

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0688924

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED NOV 1 1978
DATE ENTERED DEC 14 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
McLennan County Courthouse
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Public Square
CITY, TOWN
Waco
STATE
Texas
VICINITY OF
CODE
048
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
11
COUNTY
McLennan
CODE
309

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE |
|---|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
County of McLennan
STREET & NUMBER
Public Square
CITY, TOWN
Waco
STATE
Texas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Office of the County Clerk, McLennan County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
Public Square
CITY, TOWN
Waco
STATE
Texas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Recorded Texas Historic Landmark
DATE
1970
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Texas Historical Commission
CITY, TOWN
Austin
STATE
Texas

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Constructed 1901-1902, the McLennan County Courthouse was designed by J. Riely Gordon. The building was erected by Tom Lovell, contractor, and construction was supervised by W.C. Dodson, architect. Built during prosperous times, it is the fourth courthouse in the county's history.

The courthouse is on a cruciform plan with corridors extending lengthwise through each arm. On the upper two levels, several courtrooms are located at ends of the cross. A rotunda extends up through the crossing.

The exterior is distinguished by Beaux Arts Classical style on a monumental scale. The concept of composition of the building with its wings, dome and dominant entrance is similar to that employed in the Texas Capitol.

Numerous features contribute to the success of the Beaux Arts style in this building. A colonnade with paired end columns announce the main entrance; above the entablature supported by these is a wall with decorated pilasters, surmounted by triangular pediment and bull's eye window. This compositional theme was duplicated in the pavilions on the long wings; however, in these a balcony is introduced and the paired columns are brought forward, thus breaking the plane of the facade. The Corinthian order was used for the columns, while Doric was employed on the pilasters.

The monumentality of the edifice is further dramatized by the lengthy stair. In the entrance portico, the door opening is emphasized by a segmental pediment, and windows are surmounted by triangular pediments.

The building is essentially a three-part composition; the base encompasses the first story; two stories, extending between a water table and entablature, are contained in the middle section; and one story is included in the terminal feature. Two entablatures, the upper one of which is topped by a balustrade, encircle the top level.

The dome unifies the entire composition. In typical Beaux Arts style, paired columns around the drum support an entablature above which rises the dome. Roman-arched openings flanked by pilasters in Corinthian order are contained between the paired columns. Surmounting the lantern of the dome is a statue of Themis, the Greek personification of justice. Below are two smaller statues, one of a torchbearer, the other of Justitia, the Roman version of Themis. Roman eagles surround the dome.

Urns appear above the ends of the secondary pediments.

The exterior walls incorporate beautiful materials. Quarry-faced granite was employed for the base; above this cut limestone with rusticated joints was used. Marble was used for accent at various locations. For the structure, steel and concrete were used.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1901-1902 BUILDER/ARCHITECT J. Riely Gordon and W. C. Dodson

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The courthouse has architectural and historical significance. It is one of the finest **Neo-Classical** buildings in the state. Historically it has served county government for over three-quarters of a century.

McLennan County was created in 1850. Earlier in the century the area had been occupied by the Waco Indians, who established a village on the present site of the city of Waco. Some settlement occurred during the 1830's and 1840's, and by 1860 the county population exceeded 6,000. In 1849 Waco was surveyed, and in 1850 a commission voted to locate the county seat there. Education has been an important aspect of the culture of Waco: At one time Texas Christian University was located in the city. Waco University also was founded there; in 1886 it was united with Baylor University when the latter was moved to the city.

The first courthouse was built in 1850. It was thirty feet square, one and a half stories high and cost \$400.

In 1858-1859 a larger courthouse was constructed for about \$11,500. Robert H. Smith was the contractor for the edifice which was built of bricks and had a tin roof.

In 1876 a third courthouse was built according to the plans of W.C. Dodson, a local architect. This was completed the following year for about \$30,000.

