

**Four Criteria for the Historic Significance of the Bacon-Steubing Farm presented to HDRC**  
**12/2/2020**

**Criterion 1: valuable visible reminder of the cultural heritage of the community.**

The remaining farm buildings serve as a valuable visible reminder of the cultural heritage of dairy farming that once flourished in northwestern Bexar County, and which author Gayle Brennan Spencer described as “a part of San Antonio’s heritage almost erased” (Spencer, p. x).

Twentieth century improvements in roads, vehicles, refrigeration, and dairy equipment allowed farmers, like the Bacons and Steubings, to supply the large dairy processing plants in town, which were distant from their farms on the rural outskirts. This farm supplied Metzger Dairies, whose plant was located on N. Flores Street.

The existing barn replaced a smaller structure and allowed for mechanized milking, sometime between 1948 and 1954. Its construction reflected the farm’s continued growth around the time when overall milk production in Bexar County had started to decline. Together with the feed room and milk house, it represented the working heart of the farm.

Operating as a dairy into the 1980s, the Bacon-Steubing farm outlasted the older Voelcker farm (Prewitt, p. 19) whose barn and houses are preserved in Hardberger Park. The mid-century buildings on the Bacon-Steubing farm remind an increasingly urban community how long dairy farming persisted as a part of the area’s rural heritage.

**Criterion 3: Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the development of the community or county.**

This site is associated with both the Joseph V. Bacon and the Raymond Steubing families. Joseph Vinson Bacon, for whom J.V. Bacon Parkway is named, established the farm in 1917. His daughter, Bernice, married a local farmer named Raymond Steubing in 1938. He joined her on the Bacon farm, where they raised their two children to carry on the family business.

Raymond Steubing’s grandfather, Heinrich, and father, Henry, helped settle and advance the Helotes/Leon Valley community.

Heinrich Steubing, a German immigrant, established one of the area’s first farms near Eckert Road in the 1850s. He became a charter member of the Zion Lutheran Church in Helotes in 1904.

Henry Steubing helped construct the 1906 church building. He also assisted in establishing several area schools. The Henry Steubing Elementary School on Hausman Road is named for him.

Due to the long hours and rigorous demands of dairy farming, the Bacon-Steubing family had less time to engage in civic and social activities. The two families contributed their labor on their farm, which provided wholesome, quality milk to meet the city’s rising demands for dairy products throughout the first half of the twentieth century. As one of the larger local farms, their efforts helped make Bexar County a “major player in the Texas dairy industry” between 1920 and 1950 (Prewitt, p. 12).

**Criterion 7: Its unique location or singular physical characteristics make it an established or familiar visual feature.**

Of the remaining three buildings, the long, low masonry building is recognizable as a cattle barn, similar in basic form to the older Voelcker dairy barn preserved at Hardberger Park.

Passed on the east by J.V. Bacon Parkway and on the west by an unnamed road by the Overlook Exchange Apartment complex, the three buildings are an established visual feature that can be seen by traffic on both roads.

J.V. Bacon Parkway serves as an important traffic connector between Hausman and De Zavala Roads, linking the growing residential and commercial development that exists to the north and south of the remaining buildings.

Many residents from the Ridgehaven neighborhood northeast of this site have already indicated their support for preserving the farm buildings as a familiar visual feature.

**Criterion 11: The buildings are of distinctive interest and value for exemplifying dairy farming as a part of San Antonio's economic and historical heritage.**

Commercial dairy farming became “a significant component of agricultural production in Bexar County,” particularly in the years between 1920 and 1950 (Prewitt, p. 16). Even by 1954, the San Antonio City Directory listed twelve dairies, the largest of which were The Borden Company, Foremost Dairies, Knowlton's Creamery, and Metzger Dairy.

The farmers functioned together with the processors and distributors in an interdependent relationship that represented an important part of the local economy. One 1935 article about Metzger's dairies noted that, “every cent spent for fresh milk aids in the upbuilding of San Antonio. From the dairymen who produce it to the . . . employees of the Metzger plant, it is strictly a home industry” (*San Antonio Light*, November 11, 1935).

The Metzger's plant on North Flores, which included the Bacon-Steubing farm among its suppliers, expanded and innovated multiple times between 1935 and 1954, as the popularity of its products increased. In the early 1950s, Metzger's processed nearly 10,000 gallons of milk a day and 1,000 gallons of ice cream (*The Southwest Texans*, p. 177).

With a new barn capable of accommodating 40 cows at a time, the Bacon-Steubing Farm would have been among the city's larger milk suppliers capable of meeting Metzger's rigorous quality standards, which depended on “sound feeding and sanitation programs” on the farms (*San Antonio Express and News*, July 4, 1954).

The remaining dairy buildings on the Bacon-Steubing site, including the feed room and milk house, show how the farm adapted its physical environment to better meet the needs and requirements of the local dairy products industry.

**Conclusion:** Dairying was once an important part of San Antonio's economy and a demanding way of life for many farm families living on the city's outskirts. The remaining buildings on the Bacon-Steubing Farm link this site on De Zavala Road to that vanished heritage through four different aspects of significance and are worthy of preservation.

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