

ROOS FARMSTEAD, HOUSE

HABS No. TX-3531-A

875 Boot Ranch Circle
Fredericksburg vicinity
Gillespie County
Texas

BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
INTERMOUNTAIN REGIONAL OFFICE

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
12795 W. Alameda Parkway
Denver, CO 80228-2838

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

INDEX TO PHOTOGRAPHS

ROOS FARMSTEAD, HOUSE
875 Boot Ranch Circle
Fredericksburg vicinity
Gillespie County
Texas

HABS No. TX-3531-A

A. Elizabeth Butman, photographer, January 2008

TX-3531-A-1	VIEW TO NORTHEAST, FRONT FAÇADE
TX-3531-A-2	OBLIQUE VIEW TO NORTH, FRONT AND SOUTHEAST FAÇADES
TX-3531-A-3	OBLIQUE VIEW TO SOUTH, REAR AND NORTHWEST FAÇADES
TX-3531-A-4	DETAIL VIEW TO NORTHEAST, DOOR ON FRONT FAÇADE
TX-3531-A-5	DETAIL VIEW TO NORTHEAST, WINDOW ON FRONT FAÇADE
TX-3531-A-6	DETAIL VIEW TO SOUTHEAST, STONework ON NORTHWEST FAÇADE
TX-3531-A-7	DETAIL VIEW TO SOUTHEAST, PORCH
TX-3531-A-8	INTERIOR VIEW TO SOUTHWEST, FRONT WALL OF PRIMARY FIRST-FLOOR ROOM
TX-3531-A-9	INTERIOR VIEW TO EAST, STAIRWAY
TX-3531-A-10	INTERIOR VIEW TO WEST, ATTIC/SECOND FLOOR

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ROOS FARMSTEAD, HOUSE

HABS No. TX-3531-A

Location: 875 Boot Ranch Circle
Fredericksburg vicinity, Gillespie County, Texas

Present Owner: Boot Ranch

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: Built for Heinrich and Katharina Roos about 1853, this 1½ story limestone dwelling is a significant example of German masonry construction. It is architecturally significant as an outstanding, exceptionally intact example of a modest immigrant farmhouse, fast disappearing from the landscape. It is also significant for its historic associations with exploration and settlement of Central Texas in the mid-19th century and for its expression of German culture. The Roos family settled in what was then called the Palo Alto community with other German immigrants, most of whom were farmers. Several stone masons in the community likely helped build the house.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1853
2. Architect: None
3. Original and subsequent owners: Heinrich and Katharina Roos; (deeds)
4. Builders, contractors, suppliers: Not known; likely stone mason(s) from the Palo Alto community.
5. Original plans and construction: Not known
6. Alterations and additions: Shed-roofed rear addition, ca. 1870; shed-roofed front porch and partial-width front addition, ca. 1870; shed-roofed side addition, ca. 1940

B. Historical Context:

See the first section of this report, "Roos Farmstead," (sheet TX-3531) for historic context of the entire farmstead including the house, secondary dwelling, outbuilding, and cemetery.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement: The Roos House is a 1 1/2-story, side-gabled limestone dwelling in the vernacular style, built by German stonemasons out of local stone. Originally a small one-room dwelling with a rectangular footprint and a partial upper story, the house was enlarged by three historic additions—a stone shed-roofed rear addition, a stone partial-width front addition and shed-roofed front porch, and a shed-roofed wood frame side addition. The upper story contains the addition of a wood dormer window on the front façade. It shares its site with a stone secondary dwelling and log outbuilding, both of which were built contemporaneously. The house faces south.
1. Architectural character: This is a vernacular stone house of German-immigrant construction, with early additions that do not alter its sense of history.
 2. Condition of fabric: Fair to good. Structurally stable, with very little damage to the stonework, and no visible cracks. Paint coat damage and minor wood damage on all wood areas, including the side addition, areas of wood trim, wood window sash and window frames, dormer, and front porch. Glass damaged or missing in some windows. Corrugated metal roof in fair condition. Inside, there is minor damage to paint and plaster, and little to no damage to wood trim and stairs.
- B. Description of Exterior:
1. Foundations: Limestone blocks.
 2. Walls: Limestone coursed rubble. The limestone blocks comprising the rear and front additions are larger than those found on the house's original volume. Courses are level but interrupted, with periodic full-width courses found on all sides. Above the gable-end windows are thin strips of wood inset between two courses of stone. These were used to attach awnings. There is wood siding on ca. 1940 addition and dormer window, and a small section of wood siding on the side wall of the inset porch. The wood-framed addition has a stone skirting.
 3. Structural system, framing: Load-bearing masonry with wood joists and rafters for second floor and roof. The ca. 1940 addition is frame.
 4. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: A partial-width front porch shares a shed roof with the small front addition. The porch has chamfered wood porch posts and an awning consisting of wood planks applied like skirting to the eaves of the porch roof. The awning features a sawtooth design along its bottom edge. Three limestone steps lead to the porch.
 5. Chimneys: There are two stone chimneys on north elevation—one centered on the original structure, and the second near connection of rear addition. Fireplaces are not extant.

