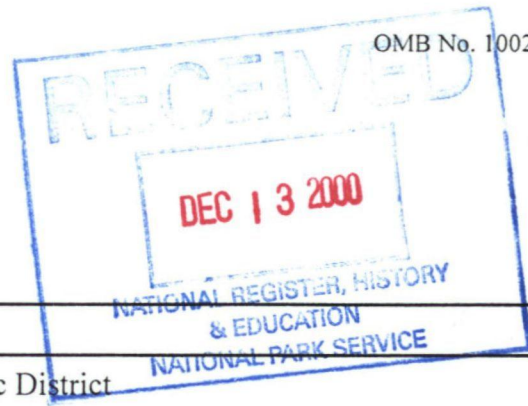


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

OMB No. 10024-0018



1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER:

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Area roughly bounded by Main, Lafayette, Franklin, Colorado, Jefferson, Washington and Crockett streets

CITY OR TOWN: La Grange

VICINITY: N/A

NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A

STATE: Texas

CODE: TX

COUNTY: Fayette

CODE: 149

ZIP CODE: 78945

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

11-15-00

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

1-16-01

5. CLASSIFICATION**OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY:** Private, Public-local**CATEGORY OF PROPERTY:** District

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
<u>47</u>	<u>20</u>	BUILDINGS
<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>	SITES
<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	STRUCTURES
<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	OBJECTS
<u>54</u>	<u>25</u>	TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 2: Fayette County Courthouse; Fayette County Jail**NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING:****6. FUNCTION OR USE****HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:** COMMERCE/business, specialty store, department store, financial institution, restaurant; GOVERNMENT/courthouse, jail; RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater, monument; LANDSCAPE/plaza; SOCIAL/ meeting hall;**CURRENT FUNCTIONS:** COMMERCE/business, specialty store, department store, financial institution, restaurant; GOVERNMENT/courthouse; RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater, monument; LANDSCAPE/plaza**7. DESCRIPTION****ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:** OTHER: 1-part commercial block; OTHER: 2-part commercial block; LATE VICTORIAN: Romanesque; LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style

MATERIALS:	FOUNDATION	CONCRETE, STONE
	WALLS	STONE, BRICK, WOOD, STUCCO
	ROOF	ASPHALT, SLATE
	OTHER	GLASS, CONCRETE, CERAMIC TILE

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-19).

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

Summary

The Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District contains a high concentration of properties that represent significant aspects of the economic, physical, and architectural development of the city. With a spectacular courthouse dominating the center of the square, the surrounding streets are lined with commercial buildings representing several phases in the economic and architectural development of the city. These commercial properties are typical of those found throughout the state and illustrate the development of commercial buildings from the late nineteenth century through the post-World War II period. The majority of the properties are one-part or two-part commercial buildings constructed of brick or stone. There are, however, examples of other types of buildings including a depot, jail and courthouse. Although the earliest building dates to 1859, most of the properties date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and reflect typical alterations made to such commercial properties during the 1920s and 1930s. As the majority of the properties serve a commercial function, they have received alterations over the years to reflect the changing nature of retail businesses. These changes illustrate the physical evolution of buildings within the business district and reflect the changing nature of commerce throughout the twentieth century. Contributing properties, however, still retain sufficient character defining elements to convey a visual sense of the historic environment. The district is composed of 79 properties and features of which 54 are contributing and 25 are noncontributing. The Fayette County Courthouse and Jail were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. The 1975 nominations, however, did not include other objects and structures associated with those sites that have been included within the scope of this nomination. This historic district includes 67 buildings, 8 objects, and 4 structures. The Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District retains sufficient integrity for listing under Criterion A in the areas of commerce, and community and regional development at the local level of significance, as well as under Criterion C in the area of architecture at the local level of significance.

Setting of the Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District

The city of La Grange lies within a horseshoe bend of the Colorado River where it has cut a 200-foot bluff into the Texas limestone. The river created a rich soil through its periodic flooding, making a strong agricultural economic base for the city. One of the earliest bridges across the Colorado River (1925) follows Travis Street, also known as State Highway 71, to the courthouse square. The Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District (map 1, page 40) is located within the center of the original town plan. The 1891 Romanesque Revival Courthouse (NR 1975) dominates the square both by its architectural form and its setting within the central block. Selected as the county seat in 1838, the plan for the city's core utilized the Shelbyville Square plan (map 2, page 41), the most common layout for county seats in Texas during this period wherein the courthouse square is flanked on each side by a principal street. The courthouse is bounded by Washington Street on the northeast, Travis Street on the southeast, Main Street on the southwest and Colorado Street on the northwest. As is so common for county seats, the courthouse square became the hub of the transportation network through town as the major highways in La Grange intersected near the courthouse

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

square (Highway 71 lies along Travis Street and Highway 77 follows Jefferson Street, just one block to the northeast). The M. K. & T. railroad tracks are located one block to the northwest of the downtown area. The Fayette County Jail is located one block to the southeast at the corner of Main and Crockett streets and occupies approximately one-quarter of the block. This site, both accessible to county government yet away from the general populace, was very typical of Texas jails in the late nineteenth century.

Commercial buildings surround the courthouse on all four sides of the square (photos # 1 through # 4) and extend one block to the northeast along both Colorado (photo # 5) and Travis streets, as well as one block to the south along Main Street to where the county jail is located and one block to the north to embrace the railroad tracks. Both one-part and two-part commercial blocks are well-represented within the district. The commercial buildings define the outer perimeter of the courthouse square and uniformly line the sidewalks. Several of the blocks of the district do contain small, narrow vacancies once occupied by buildings, but these in no way disrupt the overall rhythm of the courthouse square. The Colorado Valley Bank on Main Street is set back from the street. As it was built in 1973 to replicate a historic dwelling (Julius Meyenberg House, 1877) which once occupied the site (according to Sanborn Insurance maps; map 3, page 42), its historic siting is an integral part of the history of the courthouse square although it appears to be an anomaly. The consistent use of the two-part and one-part commercial block typology presents a similarity in massing and fenestration pattern throughout the district. These commercial buildings form a backdrop to the courthouse square and define the open green space of the courthouse. As a result, the Fayette County Courthouse Square still maintains the appearance, feeling and setting of a typical courthouse square in Texas.

The earliest surviving residential district in the city lies to the northwest and northeast of the downtown area. Many of the town's prosperous merchants and businessmen constructed large homes in these neighborhoods, many of which still survive today and are potentially eligible as National Register historic districts. The earliest industrial section of town is located to the west and north of the courthouse square, initially along the river and later along the railroad tracks. A few surviving resources survive to the north, primarily buildings associated with commerce associated with the rail industry such as the 1897 depot and a warehouse.

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

Fayette County Courthouse and Grounds

Designed by the prominent Texas courthouse architect James Riely Gordon, construction of the fourth courthouse for Fayette County began in 1890 and was completed by 1891 (photo # 6). The importance of this courthouse is recognized by its listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975 and its designation as a State Archeological Landmark. Representing the early stage of Gordon's career, this 3 story Romanesque Revival courthouse is constructed of cream-colored limestone and blue sandstone accented by polychrome red sandstone and pink granite columns. Although each façade features an entrance, the primary entry faces Washington Street, crowned with a tall clock tower and ornamented with an American eagle in relief. The tower served both symbolic and practical functions, establishing the location of the courthouse for miles around and allowing for a constant updraft through its openings to ventilate the courthouse. The Fayette County Courthouse represents Gordon's second design for a courthouse, but the success of its design already marked the architect's rich vocabulary that created a picturesque skyline and marked the center of the town.

The courthouse received only minor alterations over the years, including the removal of the ridge-point ornaments in 1925 after one fell, the removal of eight chimneys in 1927 after steam heat became available, and the enclosure of the open patio for additional office space and a vault in 1949. All of these alterations occurred within the period of significance and are historic in nature.

The courthouse grounds are lushly landscaped with numerous older trees and flowering bushes, creating an oasis of shade in which geckos scamper about. The grounds of the courthouse contain a commemorative war monument (noncontributing) constructed in 1987 located on the northern corner. Located adjacent to the sidewalk to the main entry is a reproduction of an iron deer (contributing) which once decorated the interior patio. A granite obelisk is also located on the northeastern side of the courthouse (contributing), erected in 1884 to commemorate the heroes of the Dawson and Mier campaigns. Facing Main Street, the courthouse grounds also include a historic stone meridian marker from 1878 (contributing), and a flag pole erected within a star-patterned mosaic (noncontributing). A perimeter sidewalk surrounds the exterior boundary of the courthouse lawn with additional sidewalks leading to each of the four entries.

Parking around the courthouse square features traditional, straight-in parking along both sides of the street, but with an additional row of parking within the center of the street along Main, Colorado and Washington. This arrangement of parking lies within the historic period of the courthouse square. A curb was installed along the southeastern edge of the square to create a small parking lot which is separated from the traffic along Travis Street which also serves as Highway 71.

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

Fayette County Jail and Grounds

Located one block to the southeast of the courthouse on Main Street, the Fayette County Jail (photo # 7) is a two-story Gothic style building designed by Andrewarthe and Wahrenberger (1881-1883). Set back from the street, the irregularly T-shaped plan included facilities for both prisoners and the jailer. The rusticated masonry of the monumental building with its tall, stepped parapet of the tower pavilion over the main entry imparts a feeling of solidarity and security. The building served as the county jail for over one hundred years. In 1995 it was restored for use by the Chamber of Commerce. In 1884, the iron fence (contributing) was installed which encircles the jail on all sides. A windmill (noncontributing) located on the north side of the jail replaces an earlier one which was originally located on the south side. A small shed (contributing) is also located on the grounds near the street on the north side of the jail. New restroom facilities (noncontributing) for the public are located in a building set back to the rear of the lot at the back of the jail. Outside the iron fence is a small, wooden barn (contributing).

Physical Characteristics of the District

The Fayette County Courthouse dominates the district in its central location on the square. Designed by James Riely Gordon in 1890, the three-story Romanesque courthouse looms over the rest of the buildings around the square. As the site of county government, the location of the courthouse gave impetus to the commercial development around the courthouse square. One of the earliest extant buildings is the Grassmeyer Building (1856-1859), an Italianate stone commercial building used as offices, a hotel, and, in the late nineteenth century as a beer distributing office. The district witnessed intense development during the 1880s, the 1890s, and again during the early years of the twentieth century. Completed in 1881, the Fayette County Jail is located one block south of the courthouse square and is representative of the Gothic Revival Style.

Most of the buildings within the district date between 1882 and 1930. Neither one-part nor two-part commercial buildings predominate as each building type is well-distributed throughout the district. Two-part commercial buildings prevail only along Colorado Street one block east of the courthouse. Stone and brick are the predominant construction materials. Although a few masonry buildings are stuccoed, this treatment is part of the original construction or was applied during the period of significance. The building at 244 North Washington is the only surviving frame building within the district. The most common alterations to buildings are a modernization of the storefront, most commonly the use of aluminum frame plate glass windows, the application of a modern material to the ground floor surrounding the base of the storefront, or the covering of

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
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transoms. Many of the buildings within the district received such changes to their storefronts just prior to or following World War II. As these modifications are more than fifty years old and yield important information on the historical evolution of commerce in La Grange, such alterations to the facades are considered contributing to the district. Some buildings are slipcased in aluminum or concrete panels popularized in the 1960s and are considered noncontributing to the district since their character defining features are no longer apparent.

The buildings along Washington Street along the northeastern block of the district date primarily from the late 19th and early 20th centuries (photo #1). Comprised primarily of one-part commercial blocks, these buildings retain a high degree of historic integrity including their original fenestration patterns, architectural detailing and even their original recessed storefronts. The block includes two buildings of the two-part commercial block type (the Hermes Building of 1907 and the Hermes Building of 1939). The National Bank and Trust Building at the corner of Washington and Colorado (145 West Colorado) is a modern building constructed in 1970. It does retain, however, the same set-back and overall size and massing of the other buildings in the block and does not detract significantly from the overall feeling and setting of the district. The block retains its overall massing, rhythm, design, and architectural features which contribute to sufficient integrity of feeling, association and setting of the period of significance. Washington Street extends to the north and south of the square. The block to the north towards the railroad tracks is sparsely filled with buildings, but includes the KATY depot, a significant property within the district. One block south of the courthouse square are two additional buildings, both of which are one-part commercial blocks.

The southeastern boundary of the district lies along Crockett Street and includes the jail complex as well as encompassing the block facing the courthouse along Travis Street (Highway 71). This block (photo # 2) appears to be regularly composed of alternating two-part and one-part commercial buildings, although the building at 229 Travis is actually a one-part commercial block with a very high parapet. Most of these buildings date from the 1920s and 1930s and the entire block is made up of contributing buildings. Although some of these buildings have received alterations to their storefronts, including the installation of new windows and aluminum framed glass doors (as in 207 Travis and 201-203 Travis), these buildings convey the same scale, setback, massing and function as the other buildings in the district. Several of the buildings along this block still maintain their original recessed entries and transoms. The proposed district continues to the northeast along Travis Street to its intersection with Jefferson Street (Highway 77). The southern side of this block contains buildings dating primarily from the early twentieth century although two contemporary buildings occur at mid-block. The Masonic Lodge Building (138 Travis), located on the northern side of Travis dates from 1860. This 3 story brick and stucco building retains a high degree of integrity and played an important role in the early social history of La Grange.

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

Main Street forms the southwestern boundary of the district and includes the oldest buildings in the district at the southern end of the street (photo # 3). The Grassmeyer Building (114 S. Main; RTHL 1983), constructed between 1856 and 1859, is a good representation of typical German construction which utilized stucco over stone, as is the nearby Huettel Building (104 S. Main; 1880). Across from the courthouse square, Main Street includes a representation of both one-part and two-part commercial block buildings. There is one narrow vacant lot between 103 and 113 Main Street previously occupied by a building. Most of these building date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although some of the buildings exhibit extensive alterations to their storefronts, such as the use of new materials, they retain the same set-back and overall size and massing of the other buildings in the block and do not detract significantly from the overall feeling and setting of the district. The block retains its overall massing, rhythm, design, and architectural features which contribute to sufficient integrity of feeling, association and setting of the period of significance. The buildings at 117 N. Main and 129 N. Main exhibit the exuberant architectural detailing of the Victorian period in their use of low-slung arches and checkerboard patterning of the parapet. The building at 143 N. Main, once the site of a center-passage residence, is now the location of the Colorado Valley Bank. While this building is set-back more than other buildings within the district, this is the historic location and siting of the house. The northernmost edge of this block is anchored by the 1914 Mohrhusem Building (155 N. Main), an outstanding example of an early two-part commercial block which has retained most of its original features.

The district continues along the northeastern side of North Main from Colorado to the railroad tracks. Four resources (one of which is a storage building) are located along this edge, only one of which is contributing (226 North Main).

