

(Oct. 1990)
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Trinity County Courthouse Square
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 162 W. First Street, US 287 at SH 94
CITY OR TOWN: Groveton
STATE: Texas CODE: TX COUNTY: Trinity CODE: 455
NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A
VICINITY: N/A
ZIP CODE: 75845

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.)

[Handwritten Signature]

Signature of certifying official

7 Jul 2004
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): _____

[Handwritten Signature]
Signature of the Keeper
Edson W. Beall

Date of Action
9/10/04

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Public - local

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: Building

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING
	3	0 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	0	0 STRUCTURES
	0	0 OBJECTS
	3	0 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING:

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: GOVERNMENT/courthouse, correctional facility, government office

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: GOVERNMENT/courthouse, correctional facility, government office

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS / Beaux Arts;
OTHER/WPA Rustic

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION CONCRETE
WALLS BRICK, STONE
ROOF METAL
OTHER GLASS

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-8).

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Trinity County Courthouse Square
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The 1914 Trinity County Courthouse is a good example of an early 20th century Beaux Arts style courthouse in a rural Texas county. The Courthouse is the centerpiece of three county government buildings located on a rectangular public space in the center of town. The linear-planned, 19,000 square foot courthouse has a three-story central section flanked by two-story wings. Load bearing masonry walls, faced in red brick, rest on a raised concrete perimeter beam and slab. The entry portico, balustraded parapet, cast concrete masonry accents, and painted metal cornice work are distinctive features of the Beaux Arts style.

The courthouse is flanked on the west by the county jail and on the east by the Agriculture and Library Building, known locally as the Rock Building. The compact, rectangular planned, two-story jail, constructed of dressed fieldstone, evokes solidity, security and power. The Rock Building, built of local random laid fieldstone, is more residential in scale with the exception of the crenellated, arched entry portico. Both buildings were built by the Work Projects Administration (WPA) in 1939 and are in fair to good condition. The courthouse serves as the focus of the prominent site, flanked by two WPA buildings that, like the courthouse, have been in continuous use as county buildings. Together, these buildings form a place that provides an important local government function, creates a community focal point and gives a sense of local identity.

Site

The courthouse square is the focal point of the community. The square is slightly elevated, with cultivated and landscaped lawns and flowerbeds. The courthouse has an imposing presence on the square that overlooks the main street of downtown Groveton. It is located at the intersection of two major highways, U.S. 287 (West First Street) and State Highway 94 (West Second Street). American Elm trees are lined across the front and at other locations around the grounds. There are two historical markers on the front side of the site near the street parking lot between the jail and the courthouse. The 1982 marker is titled "Trinity County Seats" and the 1991 Texas Historical Marker is titled "Groveton". Two other local monuments are located on the south side of the grounds between the jail and the courthouse. One designates the 1929 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey magnetic station for the center of Trinity County. The other monument marks a time capsule buried in 1979 by the Trinity County Historical Commission to commemorate their 25th anniversary. A decorative concrete bench located at the northeast corner of the site was installed in 1982, marking a time capsule placed by the Pineywoods Heritage Society to commemorate the centennial of Groveton as the Trinity County seat. Sidewalks provide access around the perimeter of the courthouse and lead to the other two public buildings.

Trinity County Courthouse

The Trinity County Courthouse, designed by architect C. H. Page, was built in 1914. Mr. Page was ordered by the Trinity County Commissioner's Court to design a courthouse that would incorporate a previous building that had been built on the site in 1908, known as the records vault. The records vault building was designed by in 1908 by architect L. S. Green in the Beaux Arts style. The courthouse designed by C. H. Page seamlessly incorporates the 1908 records vault wing.

The cast-in-place concrete foundation, painted white, forms a plinth for the building. The white plinth, masonry accents, cornice and wood windows stand out against the red face brick. The footprint of the courthouse

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building forms a long, narrow rectangle and incorporates characteristic features of the Beaux Arts style including brick pilasters, window surrounds with decorative white cast stone detailing, roofline parapet, a wide dentilated cornice and accent band, a pedimented main entry portico with balustraded parapet, and pedimented secondary entries.

The building has a three-story central section flanked on either side with a two-story wing. The north and south elevations are fifteen bays wide and the narrower east and west elevations are only one bay wide with brick pilasters separating the bays. Each elevation of the courthouse wings and center section are similarly detailed and arranged. The south side of the building facing West First Street is the focal point of the building. Wide steps leading to each of the three front entries are flanked on either side with concrete plinths. There are three entrances on the south elevation and three entrances on the north elevation. Each doorway has massive wood doors, embellished with concentric raised circles, set beneath a transom window covered with decorative metal grilles, a white metal pediment, and flanked by brick pilasters. The main entry features a three-story portico with four Tuscan columns and pilasters and a pair of copper clad doors.

Each elevation features symmetrically placed windows. Most of the original wood sash windows are intact throughout the building. Window frames, trim and mullions are painted white. Each window has a brick surround with white cast concrete and corner accents. The windows on the first floor are single 12/2 double hung separated by brick pilasters. The second-story windows are two sets of 4/4 sash windows separated by a center mullion. The third-story windows are smaller pairs 4/4 sash windows separated by a center mullion. Air conditioning units were added to the some of the windows over the years. The 1908 wing has the original iron bars installed on the first floor windows.

The 1914 courthouse is a linear central hall plan with offices on either side of the hall. Stairs at the east and west secondary entrances provide access to the upper floors. Marble wainscoting of the first floor main entry is original to the building. The light fixtures in the main hallway appear to be historic gaslights, which have been electrified. Further research is being conducted to accurately date the electrical fixtures throughout the building. Most of the original office doors with overhead transoms are in place throughout the building. The current Trinity County Courthouse is the first to have electricity and indoor plumbing and was originally heated with steam. Individual offices now have window type heating and cooling units. Two original fireplaces are located in the first and second floor of the original 1908 wing. They have been sealed, but the original mantels and surrounds remain.

To reduce heating and cooling costs, lay-in ceilings and air conditioning were installed in the offices and courtroom in 1961.¹ The historic plaster ceilings and wood crown molding remain above these suspended ceilings throughout the building. Hallways remain as originally constructed, having never been air-conditioned. Above the lay-in ceiling in the courtroom is a treasure of historic plaster truncated arches, elaborate plaster crown molding, clerestory windows and vintage light fixtures. The light fixtures are not original to the

¹ Welch 324.

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courtroom; rather they appear to date from the 1940s. Though plans were drawn up for an elevator in the 1970s, it was never installed. With the exception of a fire escape, handicapped ramp on the north elevation, and the addition of window air conditioning units, the exterior appearance of the courthouse remains as it did upon completion in 1914.

The Jail Building

Constructed of dressed fieldstone laid in an ashlar pattern the Jail projects solidity, security and weight, but with very little detail or ornament. The jail building is located on the square to the west of the courthouse. The two-story Jail Building was built in 1939 as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Architect O. L. Hazelwood was hired by the county on February 13, 1939 to "Supervise the work generally and see that the intent of the plans and specifications are carried out... To act as Owner's agent in any conference with WPA officials concerning methods of construction or materials purchased."

