape Analysis, Quihi Vicinity, Medina County, Texas* (Myers and Butman 2006).
- b. On the south elevation, the only extant window is a single one-over-one, wood sash window, with no lights present, located in the east bay. A matching window, with no remaining sash and now covered with plywood, is located directly opposite on the north elevation; originally, the two windows would have offered a direct view (and air flow) through the house to the exterior on either side. The chimney on the west elevation is flanked by matching wood sash windows, both likely originally one-over-one, though a sash remains only on the north bay window. On the north (likely rear) elevation, a single window opening is centered

in the remaining east bay, which has been boarded from the interior. There are no openings visible on the east elevation; however, the interior reveals that one small rectangular window may have historically existed south of the chimney, and was later enclosed and converted to shelving space. None of the windows have extant panes.

7. Roof:

The roof is covered with corrugated metal sheets laid over earlier wood shingles. The wood plank roof deck rests on wood rafters.

C. Description of Interior

a. Floor Plans:

The house most likely had two rooms originally, based upon its size and form. The placement of a fireplace at each gable end of the house also indicates that the house had separate interior spaces. Due to the deterioration of the structure, the exact placement of the interior wall dividing the two rooms is unclear.

b. Flooring:

No interior flooring remains, and the hearth stones have been mostly torn out.

c. Wall and Ceiling Finish

Walls were covered in whitewashed stucco, some of which is still extant, with the most intact portions located within the east section of the house.

d. Openings:

Windows are deep-set with wide wood frames and sills spanning the approximately one-foot-thick stone walls.

e. Decorative Features

A wood-frame storage niche rests in the east wall, to the south of the fireplace.

D. Site:

HDR-AR-06 is located on a historically agricultural property. Many of the agricultural outbuildings that likely supported the historic farmstead are absent from the site now. The parcel is predominantly flat in topography, with several mature trees located around the house. The land is uncultivated and covered in wild grasses and shrubs. There are three resources on the parcel associated with this house:

- a. A modern log cabin, south of the historic dwelling, first appears on a 2004 aerial photograph of the property. It was brought to or erected on the parcel after 1995, the date of the last aerial photograph in which it does not appear. It is a side-gabled cabin with a shed-roofed extension covering a full-width front porch on the southeast elevation.
- b. A metal windmill and concrete cistern, part of the property's former watering system, stand southeast of the dwelling. The tail of the windmill bears the faint lettering "SAMSCO San Antonio," indicating it was made by San Antonio Machine and Supply Company, one of only two large-scale windmill manufacturers in Texas (Welborn 2013). SAMSCO operated primarily between 1899 and 1965. This windmill was likely erected ca. 1920 during the ownership of John J. Sturm because it appears to feature a housing around the gearbox developed in 1915 to keep the gears oiled year-round, and because electric and gasoline pumps were in wide use by 1930 (Welborn 2013). Directly beneath the metal frame tower structure is the concrete-encased pumping mechanism. A freestanding circular concrete cistern stands just southwest of the pumping structure.
- c. South of the windmill and cistern sits a small, round concrete trough for watering smaller livestock, perhaps goats. Remnants of an underground piping system are visible, including an overflow pipe inserted in the wall of the trough.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Primary Sources

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This recording project was undertaken as part of the mitigation of adverse effects resulting from the construction of the Southwest Gulf Railroad through the Upper Quihi Rural Historic District. The project was completed in 2017 by Architectural Historians Kristin D. Morgan and Ann M. Keen (HDR). Architectural Historian Jessica M. Forbes (HDR) edited and prepared the final draft of documentation in 2018.