The two blocks of Colorado Street present both the best and the worst of the historic district. The block of Colorado Street directly across from the courthouse square (photo # 4) contains the fewest number of contributing properties than any other side of the square. Many of these buildings received extensive alterations and modifications including the use of new materials over the historic building facade and the installation of inappropriate storefronts. Although the noncontributing buildings along this block do not contribute to the district, neither do they detract from the overall feel and character of the district. With proper restoration techniques, many of these buildings could become contributing to the district. The block to the east of the courthouse along Colorado Street (photo # 5) contains many of the best buildings within the district and all but the National Bank and Trust extension are contributing to the district. Constructed primarily in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the architectural detailing of these buildings invoke the period of significance and many remain essentially untouched. The storefronts of 136 and 140 Colorado Street retain their recessed entries, marble kickplates, prismatic glass set within the transoms, and even their original canopies. The geometrically patterned brickwork of the prominent parapets of these two buildings reflects the

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

high degree of architectural design often lacking in such storefronts. It is rare to discover storefronts as unique and untouched as these examples. Across the street, the two buildings at 123-129 and 135 Colorado represent architectural developments during the 1880s. The Post Office and Bank Building (123-129 Colorado; 1884), an Italianate Revival style office building, retains its distinctive cast iron cornice and stone window surrounds. The Ledbetter Building (135 Colorado; 1884-1885) exhibits an exuberant parapet with a monumentality to its rusticated façade.

A tragic fire in March of 2000 destroyed the old Lester Hotel located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Washington and Colorado Streets and a modern building along N. Washington Street. The two story brick hotel (later covered with stucco) was demolished by order of the state fire marshal, leaving an empty lot on this corner. The adjacent hotel annex (movie theater) also burned, but the building is still extant. Although the interior was gutted by fire, all four walls are still standing and the façade retains its integrity. At the time of this nomination, no announcement has been made regarding the future plans for this site. Despite the destruction of this corner building by fire, the other buildings along this block of Colorado Street retain such a high degree of integrity that it would be a grave error to omit them from the district.

Nine contemporary buildings are located within the district, but they do not significantly detract from the historical character of the area as they are interspersed throughout the district and most maintain the same scale, massing and setback of the one-part commercial block buildings. The least sympathetic addition to the downtown are two modern bank buildings at the intersections of Colorado and Washington streets. These buildings, however, do not adversely impact the overall scale and rhythm of the courthouse square. The other contemporary buildings are interspersed amidst the district and continue the scale, if not the use of materials, as the other buildings within the district.

The following inventory is arranged first by the courthouse and jail building complexes; then by reading from top to bottom of map # 1 for east to west streets (with addresses in descending order); and finally, from left to right of map # 1 for north to south streets (with addresses in descending order).

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

Evaluation of Historic Resources within the Fayette County Courthouse Historic District, La Grange, Texas

			Design			Material		Design & Workmanship			
Address	Association	Type	Storefront Rhythms	Fenestration Pattern 2nd Floor	Messing, Form, Plan	Materials Storefront	Materials Upper Part	Parapet	Ornament /Detailing	Feeling	C or NC Status
West Colorado											
262 West Colorado	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
258 West Colorado	Yes	1-P	No	NA	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	NC
256 West Colorado	Yes	1-P	No	NA	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	NC
240 West Colorado	Yes	1-P	No	NA	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	NC
236 West Colorado	Yes	2-P	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
230 West Colorado	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	C
226 West Colorado	Yes	2-P	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	NC
220 West Colorado	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	NC
148 West Colorado	Yes	2-P	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
140 West Colorado	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
136 West Colorado	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
135 West Colorado	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
123-129 W. Colorado	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
126 West Colorado	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
119 West Colorado	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	C
113 West Colorado	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	stucco	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
108 West Colorado	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	C
107 West Colorado	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
101 West Colorado	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

Evaluation of Historic Resources within the Fayette County Courthouse Historic District, La Grange, Texas

			Design			Material		Design & Workmanship			
Address	Association	Type	Storefront Rhythms	Penetration Pattern 2nd Floor	Molding, Form, Plan	Materials Storefront	Materials Upper Part	Parapet	Ornament /Detailing	Feeling	C or NC Status
West Travis											
239-253 West Travis	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
235 West Travis	Yes	1-P	No	NA	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
229 West Travis	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
223 West Travis	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
213-219 West Travis	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
207 West Travis	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	C
201-203 West Travis	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
155 West Travis	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
153 West Travis	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
149-151 West Travis	Yes	1-P	No	NA	No	No	No	No	No	No	NC
138 West Travis	Yes	Masonic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
127 West Travis	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
North Main											
226 North Main	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		C
155 North Main	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
135 North Main	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
129 North Main	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
123 North Main	Yes	2-P	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	NC
117 North Main	Yes	1-P	No	NA	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
113 North Main	Yes	1-P	No	NA	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	NC
103 North Main	Yes	2, 1-P	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
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Evaluation of Historic Resources within the Fayette County Courthouse Historic District, La Grange, Texas

			Design			Material		Design & Workmanship			
Address	Association	Type	Storefront Rhythms	Fenestration Pattern 2nd Floor	Massing, Form, Plan	Materials Storefront	Materials Upper Part	Parapet	Ornament /Detailing	Feeling	C or NC Status
South Main											
104 South Main	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	C
114 South Main	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	C
North Washington											
252 North Washington	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	C
244 North Washington	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes/gable	Yes	Yes	C
152 N. Washington	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
142-148 N. Washington	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
134 N. Washington	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
130 N. Washington	Yes	2-P	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	C
118-124 N. Washington	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
110-108 N. Washington	Yes	1-P	Yes	Na	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
South Washington											
124 South Washington	Yes	1-P	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	C
140 South Washington	Yes	1-P	No	NA	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No		NC

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

Inventory for the Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District

Address	C/N Status	Date	Alterations	Style/Typology
<i>Courthouse Grounds</i>				
Courthouse	contributing	1890-1891	1925/1927/1949	government/Romanesque Rev.
War Memorial	noncontributing	1987		object
Iron Deer	contributing	c.1880		object
Obelisk	contributing	1884		object
Meridian stone	contributing	1878		object
Flag pole	noncontributing	1967		object
THC subject marker	noncontributing	1983		object
<i>Jail Grounds (171 Main)</i>				
Jail	contributing	1881-1882		government/Gothic Revival
Fence	contributing	1884		structure
Shed	contributing	c.1880		structure
Windmill	noncontributing	1967		structure
Restroom Facilities	noncontributing	c.1975		contemporary
Barn	contributing	c.1885		structure
<i>West LaFayette</i>				
161 W. LaFayette	contributing	1897		railroad passenger depot
<i>West Colorado</i>				
262 W. Colorado	contributing	1884		one-part commercial
258 W. Colorado	noncontributing	1923		one-part commercial
256 W. Colorado	noncontributing	1952		one-part commercial
240 W. Colorado	noncontributing	1974-75		contemporary - commercial
236 W. Colorado	contributing	1875		two-part commercial
230 W. Colorado	contributing	1886		two-part commercial
226 W. Colorado	noncontributing	1885		two-part commercial
220 W. Colorado	noncontributing	c.1880		one-part commercial
202 W. Colorado	noncontributing	1970-1971		contemporary commercial
202 W. Colorado	noncontributing	1963		object - marker
148 W. Colorado	contributing	1890	1930/1941/1947	two-part commercial
145 W. Colorado	noncontributing	1971	1980	contemporary commercial
140 W. Colorado	contributing	1892	1912	two-part commercial
136 W. Colorado	contributing	1880	1929-storefront	two-part commercial
135 W. Colorado	contributing	1884-1885	1907	two-part commercial
123-129 W. Colorado	contributing	1883-1884		two-part commercial

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West Colorado, contd.				
126 W. Colorado	contributing	1881		one-part commercial
119 W. Colorado	contributing	1894		two-part commercial
113 W. Colorado	contributing	1891	1895-storefront	two-part commercial
108 W. Colorado	contributing	1922	1929/1980s garage	one-part commercial
107 W. Colorado	contributing	1927		one-part commercial
101 W. Colorado	contributing	1927		one-part commercial
East Colorado				
113 E. Colorado	contributing	1936-1937		government/Art Moderne
113 E. Colorado	contributing	1936		object - marker
225 E. Colorado	noncontributing	1965		contemporary commercial
West Travis.				
239-253 W. Travis	contributing	1922		two-part commercial
235 W. Travis	contributing	1947		one-part commercial
229 W. Travis	contributing	1890		one-part commercial
223 W. Travis	contributing	c.1921-1926		one-part commercial
213-219 W. Travis	contributing	1929		two-part commercial
207 W. Travis	contributing	1896		one-part commercial
201-203 W. Travis	contributing	1932		two-part commercial
155 W. Travis	contributing	1911		two-part commercial
153 W. Travis	contributing	1928		two-part commercial
149-151 W. Travis	noncontributing	1936		one-part commercial
145 W. Travis	noncontributing	c.1968		one-part commercial
138 W. Travis	contributing	1860	1885/1939/1950	two-part commercial
135 W. Travis	noncontributing	c.1954		one-part commercial
127 W. Travis	contributing	1900		one-part commercial
North Main				
252 N. Main	noncontributing	c.1970		contemporary commercial
228 N. Main	noncontributing	c.1965		contemporary commercial
226 N. Main	contributing	1939		one-part commercial
155 N. Main	contributing	1914		two-part commercial
143 N. Main	noncontributing	1973		contemporary commercial
135 N. Main	contributing	1905		one-part commercial
129 N. Main	contributing	1895		one-part commercial
123 N. Main	noncontributing	1895	1957	two-part commercial
117 N. Main	contributing	1895		one-part commercial
113 N. Main	noncontributing	c.1936		one-part commercial
103 N. Main	contributing	1880	1961-addition	two-part commercial

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<i>South Main – contd.</i>				
104 S. Main	contributing	1880	1934	one-part commercial
108 S. Main	noncontributing	c.1955		one-part commercial
114 S. Main	contributing	1856-59		two-part commercial
<i>North Washington</i>				
252 N. Washington	contributing	c.1922		one-part commercial
244 N. Washington	contributing	1897		two story shop
152 N. Washington	contributing	1904	1931	one-part commercial
142-148 N. Washington	contributing	1906-1907		two-part commercial
134 N. Washington	contributing	1890	1947/1951-ext.	one-part commercial
130 N. Washington	contributing	1855	1897/1901/1914	two-part commercial
118-124 N. Washington	contributing	1889		one-part commercial
108-110 N. Washington	contributing	1886	1939	one-part commercial
<i>South Washington</i>				
124 S. Washington	contributing	1947		one-part commercial
140 S. Washington	noncontributing	c.1920		one-part commercial
<i>North Jefferson</i>				
254 N. Jefferson	noncontributing	1953		contemporary commercial
<i>Franklin</i>				
255 Franklin	contributing	1881-1882		institutional/Victorian

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Methodology for the Evaluation of Individual Buildings Within the District

This district as a whole was evaluated using the following considerations: the area contained a high concentration of properties that retain a high degree of integrity, giving the district a sense of continuity; there exists little contemporary in-fill to intrude upon the proposed district with modern construction dispersed throughout the district; and the proposed district reflects significant aspects of the historical development of La Grange. According to the National Register guidelines, for a district to retain integrity as a whole, the majority of the components that make up the district's historic character must possess integrity even if they are individually undistinguished. In addition, the relationships among the district's components must be substantially unchanged since the period of significance.

The evaluation of a commercial district is made difficult by the economic necessity to modernize storefronts so an area can maintain its economic viability. In order to provide clarification on how a building was determined contributing or noncontributing, a chart was prepared containing the essential characteristics of small-scale commercial buildings based on a model first used by Hardy, Heck, & Moore of Austin, Texas in the Henderson Commercial Historic District. As it is not necessary for a district nominated under Criterion A to retain all seven aspects of integrity, it was determined which aspects of integrity were the most important in conveying the district's significance. Integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association were determined to be absolutely essential in determining integrity of the individual resources. All of the buildings within the district maintain their integrity of location so this aspect was not included within the chart. If a building lacked setting, feeling or association, it was automatically considered noncontributing. The matrix was applied only to commercial buildings more than 50 years of age. Contemporary buildings and other building types, such as public buildings, were not included in this analysis.

Furthermore, the individual components of design, materials, and workmanship were broken down within the chart and a building's facade was considered as consisting of two parts - the lower section containing the storefront and the upper section featuring either a full second floor or the upper part of a one-part commercial block. These sub-categories include: fenestration pattern of the ground floor; materials within the storefront (ground floor); fenestration pattern of upper floors; materials used within the upper floors or upper part of the facade, parapet, architectural ornament or detailing; and overall massing, form and plan (i.e., design). This criteria was vigorously applied to each of the buildings within the district. Buildings which lacked a majority of the elements of design, materials, and workmanship were considered noncontributing, even if they retained a sense of association, setting and feeling. Non-historic buildings are not included in the chart as they are noncontributing by virtue of their being less than 50 years of age.

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Many alterations which one might assume would adversely affect a property's integrity were actually applied during the period of significance. The La Grange City Tax Records (now deposited in the Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives) contain photographs of all buildings taken in 1950 during a property value re-assessment program where every taxable property was re-appraised and photographed. These photographs and the accompanying descriptions of buildings were invaluable in determining whether an alteration was made during the period of significance. Any alterations securely documented as occurring before 1950 were considered to be historic changes to the building and do not adversely affect the building's integrity. The illustrations accompanying the representative property type descriptions (Section Eight) include examples of these 1950 photographs in conjunction with a current photograph of the property.

Common alterations to buildings resulting in their noncontributing status include: extensive post-1950 alterations to both the storefront and the upper section of the facade and the application of entirely new materials to a facade that destroy the original fenestration pattern and storefront rhythm (226 Colorado); the extensive use of stucco or other new materials in addition to major alterations to the storefront (220 Colorado); and the replacement of character-defining architectural elements in conjunction with alterations to the facade (123 Main). The application of a new covering over the entire facade, such as the aluminum slipcasing which encase the historic facade of 226 Colorado, present a drastic alteration of the building that dramatically affects its integrity.

The district is also nominated under Criterion C in the area of architecture at the local level of significance as it contains numerous examples of buildings retaining a high degree of integrity that represent the architectural development of commercial architecture from the mid-nineteenth century through the early twentieth centuries. These buildings were included in the evaluation on the enclosed chart and generally received a positive response to every column of the matrix.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- ☒ **A** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.
- ☐ **B** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST.
- ☒ **C** PROPERTY EMBODIES THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION OR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER, OR POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUE, OR REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENTS LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION.
- ☐ **D** PROPERTY HAS YIELDED, OR IS LIKELY TO YIELD, INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PREHISTORY OR HISTORY.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: COMMERCE, COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, ARCHITECTURE

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1859-1950

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1881, 1891

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION:

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Kreische, Heinrich Ludwig; Gordon, James Riely; Andrewarthe and Wahrenberger, architects; Rohde, Henry

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-20 through 8-53).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-54 through 9-58).

