

494

(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 100-416 E. Main St., 101-108 W. Main St., 101-124 Commerce St., 101-201 N. McCarty Ave., 100-203 E. Post Office St. NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A  
CITY OR TOWN: Eagle Lake VICINITY: N/A  
STATE: Texas CODE: TX COUNTY: Colorado CODE: 089 ZIP CODE: 77434

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this (x 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 ( x meets) ( ) does not meet) the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ( ) nationally) ( ) statewide) ( x locally). ( ) See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*[Signature]*  
Signature of certifying official Date 3-5-07  
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]*  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 6-5-07  
*[Signature]*

**5. CLASSIFICATION**

**OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY:** Private, Public-local

**CATEGORY OF PROPERTY:** District

**NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:**

CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING	
35	4	<b>BUILDINGS</b>
0	0	<b>SITES</b>
0	0	<b>STRUCTURES</b>
0	0	<b>OBJECTS</b>
35	4	<b>TOTAL</b>

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

**NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING:** N/A

**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

**HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:**

DOMESTIC: hotel

COMMERCE: department store, specialty store, financial institution, restaurant

SOCIAL: meeting hall

GOVERNMENT: city hall, post office, correctional facility, fire station

INDUSTRY: telephone company facility

HEALTH CARE: medical business/office

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

**CURRENT FUNCTIONS:**

DOMESTIC: hotel

COMMERCE: financial institution, specialty store, professional

SOCIAL: meeting hall

GOVERNMENT: city hall, correctional facility, fire station, post office

TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

VACANT/NOT IN USE

WORK IN PROGRESS

**7. DESCRIPTION**

**ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:** LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Italian Renaissance  
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style, Mission;  
MODERN MOVEMENT: Post-War Modern

**MATERIALS:** FOUNDATION UNKNOWN  
WALLS BRICK  
ROOF ASPHALT  
OTHER METAL: Cast iron storefronts

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION** (see continuation sheets 7-6 through 7-14).

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Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

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## DESCRIPTION

The Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District encompasses approximately 10 blocks of historically commercial development in the city's downtown business district. Built along Main Street and around the public square, these one-part and two-part commercial block buildings have housed retail businesses since the early 1900s. A sense of visual continuity results from predominantly brick construction with enframed window walls and, occasionally, an original inset entryway. Although most of the storefronts have been updated, the district's resources largely retain their integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship, which as a whole promote the downtown's largely unaltered sense of setting, feeling and association as an early 20th century commercial area. With 35 of 39 resources classified as contributing elements, the Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District retains a high level of historic and architectural integrity.

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The Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District is located in the center of Eagle Lake, Texas, near the junction of Texas Highways 102 (Main Street) and ALT 90A, about halfway between Austin and Houston. Main Street runs from southeast to northwest and is intersected at right angles by four cross streets: McCarty Avenue, Commerce Street, Jones Avenue (formerly Eldridge Avenue), and Lake Street. The public square, at the northwest end of the district, is bordered by McCarty Avenue, Main Street, Commerce Street, and the Galveston, Harrisburg, & San Antonio (now Southern Pacific) Railroad tracks. The square is a Block Square design; that is, the square is created by four streets that intersect at its corners.<sup>1</sup> Over time, it was the location of a pond and a bandstand; since the late 1950s, it has been the site of the City Hall and Post Office.

On the other side of the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks, to the north, the district includes four buildings on Post Office Street, from McCarty Avenue to the corner of Post Office and Centre Streets. A second set of railroad tracks, once part of the San Antonio & Aransas Pass Railroad and now abandoned, ran behind the buildings on Main Street. A third set of tracks, for the Cane Belt Railroad, travels generally from north to south across the eastern end of the city, several hundred yards from the junction of the other two lines.

## BUILDINGS IN THE DISTRICT

The original late-1800s structures in the commercial district were wood-frame buildings, some of which had been houses. These were replaced with brick structures over time, and today the only wooden building in the district is the Southern Pacific Depot (now used as offices and storage for the railroad).

