

February 10, 2019
Friends for the Preservation of
Historic Landa Park
Rosemarie L. Gregory
Arlene K. Seales

LP2.10.19.17

Photos: Each with appropriate Caption:
Pauline Marie Spiess Baetge
Carl Baetge
Courtesy of Dorothy Baetge

THE CARL BAETGE FAMILY MAKE THEIR HOME IN COMAL COUNTY

The Baetge House is considered the “Crown Jewel” of Conservation Plaza. The European-style two story house, built in **1852**, 26 miles upstream from New Braunfels on Demi-john Bend on the Guadalupe River, was considered the most beautiful house in the county. It was moved to Conservation Plaza in 1975. There, it was reassembled by Barron Schlameus who was assisted by willing helpers, and when completed, opened for visitors in 1981.

The house was built by Carl Baetge who came with his wife and child from Russia in 1850.

Carl was a Civil Engineer with emphasis in railroad construction and mining. He was born in Uelsen, Germany in 1805, the son of Engel Marie Elizabeth Kretzschmar and Johann Andreas Friedrich Baetge and christened Johann Friedrich Carl Baetge. His father was a dye-master which means the family was considered middle class. Only the children of nobility and the wealthy went to the university with the exception of very intelligent children of middle class families. Carl must have been very intelligent as he received a Civil Engineering degree from The University of Gottingen. He had previously moved his residence to Hannover. It is thought he had some schooling in England as well. Railroads as they are known today developed in England the first quarter of the 19th century.

Carl mastered 7 languages. Upon receiving his degree, he began working for a privately-owned engineering and construction company in Austria-Hungary that specialized in railroad construction. Carl was working for that company as a civil engineer on a railroad line that ran along the Danube River into Hungary. The development of the railroad is one of the great accomplishments in the progress of civilization. From early in the 1800's the railroads provided assistance in realizing the potential of the Industrial Revolution. Carl had chosen the right profession for the time.

Eventually Carl was hired as the Chief Engineer to build the railroad in Russia between the summer palace in Moscow and the winter palace in St. Petersburg. This railroad carried thousands of the royal court and their servants in comfort between the palaces that was a distance of 420 miles. The Czar was most pleased with Carl's work; consequently, Carl received 2 medals, a fortune in gold, and a title that was similar to “von” in Germany. The title made him eligible to marry a lady from the court.

This he did. His bride, Pauline Marie Spiess, was a lady-in-waiting to the Czarina Alexandra of Russia. Carl and Pauline Marie were married in 1846 in St. Petersburg. He was 41 She was 19.

The Spiess family immigrated from Germany into the Russian Baltic area and had considerable land holdings there. As time went on the family was elevated into the nobility. Pauline Marie was born at the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg in 1827. She was well educated, played the piano, and also

developed secretarial skills that helped her in her role at court.

In 1848 Carl and Pauline Marie had their first child, a daughter, named Marie but called Mascha. The baby was born at the summer palace in Moscow. By 1850 Carl knew they had to leave Russia as Czar Nicholas I was a cruel tyrant. Going to Germany was not an option because it too had difficulties. Carl decided the family would immigrate to New Braunfels, the new German town that was founded in Texas in 1845. This would be quite a change for Carl because the only occupations for him in Texas at that time were farming and ranching. Railroads did not come to Texas until the 1880s. It was quite a change for Pauline Marie as well. She had always been surrounded by servants to tend to her every need. She had never cooked and now, at least for a while, it would be cooking over a campfire to feed her family.

The Baetge family arrived in Texas with 100 pieces of baggage. Carl purchased 1600 acres on the Demi-john Bend part of the Guadalupe River. Initially the family lived in a log cabin on the property until 1852 when their European-style two-story house was complete. Carl became a rancher. With the vast land areas and little fencing, branding of cattle was necessary. Carl's brand was 4B. The nearest neighbor was 10 miles away. Every 6 months the Baetges went to town to restock supplies. After 5 years the house and property were sold. The family moved to Sattler. There Carl built another two-story house for them at Farm Marienthal. Unfortunately, the home was built too near the Guadalupe River. It flooded when the Guadalupe went on a rampage July 4, 1869 and again June 8 and 9, 1872. Most of their belongings were lost. Carl built another house at Farm Marienthal a safe distance above the Guadalupe River. There he and his family had peaceful years the remainder of his life.