Finally in 1900, county commissioners submitted a \$250,000 bond proposal to the electors. This was passed and plans and specifications were invited for a courthouse to be located on a new site. Upon the recommendation of W.C. Dodson, the plans of J. Riely Gordon, of San Antonio, were adopted. The contract was awarded to Tom Lovell of Denton, Texas. On November 3, 1902, the new temple of justice was accepted.

The pride of the people in their accomplishment is commemorated on the granite cornerstone where the inscription, "built by the taxpayers of McLennan County" appears. It still serves county government.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

McLennan County Commissioners' Court Minutes, Office of the County Clerk, McLennan County Courthouse, Vols. 1, 2, B-F.

Walter Prescott Webb (ed.) The Handbook of Texas (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1952), Vol. II.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY About 1½ acres.

QUADRANGLE NAME Waco West, Tex

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 14 677190 3492695

B

 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The courthouse is bounded by Columbus Avenue on the north, Washington on the south, Fifth Street on the east, and Sixth Street on the west.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Willard B. Robinson, Professor of Architecture

ORGANIZATION

Texas Tech University

DATE

June, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

F.O. Box 4499

TELEPHONE

806-742-2464

CITY OR TOWN

Lubbock,

STATE

Texas

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE X LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Willard Robinson 10-2578

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Willard Robinson

DATE

12/14/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *William Bouch*

DATE

12/19/78

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

The attached National Register Inventory-Nomination form is being returned to your office for clarification of the information indicated below. PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WHEN THE NOMINATION IS RESUBMITTED.

7 Description: _____

8 Statement of Significance: Please elaborate on the structure's value in
within a state context.
Neo-Classical architecture. Also, having stated that the property has historical
significance, the discussion presents instead a 19th century history of the county.
Please evaluate the property in the context of Criteria A. What patterns of
community history are ~~not~~ represented by or related to this ~~structure~~ structure?

9 Bibliography: _____

10 Geographical Data -- Acreage: _____
UTM Reference(s): _____
Verbal Boundary Description: _____

12 Certification: _____
Photographic Coverage: _____

Map Coverage: _____

Other: _____

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to Marcella Sherfy
on the National Register staff, telephone 202-343-6401

Thank you for your attention to the above items.

Chief, Branch of Registration Date: _____

Property McLennan County Courthouse

State TX Working Number 11.1.78.4432

TECHNICAL

Photos 1
Maps 1

CONTROL

OK pl
11-2-78

Building has more architectural integrity and probably value than other courthouses that we have been seeing. But historical value to community in context of Criteria A is not supported.

HISTORIAN

Sheffy
12-11-78
? Peter

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Courthouse possesses architectural significance as an outstanding example of the Beaux-Arts/Neo-Classical styles executed in a manner rendering high artistic value to the building. Significance of its characteristics (e.g. building materials) need to be addressed.

Sara 12/2/78 **ARCHEOLOGIST**

Bob L - defer to your judgment - elaboration of Beaux-arts characteristics appears in #7 - & gives value of building - may suffice for listing without elaboration of historical associations

OTHER

Sheffy
12-12-78

HAER

Inventory _____
Review _____

Lacking explicit statement of Govt sign., but significance as local interpretation of Beaux Arts and Texas Capitol is adequate for listing for architectural significance.

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
Lebowich
12/13/78

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up _____
Federal Register Entry 2-6-79

