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### KREISCHE BREWERY STATE HISTORIC SITE

414 State Loop 92, La Grange, TX 78945  
979-968-5658

[visitkreischebrewery.com](http://visitkreischebrewery.com)



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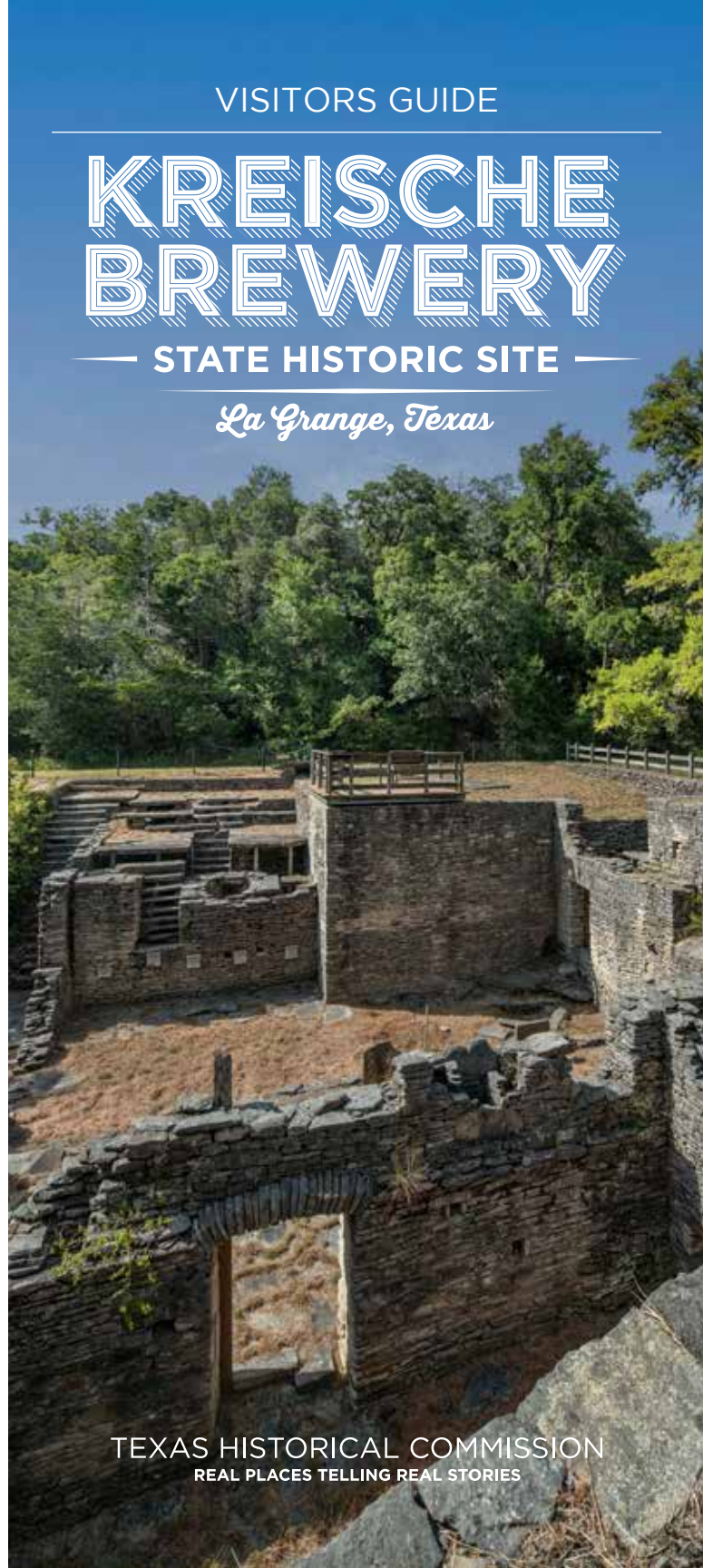
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## VISITORS GUIDE

# KREISCHE BREWERY

## STATE HISTORIC SITE

*La Grange, Texas*



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES

Welcome to Kreische Brewery State Historic Site. Set on top of a beautiful clifftop bluff shaped and molded by the Colorado River, the site overlooks miles of Central Texas, where many German immigrants settled in the mid-19th century. The Kreische family home and its surrounding grounds became a focal point for the bluff community and Fayette County. Here, German Texans gathered to reflect on their heritage, build community, and raise a glass to the opportunities of their new homeland.