Building types are one-part and two-part attached commercial block structures, with retail stores or offices on the ground floor and living spaces, store rooms, meeting rooms, and professional offices on upper floors where those are present. Most storefronts have been altered and now have fully enframed window walls. A few buildings retain their original inset entryways and wooden wall framing. Cast-iron columns can be found on several storefronts. With one exception, awnings of varying materials (wood, metal, or fabric) shelter the first-floor retail space of nearly every structure.

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<sup>1</sup> Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, "About Courthouse Squares" on the Indiana Courts website, online at <http://www.in.gov/judiciary/citc/museum/virtual-tours/courthouse-squares.html>; accessed April 11, 2006.

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Most transom windows are extant, although many are covered with plywood on the interior or exterior; according to one building owner, this was done to discourage thieves from climbing through the windows at night before electronic alarm systems became available. The frames of these transom windows generally seem to be intact where they are visible. Above the transom, brickwork on both one- and two-story buildings tends to be decorative, with corbelled parapets, dentils, belt courses, arched window openings, and inset panels most frequently found. On a few buildings, these panels contain brickwork in a basketweave pattern, but most of the panels continue the masonry bond pattern found on the rest of each building's façade.

The district can be divided into three sections: the Square, East Main Street beyond Commerce Street, and Post Office Street. The majority of buildings around the square are significantly taller, wider, and more ornate — specifically, in the brickwork used to create arches and towers on parapets, as well as arches and pilasters around windows — than the predominantly one-story buildings continuing east on Main Street. Although the first brick building was erected before the turn of the century, many of these structures were built in 1903-04, with another spurt of building activity around 1911 and 1912. Continuing south on Main Street, between Commerce Street and 90A, the buildings are predominantly one-story attached buildings. The two buildings (new City Hall and Post Office) constructed on the public square and the five buildings on Post Office Street are all detached structures of varying sizes and styles.

## DETAILED BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

(All buildings contribute to the district except as noted)

### Post Office Street

At the corner of Post Office and McCarty, **The Farris Hotel** (Property #12, 201 N. McCarty Ave., 1912) is a rectangular two-story red brick structure with a covered porch that wraps around the southwest corner of the building. This location has been the site of hotels for rail travelers intermittently since the Good Hotel was constructed in 1858. The current hotel was built as The Dallas Hotel in 1912. It features three symmetrical bays in the Beaux Arts style, with an arched central second-story window over a covered entryway. This main entrance porch features a wide, flat wooden roof (painted white), supported by four square brick columns with square white capitals, and topped by a black cast-iron balustrade. (The rest of the porch roof, to the side of the hotel, is supported by wooden posts as well as metal rods tied into the brick walls.) Second-story wood-sash windows are rectangular, with nine or fifteen lights over a single pane. Windows on the first floor have been replaced with aluminum sash. The flat roof is surrounded by a corbelled brick parapet above a brick frieze decorated with evenly- and widely-spaced square-within-a-square designs. The hotel is sited very close to the street on both Post Office and McCarty, with a black wrought iron fence surrounding the property.

**Meitzen's Garage** (Property #1, 100 E. Post Office St, ca. 1935) is a one-story gasoline service station. The rectangular building, which faces Post Office Street and the town square, is constructed of concrete masonry units, with a wood-frame awning. The building contains an office (on the northwest end) and two service bays. The awning is roofed with standing-seam sheet metal and supported by a simple square wooden column, which topped with a large bracketed capital. The awning provides cover between a single-entry door and the (inoperative) gasoline pumps just beyond the awning. The building is painted white with a light-blue band just above the service bays, which continues around the southeast end of the building. A fenced area at that end contains several large tanks. The site is not landscaped, and in fact, appears to be closed much of the time. This has been the location of a gasoline station as early as 1922 (according to Sanborn Maps), although at that time the building and awning were oriented due West, toward the street corner. The original building was

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torn down in 1937, and the existing building was constructed in 1938; the current footprint/orientation appears on the 1943 Sanborn Map. The present owner's family took over management of the station in 1946 and purchased it in the 1960s from the Hayes Stephens estate.