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

☒ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:

☒ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*)

☐ Other state agency

☐ Federal agency

☒ Local government – Fayette County Deed Records; Fayette Heritage Museum & Archives

☒ University – Drury B. Alexander Architectural Archives, The University of Texas at Austin

☐ Other -- Specify Repository:

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Summary

The Fayette County Courthouse Square historic district typifies the role of entrepreneurship in the economic and physical development of the city. Founded in 1837 as the county seat of one of the original counties organized during the Republic of Texas period, the city of La Grange's role as the center of government for Fayette County encouraged the early growth of commerce in an area based largely on an agricultural economy. The strong cotton trade and the arrival of the railroad ensured the economic success of the city as it became the transportation center for the agricultural economy of the outlying areas, and merchants and industries established businesses to serve the surrounding farm communities. The influx of German immigrants played an important role in the establishment of a strong mercantile economy and affected the physical development as represented in many of the buildings surrounding the square. The Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District is nominated under Criterion A at the local level of significance in the areas of commerce and community planning and development. The district is also nominated under Criterion C at the local level of significance in the area of architecture.

Early Settlement and the Establishment of Fayette County

The first settlers in the area came largely from the Upper South including Tennessee, Georgia, and Kentucky. Even before Stephen F. Austin officially received his land grant which included Fayette County, Anglo settlers began to arrive in the county. Aylett Buckner, Jesse Burnham and Peter Powell were among the earliest settlers.¹ The city of La Grange was located on land granted to John Henry Moore in 1831 where he established a blockhouse, known as Moore's Fort, to which local settlers flocked when threatened by hostile Indians. A small community became established around Moore's Fort, eventually becoming the city of La Grange. An act of congress of the Texas Republic created Fayette County on December 14, 1837, one of the original counties of the new republic created from the municipalities of Colorado and Mina.² The small community of La Grange was chosen, and has remained, as the county seat. Most local histories claim the county was named in honor of Marquis de Lafayette, and the county seat of La Grange took its name from the American Revolutionary hero's estate (French for "meadow").³ The county was actually named, however, for the birthplace of Andrew Rabb in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. Rabb served as the first Chief Justice for Mina county in 1837 and represented the county in the third congress of the Republic of Texas.⁴ A bid to become the capitol of the republic failed in 1838. Appointed to select a site, a special commission recommended a parcel of land adjacent to Moore's tract which local citizens arranged to purchase. Although unanimously selected by the Congress of the Republic, President Sam Houston vetoed the bill.⁵

¹ Julia Lee Sinks, *Chronicles of Fayette County* (La Grange: Bicentennial Commission, 1975) 38.

² *Ibid.*, 29.

³ Daphne Dalton Garrett, "Fayette County" in *The New Handbook of Texas* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1996) vol. 3, 969.

⁴ Research Files, Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives, La Grange, Texas.

⁵ "Republic of Texas," in *The New Handbook of Texas* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1996) vol. 5, 539.

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With initial county revenues at only \$1,200 per year, the county purchased a frame building and moved it to the courthouse square. Its inadequate size forced the county to rent additional buildings for county offices and the district courtroom. The town was formally platted in 1837 and the following year a post office was established. Wooden buildings began springing up around the courthouse square to provide space for law offices, dry goods stores, saloons, liverys, and hotels. These types of businesses underscore the importance of La Grange as the county seat, providing the necessary services to a rural population who traveled to the small town primarily for trading, the filing of deeds, and to vote. Early construction in downtown La Grange remained clustered around the courthouse square for decades. These early buildings faced the street in an irregular pattern with many lots remaining vacant. The early streetscape lacked any form of paving or surfacing material and wooden sidewalks in front of stores were intermittent.

Education became an important concern of the residents early on as the first school, organized by Judge R. E. B. Baylor in 1839, was soon followed by others. By 1855, La Grange boasted four schools including the German Free School sponsored by the Casino Association of La Grange.⁶ Churches were quickly established in La Grange including the Methodist (1834), Episcopalian (1842), Baptist (1842), and Presbyterian (1848) churches. Within the first decade of its founding, La Grange's first newspaper was established in 1844, The La Grange Intelligencer.⁷

The men of La Grange played an important role in the early years of the Republic. Among this group was Nathaniel W. Faison, a French Huguenot who arrived in 1839 from Louisiana.⁸ In 1842, he became one of 54 men to join the command of Nicholas Dawson who faced a tragic loss of 36 men at the Battle of Salado Creek. The captured, joined by others of the Mier Expedition, eventually numbered 204, of which only 176 survived after an escape attempt. General Santa Anna ordered every tenth man to be shot; these doomed men were selected by the drawing of beans from a bowl. Those who drew a black bean were executed. The remaining prisoners were finally released in 1844. A meeting in 1848 resulted in the remains of both the dead at Salado Creek and Mier's men being returned to La Grange for interment on Monument Hill. An old oak tree located on the north side of the courthouse square (in front of the bank at the corner of Colorado and Washington streets) still marks the spot where these men first organized their missions.

The population of the area remained sparse during the early years, but La Grange was a thriving community in the decade before the Civil War. The county's population during the first U.S. census conducted in Texas (1847) was 2,886. Within three years, the population rose to 3,756 (1850) due to the increase in the cotton trade and the arrival of German immigrants.⁹ The increased revenues allowed the county to erect a more

⁶ Fayette County History Book Committee, *Fayette County, Texas: Heritage* (Austin: Curtis Media Inc., 1996) 36.

⁷ John Leffler, "La Grange, Texas," in *The New Handbook of Texas* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1996) vol. 4, 6.

⁸ Mr. and Mrs. D. R. Laughter, "Two Houses in La Grange," unpublished research report on the Kreische and Faison Houses, Drury B. Alexander Architectural Archive, The University of Texas at Austin.

⁹ Garrett, "Fayette County" in *The New Handbook of Texas*, vol. 3, 970.

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permanent courthouse on the square in 1848. Although constructed of wood, it was much larger than the previous courthouse. La Grange formally incorporated in 1850. By the early 1850s, plantations were producing quantities of corn and cotton for shipping to outside markets via both the overland route to Houston along the La Bahia Road and the steamboat, Kate Ward, which began service on the Colorado in 1850.¹⁰ The success of the cotton industry is reflected in the slave population of the county which almost quadrupled from 206 in 1840 to 820 in 1850. Just prior to the Civil War, Fayette County was one of the most well-developed areas of the state with almost 1,000 farms representing over 75,463 improved acres of land. By 1855, the slave population swelled to 2,072 and increased to 3,786 in 1860, representing one-third of the total population of the county (1860 census of 11,604). The county's assessed value of property rose from only \$1,138,000 in 1847 to \$5,115,000 in 1860.¹¹

Influence of German Immigration on Commerce and Culture in La Grange

By 1856, Germans were arriving in great numbers. According to the Texas census of 1836, 218 Germans resided within the new republic. It was not until after the Texas Revolution, however, that German immigration gained momentum. The Society for the Protection of German Immigrants, established in 1842, obtained rights to settle on the Fisher-Miller Grant and eventually brought 7,380 Germans (primarily Hessians) to Texas.¹² Although the Society declared bankruptcy in 1847, the group popularized Texas as the new paradise.¹³ Between 1847 and 1861 the German population of Texas increased and by 1860 it exceeded 30,000.¹⁴ Between 1865 and 1880 another 14,200 Germans arrived in Texas.¹⁵ The majority of Germans in La Grange settled within the earlier period of immigration before 1850.

The Society for the Protection of German Immigrants promised free passage, land, a log house and farm implements, but most immigrants found themselves stranded in an area from Indianola to San Antonio, New Braunfels, and Fredericksburg.¹⁶ In 1843 Count Boos-Waldeck of the Society purchased the W.H. Jack league in Fayette County and established the Nassau plantation in honor of the Duke of Nassau.¹⁷ A German settlement was established at Ross Prairie in 1845.¹⁸ By 1860 the German population of Fayette County reached 27% of the total population.¹⁹ As the German population in 1860 was only 3.4%, this represented a significant

¹⁰ Fayette County History Book Committee, *Fayette County, Texas: Heritage*, 99.

¹¹ Garrett, "Fayette County" in *The New Handbook of Texas*, vol. 3, 970.

¹² Gerlinde Leiding, "Germans in Texas," in Allen Noble, ed., *To Build in a New Land: Ethnic Landscapes in North America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1992) 363.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 365.

¹⁷ Rudolph Leopole Bieseke, *The History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1987) 53

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 62.

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increase.²⁰ In the tradition of scattered farmsteads in northern Germany and due to the cheap land, Germans settled along the Brazos, Colorado and Guadalupe rivers in a fragmented belt, purchasing land from the original pioneer settlers of the area.²¹ Germans quickly established a variety of industrial establishments within the local communities including brick kilns, flour and grist mills, saw mills and breweries.²² By 1860 in Fayette County, August Beyer owned a blacksmith shop, Henry Frosch a sawmill and Andrew Frenzel a grist mill.²³ Although La Grange possessed smaller numbers of Germans than such communities as New Braunfels and Fredericksburg, their influence is still apparent. Among the many influential German businessmen of La Grange were William Hermes who founded the Hermes Drug Store in 1855. Hermes offered the community a wide range of services beyond drugs including subscriptions for newspapers (from New Orleans, New York and Galveston), school books, sundries, hardware, and groceries.²⁴

Germans had a great interest in schools and the organization of societies which contributed to the cultural development of the community. Between 1840 and 1844 L.C. Ervendberg and Johann Anaton Fischer organized Protestant congregations in La Grange as well as Industry, Cat Springs and Columbus.²⁵ The first German Methodist congregation in Texas is reportedly the one founded in La Grange in 1847 by Reverend G. Rottenstein.²⁶ Among the earliest schools in the area were those connected with Protestant congregations established as early as the early 1840s (by Reverend L.C. Ervendberg).²⁷ Reverend P.F. Zizelmann, of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church, conducted a school in La Grange for a few months in 1852.²⁸ In addition, the German population founded many types of clubs to socialize with one another and to preserve their German culture. The La Grange Casino, established in February of 1860, promoted social recreation, as well as literary pursuits and plays.²⁹ Singing societies were established in almost every German settlement including one in La Grange in 1853.³⁰ State-wide singing festivals were held as early as 1853. German newspapers were also an important cultural characteristic of German communities. The German community retained its strong cultural identity and today approximately 80% of the county's population feature German or Czech surnames.³¹

²⁰ Ibid., 191 and the 1860 census for Texas in which 20,533 out of 604,215 were Germans.

²¹ Leiding, "Germans in Texas," in Allen Noble, ed., *To Build in a New land: Ethnic Landscapes in North America*, 364.

²² Ibid., 375.

²³ Biese, *The History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861*, 210.

²⁴ Esther Hall, "Hermes Drug Store in La Grange: A Pioneer Texas Store," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* (July 1966-April 1967) 68.

²⁵ Biese, *The History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861*, 217

²⁶ Ibid., 219

²⁷ Ibid., 211

²⁸ Ibid., 214

²⁹ Ibid., 221

³⁰ Ibid., 223

³¹ Engelke first page

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With the booming economy, the county finally built a two-story, stone courthouse on the square in 1856, replacing the frame one erected less than a decade earlier. Built by Henry Kreische, a German immigrant remembered today for his brewery, this courthouse graced the square with a clock tower, and also served the community for public meetings. Although no photographs are available of the square before the Civil War, photographs from the later 1860s (figure 1, page 43) adequately convey how it would have looked with simple frame buildings with gabled roofs hidden behind raised parapets. In these early years of development, it was not uncommon to find livery stables and residences located directly on the square. The Julius Meyenberg residence (c.1870), constructed on the southwest side of the square, was replicated in later years and serves now as a banking facility. One of the oldest surviving buildings in the district dates from this period. The building at 114 S. Main represents the German influence on construction with its use of a stucco covered masonry. During the ante-bellum period, La Grange was linked to Houston by an overland road through San Felipe on the Brazos along the Old La Bahia road which followed part of what is now LaFayette Street, one block to the north of the courthouse square.³²

Impact of the Civil War on Fayette County and La Grange

On the eve of the Civil War, Fayette County was one of only 18 counties voting against Secession, by the slim margin of only 46 votes. On February 23, 1861, the county's voters cast 626 votes against secession and 580 votes for joining the Confederacy.³³ The presence of such a large German population no doubt influenced the vote, as they abhorred slavery as a culture, although they generally associated with the Democratic party.³⁴ Fayette County witnessed the organization of numerous companies such as the Plum Creek Rifles and the La Grange German Company, with many men joining the Confederate ranks. Many of the Germans who did not support the Confederacy left the city at this time, including Dr. Hermes.³⁵

Following the Civil War, there were a few instances of violence against those who did not support the Confederacy as some returning soldiers robbed local German businesses and provoked fights, but an outbreak of yellow fever in 1867 focused the town's attention toward survival. Within six short months, the virus decimated one-fifth of the town's population as 204 succumbed to the illness. Many of the populace simply left town including, once again, Dr. Hermes. This crisis was soon followed by the disastrous flooding of the Colorado River in 1869 which left five feet of water within the courthouse square. The raging river devastated crops throughout the valley and destroyed businesses and homes. Less than a year later, the river once again overflowed its banks. Although less devastating to the town in 1870, the flood nonetheless destroyed crops throughout the county. The impact of the floods, coupled with the decline in property values due to the Civil War, affected county government's ability to raise revenues.

³² Terry Jordan, *German Seed in Texas Soil: Immigrant Farmers in Nineteenth Century Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966) 102.

³³ Fayette County History Book Committee, *Fayette County, Texas: Heritage*, 35.

³⁴ Bieseke, *The History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861*, 195

³⁵ Ibid.

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The population of the county continued to increase despite the war and, in 1870, it increased to 16,863. Moreover, by 1870 the economy began to recover as production levels neared those of 1860.³⁶ One result of the war, however, was the break-up of large plantations as Germans and Bohemians purchased additional lands which once belonged to the plantation owners. The number of farms increased and although smaller in size, their productivity level actually rose due to the more intense cultivation methods utilized by the Germans. The leading cash crops continued to be cotton and corn.

Arrival of the Railroad and the Burgeoning Economic Growth of La Grange, 1880-1910

The inauguration of rail service by a spur from Columbus by the Galveston Harrisburg and San Antonio Railroad in 1880 transformed La Grange into a major trade center. In 1882, the M. K. & T. line arrived to serve the city. Two factions argued over the location of the new rail route into the city. One group wanted the rail to go around the city including the Kirsh family, who owned a mercantile store along Colorado Street. But many of the merchants wanted a location through town, realizing the positive economic impact it would have on the town.³⁷ The latter group was granted its wish as the rail line followed LaFayette Street, the route of the Old Bahia Road, located just one block north of the courthouse square. A railroad passenger depot, constructed in 1885 at the corner of LaFayette and Washington Streets, burned in 1897. The surviving rail passenger depot (161 W. LaFayette; photo # 14) was constructed on its site. The arrival of the railroad spurred an influx of population in La Grange, which grew from 1,626 in 1890 to 2,392 by 1900. The population of the county grew from 27,996 in 1880 to 36,542 in 1900.³⁸ In addition to rail service, the first bridge over the Colorado River (built on the west side of La Grange), previously only passable by private ferry, was completed in 1883. By the turn of the century cotton dominated agricultural shipments from the county, reaching annual production figures of 30,000 bales.³⁹ With adequate transportation now available, cotton and corn became important cash crops for the area, encouraging such local industries as mills, lumber yards and wholesale groceries.