A bronze plaque over the front door reads "Works Progress Administration 1938-1939." The bronze statue of a lion at the jail's entry is a familiar fixture, which locals associate with the historic stone building, although its origin remains unknown. The jail was built primarily of rough laid stone with subtle detailing, sculptured in concrete, at the entry level and between the upper and lower windows. The stone corners of the south part of the building are chamfered and there is a concrete band around the entire building at first floor window sill height. The building is three bays wide and seven bays deep. All the windows and sashes are metal and covered with the original iron security bars set in the concrete masonry. The first and second-story windows in the front volume are separated by concrete spandrels. The front door on the south elevation is a solid metal door. A solid metal door, covered with iron security bars is on the east elevation. The roof is a low-sloped, hipped metal with painted metal gutters and downspouts. There is no soffit and the gutter covers the fascia. The front elevation and volume is slightly larger than the rear elevation. The current floor plan for first floor holds the kitchen, control room, Sheriff's office, dispatch, restrooms and storage rooms. The stairway to the second floor is in the center of the floor plan. The second floor current floor plan holds an office, holding cell, and four separate holding cells. There is a separate inmate exercise area on the north elevation. The structure has one access gate to the high chain link surround and chain link-covered roof. On the west elevation is an employee and service dirt parking lot.

The Rock Building

With the exception of the crenellated, arched entry portico, the Rock Building is residential in scale and proportion. It was built in 1939 through the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The original name to identify the building was the A. and L. Building (Agriculture and Library Building). There is a bronze plaque on the front entry porch that reads, "Works Progress Administration 1935 to 1937". Ben R. Richards was hired by the county as supervising Architect of the A. and L. Building on November 10, 1936. No original plans are known to exist for this building. The Rock Building is located on the southeast corner of the courthouse square and is constructed at the street level. The fall in elevation from the courthouse to the rock building occurs just east of the courthouse and slopes down to the street level of the Rock Building site. The exterior load bearing walls are solid rough stone, with wide, smeared finished mortar joint. The stone structure is in sound condition

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although little original interior fabric remains. Built as a single story building, a second floor was later added in a portion of the attic space and dormers were installed on the south side. The building has three sections, front, middle and rear. Masonry walls are built on a perimeter foundation with a small crawl space under the floor. The roof is a composition shingle roof, gable parapets, flashing with gutters and downspouts. The three dormers that appear on the south elevation roof are sheathed in texture plywood and have aluminum windows inserted in painted wood frames. The main entry doors on the south side are glass and aluminum storefront and there is an exterior wood door on the north side. The massive, crenellated arched stone entry porch, juxtaposed against the more residential proportions of the flanking gables and small dormers creates a curious composition at the main entry on the south side of the building. Timber lintels span the openings. The roof of the entry porch is drained through stone scuppers on the front of the parapet and the soffit is painted wood. The east and west parapet walls of the front (south) section are covered in layers of roofing mastic while the top of all the other walls are covered by a roof overhang. The gables, window frames and trim of the building are painted in an antique white color. The windowsills are cast concrete and there are painted lintels above all the windows.

The windows that are placed symmetrically around the building are 6/6 wood sash windows separated by center mullions. The interior offices on the first floor are entered from a central hall that begins at the front entrance. The stairway to the second floor is located within this hallway. The second floor offices are accessed through a reception area at the stairway entrance. The second story offices are located in the front section of the building and an attic space is located over the middle and rear sections of the building. The Rock Building first floor currently holds the Groveton Public Library, offices for the District Attorney, Probation Department and Department of Human Services. The second floor holds the offices of The Game Warden and County Extension Agent. Compact, well-trimmed evergreen bushes extend across the front of the building, and sporadically around the parameter of the building.

The Trinity County Courthouse, Jail and Rock Building have undergone very little modification over the years while continuing to serve their county government function. They have provided continuity, community identity and focus for the community. Through good preservation practice and system upgrades, these buildings and this site can continue to provide that vital community function. Though the exterior brick is in good condition, the windows, doors and metal cornice are in poor condition and the electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems pose a fire hazard and should be replaced. The Courthouse has undergone only minor alterations over its life, including the addition of an accessible ramp on the rear and the addition of air conditioning and lay-in ceilings on the interior. The central corridors and stairwells retain their original finishes.

Table of resources within property:

Trinity County Courthouse	1914	BUILDING/courthouse	contributing
Trinity County Jail	1939	BUILDING/correctional facility	contributing
Rock Building (A. & L. Building)	1939	BUILDING/government office	contributing

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: GOVERNMENT; ARCHITECTURE

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1908-1954

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1908, 1914, 1939

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: 1908 clerk's office: L. S. Green, architect, W. A. Norris, contractor. 1914 courthouse: C. H. Page and Brothers, architect, Jopling & Williams, contractor. 1939 jail and office building: O. L. Hazelwood and Ben R. Richards, architects, Work Projects Administration, builders.

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-9 through 8-13).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheet 9-14).

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
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

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The Austin architectural firm of C.H. Page and Brothers designed the 1914 Trinity County Courthouse in the county seat of Groveton to answer the urgent needs of the county government. The new courthouse was ordered to incorporate the existing records storage vault, designed by L.S. Green in 1908. In 1939 the Work Projects Administration (WPA) provided funds to build a new jail and an Agriculture and Library Building (more commonly known as the Rock Building) to answer the needs of the growing community. The Courthouse, Jail and Rock Building have played a pivotal role in county government and therefore meet Criterion A in the area of Politics and Government at the local level of significance. The 1914 Trinity County Courthouse is an excellent example of an early 20th century Beaux Arts style courthouse in a rural Texas County, while the Jail and Rock Building are also significant for their modest, yet strong architectural appearance on the property. All three buildings meet Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance and retain a high degree of architectural and historical integrity.

Geographical Features of Trinity County

Trinity County is located in the midst of the East Texas Timberlands. It is thirty miles east to west and twenty-five miles north to south, covering an area of 453,608 acres or 707.2 square miles.² It is bordered on the southeast by the Trinity River, for which it was named. The Neches River forms its northeast boundary. Altitudes range from 150 to 400 feet above sea level. The major lake is Livingston Reservoir, which is located at the southeast corner of the county. The soil is rich and varies from coarse sandy uplands to rich alluvial bottomlands. Other soil types include loams and fine sand. Minerals include stone, clay, gas, volcanic ash and lignite.

The major source of revenue is timber. The dominant tree in the county is the loblolly pine. The virgin forest was cleared out in the late 1800s and early 1900s, however, due to reforestation efforts during the mid-twentieth century much of the forest resources have been replenished and the timber business in Trinity County continues to prosper. Cattle ranching and farming began to prosper early in the county's history due to the ebb and flow of the lumber business when people sought other means of income and clear-cut property became abundant for sales. The population of Trinity County in 1860 was 4,392; in 1900 it had grown to 10,976. It reached 13,705 by 1940 and remains much the same with the 2000 Census population at 13,799.