The **Volunteer Fire Department** (Property #2, 104 E. Post Office St., 1973, **noncontributing**) is a modern steel-frame building with a dark brown brick veneer on the front and aluminum siding (painted blue) on the other elevations. It has a standing-seam metal roof. The front façade is nearly symmetrical, with three large garage bays in the center and a single entry door on either side. Bollards between the bays and doorways protect the façade from impact. This building is Non-Contributing due to its age.

**Old City Hall** (Property #3, 203 E. Post Office St., 1926) — now the Eagle Lake Police Station — was designed by Austin, Texas, architect Charles H. Page (1876-1957). The contractor was W.O. Stephenson of Floresville. This Italian Renaissance revival building is constructed of brown brick, with a red clay tile roof, in several sections consistent with the different functions served. A two-story-plus tower, on the northwest corner, includes the main entry door, framed in wood with side lights and eight vertical transom windows; an arched double window on the second floor; and large decorative tiles set into the brickwork around the cornice, just below wide eaves that are supported by open brackets. Also facing Post Office Street is a two-story section, set back slightly farther than the tower, which houses the old ambulance and firetruck bays. These three bays (two wide and one narrow) are still enclosed by wooden paneled garage doors with twelve-light windows (four per wide door). A stone lintel tops these openings as well as the double-hung window to the right of the bays. On the second floor, three double-hung windows as well as a single-sash window (over the narrow door) are located directly above the bays and windows below. This section also features a red clay tile roof and open bracketed eaves, as well as an interior brick chimney with corbelled cap on the southeast façade. The third section of the building, located behind the tower and facing Centre Street, has a two-story façade with a flat roof and undecorated parapet. Double-hung and single windows provide light into office spaces. Finally, a one-story section, built in 1929 and also facing Centre Street, houses the jail.

## The Square

The southeast side of Commerce Street, now the location of the **First National Bank** (Property #4, 101 Commerce St., 1958), was once filled with numerous brick buildings, including the former bank building. These were demolished in the late 1950s to make way for the current structure. The bank is constructed in the Modern style using a variety of materials. The front façade, which faces the square to the northwest, is tan brick with granite surrounding the two-story inset main entryway. On the south side of the building, facing East Main Street, the tan brick transitions to stucco and multicolored ceramic tile around an emergency exit door. An electronic sign, displaying the current time and temperature, is suspended from the building above the sidewalk on the corner of Commerce and Main Streets. To the northeast of the building, a drive-through service area is covered with a deep metal canopy supported by tan brick columns. Beyond that, the site includes a parking lot for bank customers.

The **Southern Pacific Depot** (Property #5, 124 Commerce St., ca. 1890) is located between the bank parking lot and the railroad track. This one-story, rectangular wood-frame building is sided in various widths of wood siding, now painted gray. It has a low-pitch roof covered in gray asphalt shingles; the northwest end facing Commerce Street appears to have been originally gabled with a hipped section added, possibly to cover a small extension to that end of the building. The hipped roof ends about one foot below the peak of the gable. The building features multiple windows and doors on all

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sides, as one might expect of a depot that originally handled both passengers and freight. It is currently used as office space for Union Pacific maintenance crews.

On the McCarty Avenue side of the square, the buildings alternate between one and two stories and feature decorative brickwork and fanciful parapets. Where the north side of this block is highly decorative, the south side is less fanciful: parapets are designed with straight lines or simple angles, rather than arches; windows are nearly square; and more elaborate corbels are replaced by simple dentils.

The **Gotlieb Hermann Building** (Property #13, 101 W. Main St., 1907) is brick with arched windows and cast-iron columns; the masonry has been covered with stucco, the front-facing windows are masked by rectangular wooden panels, and the storefronts have been updated with metal-framed window walls, although three cast-iron columns remain.

