

City of Schertz

Remembrances Special Edition Article 2018-3

Prepared by: Schertz Historical Preservation Committee

Sources: 1. *Comal, Texas – Community Built On Faith, Family and Sacrifice*

2. Attachment to #1, Mrs. Sandra Sahm Reeh's Application for Middle School Naming



New Middle School Naming – A Tribute to Community Legacy

At the turn of the 20th century, situated along an historic roadway known as Kings Highway (now identified as Farm-to-Market (FM) 482), there existed a farming community known as Comal Settlement. The community was created by the arrival of a group of German first settlers of New Braunfels, Texas. In the mid-1850s, these settlers migrated approximately seven miles southwest of New Braunfels to begin establishing farms for the raising of crops for personal consumption and eventually cotton for sale as the community's primary cash crop. The community prospered as a cotton producing region throughout the "King Cotton" era (approximately 1830-1930). But, as time would prove, cotton farming suffered greatly during the Great Depression years from other disruptive factors, such as Boll Weevil infestation and the introduction of synthetic fabrics. In its early years, the community's struggles for survival were many and daunting. But, being industrious, hard-working, and God-fearing people, the settlers overcame the obstacles. A basic infrastructure of commerce, educational and religious foundations developed that kept the community vibrant and self-sustaining well into the first few decades of the twentieth century.

Among the settler's first priorities upon arrival at Comal was the establishment of a school for the educating of their children. Initially, the children's education was vested with the parents themselves, which meant in-home schooling. It was not long before the community, recognizing the need for a community school, built a small stone schoolhouse along-side what was the "Old San Antonio Road" or "Kings Highway". The location of the school was directly along the pathway of what is known as the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Trailway. In 1863, another small stone building was constructed beside the original building and became known as "Danville School". Danville School was the place where students from grades one to eight were educated until transferring to a high school in New Braunfels, Texas. In the mid-1950s, Danville School was consolidated with nearby Solms and Davenport Schools to form the Comal Elementary School. The second stone school building was moved to the site of the consolidated school. The original stone building, used as a school teacher's residence, remains standing at its original site location. Today, Danville school reunions are celebrated bi-annually by former students still residing in or near the vicinity of the former Comal Settlement.

Much has changed in terms of educational opportunity for the Comal community since the early days of settlement. Where once stood the consolidated elementary school, now is occupied by Saint John Paul High School. The latest addition to educational opportunity in the Comal Independent School District is the construction of a new middle school at the corner of

FM 482 and Hubertus Road. Naming the new middle school began by way of a community/school district nomination and school district review process. Interested citizens were invited to submit recommended names and to justify their recommendations in terms of historical importance, individual contributions, and/or impact upon the community. One such submission was sent by Mrs Sandra Sahm Reeh, a descendent of one of those original Comal Settlement German immigrant families. Mrs. Reeh's submission outlined the history of the settlement and the importance of Danville School to the community's development. To quote Mrs. Reeh,

“...education is important to my entire family and was instilled by our ancestors....The alumni (Danville School) agree that the education they received at Danville School was the fundamental start for a great future, preparing them for careers in many and varied occupations...The Danville School alumni are extremely proud of their legacy to the Comal Settlement and Danville School and would be deeply honored if the new middle school continues the heritage started in the mid-1800s by naming it Danville and/or Danville-Comal Middle School.”

Mrs. Reeh's persuasive application apparently struck home with the Comal School District's review committee. The name selected by the committee was “Danville Middle School”. The school will begin opening its doors August 28, 2018 and a dedication ceremony will be held in either September or October 2018.

Comal Settlement is now a part of the City of Schertz's Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). The area just east of the new middle school is the site of several iconic structures which were a part of the community architecture and economic infrastructure during the settlement years.

The selection of “Danville Middle School” as the school's permanent name is a significant occurrence with respect to preserving the legacy of the commitment to education by the early Comal Settlers. Mrs. Reeh is to be commended for taking the initiative for outlining the importance of the legacy left by the early settlers of Comal Settlement and their first school house.



Middle School Site

New Danville Middle School

Original Danville School