Early County Seats and Courthouses

In 1837 the Congress of the Republic of Texas established Houston County, which included all of present Trinity County. On February 11, 1850, the Texas legislature established Trinity County and designated Sumpter, a small village, as its county seat.³ The Sumpter site is located five miles east of Groveton in central Trinity County. The small wooden courthouse that had been built to serve the newly established Trinity county seat burned on November 2, 1872. Today only a cemetery and historical marker identify where the once

² Hensley, Patricia B. and Hensley, Joseph B., Eds. *Trinity County Beginnings* (Groveton, Texas: Trinity County Book Committee, 1986): 16

³ Leffler, John and Long, Christopher, *The Handbook of Texas Online: Trinity County, Texas*
<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/TT/hct9.html>

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booming town of Sumpter existed. When the early railroad systems bypassed the village of Sumpter the residents quickly moved out of the area to Trinity Station, where the Houston and Great Northern Railroad had built a station.⁴ Trinity Station, named after the Trinity River, changed to Trinity City and finally to Trinity. In 1873 Trinity was elected to become Trinity County's second county seat. It is not known if the county ever had a courthouse in Trinity, and within a year residents voted to move the county seat to Pennington. Pennington is located in northwestern Trinity County near the Houston county line. It was established in 1858 and grew as people migrated to the new county seat. A two-story courthouse and jail were built there.⁵ On February 28, 1878 the courthouse was destroyed by fire. Little is known about the temporary structure that was used after the fire. Many of the county's records were destroyed in the fire and only the court indictments and survey records were saved. Pennington had plans and promises of a railroad but it never came to fruition. In 1882 the Trinity and Sabine Pass Land and Timber Company, which was located in Groveton, Texas, offered Blocks 9 and 10 to the county if the seat of justice was moved to Groveton. They also offered to build a temporary courthouse until a new one could be built on the donated land. An election took place on October 7, 1882 and Groveton was elected to become Trinity County's fourth county seat.⁶ As promised the Trinity and Sabine Pass Land and Timber Company built a temporary two-story frame structure like the courthouse that had burned in Pennington.⁷ It was located on the corner of Sloan (now Main Street) and First Street. The Trinity and Sabine Pass Land and Railroad Company director, William S. Peters, proposed the name Grovetown because of a stand of blackjack trees that stood between the company mill and the town. Residents immediately shortened the name to Groveton.⁸ The town plat was filed on November 14, 1882.⁹ The first Commissioner's Court was held in Groveton on November 13, 1882.¹⁰ The temporary courthouse structure was used until 1884.

On May 15, 1883 the Trinity County Commissioner's Court authorized the construction of a permanent brick courthouse and jail.¹¹ Architect Eugene T. Heiner of Houston was contracted to draw plans and specifications for the courthouse and jail and Darling and Myers were the contractors.¹² T. J. Pauly and Bros. of St. Louis, Missouri were hired to build the jail.¹³ The courthouse was constructed quickly and developed structural problems, and as the county grew the space became inadequate for county records. The County Commissioners found that "...a great and pressing necessity now exists for the erection of a building suitable for the protection and preservation of said records" and in 1908, the construction of the records vault building was ordered to be built just to the east of the courthouse. The Trinity County Commissioners liked the records vault that Polk

⁴ Connell, Sidney, *The Handbook of Texas Online: Trinity, Texas*
<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/TT/hjt10.html>

⁵ Hensley 61.

⁶ Hensley.

<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/GG/hjg11.html>

⁷ *Journey to Jubilee Groveton, Texas USA*, p. 5.

⁸ Hensley 65.

⁹ Trinity County Deed Records, Book F.: 277

¹⁰ Hensley 66.

¹¹ Commissioners' Court Minutes, Book B, 1879-1885: 310

¹² Commissioners' Court Minutes, Book B, 1879-1885: 310

¹³ Commissioners' Court Minutes, Book B, 1879-1885: 310

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County, Texas had built in 1905 and so, on July 29, 1908, ordered "...that the plans, the same as for the records vault in Livingston, Polk County, Texas be adopted by this court as the plan for the erection of record vault in Groveton, Trinity County, Texas and that L. S. Green of Houston, Texas be employed as Architect to prepare plans and specifications recordingly [sic]."¹⁴ W. A Norris was chosen as contractor on July 13, 1908.¹⁵ As an exact copy of the Polk County vault building, Trinity's new vault was sited on the courthouse square in a location that would accommodate a new and yet unplanned courthouse. The vault building was completed in 1908. Today the marble dedication plaque for it hangs in the County Clerk's Office.¹⁶

In 1913 the County Commissioners hired architects C. H. Page and Brothers of Austin to design a new courthouse that would incorporate the existing vault building, in a seamless Beaux Arts style.¹⁷ The court accepted Jopling and Williams' bid for the building construction and J. L. Martin's bid for heating, plumbing and wiring.¹⁸ The final cost of the new courthouse was \$44,248.05.¹⁹ The courthouse was remodeled in 1961 for the price of \$199,552.²⁰ The most significant alterations included the reconfiguration of the courtroom and the installation of drop ceilings. It is believed that Harold E. Kaemmerling of Lufkin, Texas was the architect responsible for this work and an elevator study done in the 1970s. Unfortunately, no Commissioners' Court minutes of these projects could be located, with the exception of several payments for unspecified work made to Harold E. Kaemmerling.

C. H. Page and Brothers

C.H. Page and Brothers was an Austin-based firm that has evolved into the present firm of Page Southerland Page. Over a period of more than sixty years in architectural practice, Charles Henry Page and his brother Louis designed hundreds of churches, schools and private buildings. The Page Brothers designed Beaux Arts style courthouses in Anderson, Williamson and Nueces counties, all during to the same period as the Trinity County Courthouse. The architects went on to design in the Moderne style in the 1930s, which is demonstrated in the Hunt, Orange, and Travis county courthouses. Trinity's floor plan is much more loosely arranged than the other more formal Page and Brothers courthouses, and the overall footprint of the building is much more linear than rectangular. This linear organization may be due to an attempt to locate the courthouse as close to the center of the public square and on axis with the intersecting streets as possible. Because the 1914 courthouse was attached to the 1908 records storage structure that was located to one side, the location of the new structure on the site was limited. Given the budget and building program, the architect may have had to stretch the building footprint from the existing records storage facility toward the west to get as close as possible to the center of the public square.

¹⁴ Commissioners' Court Minutes, Book F.: 206-207

¹⁵ Commissioners' Court Minutes, Book F.: 209-214

¹⁶ Photo: Vault Building Dedication Plaque

¹⁷ Commissioners' Court Minutes, Book G.: 220

¹⁸ Commissioners' Court Minutes, Book G.: 220

¹⁹ Letter to C.H Page and Bros. From Trinity County Clerk, August 5, 1914

²⁰ Welch 324.