A strong and diversified economy developed as a result of the interdependence of the railroad and the cotton industry. Cotton provided the major source of revenue for the railroad which provided the means of transportation for the ever-increasing production levels of cotton in the area. As the farmers in the area flourished, so did the merchants who established numerous dry good stores and groceries in La Grange. Thus La Grange developed as a mercantile center for surrounding rural communities and, by 1881, over 60 businesses were established. The town boasted four churches, three schools, an opera house, three banks (First National Bank, 1888), two newspapers (The La Grange Journal and Slovan), and an oil factory. The town began

³⁶ Garrett, "Fayette County" in *The New Handbook of Texas*, vol. 3, 972.

³⁷ Fayette County History Book Committee, *Fayette County, Texas: Heritage*, 42.

³⁸ Garrett, "Fayette County" in *The New Handbook of Texas*, vol. 3, 972.

³⁹ Daphne Dalton Garrett, "Fayette County" in *The New Handbook of Texas*, 970.

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expanding away from the courthouse square and, by the early 1880s, much of the new construction shifted one block to the northeast of the courthouse square along Colorado Street. Buildings of this period were typically two-part commercial block buildings and many utilized cast-iron architectural features in the cornices and columns. Many building owners added cast-iron details, such as cornices, to update and modernize simpler buildings. The arrival of the railroad provided inexpensive transportation for manufactured building components, including windows, cast iron columns, moldings and entire storefronts, from large urban areas such as St. Louis. Thought to be fire-proof, iron appealed to merchants as a modern material. A number of buildings survive from this period including the Post Office and Bank Building (1884) at 123 W. Colorado, the Meerscheidt Building (1881) at 126 W. Colorado, the Ledbetter Building (1884-1885) at 135 W. Colorado, the Huettel Building (1880) at 104 S. Main, the Heintz-Speckels Building (1887) at 130 N. Washington, and the Willenberg Building (1886) at 108-110 N. Washington.

Many of these buildings are typical of the earliest masonry commercial buildings in Texas, often referred to as the Texas Vernacular Arched Front (or Flat Arched Front). This building type consisted of a first floor with a series of narrow openings separated by masonry piers which provided openings for doors and windows and supported the upper floor. Initially, a series of arches at the ground level provided openings for windows and doors, as well as supporting the upper wall. These were spaced evenly across the front, and it was not uncommon to hang double doors in each archway to allow the shopkeeper to open up the entire façade for maximum ventilation and to provide the greatest amount of direct contact with customers on the sidewalk. Above the doors, fanlights were installed conforming to the shapes of the arches. La Grange contains numerous examples of this particular type of early commercial building. Eventually, wider flat windows were introduced, made possible by the introduction of a steel or heavy timber beam across the entire façade, which supported the upper part of the masonry wall. With this structural advance, a large transparent opening could be achieved to display more goods within a display window. These new storefronts therefore exhibited large expanses of plate glass, allowing the ground floors to become more transparent. Window sills on the second floors were finished with stone sills, brick arches and a simple cornice at the top of the building. A canopy projected from the front of these buildings to shade the sidewalk and provided a sense of continuity to individual buildings. Signs were also hung along the outer edge of the canopy.

Augustine Haidusek, who settled with his family in 1856 from Bohemia, became the first Bohemian-American lawyer and served as mayor in 1875 as well as other offices. As county judge, he ordered that English, rather than Bohemian or German, be spoken in all the schools. After being heavily criticized in the German press, he established his own newspaper, the *Svoboda*, in 1885. In 1881, the county constructed a new jail designed by Andrewarthe and Wahrenberger (NR 1975). This Gothic Revival stone structure (photo # 7; figure 2, page 44) exhibited a sense of monumentality and security befitting a jail with its solid stone walls supporting a tower over the main entrance. Unfortunately, the construction of this jail put the county in debt as they borrowed from the school fund, issuing 22 bonds at \$1,000 each. By 1887, only five bonds had been repaid and it was not until 1902 that most of the funds were repaid. This debt postponed the construction of a much needed courthouse for almost a decade.

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With the new prosperity from the arrival of the railroad came additional tax revenues, allowing the county to replace its older courthouse. Designed by James Riely Gordon, the new three-story courthouse (NR 1975), completed in 1891, utilized sandstone from a nearby quarry accented with polychromatic limestone window surrounds, red sandstone sills and steps, and polished red granite columns. The building (photo # 6; figure 3, page 45) faced northeast towards Washington Street, but included secondary entrances on the remaining facades. A tall bell tower graced the front entrance with an American eagle carved in relief over the main entrance. Unlike Gordon's later courthouses, the Fayette County Courthouse was organized around a central, open patio which provided ventilation to the interior rooms. Although Gordon later became known as the premier courthouse designer in Texas, this courthouse represented only his second design and is essential in understanding the development of his courthouse designs.

The new courthouse became the center of a prosperous community, hosting a variety of public events such as market days and local commemorative celebrations. As the seat of district and county courts, it provided the setting in which people resolved their differences and filed their most precious documents, including titles to their land, probate documents and marriage certificates. It also served as the focus of the county's political arena and the theater of commissioners court provided a measure of entertainment for citizens as well as direct participation in the issues of the day. As the polling place, the courthouse hosted many political events throughout the years, including watershed moments such as the vote for secession and the 1919 election on the prohibition amendment. It also became the center for such ceremonial events as marches and parades, meetings of Confederate Veterans, and the honoring of the county's heroes and those lost to numerous wars. Indeed, the old oak tree at the corner of Washington and Colorado still bears witness as the landmark to which young men of the county grouped before going off to war (figure 4, page 46). For the surrounding buildings, the courthouse served as the impetus for the economic growth of the courthouse square. It not only increased the economic value of the surrounding property, it served as a magnet to attract consumers to the increasing number of businesses located around the square. Furthermore, the building of a new courthouse stimulated additional construction on the courthouse square. Many of the new buildings emulated the Romanesque Revival style of the new courthouse including the Shuhmacher Bank Building (1894, demolished; figure 4, page 46).

The population of La Grange increased from 1,626 in 1890 to 2,392 by 1900. By the late 1890s the buildings around the square continued to be primarily two-part commercial blocks constructed of masonry (figure 5, page 47). The city became a vibrant, modern town with the first telephone lines installed in 1887 by the Schuhmacher Company, a fire department with a hook and ladder wagon, and a system of water works and electric lights by 1891. In 1892, street lights were placed on each corner of the public square. In 1899, La Grange became the site of the first rural mail route in Texas, begun by Henry Creamer. This first circuit of 27 miles became longer each year, and by 1927 most rural farms received mail.⁴⁰ By the turn of the century, La Grange thrived with a bustling downtown area (figures 6-9, pages 48-51) that included two banks, three newspapers (English, German and Czech), sixteen attorneys, five physicians, two dentists, three hotels, one wholesale grocery, seven general merchandise stores, four grocery stores, five dry-goods stores, three hardware

⁴⁰ Thad Sitton and Dan Utley, *From Can See to Can't See: Texas Cotton Farmers on the Southern Prairies* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 139-140.

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stores, two restaurants, two saddleries, two jewelry stores, three drugstores, eleven bars, two beer agents, three blacksmith shops, three shoemakers, two tailors, one millinery shop, and even two professional photographers.⁴¹ The town continued to be plagued with floods from the Colorado River including one in 1900 and yet another in 1913 when the water rose to five feet on the courthouse square.

This period of intense economic development is most visible in the surviving buildings within the Fayette County Courthouse Historic District today. The importance of the courthouse square to regional traffic increased during the late nineteenth century, thus creating a viable commercial area both north and south of the area. One-story buildings appeared more frequently during this period of intense economic development. The introduction of the vernacular storefront type occurred across America from the 1870s through the 1920s. It features a large, plate glass display window on either side of a deeply recessed entryway. The upper part of the building is supported on a steel beam that spans the glass opening. The display window is frequently framed in moldings that are more ornamental than vernacular and may be supported on cast metal columns. A kickplate, which supports the display window from below, typically has an ornamental molding. Transoms above the display windows provided additional light into the interior of the store. Ornamental details existed, but are generally limited to a shallow molding as a cornice of masonry or stamped metal. In essence, these buildings lack the distinctive detail that would associate them with the revival styles popular during this period. The introduction of the commercial storefront contributed both cohesion and variety to the streetscape. The result of the open first floors and the human-scaled ornamentation found on the building fronts was that the street appealed to pedestrians. The uniform alignment of canopies enhanced the repeated storefront form, although the streetscape continued to project a busy, rhythmic appearance. Early photographs show that most storefronts were sheltered by canopies either supported on wood posts at the edge of the sidewalk or hung by chains from the façade (figure 10, page 52). Examples of this particular building type are located at 117 Main (1895), 229 Travis (1890), and 134 N. Washington (1890). While vernacular building types predominate within the historic district, La Grange contains examples of the Romanesque Revival and Late Victorian styles influenced by the Fayette County Courthouse including 129 Main (1895), and the Hermes Building (1907) at 142-148 Washington. The Romanesque Revival style was popular in the United States from 1870 through the 1890s and is distinguished by monumental masonry arches rising from massive piers or springing directly from the wall itself. Simple carved moldings frame these arches and stone is often used around openings, often with a rough-cut ashlar finish.

⁴¹ Fayette County History Book Committee, *Fayette County, Texas: Heritage*, 35

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The Beginnings of Economic Decline, 1910-1940

Cotton provided the basis for the annual cycle of traffic in the county seat of La Grange. After waiting for months, watching the weather and monitoring the progress of the cotton fields, the town would fill in August as the first bales traveled through the streets. In the months that followed, crowds of people flocked to La Grange. There were many purchases to be made, especially annual clothing and Christmas gifts, and there were always numerous debts to settle with local merchants. This influx of commerce required the local businessmen to hire additional staff, as the prosperity of a good crop cast its glow on the entire area. The school term was predicated on the cotton crops as well. But if the cotton crop failed, everyone would be affected. Many local merchants also functioned as cotton buyers, purchasing cotton from area farmers to whom the merchants had extended credit during the course of the growing year. These buyers usually served as local agents for the major cotton brokers, such as Ehlers Cotton Company at 101 W. Colorado and at 123 W. Colorado. These major brokers told their agents each day how much and for what kind of cotton they would pay a particular price.

During the first years of the twentieth century the boll weevil began to plague the cotton farmers of Fayette County, resulting in a reduced crop.⁴² By 1914 Southern farmers produced an enormous cotton crop but, with the advent of World War I and the disruption of world cotton markets, the price of cotton fell to just over 5 cents a pound.⁴³ Merchants went unpaid as tenant farmers in particular could not meet their debts, neither to landlord or store owner. Prices began to rise in 1915 and by 1917 prices jumped to 28 cents a pound; by 1919, prices rose to 35 cents a pound. The new wealth allowed farmers to purchase Model T Fords and new

buildings began to proliferate. The following year, however, cotton plummeted to 13 cents a pound. Once again, cotton prices slowly rose over the ensuing years and returned to an average of 30 cents a pound in 1923. As a result, farmers planted yet more cotton the following years. But whereas elsewhere in Texas farmers benefited, in Fayette County the cotton crop of 1925 was destroyed by drought and grasshoppers. Not only cotton, but also other crops and livestock were devastated by the drought as farmers cut their fences to allow their cattle to feed on the grass along the Southern Pacific right of way.⁴⁴ Whereas 12,713 bales were ginned in Fayette County prior to September 1 in the previous year, only a mere 2,590 bales were ginned for 1925. The drought even destroyed gardens as families began to struggle just to feed themselves. Rain in 1926, however, reinvigorated the cotton industry.

The fall of cotton prices in the early 1920s discouraged commerce and the city experienced a drop in population from 1,960 in 1910 to 1,665 in 1925. After 1926, however, cotton prices rebounded and the city experienced a brief period of prosperity. The Fayette County Record, established in 1922, constructed a new building at the corner of Washington and Travis streets in 1929. The citizens of the town enjoyed weekly touring companies in the Casino Opera House (demolished) including such performances as "Wilhelm Tell" and

⁴² F. Lotto, *Fayette County: Her History and Her People* (Schulenburg: Sticker Steam Press, 1902) 355.

⁴³ Sitton and Utley, *From Can See to Can't See: Texas Cotton Farmers on the Southern Prairies*, 56.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

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"Ingomar, the Barbarian."⁴⁵ During the 1920s, travel through the county was greatly hampered during the rainy season by muddy roads, which in the blackland prairie, turned to thick, sticky, impassible mud. Work began on the Jefferson Street bridge over the Colorado River in 1921, but was not complete until 1926 at a cost of \$293,000.⁴⁶ This bridge vastly improved transportation over the river and was proclaimed as being "practically free from vibration and thoroughly braced against a one hundred mile per our wind."⁴⁷ In addition, the city began paving streets in the late 1920s and by 1929 (figure 11, page 53), all of the streets around the courthouse square and extending one block in each direction were paved. As the streets witnessed increased traffic during the early twentieth century with the introduction of the automobile, the city continued its essential role as a mercantile center for the surrounding farm communities. Buildings from this period tended to be less elaborate than those preceding the turn of the century. One of the most important trends was the construction of early twentieth century vernacular buildings, many of which had a brick parapet, occasionally ornamented with geometric patterns in brick.

La Grange fully recuperated from the economic slump in the late 1920s and gained population (2,800 in 1929) just in time for the depression which significantly impacted the city's economy. As cotton production declined during the depression years, the number of businesses dropped from 130 in 1931 to only 75 in 1933. During this period, La Grange received its first permanent postal facility. Previously, the post office was located in various commercial buildings around the courthouse square. In 1936, construction began on a modest Art Moderne building at the corner of Colorado and Jefferson. Designed by the U.S. Supervising Architect, Louis Simons, the facility opened in early 1937. Two years later, a mural depicting a group of horses by Tom Lewis was installed within the lobby.

In 1938, yet another flood inundated the city of La Grange and threatened the businesses around the courthouse square. Caused by the release of water from Buchanan Dam, it angered the residents of La Grange and Fayette County. Unfortunately, it destroyed an eighty foot span of the bridge over the Colorado on Travis Street and washed out the east bank. Through a concerted effort of the city council, commissioners court and the local chamber of commerce, the Texas Highway Department agreed to erect a new bridge using state and federal highway money. It was not until 1939 that the city fully recovered from the depression, at which time the city had once again 140 businesses.

Post-World War II Development in La Grange

World War II halted development temporarily as building materials were in short supply. Following the war, however, building permits jumped and the modernization that had begun in the 1930s continued at a fast pace. Many of the returning young soldiers decided to strike out to cities for employment, leaving the farms behind. Of those who remained in the county, many sought jobs in town. In addition, local farmers diversified

⁴⁵ Sitton and Utley, *From Can See to Can't See: Texas Cotton Farmers on the Southern Prairies*, 132.

