

THE KRAUS HOUSE

Circa 1890s

Fredrich William Kraus emigrated from Germany in 1844, landing at Galveston. In 1847, the same year he married Dorothea Koenig, he purchased land a few miles east of where Round Top had its beginning. Here they farmed and raised cattle, living in a log house and rearing five children: Emma, Louise, Fredrich W., Jr. Otto, and Adolph. The log house burned, the year it burned is no longer known.



The men of the Kraus family continued to live on the farm, Otto and Adolph never married, but Fredrich, Jr. married Lura Aurich. The frame house was Fredrich and Laura's home, but the year it was built is not known. It is known that Bodo Kraus was born in this house on April 26, 1903, as were his older brothers, Willie (1894) and Hugo, (1897).



Bodo Kraus lived on the farm all his life. He married Pearlie Birkelbach on November 11, 1927. A notable achievement in the life of Bodo Kraus, other than being a friend to all was being president of the Round Top State Bank for 29 years. The bank was chartered in 1912.

The Kraus Haus was gifted to the Round Top Area Historical Society by the Kraus family and moved to Round Top on April 7, 1998.

Points of interest about the house: The outside structure of the house is known as “board” and “bat” construction. Twelve inch horizontal boards with bats covered the opening between the boards. The boards and bats had to be made in a saw mill thus telling us Round Top by the 1890s had a saw mill. There would be no insulation in the walls. The inside walls of the house are covered in wood thus telling us the owners probably added the inside walls as they became more affluent. The wood burning potbelly stove would be the only means of keeping the house warm in the winter. The kitchen was probably located in a separate building from the house for fire safety. The toilet also would be located outside the house; this structure would be known as an “outhouse”. Bathing would be done on a weekly or monthly basis in a creek; pond or a large tub would be brought into the house. Water would be heated and poured into the tub. The original water in the tub would be used to bathe everyone that lived in the house. Each person would take their turn in the tub, who was first, second and so on would be determined by their standing in the family. Water would be drawn from a creek or hand dug well and brought to the kitchen.