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The Jail and Rock Building are two of four buildings in Groveton constructed in the late 1930s as part of the Works Projects Administration (WPA). The Jail was constructed to replace the original wood jail that once stood on the site. Ben L. Richards was hired on October 12, 1936, as Architect to supervise the WPA jail construction.²¹ The Rock Building was originally a one-story building designed to serve the county as The Agriculture & Library Building. On February 13, 1939, the Commissioners' Court hired O. L. Hazelwood to be the Architect for the WPA Rock Building project.²² In recent years the attic space was opened for additional office space and dormers were added to allow in sunlight. The courthouse square buildings are still serving their intended purpose for the citizens of Trinity County and therefore are nominated under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance.

Local Significance

The public square in Groveton has served as the political, social and cultural center of activity for the town and county since 1882. Due to the abundant timber industry, Trinity County was thriving in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The courthouse stood as a proud symbol of the success of the constituents. The courthouse square was a gathering place for the seat of justice as well as many community functions and celebrations. Horse-trading took place on the front lawn of the courthouse around the turn of the century²³. The final hanging in the county took place on the west lawn of the courthouse on March 11, 1916, as a sea of people gathered to witness the execution of Mr. Jernagan.²⁴ On July 26, 1918, the Democrats of Precinct 1, a crowd of about sixty voters, held a political rally to endorse the current U. S. President, Woodrow Wilson and Texas Governor W. P. Hobby²⁵.

The citizens of Trinity County were quite patriotic. Several gatherings were assembled at the courthouse to honor servicemen from the community. A large group came to the courthouse on November 11, 1918, to celebrate Armistice Day²⁶. One of the largest celebrations occurred on November 22, 1945²⁷. A Thanksgiving parade and feast greeted World War II servicemen from overseas. Several wash pots of coffee were distributed and everyone joined to visit and enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner, complete with dressed turkey²⁸. The courthouse was a popular site for photographing local servicemen. There are several photos of citizens who served in the war from the Civil War to World War II.

During 1974, the courthouse and the jail were used as background during the filming of the ABC's award winning television movie "*Attack on Terror: The FBI Versus the Ku Klux Klan*", a fact-based account of the four-year FBI investigation that tied the KKK to the 1964 murders of three civil rights workers in Mississippi. The first telecast took place on February 20, 1975, and is based on Don Whitehead's book of the same title.

²¹ Commissioners' Court Minutes, Vol. J.: 112

²² Commissioners' Court Minutes, Vol. J.: 342

²³ Hensley 42.

²⁴ Hensley 42.

²⁵ *Journey to Jubilee Groveton, Texas USA*, p. 50.

²⁶ Hensley 107.

²⁷ Hensley 79.

²⁸ Hensley 79.

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In 2000, the county government hired the firm of Michael Gaertner and Associates to create a Master Plan for the preservation of the courthouse, jail and rock buildings and begin the application process for a grant through the Texas Historical Commission's Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. All three of the courthouse square buildings are very worthy of restoration and preservation. The Trinity County Courthouse, Jail and Rock Building continues to provide the focal point of political activities in the county.

Conclusion

The 1914 Trinity County Courthouse, 1939 County Jail and 1939 Rock Building form a dominant focus on the public square in Groveton. The buildings continue to function as the center of county government in Trinity County, as well as the setting for social activities. The three buildings of the Trinity County Courthouse Square nomination meet Criterion A, in the area of Government, by their role as the seat of county government since their construction. The buildings meet Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, with the courthouse an intact example of Beaux Arts style architecture and the two 1939 buildings representing good local examples of vernacular buildings funded through the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The buildings retain integrity of materials, workmanship, design, location, setting, association and feeling to a high degree.

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Groveton, Trinity County, Texas

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Groveton Ex-Students Association, Journey to Jubilee Groveton, Texas USA. Groveton, Texas, 1980.

Hensley, Patricia B. and Hensley, Joseph B., Eds. Trinity County Beginnings. Groveton, Texas: Trinity County Book Committee, 1986.

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Letter to C.H Page and Bros. From Trinity County Clerk, August 5, 1914.

Trinity County Commissioners' Court Minutes, Book B, 1879-1885

Trinity County Commissioners' Court Minutes, Book F.

Trinity County Commissioners' Court Minutes, Book G.

Trinity County Commissioners' Court Minutes, Vol. J.

Trinity County Deed Records, Book F.

Trinity County Courthouse Master Plan, prepared by Michael Gaertner and Associates, 2000.

Welch, June and Larry Nance. The Texas Courthouse. Dallas: G.L.A. Press, 1971.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
	15	297140	3437540

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Trinity County Courthouse Square, bounded by West First Street (US 287) on the south, North Magee Street (SH 94) on the west, West Second Street (SH 94) on the north and Divine Street on the east, in Groveton, Trinity County, Texas. Designated as public square, blocks 9 and 10, original plat of the town of Groveton, Trinity County, Texas.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: Nomination includes all property historical associated with the buildings.

11. FORM PREPARED BY (with assistance from Bob Brinkman, historian, Texas Historical Commission)

NAME/TITLE: Susanne Waller, Virginia King, Margie Wheeler

ORGANIZATION: Trinity County Historical Commission

DATE: March 19, 2004

STREET & NUMBER: P.O. Box 123

TELEPHONE: (936) 594-1662

CITY OR TOWN: Groveton

STATE: Texas

ZIP CODE: 75845

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS (see continuation sheets FIGURE-17 through FIGURE-20)

MAPS (see continuation sheets MAP-15 through MAP-16 and topographic map)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet PHOTO-21)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Trinity County, ATTN: The Hon. Mark Evans