⁴⁶ Fayette County History Book Committee, *Fayette County, Texas: Heritage*, 36

⁴⁷ Ibid.

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3,900 farms producing approximately one million bushels of corn and 15,000 bales of cotton. The county became the state's top egg producer, and its dairy farms produced an average of five million gallons of milk each year.⁴⁸ The dairy industry was first stimulated after World War II by the arrival of Spears Dairy from Houston, located in the building at 104 N. Main. Although Fayette County remained the county with the largest number of farms in the state at 2,873 in 1964, over 2,600 of these farms reported income from other sources such as working in town.⁴⁹ In addition, many farms were purchased by people from Houston and other areas as weekend places that were leased for stock to area residents.⁵⁰ The city's traditional economic base, threatened by declining cotton production, resulted in the need to attract other industries. The post-World War II era signaled a radical change for the downtown area. Businesses modernized by slipcasing their older buildings behind new aluminum and concrete facades. It was not until 1996 that a resurgence of interest in the downtown revitalized the area with the establishment of a Main Street program and its resulting preservation program. Since that time, numerous buildings have been restored to their former condition which has once again created a vital and bustling atmosphere to the courthouse square.

With the economic slowdown in La Grange, the existing buildings escaped major alterations for many years and examples of the past building styles were preserved, including the near-solid string of buildings along both sides of the streets constructed during the frenetic building activity of the 1890s through the 1920s. Following World War II, however, the entire streetscape was altered. During this period, the widespread use of the canopy disappeared and the modernization and alteration of facades began eroding the historic character of the street. The overall streetscape experienced minor changes, primarily the use of on-street angled parking and the disappearance of the continuous canopies that sheltered the sidewalks and provided unity to the street. With the introduction of shopping centers and malls, a decentralization of downtowns occurred across the country. As the economic vitality of the downtown area waned, it caused an increase in vacancies and a shift in the use of buildings. Architecturally, our historic downtowns suffered as a number of buildings received complete façade coverings during the 1950s and early 1960s.

The Fayette County Courthouse Square historic district typifies the role of entrepreneurship in the economic and physical development of the city. The economy of the city, based on its role as a transportation center for the agricultural economy of the outlying areas, assured commercial success for merchants who established businesses to serve the surrounding farm communities. The Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District is nominated under Criterion A at the local level of significance in the areas of commerce, and community planning and development. The historic district reflects the architectural development typical of county seats in Texas during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In addition, the influx of German immigrants played an important role in the establishment of a strong mercantile economy and affected the physical development as represented in many of the buildings surrounding the square. The district is therefore also nominated under Criterion C at the local level of significance in the area of architecture.

⁴⁸ Engelke first page

⁴⁹ Sitton and Utley, *From Can See to Can't See: Texas Cotton Farmers on the Southern Prairies* 270.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

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Representative Building Types

Masonic Building (1860)
138 West Travis

Two-Part Commercial

Contributing
Photo # 8

Henry Rhode constructed the Masonic Building in 1860 with Florian Meyer serving as contractor. Constructed of limestone blocks covered with stucco, it rises three stories and is crowned with a projecting stone cornice. Stone stringcourses delineate the floors that comprise the cubical mass of the building. The façade is simply composed of four bays with two doorways on the ground floor. Windows are 4/4 with stone sills and lintels on the first and second floors and casement windows on the third or attic story. Access to the upper floors was by an exterior staircase. In 1940, this stair was removed and replaced by an interior stairway. An exterior fire escape has since been added. Originally heated by a fireplace that is no longer functional, the exterior of the building retains a high degree of integrity.⁵¹ The building received the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark designation in 1962.⁵²

After the death of Rhode in 1862, the La Fayette Lodge No. 34, A.F.&A.M. and the I.O.O.F. Lodge No. 30 purchased the building in 1866. The Masonic Lodge occupied the third floor from July 24, 1866 to May of 1939.⁵³ In 1871 the Lodge sold the property to J. M. Farquahar but continued to occupy the third floor. Upon the death of J. M. Farquahar in 1879, his two daughters, Mrs. T.S. Brown and Mrs. Robert McKinney held an undivided interest in the property. Mrs. McKinney's husband, Dr. McKinney, served as the Worshipful Master of the Lodge. Upon the death of Mrs. McKinney in 1920, her half-interest was conveyed to her sister, Mrs. T.S. Brown. In 1939 the property was sold to William and August Hermes.⁵⁴

Among the occupants of the building over the years were Joseph Brown, attorney (founder of the J.C. Brown Abstract Company, later known as the Fayette County Abstract Company), the National Farm and Loan Association, the Brenham Production Credit Association, and the Soil Conservation Service. Fayette County Abstract Co. occupied the building from 1940 through 1973.

⁵¹ Research notes from the exhibition, "Main Street La Grange," compiled by Kathy Carter on deposit at the Fayette County Archives and Museum, La Grange, Texas.

⁵² State Historical Marker files, Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas

⁵³ Research notes from the exhibition, "Main Street La Grange," compiled by Kathy Carter on deposit at the Fayette County Archives and Museum, La Grange, Texas.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

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Moore Grocery /Reichert Furniture Store (1880)
136 Colorado Street

One-Part Commercial Block

Contributing
Photo # 9

In 1880, construction began on four identical buildings by four businessmen: Meerscheidt, Schuhmacher, Lidiak and Haye. Located along the northeastern extension of Colorado Street one block from the courthouse square, these buildings signaled the rapid commercial growth of the area. The building at 136 Colorado Street housed a cigar factory (1881-1883) and a succession of grocery stores (1883-1907)⁵⁵ Purchased in 1907 by Frank Reichert, it was subsequently used as a furniture store.

This brick, one-part commercial building is three bays in width. Originally, each bay contained an arched entryway flanked by paneled piers (visible in the adjacent building in the photograph). An ornamental inset panel above the archway further delineates the three bays. The building is crowned with a stepped parapet rising to a pediment. The building's ornamental use of brick is characteristic of buildings within the historic district constructed during the late nineteenth century. In 1927, the building received a 62 foot extension to the rear and its storefront was modernized. Before this remodeling, the façade consisted of three arched entryways with a doorway within each bay. The new storefront featured modern display windows, a deeply recessed entry, marble kickplates, and multi-colored prismatic glass transoms. The building retains its original canopy.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Research notes from the exhibition, "Main Street La Grange," compiled by Kathy Carter on deposit at the Fayette County Archives and Museum, La Grange, Texas.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

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Post Office and Bank Building (1884)
123-129 West Colorado

Two-Part Commercial Block

Contributing
Photo # 10

Formerly the site of McClatchy's Livery (burned 1883), Axel Meerscheidt and John Schuhmacher purchased the property and began construction of a monumental brick building in the Italianate style in February of 1884. The two-story, symmetrical façade is composed of seven bays with the center bay, serving as the entry to the second floor, flanked by stone pilasters. Stone pilasters also flank each side of the building. The arched windows and entries of the bottom floor frame multi-light, arched windows. A centralized stairway divided the ground floor into two separate storefront areas with offices located on the second floor. The two storefronts of the ground floor each contain three bays with a centralized entry. One of the original doorways remains while the other has been replaced with a modern, aluminum glass door. The windows of the upper floor are double-hung, 4/4 framed by a segmental brick arch with stone sills. Four fireplaces, two on each floor, were located towards the rear of each exterior wall. A prominent bracketed cornice crowns the building. John Wertz, a local tinsmith, executed the ornate iron cornice. According to local newspaper accounts, "Mr. Meerscheidt deserves much credit for the taste and liberal expenditure made in securing a cornice so handsome."⁵⁷ The building was completed in October of 1884.⁵⁸

The post office occupied the east half of the first floor until 1906. The other side of the ground floor was first occupied by P.T. Carter's Jewelry Store, but the First National Bank took its place in 1892. Occupants of the upper floor included: Dunn, Meerscheidt, Robson and Rosenthal, attorneys; Mauer and Wesling, architects; G.A. Hall, cotton buyer; and Dr. Otto Ehlinger. The second floor contained a fireproof vault from the Herring Safe Company. The Hermes family acquired the building in 1893. It was sold to the First National Bank in 1986.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Research notes from the exhibition, "Main Street La Grange," compiled by Kathy Carter on deposit at the Fayette County Archives and Museum, La Grange, Texas.

⁵⁸ Axel Meerscheidt moved to San Antonio in 1887 to practice real estate where he developed Prospect Hill and government Hill. See Fayette County History Book Committee, *Fayette County, Texas: Heritage*, 305.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

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Ehlers Cotton Company (1927)
101 West Colorado

One-Part Commercial Block

Contributing
Photo # 11

This corner lot was the site of numerous businesses since the 1880s including a blacksmith shop, an automobile company (L.G. Auto Co.), and the first automobile garage in the city (City Garage and Sales Co.). By 1921, however, it was a vacant lot. The current building was constructed in 1927 and served for more than 45 years as the offices of the Ehlers Cotton Company (1927-1972). From 1974 through 1977, it was occupied by the Abstract Land Title Company. Unlike many one-part commercial buildings which typically serve a retail function, this building served as an office building.⁶⁰

Alfred Ehlers (1896-1973), a graduate of Texas A&M, served as one of the leading cotton merchants in the county. He was instrumental in forming the Old Cotton Belt Association which encouraged increased cotton production with better prices for local farmers. Involved in many civic enterprises in La Grange, he established the booster La Grange Quarterback Club, served on the City Planning Commission and the Chamber of Commerce, and contributed to both the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The local American Legion is named in his honor. Ehlers also lent a portion of his building for use by the Salvation Army.⁶¹

The small cubical mass of this modest brick and stucco building is divided into three bays with a centralized entry of two double doors with transom. Two pairs of wooden, double-hung 2/2 windows flank the doorway and are separated from the upper part of the building by a simple stringcourse. The upper part of the building includes three rectangular panels, the center of which contains a nameplate (the sign for the current business covers the original nameplate). A modest, slightly projecting coping caps the building. The Ehlers Cotton Company building looks today exactly as it did when it was constructed including the green paint on the doors, windows, and trim. A mural of foliage was recently painted on its northern side wall which in no way affects the historic integrity of the building.

⁶⁰ Research notes from the exhibition, "Main Street La Grange," compiled by Kathy Carter on deposit at the Fayette County Archives and Museum, La Grange, Texas.

⁶¹ Fayette County History Book Committee, *Fayette County, Texas: Heritage*, 104.

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Hermes Building (1906-07)
142-148 N. Washington

Two-Part Commercial Block

Contributing
Photo # 12

Founded in 1855 and originally located on the northeast corner of the square in a primitive log building, this drug store moved to several locations until the present building was completed in 1907. Established by William Hermes Sr. of Heidelberg, Germany, a graduate of the University of Heidelberg, he offered the community a wide range of services beyond drugs including subscriptions for newspapers (from New Orleans, New York and Galveston), school books, sundries, hardware, and groceries.⁶² In 1865, Dr. H.A. Eck became his partner. The yellow fever epidemic of 1867 killed Hermes' entire family and blinded Dr. Eck. Hermes fled to South America, returning in 1868. He married a second time in 1868 to Lesette Holste and had 4 children (William Jr., August, Auguste, and Louisa). Both sons attended pharmacy school, and in 1890, William Jr. took over the drug store as sole owner. In 1927, William Jr. sold one-quarter interest to his brother August and one-half interest to his son, Gilbert. The two men became equal partners in 1930 when William Jr. sold the remaining one-quarter share to his brother. At his death in 1940, August Hermes willed his interest to his nephew, Gilbert, who became the sole owner. In 1946, the store was sold to Edgar Anders.⁶³ The records of the Hermes Drug Store survive along with early pharmaceutical equipment at the San Jacinto Museum.⁶⁴ In addition, other artifacts from the drug store are housed at the Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives.

The Hermes family owned several store buildings located on the square. In 1906, under the ownership of William Hermes Jr., the store moved temporarily to the Lester Hotel while a new two-story building was under construction.⁶⁵ The Old Palace Saloon (1884) was integrated into the right side of the new building. Completed in 1907, this building is constructed of red and cream colored cast stone imitating the appearance of rusticated limestone. A series of attenuated arches define the ground floor shop windows and entries to the second floor offices (The Hermes Drug Store occupied the three arches on the left of the façade). The second floor features seven bays of segmental arched windows (double-hung, 1/1) separated by engaged pilasters but united by a continuous stringcourse. The building is crowned by a cornice and scalloped parapet with the name "Hermes" inscribed in relief. The polychromatic effect and Romanesque Revival style of the building echo that of the Courthouse across the street, demonstrating the affect of the courthouse design on buildings constructed almost two decades after its completion.

The building retains a high degree of integrity including one of its original recessed entries, transoms above the ground floor windows, and kickplates for the display windows. The two arches on the right of the window have been combined into one display window, a historic change to the building.

⁶² Esther Hall, "Hermes Drug in La Grange: A Pioneer Texas Store" 65-67.

⁶³ Ibid., 68-69.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 70.

⁶⁵ Research notes from the exhibition, "Main Street La Grange," compiled by Kathy Carter on deposit at the Fayette County Archives and Museum, La Grange, Texas.

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United States Post Office (1936-1937)
113 East Colorado

Art Moderne

Contributing
Photo # 13

Constructed at a cost of \$54,500, it was completed in February of 1937. James Farley served as Postmaster at the time of construction. Designed by the U.S. Supervising Architect, Louis A. Simon, the La Grange Post Office is typical of depression era post offices. Designed according to a standardized plan, the one-story building includes a basement and a loading dock on the rear. The front façade is composed of a tripartite entrance in addition to a multi-light window bay to each side. The entrance is composed of a centralized door flanked by multi-light windows with three ornamental panels inserted above the doors and windows. These cast stone bas-reliefs illustrate the three modern methods of transporting the mail: from left to right they depict a train, plane, and ship. The window on the east has been converted into a doorway to provide for handicapped access into the building. In addition, a ramp leading up to this doorway has been installed. The only ornament on the building consists of cast stone spandrels between windows and a cast stone molding near the cornice. The entrance to the post office is flanked by two light standards in the Moderne style.

The interior of the post office retains most of its original features including a wooden foyer. The only changes are the fluorescent light fixtures, acoustical tile ceiling, and the addition of new mailboxes in the lobby. A mural executed by Tom E. Lewis in 1939 hangs on the east wall of the lobby. Unlike many such murals which depict a regional scene or a historical event, this painting depicts horses grazing in a field and is simply entitled "Horses". The mural is now framed independently of the wall and is in bad condition. A granite marker bearing a bronze medallion, located at the corner of East Colorado and Franklin, commemorates the first U.S. rural postal route in Texas. Erected in 1936 by the State of Texas and the Fayette County Rural Letter Carriers Association, this marker is a contributing feature within the district.

La Grange first received mail service during the Republic of Texas era in 1838. By 1840, four of the 36 mail routes in Texas moved through La Grange. Swante Palm served briefly as postmaster from 1848 to 1850 as did William Hermes, who served from 1866 until 1874. During the term of Herman Heileg (April-December, 1899) the first rural mail route in Texas was implemented in the La Grange area. This route covered 23 miles and served 685 people. The post office was generally located in the business establishment of the postmaster, thus there were many locations over the years including 129 West Colorado (1884-1906) and 135 West Colorado (1906-1936). City delivery was not implemented until 1949 at which time it was necessary to establish house numbers throughout the city.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Fayette County History Book Committee, *Fayette County, Texas: Heritage*, 235-237.