The **C. H. Brosig Building** (Property #39, 103 W. Main St., 1912) features a front façade with intact (although plywood-covered) transom windows and black Vitrolite or Carrara glass below the display windows. Some of the Vitrolite is cracked and two panels are missing entirely.

The **Hughs-Griffith Building** (Property #14, 108 W. Main St., 1912) was built by George Keith. Its tan brick façade is an exact duplicate of the Hughs Building constructed just a year earlier. This building features Italian Renaissance design elements including corbelled bands, corbelled dentil bands, and an ornate corbelled parapet with a central arch and four castellations (each at the top of a pilaster). The bases of the outer two pilasters are located directly above a single-unit belt course just below the windows on the second floor. These arched, hooded windows feature half-round lights above the typical rectangular wood sash. A rusting cast-iron beam above the transom windows provides visual separation between the first and second floors. The transom windows appear to be original and are bisected by a corrugated metal awning. The storefront has been updated with a single door and plate-glass display windows. This building housed a movie theater on the second floor and retail shops below. It has since been converted to apartments.

The **Hughs Building** (Property #6, 101 N. McCarty Ave., 1910-11), as mentioned, originally looked just like its replica, the Hughs-Griffith Building. Today, however, the resemblance ends above the transom. The Hughs storefront is virtually intact, although the transom windows have been covered and an air conditioner installed. The transom covering and cast iron beam have been painted tan to match the brick; one surviving cast-iron column is visible above the awning. The wooden awning is painted deep red to match the original double-entry door. Plate glass display windows on either side of the door extend above a paneled wood base, approximately two feet high. To the right of the storefront, a single door leads to a second floor apartment. This building was constructed with a one-story section to the rear of the main two-story structure. This originally housed the business of Eagle Lake's automobile dealer, T. J. Smith. The main building was the post office and telephone exchange.

Continuing northeast on McCarty Avenue, the **Hughs-Landa Building** (Property #7, 105 [107] N. McCarty Ave., 1903, 1911) was built in 1903 and updated in 1911, presumably with a parapet to match its neighbors. The parapet of this one-story brick building has the same type of decorative arches, castellations, corbelling, and dentil band as the Hughs Building. The parapet is asymmetrical; the left side is wider than the right. Although this was always a single building, it did originally have two separate storefronts: the left side of the building housed the general store and the right side was used for feed storage (according to the 1907 Sanborn Map). A cast-iron beam can be seen above the covered awning, and the entire front parapet is painted white with a wide brown border. Below the awning, the updated metal-framed window

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wall storefront reveals a single open space within the building with no sign of a earlier dividing wall.

The **Fitzgerald Building** (Property #8, 111 N. McCarty Ave., 1912) is another two-story tan brick building, and its façade is essentially the same as the Hughs and Hughs-Griffith Buildings with one exception: because the Fitzgerald is wider, the second-story windows are spaced farther apart. Below the cast-iron beam, the transom windows are covered (although the frames appear intact) and a single cast-iron column is visible. Below the awning, the storefront has been updated with a metal-frame window wall and central double entry door. A night deposit box is set into a solid wall on the left side of the storefront, possibly where a doorway to the second story used to be. A brown brick veneer base, about one foot high, has been added across the storefront.

The **Nathan Building** (Property #9, 115 N. McCarty Ave., 1912) is a one-story tan brick building. Above the transom, a projecting dentil band is centered horizontally and vertically on the straight, relatively plain parapet. The transom windows are covered; their opening is framed with brickwork. Below the awning, the updated storefront consists of an enframed window wall with a single-entry door.