Send-back _____
Re-submit _____

Entered DEC 14 1978



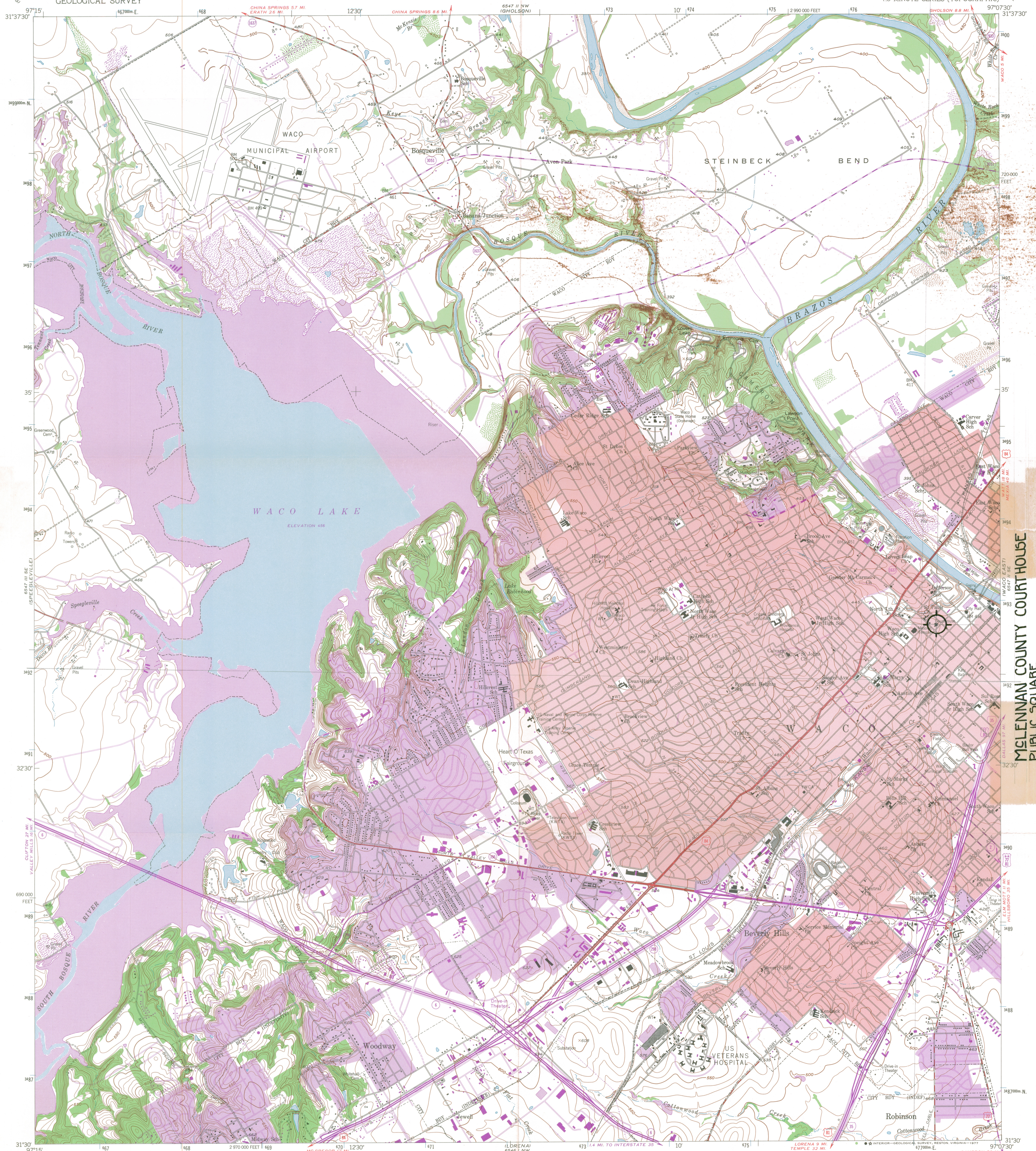
McLennan County Courthouse
Public Square
Waco, McLennan County, Texas