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad Depot (1897)
161 LaFayette

Contributing
Photo # 14

The original passenger depot, constructed in 1887, was destroyed by a fire in 1897 which began in the city hall located in the same block at 252 N. Washington. This depot was constructed according to standardized plans utilized by the railroad. Located parallel to the tracks, the building reflects the influence of the Stick style with its decorative use of both horizontal and vertical boards, as well as a herring-bone pattern in the gable areas with a louvered window. The base of the building is composed of vertical boards with paneled areas of varying size and painted in a contrasting color. The southwestern elevation features canted walls at the gabled end and a tripartite arrangement of windows with the sign announcing the passenger's destination point. All windows are original and feature wooden, double-hung 6/6 windows arranged both singly and in groups. The gabled roof has wide overhanging eaves supported by a multitude of graceful stick brackets. The elevation facing the tracks features a projecting bay window. The rear of the depot served for the storage of luggage and retains all of its original features including the cargo doors.

The building retains much of its original furnishings and all of its interior beaded board paneling as well as its five panel doors. Interior window moldings feature a bull's eye pattern. Originally heated by two chimneys, these were late replaced with pot-bellied stoves during the historic period. The segregated configuration of the interior floor plan is still apparent.

In March of 1911, President Theodore Roosevelt spoke briefly at the depot after the City Council passed an ordinance making it illegal for a president to pass through town on a train without stopping (President Roosevelt was informed of the ordinance). In 1939, the cost of a ticket from nearby Fayetteville to Houston was \$2.55. The depot continued to serve the community until after World War II when passenger service ceased. Since that time, the building has been used by various businesses since its closure including a florist shop, art gallery and video shop. The La Grange Chamber of Commerce purchased the building in 1981 and restored the old depot including repainting it to its original colors and repairing the slate tile roof. The Chamber of Commerce moved to the Old Jail building in 1991, but continued to lease the building to area merchants.⁶⁷ In 1999, the Friends of the Depot purchased the building and Department of Transportation T-21 funds were secured to restore the building for use as a railroad museum.

⁶⁷ Research notes from the exhibition, "Main Street La Grange," compiled by Kathy Carter on deposit at the Fayette County Archives and Museum, La Grange, Texas.

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

Fayette County Courthouse (1890-91)
NR 1975

Romanesque Revival

Contributing
Photo # 6

Constructed between 1890 and 1891 by San Antonio architect James Riely Gordon, the Fayette County Courthouse is an outstanding example of the Romanesque Revival style in Texas. Martin Byrnes and Johnson, contractors, received the contract for the construction of the courthouse for \$82,750, although the final cost was \$95,646.39.⁶⁸ This three story masonry building faces east with a 100 foot clock tower rising over the main entrance which also features a bas-relief eagle with spread wings at the base of the tower. Secondary entrances are located on the other three sides of the courthouse. The side and rear elevations are similar in massing with a five-part composition of a central entrance bay flanked by two projecting gabled pavilions and recessed, crenellated end sections. Yet, Gordon subtly varied these elevations to add variety and richness while simultaneously presenting a unified design. Gordon utilized richly colored masonry in his polychromatic treatment of the facades including white limestone from Belton, blue sandstone from Muldoon, Red Pecos sandstone and pink granite from Burnet. Typical of the Romanesque style are the inclusion of a checker-board pattern within the gables, colorful colonettes supporting arches, balconies, and ornamental flourishes of griffin-like gargoyles. A hipped roof, originally slate and red tile, is now covered with composition shingles. Arranged around an open, central courtyard to provide maximum ventilation and natural lighting, the plan of the courthouse represents an innovative departure from the typical cross-corridor plans of earlier courthouses.⁶⁹ A two-story courtroom with a spectator's gallery occupied the second and third floors of the west side. The courtroom is virtually unchanged. The Fayette County Courthouse is the second of sixteen courthouse designs by renown Texas architect James Reily Gordon and represents an important early stage in his development of a cruciform plan.

This courthouse is the fourth for Fayette County. The courthouse has received very few alterations over the years. The interior courtyard was enclosed in 1949 to provide additional office space and a vault for county records. With the addition of air conditioning, the courtyard no longer served its original purpose. Several changes were made in the 1920s including the removal of the acorn-shaped ridge points (1925) which were falling from the roof and the removal of the chimneys (1927) as steam heat was provided to the building. In 1951, the Seth Thomas clock was converted to electric from its original hand-wound mechanism. In 1953, the iron deer received new antlers after it was vandalized.

⁶⁸ Williams, Marjorie, ed. and students from La Grange High School, *Fayette County: Past and Present* (La Grange: privately printed, 1976) 261-262.

⁶⁹ The original drawings for the courthouse are now housed in the Drury B. Alexander Architectural Archives at The University of Texas at Austin.

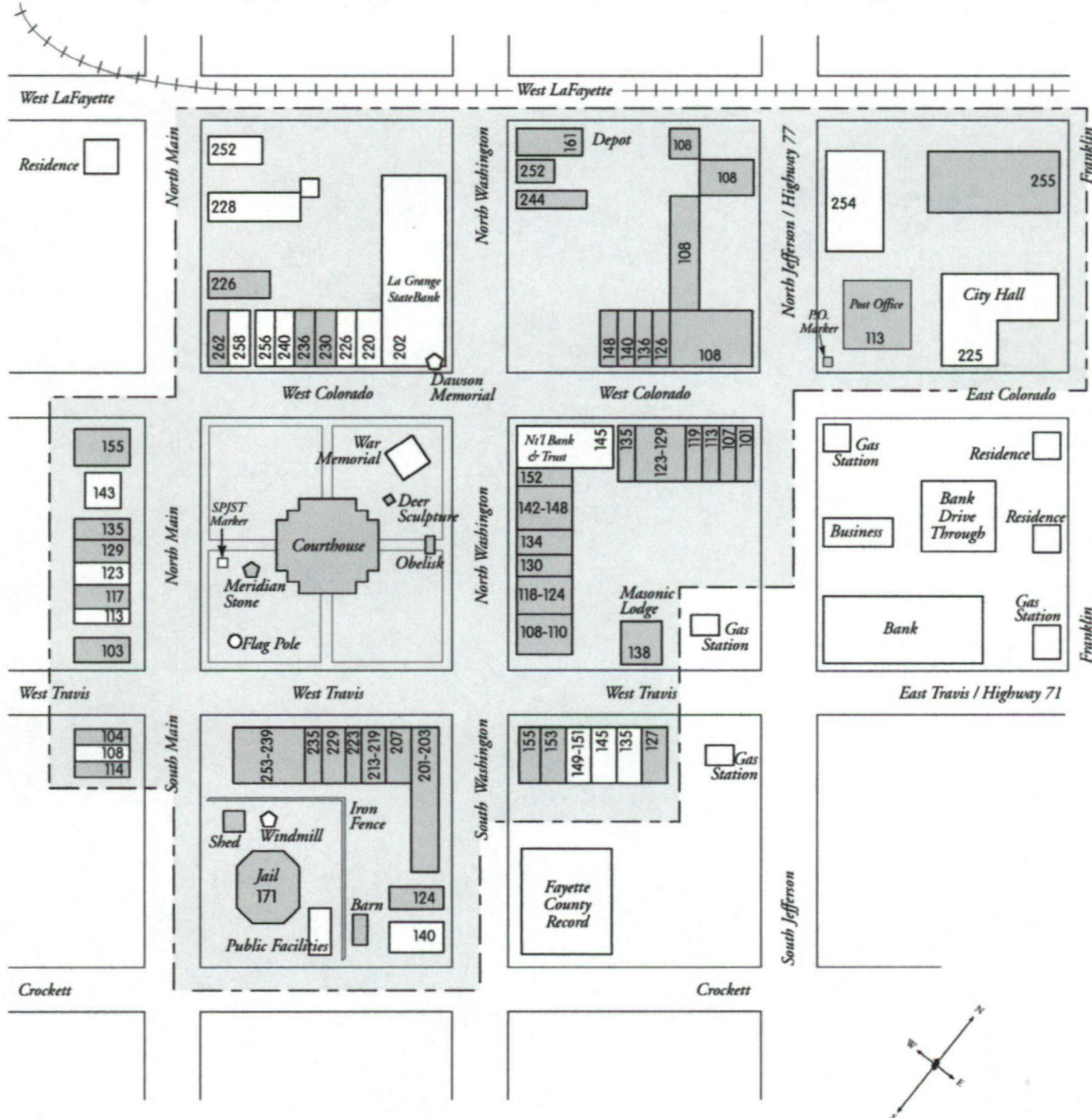
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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

Proposed Fayette County Courthouse Historic District, La Grange, Texas



Contributing Properties

Noncontributing Properties

Historic District

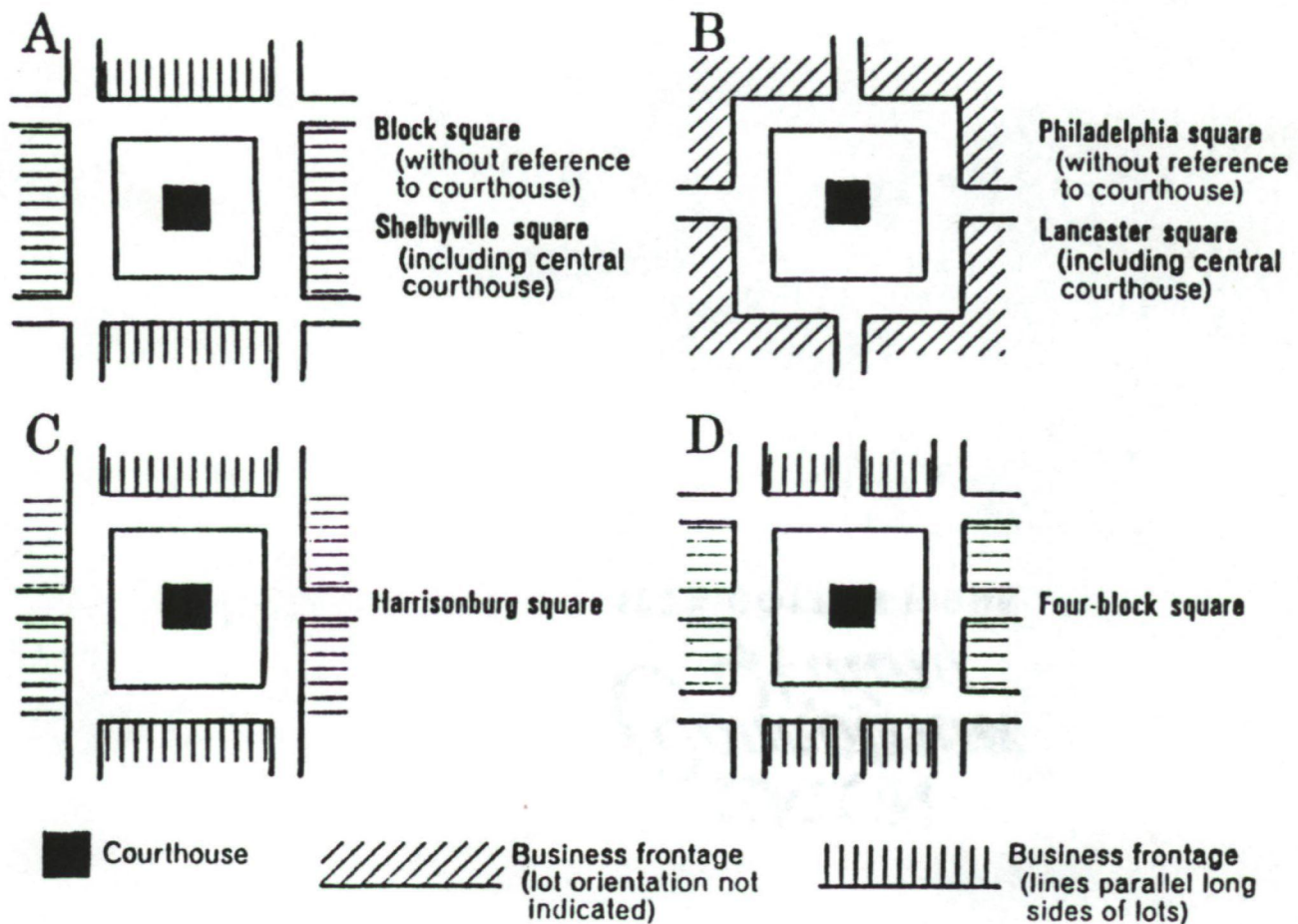
Map 1: Historic District Map
Source: Knight & Associates, Inc.