## AN IMMIGRANT'S OPPORTUNITY



Heinrich Ludwig Kreische was born in Saxony, Germany in 1821. In his youth he trained as a stonemason and mastered his craft in Germany at one of the first trade schools in the world. Ready to utilize his skills in a new land, Kreische left Germany for the promises of Texas in

late 1846. In 1849 he purchased 172 acres on the bluff. Taking advantage of the abundant sandstone at the base of the bluff, Kreische made a name for himself as a master stonemason throughout Fayette County, winning contracts for the construction of the second county jailhouse in 1853 and the third county courthouse in 1855.

While building his reputation and affluence, Kreische married Austrian immigrant Josepha Appelt in 1855 and settled in a modest self-built home on the bluff, which he later expanded to accommodate their six children: Henry Louis, Anna Louise, Otto, Franklin, Pauline, and Julia.



Through the 1850s and 1860s, Kreische's primary profession was stonemasonry; however, the 1870s census revealed a change in occupation: he listed himself as a "brewer." By the early 1870s, Kreische began the operation of a three-story brewery, located in a spring-fed ravine behind his home. By 1878, Kreische's brewery produced 774 barrels of lager, making his operation the third largest in Texas. The



The Bluff Schuetzenverein, a unique German-Texan social club, regularly gathered on the Kreische property in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Kreisches were well-respected members of the German community. The family leased a portion of their land to the local Bluff Schuetzenverein, or shooting club, for gatherings, competitions, and celebrations. Heinrich also owned and operated the Union Beer Hall in downtown La Grange, where his customers could enjoy a glass of "Bluff Beer."

Rapid industrialization, the rise of railroads, and the progression of commercial refrigeration challenged local and small-scale

brewing in the late 1800s. Kreische sensed this change and began constructing a local icehouse in town and investing in La Grange's railroad. Kreische's untimely death in 1882 was likely the final blow to the brewery—ultimately it shut down in 1884. His family continued to live on the bluff for 70 years after his death until daughter, Julia, passed away in 1952.



## POINTS OF INTEREST

### 1 COLORADO RIVER OVERLOOK

The view from the bluff has attracted visitors for over a millennium and provided a picturesque location for the Kreische Family home and gatherings of the Bluff Schuetzenverein. At the foot of the bluff—nearly 200 feet below this overlook—Kreische quarried sandstone for his home, brewery, and other projects.

### 2 KREISCHE FAMILY HOME

Heinrich Kreische began building this house in the early 1850s. Its stone construction speaks to Kreische's skill as a stonemason while its prominent location conveys his family's reputation in the local community. Josepha oversaw the home and children's upkeep including cooking, gardening, homeschooling, and other chores.



### 3 SMOKEHOUSE

Smokehouses were commonplace among German settlers for producing and preserving smoked foods. A structure this size likely helped feed hungry revelers at Schuetzenverein gatherings.

### 4 BARN

Kreische's barn is one of the oldest wooden structures in Fayette County. The family kept their oxen, horses, and other livestock here. Oxen were particularly useful for hauling stone and barrels of beer. Josepha most likely oversaw the farming chores and tended the animals.



### 5 BREWERY OVERLOOK

The ruins are a relic of the golden age of early Texas brewing. Kreische applied his skills as a stonemason to the natural landscape, taking advantage of gravity and water flow to facilitate an efficient and effective brewing operation. Though the brewery was relatively short-lived, it was well-known across Texas for producing a quality beer and for being a place where all were welcome.

### 6 LIME KILN

Kreische's success as a stonemason relied on the use of this kiln to produce a lime mortar. Many of Kreische's projects throughout the county, including his home and brewery, were held together using the mortar produced here.

### 7 SCHULENBURG-FERRY ROAD

The loading docks were situated on the main roadway between La Grange and Schulenburg, providing an impressive beer distribution network within the county and points beyond. The road, along with the Kreische-run ferry that crossed the Colorado, also transported people to gatherings on the bluff.

Members of the Bluff Schuetzenverein raise the Frisch Auf! banner, calling the community together for competitions and celebrations.



