

### 3824 FM 949 History:

Spanning approximately 430 acres in the rolling countryside of western Austin County, this extraordinary estate represents far more than a premier ranch property—it is a remarkable piece of Texas history. Located near the historic community of Millheim along FM 949, the ranch occupies land within the **James Cummings Survey (Abstract 31)**, one of the original surveys established during the settlement of Stephen F. Austin's Colony. The property's story is intertwined with the earliest chapters of Texas settlement, the pioneering families who shaped Austin County, and the rich agricultural heritage that continues to define the region today.

Austin County holds a unique place in Texas history. In 1823, Stephen F. Austin selected this area as the center of his first colony, laying the foundation for Anglo-American settlement in Texas. The fertile valleys, abundant water sources, and gently rolling terrain attracted some of the earliest settlers to what was then Mexican Texas. Among those pioneers was **James (Jack) Cummings**, one of Austin's famed Old Three Hundred colonists. The ranch lies within the survey that still bears his name, providing a direct connection to the men and women who helped establish one of the earliest permanent settlements in Texas.

The property's location along the historic **Mill Creek corridor** further enhances its significance. For nearly two centuries, Mill Creek has been one of the defining natural features of Austin County. Its reliable water supply, fertile bottomland soils, and scenic beauty made it a natural gathering place for early settlers, farmers, and ranchers. The creek played a vital role in the development of the region's agricultural economy and continues to serve as a defining characteristic of the landscape today. Much of the ranch's terrain remains remarkably similar to the countryside encountered by settlers during the nineteenth century, offering a rare glimpse into the natural beauty that first drew families to this part of Texas.

The ranch is also closely tied to the history of **Millheim**, one of Austin County's earliest and most enduring communities. Settled primarily by German immigrants during the mid-1800s, Millheim became a center of agricultural production, education, faith, and community life. The families who established homes and businesses in the area helped shape the cultural identity of western Austin County, leaving a legacy that remains visible throughout the region today. Generations of pioneering families—including the Vornkahls, Nagels, Klebergs, von Roeders, and others—contributed to the growth and prosperity of the community.

Research into the property's ownership history has identified **Leroy Vornkahl** as the earliest documented owner currently traced within the available chain of title, appearing in records dating to 1900. The Vornkahl family was among the area's early pioneer families and played a role in the development of the Millheim community during a formative period in its history. Their connection to the ranch provides a documented link between the property and the families who helped build Austin County's agricultural and ranching traditions.

The property also lies within the same historic community associated with **Charles Nagel**, one of Austin County's most distinguished residents. Although no evidence has been found linking Nagel directly to ownership of the ranch, he spent his youth in the Millheim area after his family settled there in 1855. Nagel would later become the first native-born Texan appointed to a Presidential Cabinet position, serving as United States Secretary of Commerce and Labor under President William Howard Taft. His success reflects the importance of the Millheim community and the pioneering families who helped establish it.

At the heart of the ranch stands a historic residence reported to date to **1825**. While this date warrants independent historical verification, it underscores the property's deep roots within one of Texas' earliest settled regions. Combined with the ranch's location within the James Cummings Survey, its proximity to Mill Creek, and its association with the historic Millheim community, the residence contributes to a legacy that spans generations of Texas history.

Today, the ranch offers an extraordinary blend of historic significance, natural beauty, and modern functionality. Rolling hills, mature trees, expansive views, and the enduring presence of Mill Creek create a landscape that has captivated generations. Unlike many historic properties where only fragments of the past remain, this estate preserves hundreds of contiguous acres within one of the most historically significant areas of Austin County. The result is a rare opportunity to own not simply a ranch, but a tangible connection to the settlement, growth, and enduring spirit of Texas.

For those who appreciate history, stewardship, and the enduring value of land, this remarkable property stands as a testament to nearly two centuries of Texas heritage—a legacy ranch where the story of the past continues to shape the landscape of today.

3824 FM 949 Video Link:

<https://vimeo.com/999230922/6acbdf53fb?ts=0&share=copy>