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas



Map 2: Courthouse Square typology

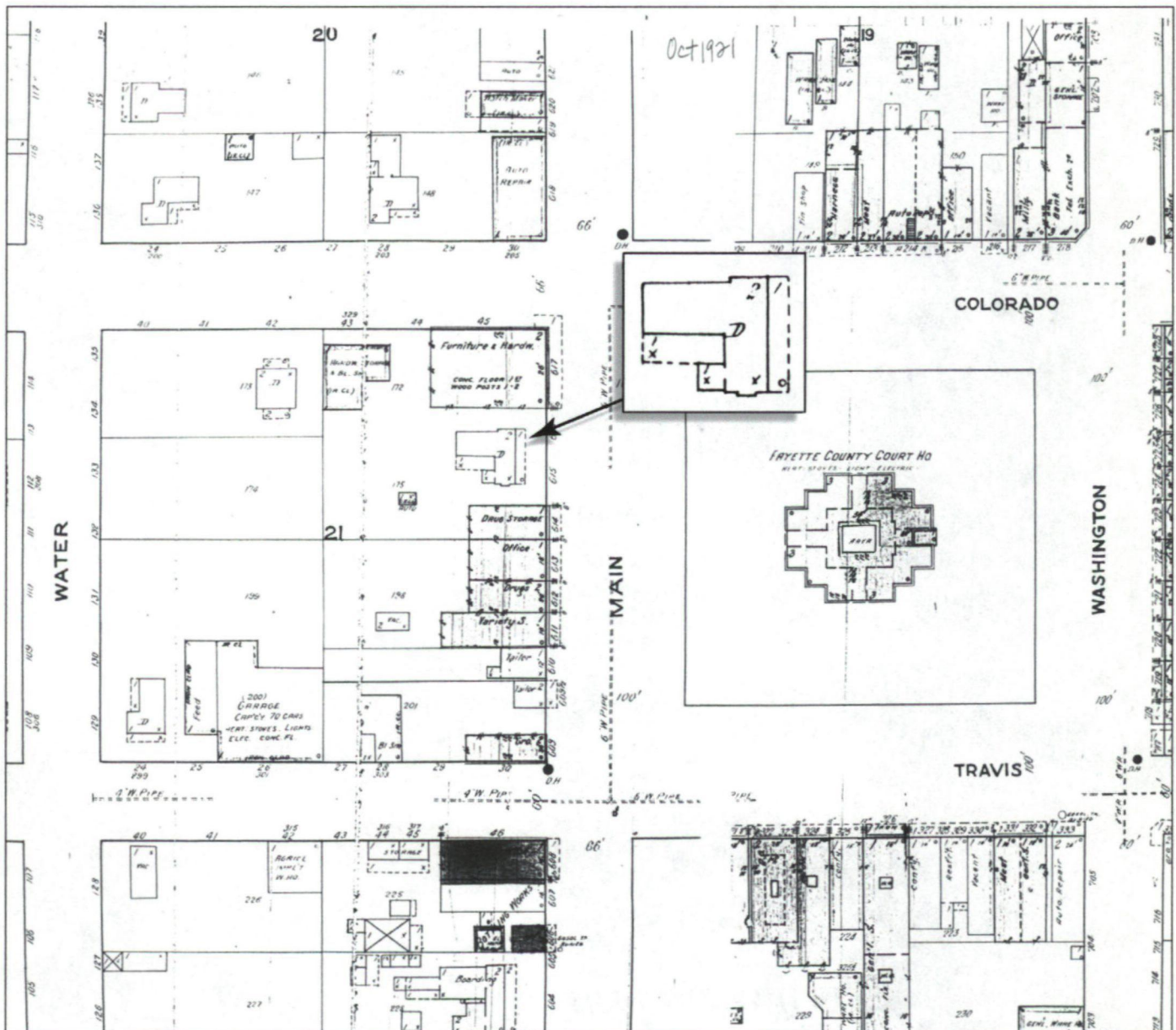
Source: Edward T. Price, "The Central Courthouse Square in the American County Seat",
The Geographical Review, January 1968

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas



Map 3: Sanborn Insurance Map (October, 1921). Modified by Knight & Associates, Inc.
Source: Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas



Figure 1: North side of Courthouse Square (c. 1865)
Source: Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives (77.35.69)

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas



Figure 2: Fayette County Jail (c. 1885)

Source: Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives (82.36.25)

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas



89.40.3

Figure 3: Fayette County Courthouse (c. 1920)
Source: Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives (89.40.3)

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas



Figure 4: Shuhmacher Building and Old Dawson Tree (c. 1920)
Source: Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives (85.36.1)

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas



Figure 5: View of Courthouse Square from the corner of Washington and Colorado Streets (1890s)
Source: Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives (94.36.1)

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

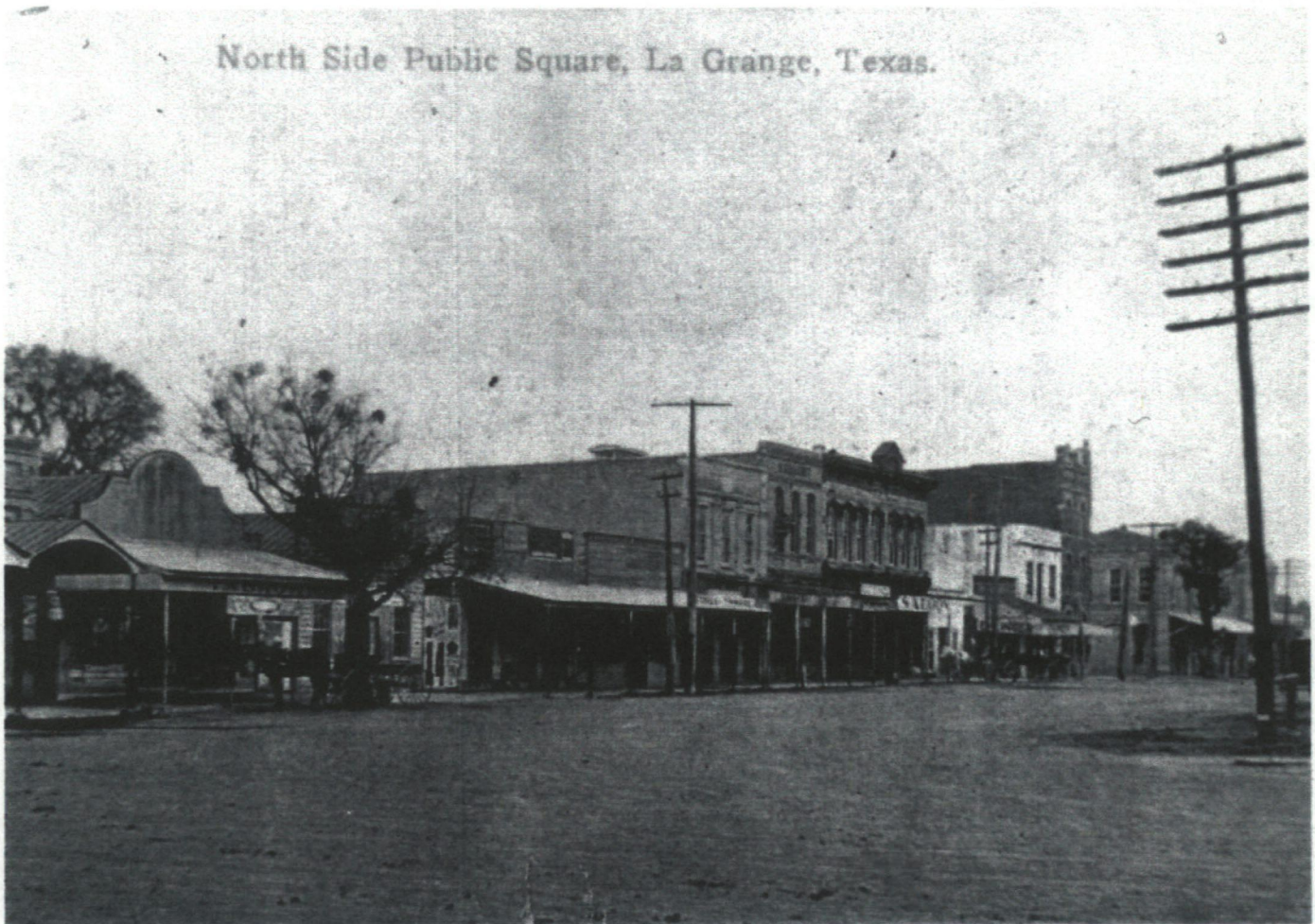


Figure 6: North side of Courthouse Square, Colorado Street (c. 1900)
Source: Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives (94.27.213)

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

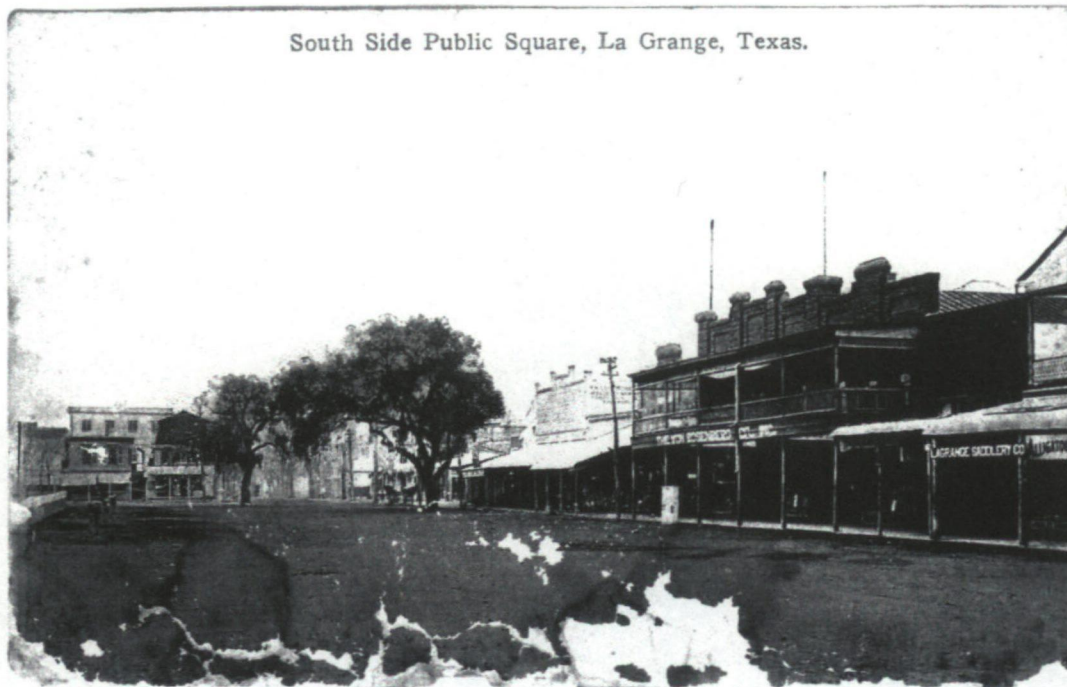


Figure 7: South side of Courthouse Square, Colorado Street (c. 1910)
Source: Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives (94.27.215)

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas



Figure 8: West side of Courthouse Square, Main Street (c. 1908)
Source: Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives (78.16.5)

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

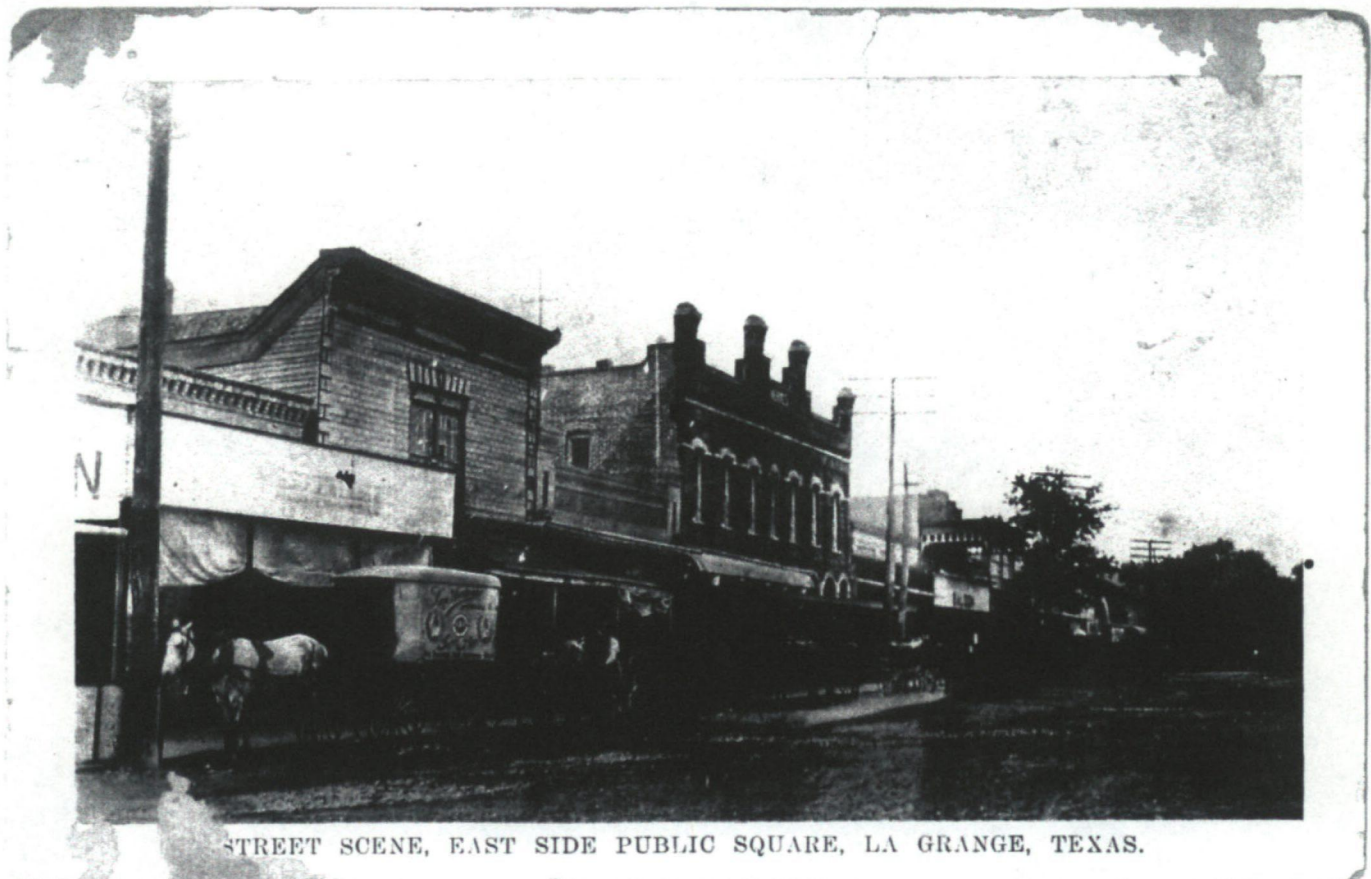


Figure 9: East side of Courthouse Square, Washington Street (c. 1910)
Source: Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives (82.36.23)

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas



Figure 10: East side of Courthouse Square along Washington Street, looking North (1906)
Source: Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives (94.27.208)

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

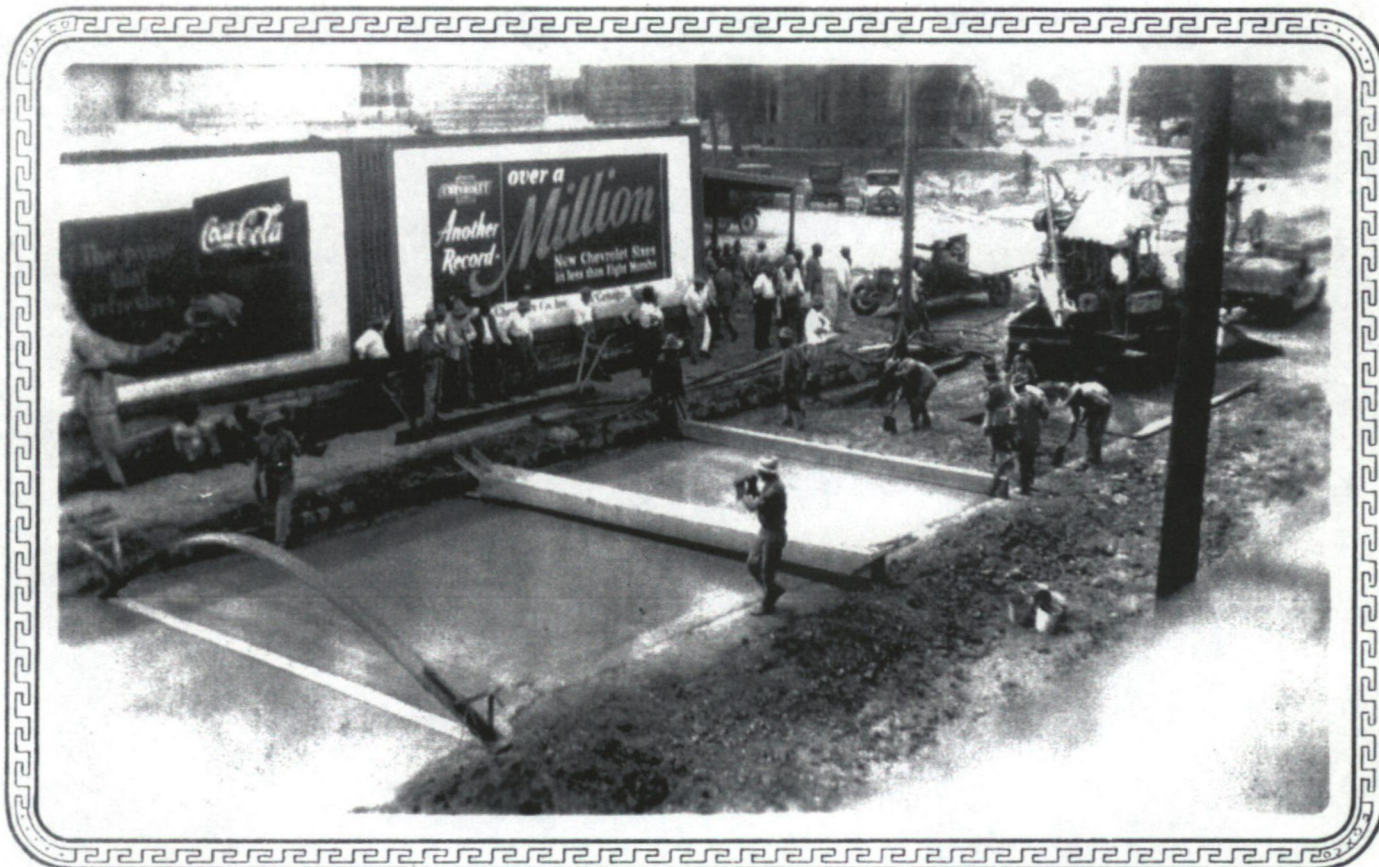


Figure 11: Laying of streets at corner of Washington and Colorado (1929)