STREET & NUMBER: 162 W. First Street

TELEPHONE: (936) 642-1746

CITY OR TOWN: Groveton

STATE: Texas

ZIP CODE: 75845

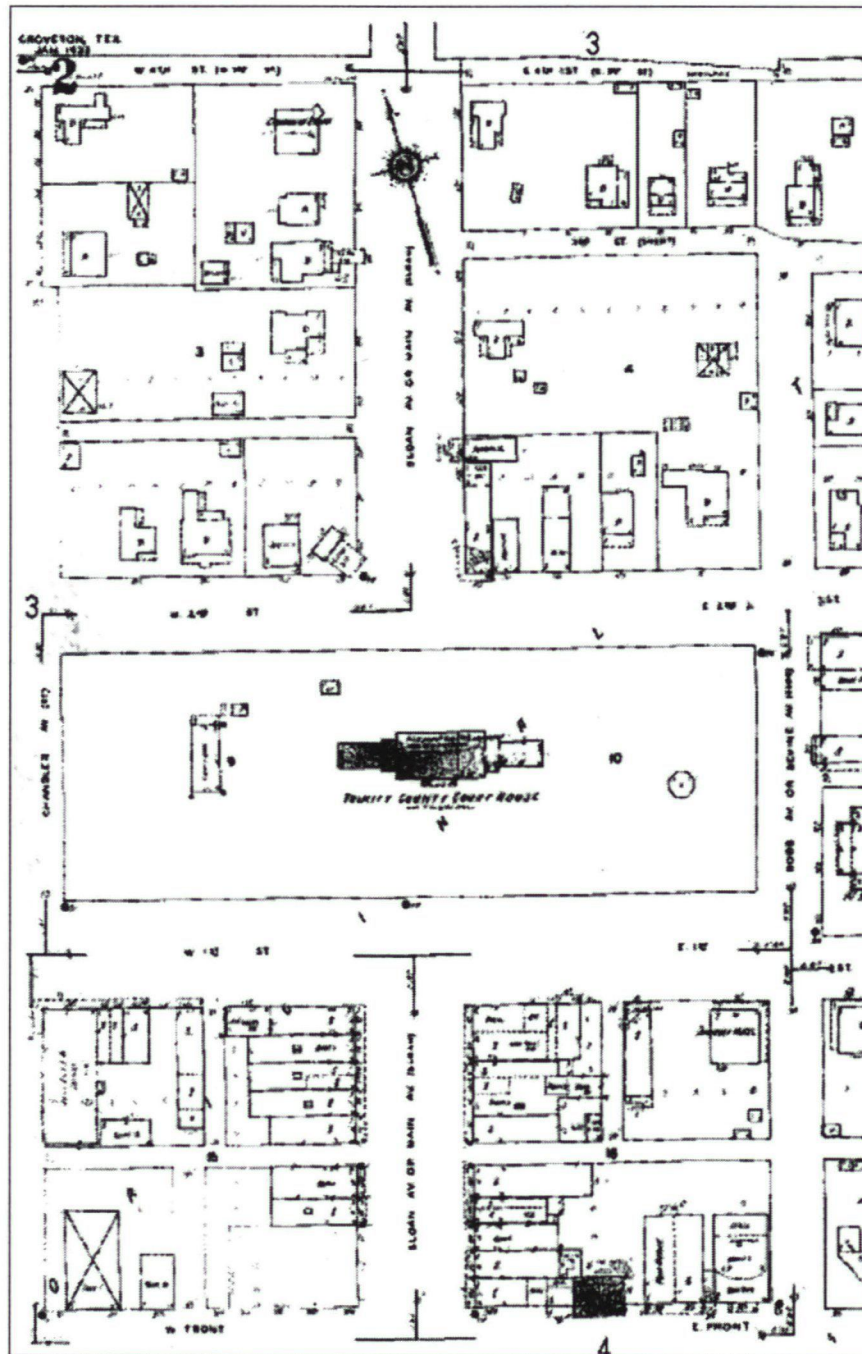
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section MAP Page 15

Trinity County Courthouse Square
Groveton, Trinity County, Texas

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Groveton, Texas, January 1933, showing Trinity County Courthouse and surrounding streets. North at top.



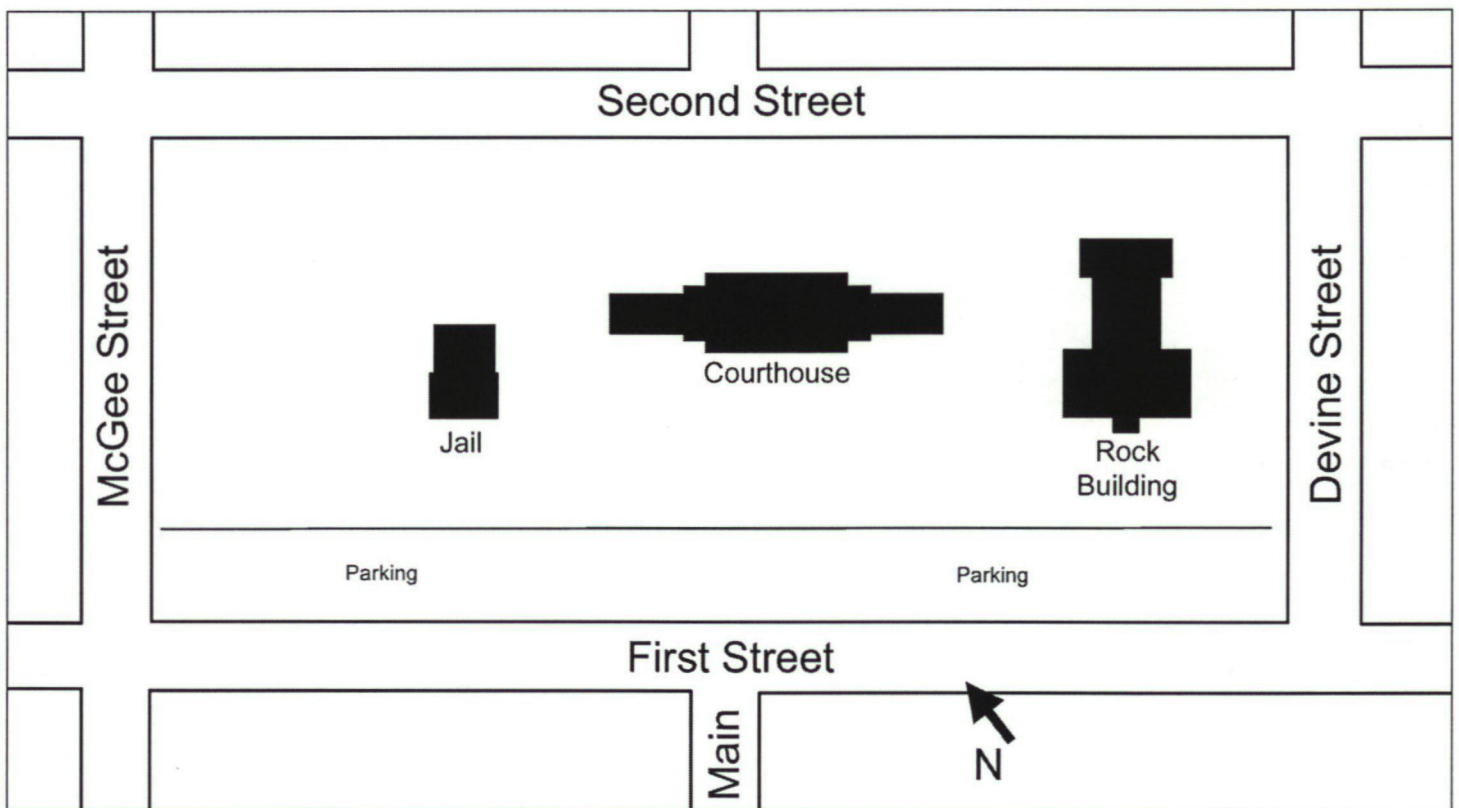
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section MAP Page 16

Trinity County Courthouse Square
Groveton, Trinity County, Texas

Site plan of Trinity County Courthouse, north at top.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section FIGURE Page 17

Trinity County Courthouse Square
Groveton, Trinity County, Texas

Figure 1. Trinity County Courthouse, 1917. Source: Trinity County Historical Commission.