The two-story **Masonic Lodge** (Property #10, 119–121 N. McCarty Ave., 1911) — designed by Sanguinet, Stoats, & Barnes of Houston — signals a transition on McCarty Avenue from Italian Renaissance to the Beaux Arts style. This tan brick building has a stepped and peaked parapet with the Masonic crest inset into a circle. Below that, a metal gutter has been added over a dentilled brick cornice. The second story window openings, now filled in with lighter tan bricks, are rectangular and separated by pilasters with dentilled capitals. A horizontal inset panel below the window sills provides a surface for three diamond-shaped bases to which are attached the awning support wires. The windows, horizontal panel, and transom are as a unit framed on the top and sides by columns and rows of projecting bricks, with squares of projecting bricks enclosed in each upper corner. The storefront below the awning is divided, with a single door leading upstairs to the Lodge and an inset single doorway, flanked by what appears to be aluminum-framed Formica, for the offices of the local court on the first floor.

The last building on the McCarty Avenue side of the square is the **Baring-Hughs Building** (Property #11, 123–129 N. McCarty Ave., 1913). Also designed in the Beaux Arts style, this painted brick building features a double-peaked, corbelled parapet with pilasters on the sides and center of the façade. A shallow two-course brick cornice extends across the entire face of the building, including the pilasters, which separate two bays of windows below the cornice. Each bay is topped with a corbelled dentil band. The four metal casement windows in each bay have an eight-light horizontal transom above two eight-light vertical casements. A belt course below the window sills serves as a base for the pilasters above. Several feet of brick wall below this are supported by a cast-iron beam that tops the transom windows, which appear to be intact but covered on the interior. Two cast-iron columns extend from the ground to the beam; these flank the entryway into the center storefront. All three storefronts have been updated with metal-framed window walls and a single entry door.

On East Main Street, facing the square, the buildings are rather eclectic; this has to do in part with the partial loss of two of them to fire in 1925.

On the square itself is the **Eagle Lake Municipal Building** (Property #15, 100 E. Main St., 1956-57). This structure was built in the Post-War Modern style, with a dark brown brick veneer and metal-framed windows. A breezeway connects the two halves of the building: the City Hall and the Post Office. On the southwest façade, facing East Main Street, the

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main entry to the City Hall is inset well into the building. The building is set back from the street equally on all sides, with landscaping and trees in the available green space.

The **Frazar Opera House** (Property #16, 101 E. Main St., 1896, 1926) had a second story until the building was destroyed by a fire in 1925. Pictures from the time show that the original building had two bays of three arched windows, each bay comprised of a larger center window flanked on each side by two shorter, narrower windows. A decorative cornice wrapped the entire building, and windows on the side of the structure were also arched (although much less ornate). In 1926, the Lufkin firm of Walker & Atkinson managed the construction of a replacement building of one story on the same site. The new building has two bays, each with four original nine-light transom windows. Brick pilasters on either side and at the center of the storefront have no base and only a simple brick cap; they extend from the sidewalk and project above the parapet. The top of the parapet also includes a painted brick sign over each bay; these read "J.N. FRAZAR" and "1926". The brickwork on the parapet is common bond except for a soldier course directly above the transom windows and a large band of brick laid in a basketweave pattern. Below the wooden awning, the circa-1965 storefront is a metal-framed window wall with a double entry door on the right side.

Next door, the **Dobbins-Nathan Building** (Property #17, 105-107 E. Main St., 1904) had an equally unusual façade with a two-level parapet. The center section of the parapet enclosed a relatively short second story. The side sections were half as high, topped by balustrades, pierced by a single small round window on each side. They were also asymmetrical, with the right side being more than twice as wide as the left (due to space for the stairway to the second floor). This parapet was also damaged in the 1925 fire when a wall from the Opera House toppled onto it. The Dobbins Building was rebuilt with a one-level parapet, filling in the lower side sections to achieve a straight top, which eliminated the balustrades. An additional window, which matches the original windows, was also added on the right side. The brick used to fill in these lower sections is a perfect match with the rest of the building to a point just above the flat arches over the windows; brick above that is a slightly different color. It is possible that salvaged brick was used for as much of the reconstruction as possible. One-over-one wood sash windows are completely framed with projecting brickwork; the round windows are similarly encircled. Single-brick belt courses immediately below the sills and above the arches punctuate the façade, and the original awning was placed just below the lower of these courses. The remainder of the brickwork is running bond with a modest corbelled parapet. The transom windows are exposed and appear to be original (at least to 1926). The storefront, with cast iron columns and an inset double doorway, is consistent with styles, building materials, and construction methods of the 1920s. To the right of the storefront, a single door leading to the second floor is also inset.