Source: Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives (2000.31.3)

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: 24

UTM REFERENCES	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing		
1	14	704700	3310040	3	14	705160	3310080	5	14	704860	3309760
2	14	705140	3310040	4	14	705020	3309840				

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet 10-59)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (see continuation sheet 10-59)

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Lila Knight

ORGANIZATION: for the La Grange Main Street Program

DATE: January 2000

STREET & NUMBER: 138 Park South Drive

TELEPHONE: (512) 312-0326

CITY OR TOWN: Kyle

STATE: TX

ZIP CODE: 78640

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (see continuation sheet 8-40 through 8-42)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photographs 60 through 61)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: ON FILE WITH TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

STREET & NUMBER:

TELEPHONE:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

ZIP CODE:

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Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the point of the intersection of Lafayette and North Main, proceed south one block to the intersection of North Main and West Colorado. Then proceed west on West Colorado for half a block, then south through Block 21, across east Travis and to the south boundary of Lot 226, Block 34. Proceed east, following the south boundary of Lot 226, Block 34 to the center of South Main. Proceed South on South Main to the intersection of South Main and Crockett, then east on Crockett to the intersection of Crockett and South Washington. Proceed North on South Washington the southern boundary of Lot 222, Block 32. Follow the southern boundary of Lot 222, Block 32 to the eastern boundary of same lot. Proceed north, across West Travis and follow the eastern boundary of Lot 204, Block 23 to the northern boundary of same lot. Proceed east, following the northern boundary of same lot to the center of North Jefferson, then north on North Jefferson to the intersection of North Jefferson and West Colorado. Proceed east on West Colorado the center of Franklin Street, then north on Franklin Street to the intersection of Franklin Street and Lafayette. Finally, proceed west on Lafayette to the intersection of Lafayette Street and North Main. This boundary encompasses: all of Blocks 19, 18 and 17; the eastern half of Lot 21; the Courthouse square; all lots on Block 23 except 204; Lot 226, Block 34; all of Block 33; and Lot 222, Block 32.

Boundary Justification

The eastern boundary of the proposed Fayette County Courthouse District encompasses nine historic commercial properties that have maintained their integrity and are contributing to the District. As the southern boundary follows a stair-step route east and north, it includes numerous important contributing properties, especially the Old Jail Grounds, the Masonic Lodge and the Post Office. The western boundary delineates the line between the historic district, to the east, and non-historic commercial structures to the west. The northern boundary follows the old railroad tracks, encompassing to the south three full blocks of contributing properties, especially the historic Depot.

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Photographs Page 60

Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Texas

Photographer: Lila Knight

March 2000

All negatives on file at the Fayette County Archives and Museum, La Grange, Texas

PHOTO 1

View of east side of courthouse square along North Washington Street

Camera facing east

PHOTO 2

View of south side of courthouse square along West Travis Street

Camera facing south

PHOTO 3

View of west side of courthouse square along North Main Street

Camera facing west

PHOTO 4

View of north side of courthouse square along West Colorado Street

Camera facing north

PHOTO 5

View of one block east of courthouse square along West Colorado Street

Camera facing northeast

PHOTO 6

Fayette County Courthouse

Camera facing southwest

PHOTO 7

Old Fayette County Jail

Camera facing east

PHOTO 8

Masonic Building

138 West Travis

Camera facing north

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Photographs Page 61

Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
La Grange, Fayette County, Texas

PHOTO 9

Moore Grocery/Reichert Furniture Store Building
136 Colorado Street
Camera facing northwest

PHOTO 10

Post Office and Bank Building
123-129 West Colorado
Camera facing southeast

PHOTO 11

Ehlers Cotton Company
101 West Colorado
Camera facing southeast

PHOTO 12

Hermes Building
142-148 North Washington
Camera facing northeast

PHOTO 13

United States Post Office
113 East Colorado
Camera facing north

PHOTO 14

Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad Depot
161 LaFayette
Camera facing east

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Fayette County Courthouse Square Historic District
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Fayette

DATE RECEIVED: 12/13/00 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 12/27/00
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 1/12/01 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/27/01
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 00001664

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 1-16-01 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N



FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.P.

LA GRANGE, FAYETTE CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 1 of 14





FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.

LA GRANGE, FAYETTE CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 2 of 14



FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.

LA GRANGE, FAYETTE CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 3 of 14



McCormick's

McCORMICK
GOLD WORKS

RIBBONS - EMBROIDERY - DECALS
CUSTOM MADE CAPS - T-SHIRTS
REBUILT PRINTER CARTRIDGES
PUBLIC FAX - LARGE COPIES
METAL & PLASTIC ENGRAVING

D&G
BUSINESS MACHINES
OFFICE SUPPLIES

PRINTING - OFFICE SUPPLIES
USED COPIER & FAX MACHINES
NAME TAGS - EMPLOYEE PLACARDS
CUSTOM FORMS - ORDER COPIES
TEACHING SUPPLIES - PAPERWORK

D&G
BUSINESS MACHINES
OFFICE PRODUCTS

FASHION
SHOP

ENGINEERS

FASHION SHOP

FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.

LA GRANGE, FAYETTE CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 4 of 14



FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.

LA GRANGE, FAYETTE CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 5 of 14



FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE
FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.
LA GRANGE, FAYETTE CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 6 of 14



LA GRANGE
Area Chamber of Commerce
Tourist Information Center

Donated by LA GRANGE HISTORY CLUB
1976
Fayette County
Industrial Foundation

CHAMBER
OF
COMMERCE

OLD FAYETTE COUNTY JAIL

FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.

LA GRANGE, FAYETTE CO., TEXAS


PHOTOGRAPH 7 of 14



A D
1860

THE OLD
MASONIC
BUILDING

RICHARD A. SCHULTZ
ATTORNEY AT LAW
RUSSELL W. HENCKS
ATTORNEY AT LAW
COWLEY, SMITH & SMITH
ATTORNEYS AT LAW



MASONIC BUILDING

138 WEST TRAVIS

FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.

LA GRANGE, FAYETTE CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 8 of 14



2 HR
PARKING
8:00 AM
5:00 PM

MYSTERY ALASKA
NOW PLAYING

CLOSED

OPEN

MONUMENT HILL
PROP. OWNERS
ASSN

MOORE GROCERY/REICHERT FURNITURE STORE BUILDING
FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.
LA GRANGE, FAYETTE CO, TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 9 of 14



LINGERIE
&
JEWELRY

POST OFFICE AND BANK BUILDING

FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.

LA GRANGE, FAYETTE CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 10 of 14



Arrangements
by Renee
Florist

101

CLOSED

EHLERS COTTON COMPANY

FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.

LA GRANGE, FAYETTE CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 11 of 14



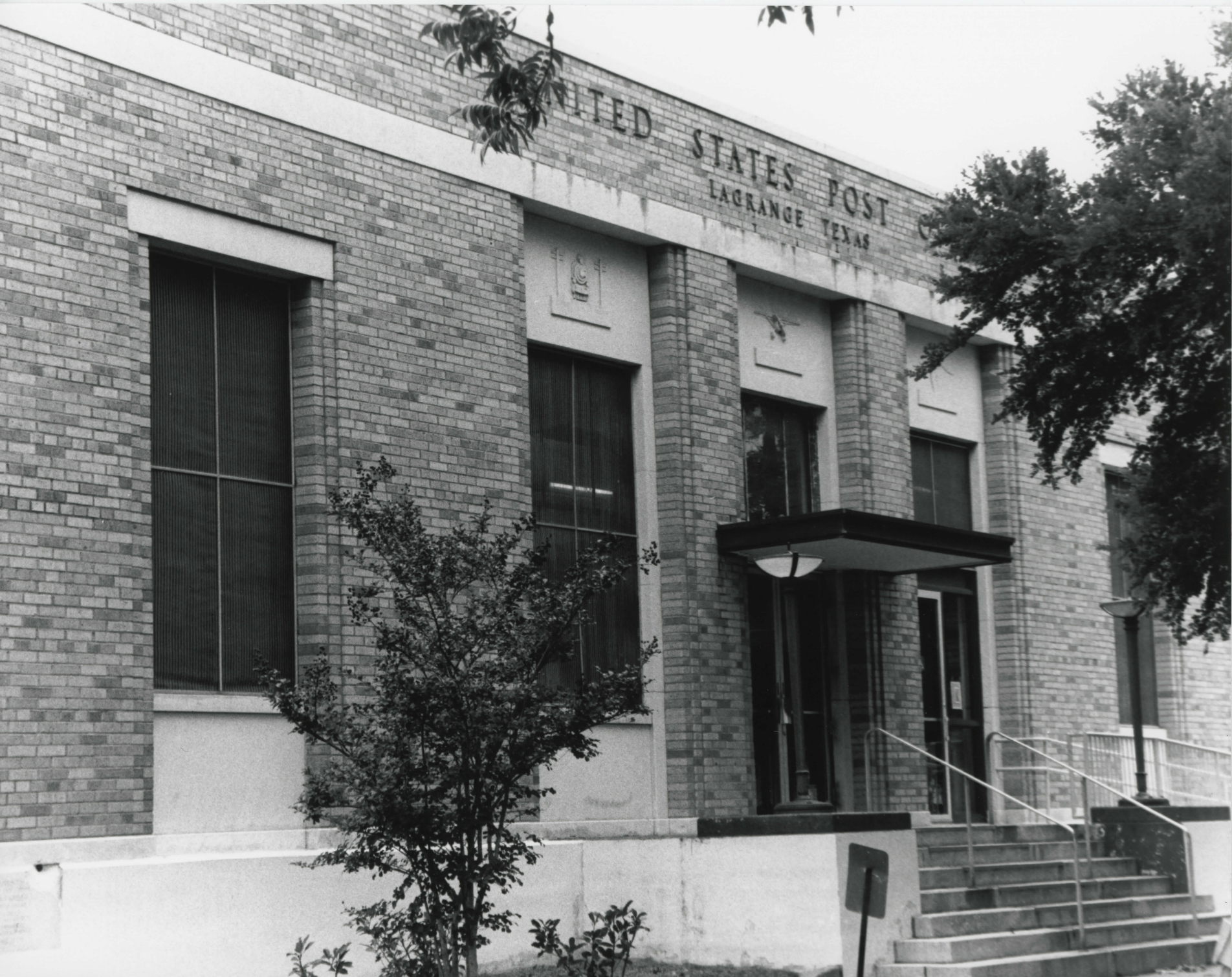


HERMES BUILDING

FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.P.

LA GRANGE, FAYETTE CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 12 of 14



UNITED STATES POST
LACLETTE TEXAS

UNITED STATES POST OFFICE

FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.

LA GRANGE, FAYETTE CO., TEXAS

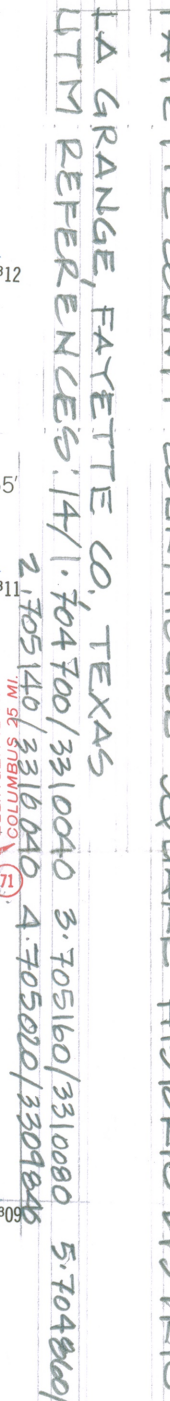
PHOTOGRAPH 13 of 14



LA GRANGE TEXAS

VIDEO ETC

MISSOURI-KANSAS-TEXAS RAILROAD DEPOT
FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE H.D.
LA GRANGE, FAYETTE CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 14 of 14



DATA 0049 17 100 SERIES 1000



**TEXAS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

GEORGE W. BUSH, GOVERNOR

JOHN L. NAU, III, CHAIRMAN

F. LAWRENCE OAKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

November 3, 2000

John S. Sorenson
Program Manager
Historic Preservation
U.S. Postal Service, Facilities
4301 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 300
Arlington, VA 22203-1861

RE: Fayette County Courthouse Historic District National Register Nomination, LaGrange, Fayette County, Texas

Dear Mr. Sorenson:

We are submitting the Fayette County Courthouse Historic District National Register Nomination (LaGrange, Fayette County, Texas) to the National Park Service and are soliciting your review and comment. The district contains 79 properties, of which 54 are considered to be contributing to the significance of the district. The district is nominated under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, and Criterion A in the areas of Commerce and Community Planning and Development.

Contributing to the district is the LaGrange U.S. Post Office (1936-37), 113 E. Colorado Street. I have enclosed all references to this property within the nomination for your review.

If you wish to comment, please send correspondence within 30 days to the Texas Historical Commission at the above referenced address, as well as a copy to Linda McClelland of the National Register Division of the National Park Service at 1849 C Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20240, FAX 202-343-1836.

If you have any questions, please contact Gregory Smith at (512) 463-6013 or greg.smith@thc.state.tx.us. Thank you for your cooperation in this review process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Smith".

Gregory W. Smith
National Register Coordinator

for F. Lawrence Oaks, SHPO

enclosures