Will Robinson 1977
negative filed at Texas Historical Commission

South elevation

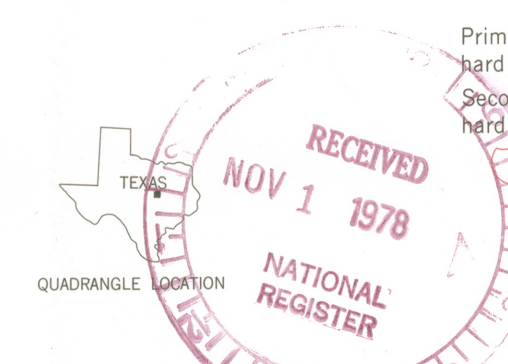
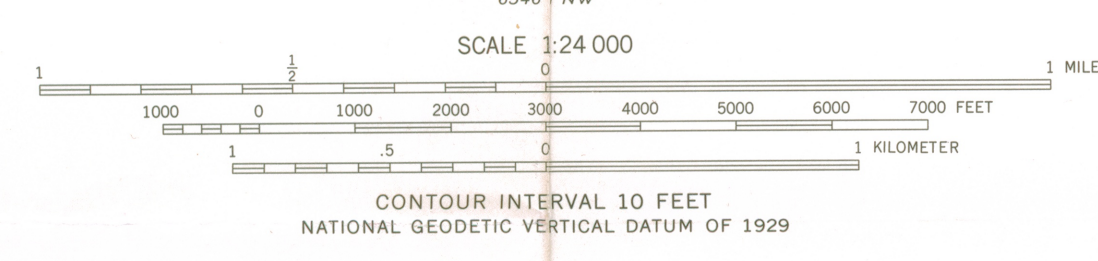
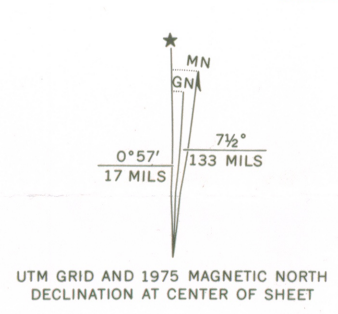
DEC 14 1978

NOV 1 1978



MCLENNAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE
PUBLIC SQUARE
WACO, MCLENNAN COUNTY, TEXAS
UTM REFERENCE: 14J677190/3492695

Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography from 1956 planetable surveys and by ER-55 plotter
Aerial photographs taken 1955. Field check 1957
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,
central zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 14, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only
landmark buildings are shown
Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1970 and 1975. This information not field checked
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Primary highway, hard surface | Light-duty road, hard or improved surface |
| Secondary highway, hard surface | Unimproved road |
| Interstate Route | U. S. Route |
| | State Route |

WACO WEST, TEX.
N3130—W9707.5/7.5
1957
PHOTOREVISED 1970 AND 1975
AMS 6547 II SW—SERIES V882

FEB 25 1977

3197-412

24

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE TEXAS

Date Entered DEC 14 1978

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| McLennan County Courthouse | Waco McLennan County |

Also Notified

Honorable John G. Tower
Honorable Lloyd M. Bentsen
Honorable Marvin Leath

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. Truett Latimer
Executive Director
Texas State Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276, Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

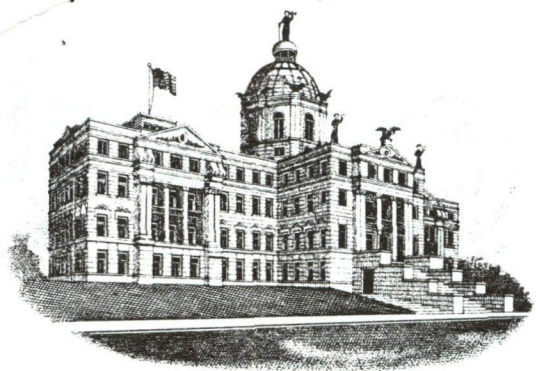
L NR

Byers/es

1/11/79

Called 12-14-79

817-



WACO, TEXAS

JIM McDERMITT
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY JUDGE
214 COUNTY COURTHOUSE
WACO, TEXAS 76701

January 17, 1979

Mr. William J. Murtagh
Keeper of the National Register
United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Washington, D. C. 20240

Attention: H34-NR YP

Subject: McLennan County Courthouse

Dear Mr. Murtagh:

Thank you for your letter of December 27, 1978, containing further information in regards to the possible listing of our Courthouse in the National Register.