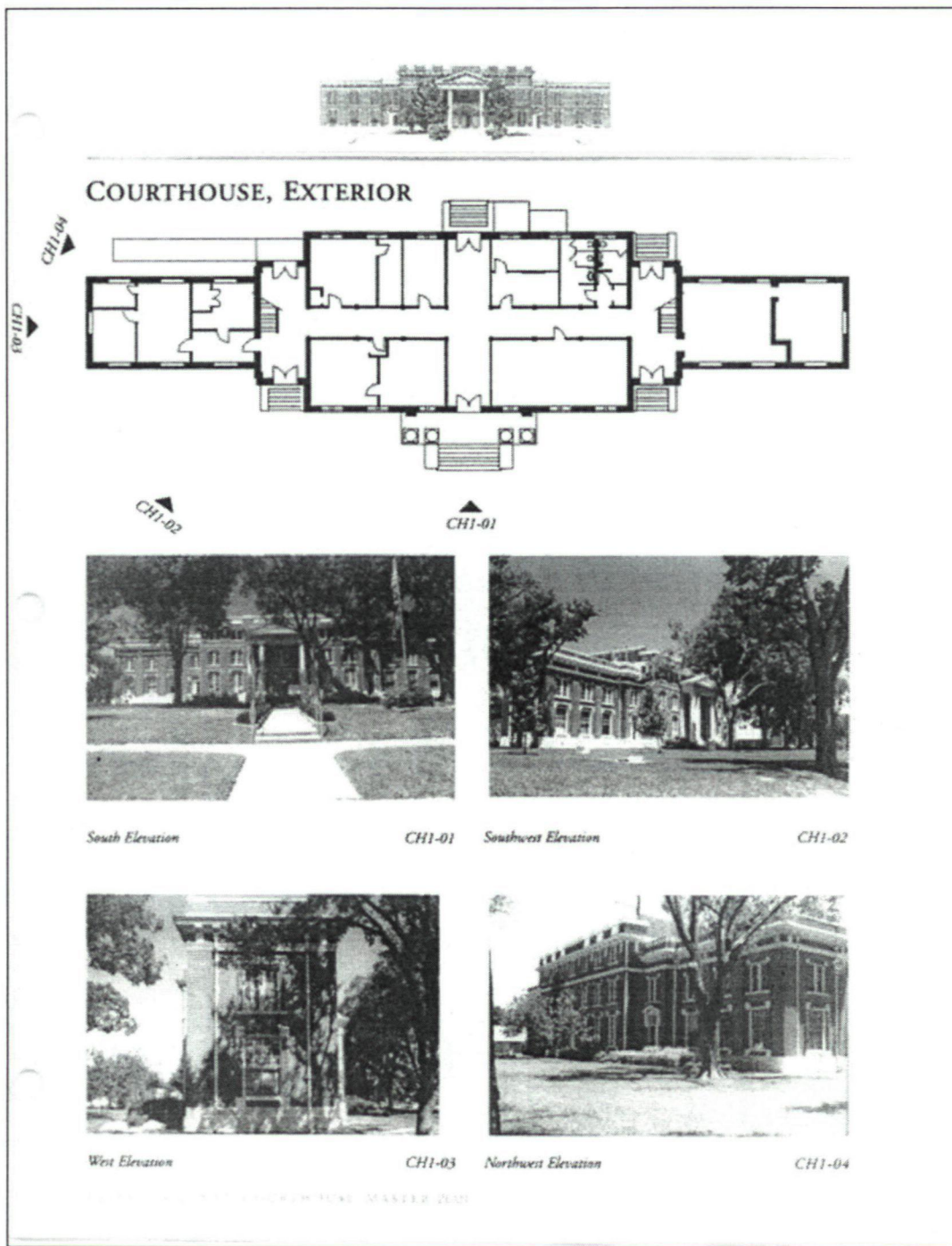
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section FIGURE Page 18

Trinity County Courthouse Square
Groveton, Trinity County, Texas

Figure 2. Floor plan and exterior views of Trinity County Courthouse.



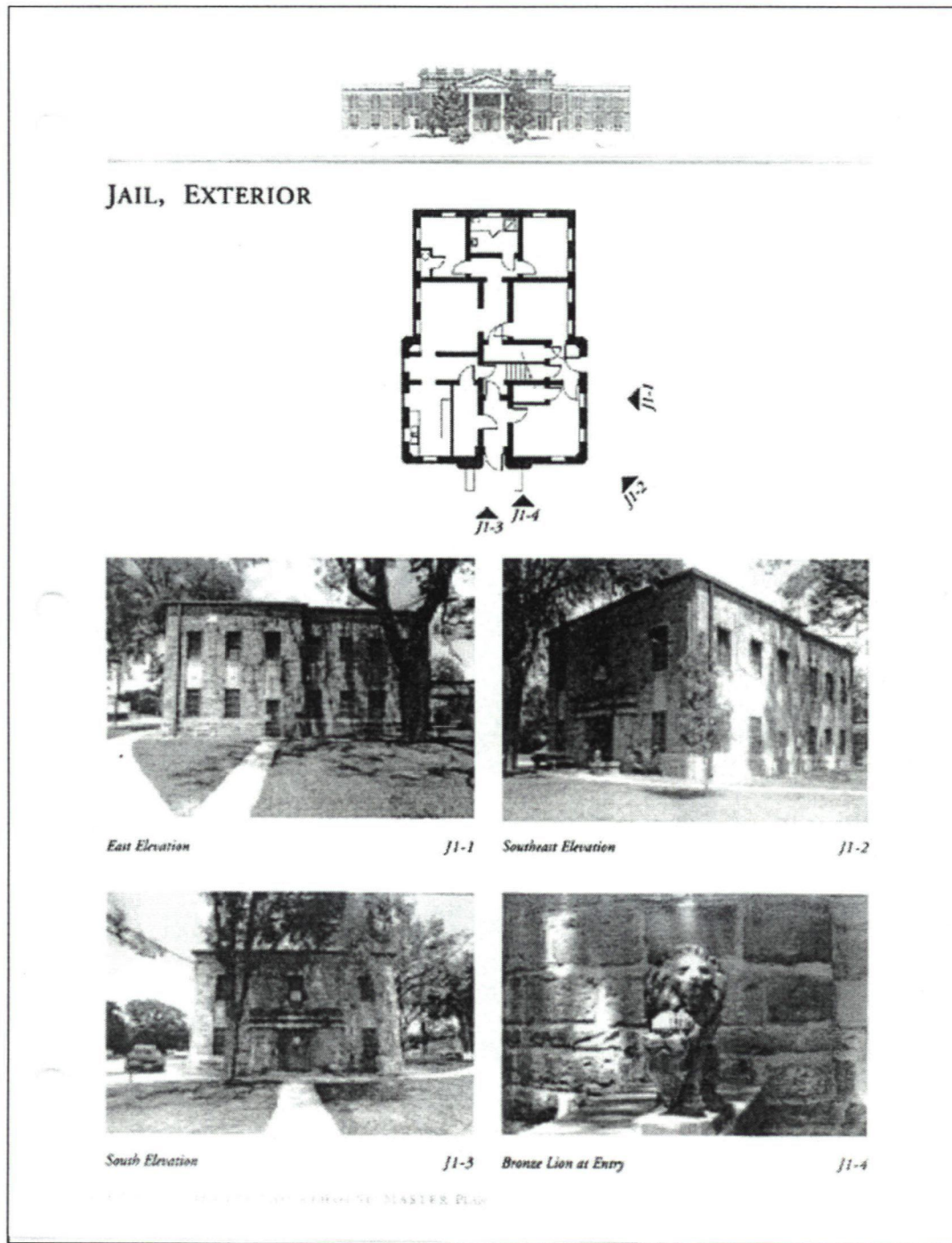
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section FIGURE Page 19