6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: There are two wood paneled doors with wood-framed screen doors open off the two walls of the front porch. The larger, main front door that faces south has a large, square light and a segmental arch header of limestone blocks. Both front doors have screen doors attached. A third paneled door is located on the side façade of the frame side addition.
- b. Windows and shutters: Double-hung, wood frame windows in six-over-six and four-over-four light configurations. A notable feature is a wall of windows on the wood-framed side addition, created by eight six-over-six windows adjacent to one another. Headers vary—at least two windows have no headers, two have limestone blocks as headers, one has a wood header, and the front-facing window on the front porch has a segmental arch header. Two windows have limestone sills.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Side gabled roof with shed-roofed rear extension, shed-roofed porch and front addition, and shed-roofed side addition. Corrugated sheet metal over wood shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Minimal overhang to roof of house and early additions, with wood board fascia. Exposed rafter ends on frame addition.
- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: Wood-clad, shed-roofed dormer centered on front elevation with paired four-over-four windows.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Roughly square in plan with side, front, and rear additions. The main room occupies the central, original volume of the house, and has a wood staircase leading upstairs. The front addition is a small room containing a circa 1940 bathroom, the rear addition is a narrow kitchen, and the side addition is a sunroom-like living space. The second floor consists of a single room contained within the roof of the central volume.
2. Stairways: Straight wood stair with wood railing and square newel post.
3. Flooring: Hardwood.
4. Wall and ceiling finishes: Plaster walls and bead-board ceiling in central volume of ground floor; plaster walls and plaster ceiling in additions; plaster walls and wallpapered ceiling on second floor. The side addition has one exposed-stone wall, which was once the east façade of the house.

5. Doorways and doors: Non-historic paired louvered doors between main room and front addition, and paneled one-light door between main room and kitchen addition. Other interior doors missing.
6. Decorative features and trim: Flat wood baseboards with shoe molding; wood trim on some doors and windows. Near the top of the stairs is a built-in wood cabinet under the eastern gable-end window. The kitchen contains built in wood cabinets below is western window and on its northern wall.
7. Hardware: Enameled knob on front door and on door between main room and kitchen. Simple hinges on all doors and cabinets. Some doorknobs missing.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: Window air-conditioning unit in frame addition.
 - b. Lighting: Wiring drops from the center of the main downstairs and upstairs rooms. No fixtures or bulbs.
 - c. Plumbing: Bathroom added to front room; kitchen with sink added to early rear addition. Not currently operational.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces south and is sited on a rise west of Palo Alto Creek. Between the house and creek bank are a small limestone outbuilding and log cabin. A well adjacent to the limestone building has been filled. Further north are a frame outhouse and the ruins of two metal-clad garages. The eastern perimeter of the homestead is defined by mesquite fencing.
2. Historic landscape design: The area surrounding the house is clear grassland with substantial oak trees and hackberries clustered around the buildings and along the slope to the creek.
3. Outbuildings: The limestone outbuilding appears contemporaneous with the house, and the log cabin also dates to the mid-1800s based on deed information.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Gillespie County deed records

Gillespie County Historical Society, *Pioneers in God's Hills* v. 1

Glynn Treibs interview with Terri Myers, February 23, 2008

U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900

Terry G. Jordan, *German Seed in Texas Soil*, 1966

Glen E. Lich, *The German Texans*, 1996.

Prepared by: A. Elizabeth Butman, Architectural Historian
 Terri Myers, Historian, Preservation Central, Inc.