The Baetge family included 5 children. Masha was born in Russia in 1848 and her siblings were born in Comal County, Texas. They were Pauline Caroline called Paula, born in 1853; Edward F., in 1855, Otto Herman, in 1857; and Oscar, in 1859.

The Baetge children were an active, happy bunch and attended the first school in Sattler. The school house was located near Jacob's Creek. The teacher was Carl Pantermuehl. Gottfried Rhode was president of the school board. Their father served as trustee along with Adolph Otto and Anton Kanz. In 1886 the school was moved close to Sattler store and called Mountain Valley School.

Carl Baetge died in 1883 at the age of 78 years. Carl's friend, A. Eiband published in the Neu Braunfelser Zeitung a tribute to Carl that concluded, "The deceased left a family that can be proudly classed with the best in the county." Eiband could not have written anything that would have pleased Carl more.

Seven years following Carl's death, Pauline Marie sold Farm Marienthal to their sons and moved to New Braunfels where she lived in a home she purchased on W. Mill St. Her sister Molly (Molline) C. Spiess, born in 1831, had come to Texas from Russia at the age of 27. In 1860 she married Friedrich Herman Heffter who became Comal County Judge during the Civil War. The Heffters had two daughters, Louise who married Robert Bose, the son of Capt. Julius von Bose, and Hermine who never married. The Heffters lived at Mountain Valley north of New Braunfels on the Guadalupe River until 1894 when Judge Heffter died. Molly then moved with her daughter who lived in New Braunfels. Molly died in 1900. The Heffters are buried in Comal Cemetery on Peace Ave.

Pauline Marie died in 1909 at the age of 82. She had good health until the last week of her life.

There was a burial service at her Mill St. home followed by her burial beside her husband, Carl Baetge, at Comal Cemetery.

The following is a list of Carl and Pauline Marie Spiess Baetges' children along with whom each married, the children of each union and who they married. This covers the first 3 generations of the Baetge family that came to Texas in 1850.

Mascha married Christian Pantermuehl in 1867. They had 9 children and 52 grandchildren.

Martha (born 1868) married August Jonas

Edda (born 1869) married Herman Fischer

Elfrieda (born 1870) married Willie Fischer (Herman's brother)

Otilie Altwine (born 1872) married Gottlieb Artzt

Paul A. Pantermuehl (born 1873) married Hedwig Guessow

Olga (born 1875) married Paul Lindemann

Antonie (Tonie) Alwina (born 1876) married Charles Lindemann(Paul's cousin)

Hans Edward Pantermuehl (born 1883) married Clara Liesmann

Harry Pantermuehl (born 1887) married Hulda Krause

Pauline (Paula) (born 1853) married Balthaser Preiss in 1895. No children.

Edward Friedrich Baetge (born 1855) married Helena Appmann in 1887.

George Baetge (born 1888) married Elizabeth McHugo

Zilda Baetge (born 1892) married Max Neuse

Erna Baetge (born 1894) married Herbert A. Dietel

Otto Herman Baetge (born 1857) married Johanne Tausch 1883

Charlie Baetge (born 1883) married Ella Staats

Arthur Baetge (born 1885) married Ella Marie Kanz

Walter Baetge (born 1887) married Minnie Davis

Gerda Baetge (born 1894) married Oscar A. Pfullmann

Othmar Robert Baetge (born 1904) married Anona Warnecke

Oscar Baetge (born 1859) married Hedwig Podewils in 1883, no children
married Alice Schultze in 1921

Oscar Baetge, Jr. (born 1922) married Eleanor Fritz

Else Baetge (born 1926) married Otto Ernst Gras.

Our thanks to New Braunfels Conservation Society Director Martha Rehler, Historian Barron Schlameus, and Dorothy Baetge for their assistance with this column. We appreciate the use of Roland Baetge's geneology of the Baetge family.