## THE BREWING PROCESS

Water is the most important ingredient in any brewery operation. Kreische's beer—widely renowned for its quality—began with fresh spring water sourced at the top of the ravine. With the help of gravity, the water flowed down into two settling tanks. Here the water was filtered before it was funneled through a pipe and directed toward the brewery's cistern.

### A. CISTERN

Storing more than 10,000 gallons of spring water, the cistern supplied water throughout the brewery via iron piping. Near the top of the cistern, an overflow allowed the spring water to drop three stories to an aqueduct, or channel, that ran below the brewery. As spring water travelled through the aqueduct, air cooled by its evaporation rose through ventilation shafts and forced warm air out of the brewery.

### B. MALT KILN

Barley malt was another important ingredient in brewing. It was soaked in water to sprout then dried in a wood-fired malt kiln to halt further germination.

### C. GRISTMILL

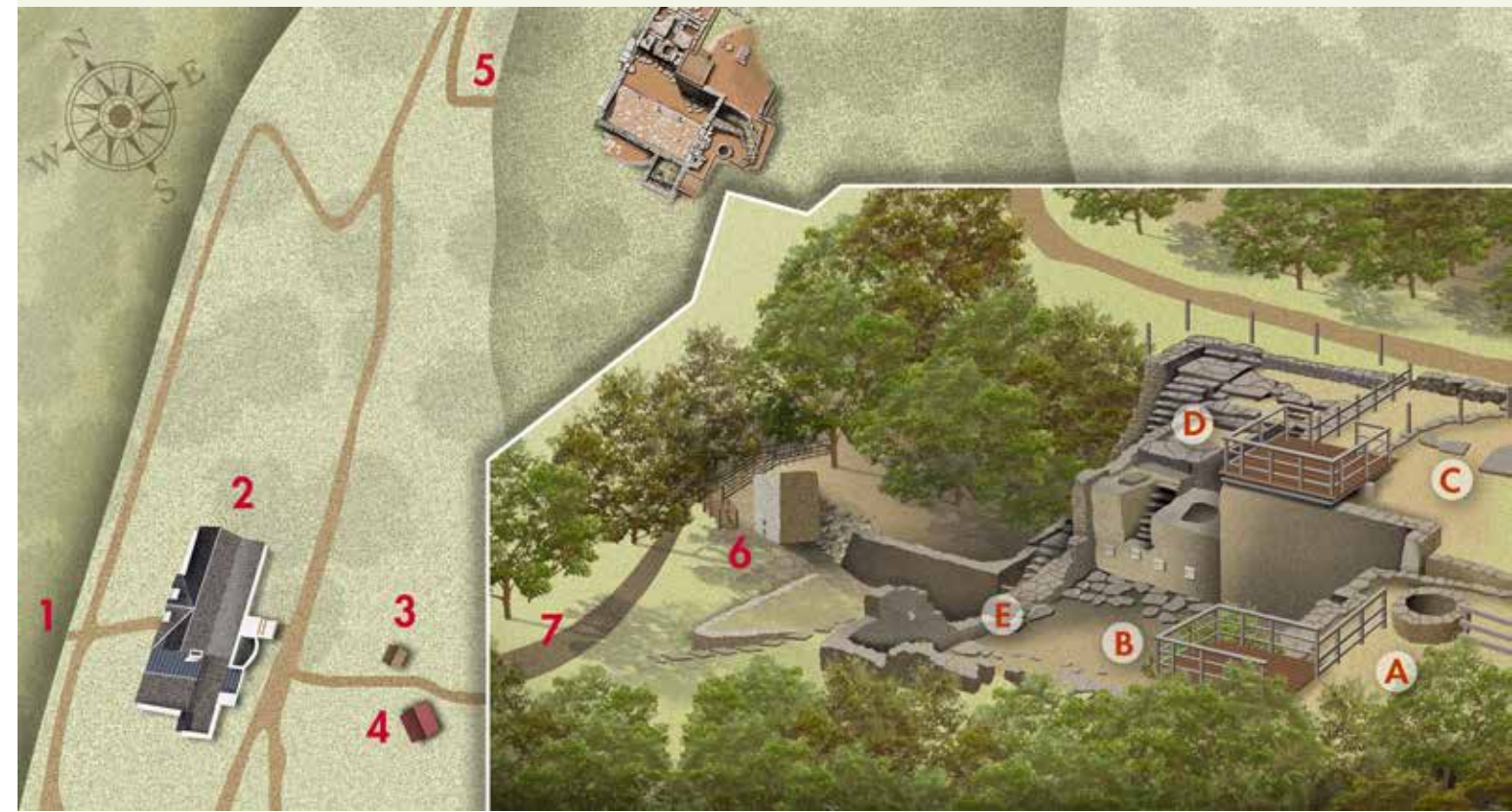
Millstones powered by animals ground the malt into grist, which exposed the sugar-producing starch body of the grain.