Based on the information contained in your letter, particularly the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, the Commissioners Court of McLennan County has decided that the nomination of McLennan County Courthouse for listing in the Register should be withdrawn and McLennan County has no wish to have the Courthouse listed in the National Register due to the stringent standards on rehabilitation.

As I explained in my previous letter, the Courthouse is used currently to carry on the business of the County and as such requires renovation and remodeling from time to time and this can not be done in the most economical manner under the Secretary's standards. We believe that it would be better utilization of the taxpayer's money to remodel our Courthouse as needed using the most modern techniques and materials.

Sincerely,

Jim McDermitt
Administrative Assistant

THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

DATE REC'D JAN 22, 1979

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE (ATTACHED)

INFORMED BY MAIL SORT

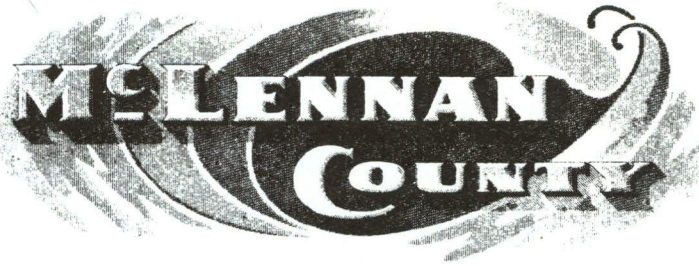
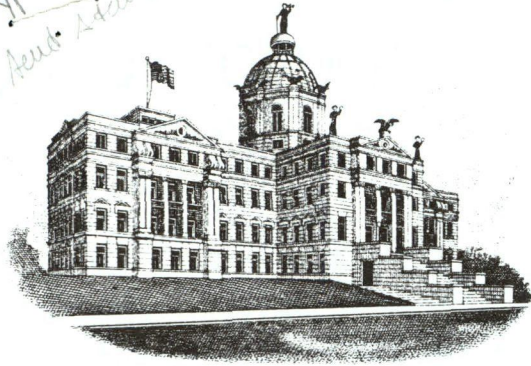
TELEPHONE CALL (ATTACHED)

DATE ACTION TAKEN 2-8-79

INITIALS SL

*called & explained effect
of listing, sec. 106 etc.*

McLennan County Courthouse
listed 12/14/78



WACO, TEXAS

JIM McDERMITT

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY JUDGE
214 COUNTY COURTHOUSE
WACO, TEXAS 76701

December 15, 1978

Dr. William J. Murtagh
Keeper of the National Registrar
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Dr. Murtagh;

In regard to your letter of November 8, 1978, concerning the nomination of the McLennan County Courthouse, Waco, Texas, to be listed in the National Register of Historical Places, the county is honored by the nomination of our historic courthouse to the National Register. We feel that we are justified in our pride of such a historic building and believe that it does warrant the recognition for which it has been nominated.

Being a unit of government, of course, we would derive no benefits from the Tax Reform Act of 1976 and our request for a listing would be more a matter of public pride than a desire for a tax benefit.

The County Commissioners' Court's primary consideration in making a decision whether or not to apply for a listing in the National Register would be the standards for rehabilitating old buildings. The McLennan County Courthouse is in daily use and is utilized as the courthouse for McLennan County. As in all public buildings and because of the county's increased population and increased work load, we are constantly remodeling and re-arranging our office and courtroom space. Any restrictions as to our rights to use and remodel the courthouse, as it exists, would, of course, be a burden which the Commissioners' Court would not want to impose upon themselves. In fact we are presently building a correctional facility behind the courthouse which will be tied onto the existing courthouse by a walkway.

Dr. William J. Murtagh

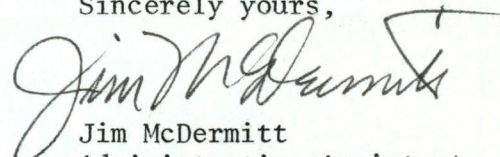
Page 2

December 13, 1978

If the McLennan County Commissioners' Court could be assured that there would be no restrictions on our use of the courthouse, and our right to remodel it to meet our needs, we would be most pleased and honored to have such a historic structure as the McLennan County Courthouse listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

If I can be of assistance to you in answering any questions concerning this matter, please feel free to contact me at my office.