Trinity County Courthouse Square
Groveton, Trinity County, Texas

Figure 3. Floor plan and exterior views of Trinity County Jail.



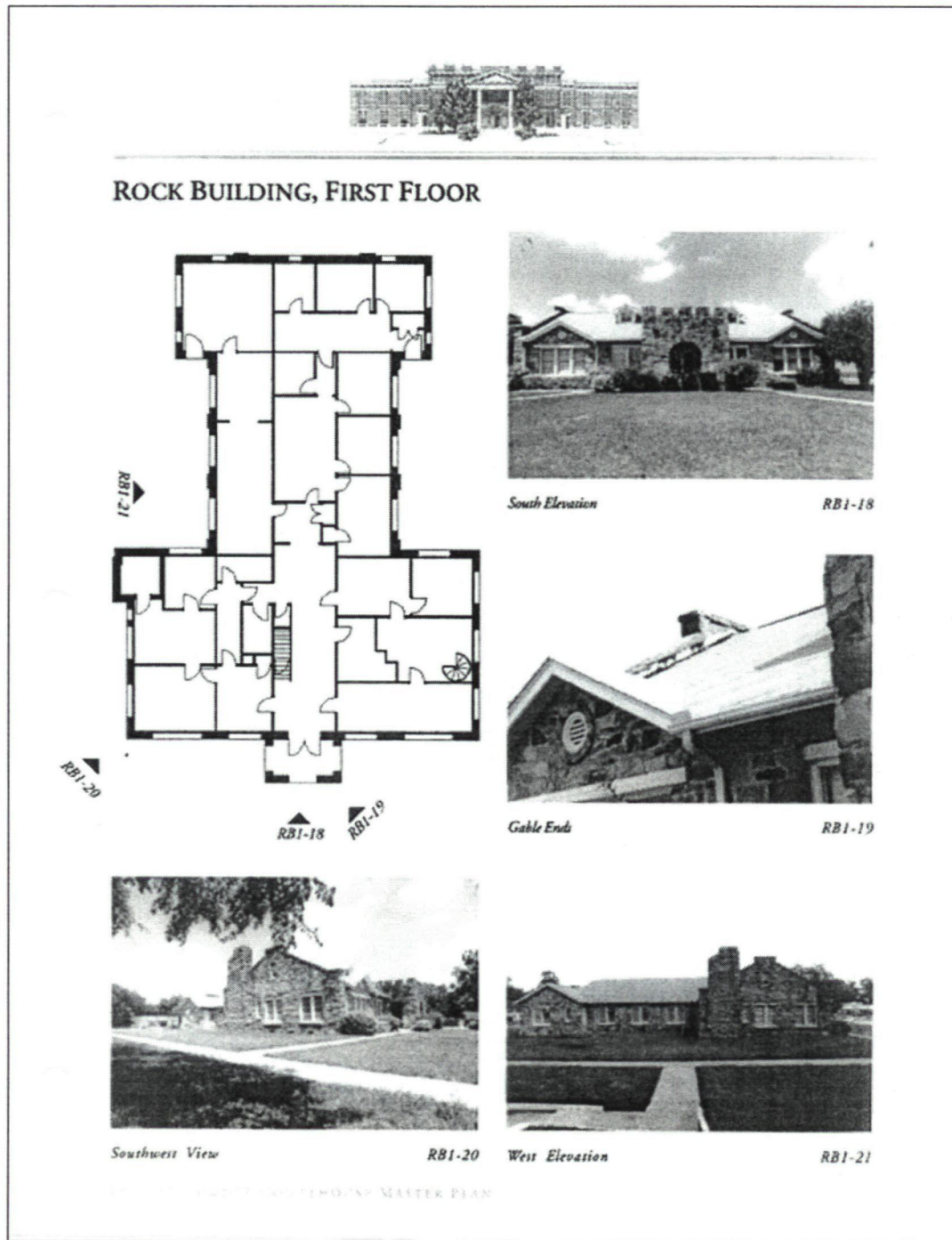
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section FIGURE Page 20

Trinity County Courthouse Square
Groveton, Trinity County, Texas

Figure 4. Floor plan and exterior views of Rock Building (A. & L. Building)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section PHOTO Page 21

Trinity County Courthouse Square
Groveton, Trinity County, Texas

PHOTOGRAPH INVENTORY

Trinity County Courthouse Square
162 West First Street, U.S. 287 at SH 94
Groveton, Trinity County, Texas
Photographed by Bob Brinkman, July 2004
Negatives on file at Texas Historical Commission

Southwest oblique, 1939 jail
Camera facing northeast
Photograph 1 of 4

South elevation, 1914 courthouse
Camera facing northeast
Photograph 2 of 4

South elevation detail, 1914 courthouse
Camera facing north
Photograph 3 of 4

Southwest oblique, 1939 Rock Building (A. & L. Building)
Camera facing northeast
Photograph 4 of 4

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Trinity County Courthouse Square

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Trinity

DATE RECEIVED: 7/27/04 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/09/04
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 04000946

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 9/10/04 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

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



TRINITY COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE
142 W. 1ST ST., US 287 AT SH. 94
GROVETON, TRINITY CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 1 of 4



TRINITY COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE
162 W. 1ST ST., U.S. 207 AT S.H. 94