### D. WORT BOILING ROOM

The milled malt was seeped in hot water to release the malt's sugars. While the wort boiled, hops were added to give beer distinct flavors and aromas.

### E. CELLAR

The vaulted cellar is the only fully intact room remaining. Vents in the floor above the aqueduct kept the cellar at a cool 65 degrees or lower—perfect for the fermentation process. In this room, cooled wort was piped into large wooden vats where yeast converted the wort's sugars into beer's alcohol. Filled beer barrels were also kept in here for aging until the brew could be shipped or enjoyed.



# MONUMENT HILL

— STATE HISTORIC SITE —

*La Grange, Texas*



Welcome to Monument Hill State Historic Site. Here lie the remains of 52 early Texans in commemoration of the turbulent period between Texas and Mexico following Texan independence. Though no battle occurred here on the bluff, this site became a hallowed ground for the survivors and descendants.

After the decisive Battle of San Jacinto in 1836, tensions between the Mexican Republic and the newly formed Republic of Texas were high. Diplomacy between governments were fragile, with frequent skirmishes instigated between both sides following the Revolution. It was within this environment that the ill-fated 1842 Dawson Expedition and 1843 Black Bean Episode of the Mier Expedition occurred.

## THE DAWSON EXPEDITION

On September 10, 1842, a Mexican force led by General Adrian Woll marched to San Antonio. As the news reached towns like La Grange, many Texans volunteered to help defend their communities. On September 18, 54 men from Fayette County met nearly 400 of Woll's soldiers in a mesquite thicket near Salado Creek. With the Texans outnumbered and outgunned, the resulting battle ended with the death of 36 men.

## THE MIER EXPEDITION

In response to the invasion of San Antonio, President Sam Houston instructed Alexander Somervell to launch an expedition and head toward the Rio Grande River. Somervell struggled to control the undisciplined men, and after the Texans pillaged two towns on the border, Somervell ordered them to return home. A group of 308 men refused to obey the order and continued their march into Mexico toward the town of Mier expecting another easy victory and the opportunity to collect plunder. However, a force of 3,000 Mexican troops had been sent to defend the town, and after a bloody battle, the Texans surrendered.

## THE BLACK BEAN EPISODE

After their capture at Mier, the Texans were forced to march toward Mexico City; managed to escape; got lost in the mountains; and then were recaptured. President Santa Anna ordered all 176 remaining prisoners executed, but the Mexican leader refused to follow those orders, and with the negotiations from leaders in the U.S. and France, led Santa Anna to compromise and call for the execution of one tenth of the men. To determine who would die, a Mexican officer placed 17 black beans and 159 white beans in a clay pot, had the prisoners blindfolded, and ordered them to draw a bean. Those who drew a black bean were shot in front of a firing squad, while the survivors were marched to serve their prison sentence in Mexico.



In 1848, the remains of the men who died in the Black Bean incident and the battle near Salado Creek were retrieved and re-interred in a simple vault on the bluff near La Grange.

## THE CREATION OF A MONUMENT

Heinrich Kreische constructed the original limestone tomb. In 1849 he purchased the property and the surrounding 172 acres. Kreische would maintain the tomb until his death in 1882. Afterward the tomb fell into disrepair until the State of Texas acquired the .36 acre with the tomb from the Kreische family in 1907. In 1933 the State designated Monument Hill as a state park. That same year, local civic organizations raised funds for a granite vault to encase the original tomb. In 1936, the Texas Centennial Commission erected a 48-foot Art Deco-influenced monument to remember the men of the Dawson and Mier Expeditions.