Sincerely yours,



Jim McDermitt
Administrative Assistant

NJM/g1b

THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

DATE REC'D DEC 10 1978

INDIVIDUAL LISTINGS (ATTACHED)

INFORMATIONAL SET

TELEPHONE CALLS (RECORDED)

DATE OF INT. TAKEN 12/21/78

INITIALS SW

NATIONAL REGISTER DATA SHEET

① NAME as it appears on federal register: McLennan County Courthouse
 ② OTHER NAMES:
 ③ date of entry: DEC 14 1978
 ④ county code: 309

⑤ LOCATION street & number: Public Sq.
 city / town: Waco
 vicinity of:
 state: TX
 county: McLennan
 ⑥ NPS REGION: S Central

⑦ OWNER PRIVATE STATE MUNICIPAL COUNTY MULTIPLE FEDERAL (agency name)
 ⑧ ADMINISTRATOR:

⑨ EXISTING SURVEYS HABS HAER NHL
 ⑩ FUNDED? YES NO
 ⑪ CONGRESS. DISTRICT 11
 ⑫ SOURCE of NOMINATION STATE FEDERAL
 if state who prepared form?

⑬ WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? YES, NAME NO
 ⑭ WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? YES, NAME NO
 ⑮ ACREAGE
 LOCAL PRIVATE ORGANIZATION

⑯ CONDITION
 excellent
 good
 fair
 deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed
 unexcavated
 altered
 unaltered
 reconstructed
 excavated
 original site
 moved
 unknown

⑰ features:
 INTERIOR SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-1
 NOT INTACT-0
 UNKNOWN-4
 NOT APPLICABLE-7
 EXTERIOR SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-2
 NOT INTACT-0
 UNKNOWN-5
 NOT APPLICABLE-8
 ENVIRONS SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-3
 NOT INTACT-0
 UNKNOWN-6
 NOT APPLICABLE-9

⑱ ACCESS YES - Restricted YES - Unrestricted No Access Unknown
 ⑲ ADAPTIVE USE YES NO
 ⑳ SAVED? YES
 ㉑ IS PROPERTY A HISTORIC DISTRICT? yes no

㉒ AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:
 ARCHEOLOGY - prehistoric-2
 ARCHEOLOGY - historic-1
 AGRICULTURE-3
 ARCHITECTURE-4
 ART-5
 ENGINEERING-11
 ENTERTAINMENT-26
 EXPLORATION-12
 HEALTH-27
 ECONOMICS-9
 EDUCATION-10
 LANDSCAPE ARCH.-15
 LAW-16
 LITERATURE-17
 MILITARY-18
 MUSIC-19
 PHILOSOPHY-20
 POLITICS / GOVT.-21
 RELIGION-22
 SCIENCE-23
 SOCIAL / HUMANITARIAN-24
 SOCIAL / CULTURAL-30
 TRANSPORTATION-25
 RECREATION-28
 SETTLEMENT-29
 URBAN PLANNING-31
 OTHER (SPECIFY)

㉓ CLAIMS: explain
 'first'
 'oldest'
 'only'

㉔ functions
 WHEN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT:
 CURRENTLY:
 ㉕ dates of initial construction:
 major alterations:
 historic events:
 ㉖ ETHNIC GROUP ASSOCIATION

㉗ architectural style(s):
 ㉘ architect:
 ㉙ master builder:
 ㉚ engineer:

㉛ landscape architect / garden designer:
 ㉜ interior decorator:
 ㉝ artist:
 ㉞ artisan:
 ㉟ builder/contractor:

㊱ NAMES give role & date
 PERSONAL:
 EVENTS:
 INSTITUTIONAL:

㊲ NATIONAL REGISTER WRITE-UP