GROVETON, TRINITY CO., TEXAS

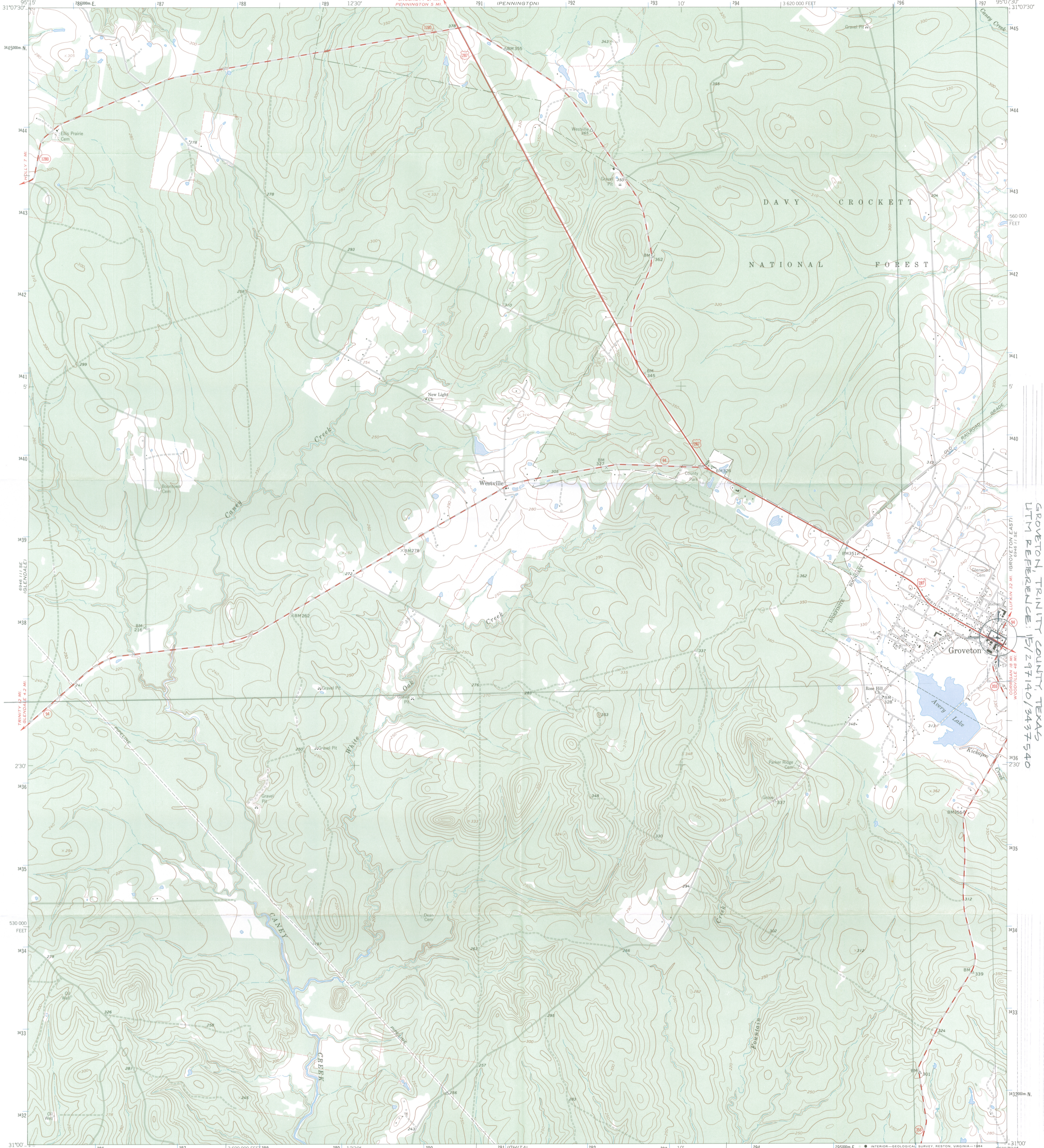
PHOTOGRAPH 2 of 4



TRINITY COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE
162 W. 1ST ST., U.S. 287 AT S.H. 94
GROVETON, TRINITY CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 3 of 4

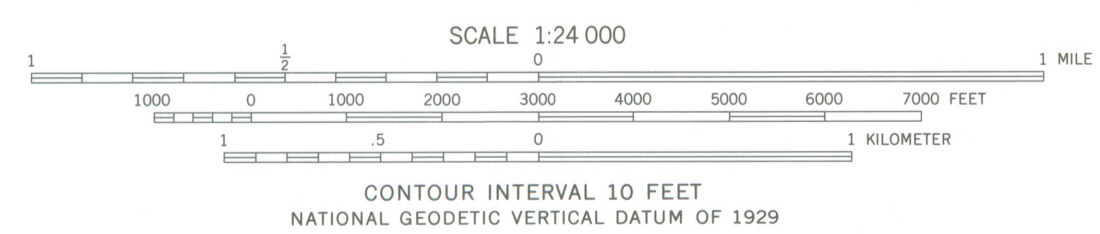
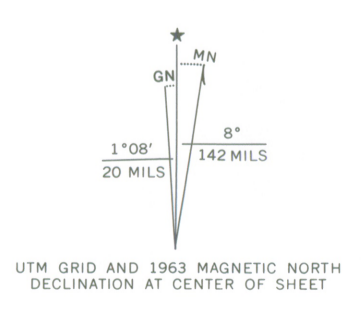


TRINITY COUNTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE
162 W. 1ST ST., U.S. 287 AT S.H. 94
GROVETON, TRINITY CO., TEXAS
PHOTOGRAPH 4 of 4



TRINITY COUNTY COURTHOUSE
162 WEST FIRST STREET
GROVETON, TRINITY COUNTY, TEXAS
UTM REFERENCE: 151297140/3437540

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1961. Field checked 1963
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American Datum
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system, central zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 16 meters south and 21 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
U.S. Route	State Route



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE LOCATION
3195-112

GROVETON WEST, TEX.
N3100-W9507.5/7.5
1963
DMA 6946 II SW-SERIES V882

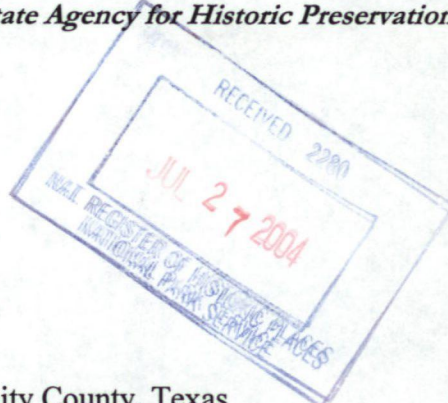
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**TEXAS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

Rick Perry • *Governor*
John L. Nau, III • *Chairman*
F. Lawrence Oaks • *Executive Director*

The State Agency for Historic Preservation



TO: Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Gregory W. Smith, National Register Coordinator
Texas Historical Commission

RE: Trinity County Courthouse Square, Groveton, Trinity County, Texas

DATE: July 20, 2004

The following materials are submitted regarding: Trinity County Courthouse Square, Groveton, Trinity County, Texas

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Original National Register of Historic Places form
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resubmitted nomination
<input type="checkbox"/>	Multiple Property nomination form
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Photographs
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	USGS map
<input type="checkbox"/>	Correspondence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:

COMMENTS:

SHPO requests substantive review

The enclosed owner objections (do) (do not) constitute a majority of property owners

Other _____