The **Norris Building** (Property #18, 111-117 E. Main St., 1903), constructed for Dr. F.O. Norris in 1903, was designed by local architects Meriwether & Barnes (Alfred Edward Barnes, 1868-1928) and built by the contractor George W. Keith. It is the only three-story building in the historic district. This brick building retains its original wooden storefront with inset entryways. Above the historically accurate corrugated metal awning, the hooded, segmental arch windows in the second and third floors are nearly floor-to-ceiling height. They are arranged symmetrically; each floor has a central bay of four windows flanked on either side by a bay of two windows. Four brick pilasters, on either side of the façade and separating the window bays, emphasize the building's verticality. The cornice is corbelled and topped by a parapet featuring castellations (as extensions of the pilasters).

The one-story building that was constructed in the space between the Norris and Stephens buildings is now the home of the **Creative Expressions** florist shop (Property #19, 119 E. Main St., ca. 1915). It has a simple brick parapet with a framed panel where the business name would have appeared historically. Today, the brick is painted white with green

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accents. This building shares an awning with the Stephens building to its left. It has an updated metal-framed window-wall storefront.

The **Ficklen-Frank Stephens Building** (Property #20, 123 E. Main St., 1885-86) was constructed by the Vineyard & Walker Company and acquired by Frank Stephens in 1900, a date which appears with his name on the façade. Warehouses to the rear of the original structure were connected to it in 1907, increasing the building's total length to 212 feet. An adjoining building, the **Frank Stephens Co. Building**, (Property #21, 121 E. Main St., 1909) is the same size and design. Both were occupied by the Frank Stephens Company; that name, as well as the dates 1900 and 1909, appears on the cornices of these buildings. The updated storefronts on either side are similar, with metal-framed window walls surrounding double entry doors. Above a single wooden awning, arched windows are set into panels surrounded by brick pilasters, each of which give the impression of silhouetted columns with wide bases and modest capitals. Four windows of this design appear on the older building, but only three on the newer. The original building also features a tall, slender open arch of protruding brickwork on the center of the second story façade. Crowning both buildings is an elaborate bracketed cornice with a floral-sweg molding and the proprietor's name. The cornice is painted in shades of blue, while the floral molding is painted red on the original building and white on the newer one.

### East Main beyond Commerce

The **Westmoreland Building** (Property #23, 201 E. Main St., 1923) and the **Phillips Building** (Property #22, 125 E. Main St., 1923-24) are one-story commercial buildings that originally shared an interior wall; this was removed in 1971. The Phillips building, on the right, has been stuccoed above the awning; black Vitrolite or Carrara glass around the updated metal-frame window wall below the awning is currently painted with flaking tan paint. The inset double doorway is probably in its original location. Next door, the Westmoreland building retains its unpainted brick corbelled parapet; its storefront, however, has been modified by removing the doorway and creating a wall of display windows. The two buildings share a wooden awning, and an original bank vault and safe are extant in the Phillips building.

Although the Phillips Building contains the vault and safe, its next door neighbor is locally identified as **The Eagle Lake State Bank Building** (Property #24, 205 E. Main St., 1908, **noncontributing**). This one-story building has an updated metal-frame window wall storefront. The original materials surrounding the window wall and above the awning have been covered completely with vertical metal siding. Because no traces of the original materials or design are visible, this building is noncontributing to the district.

The **Ziegler Building #1** (Property #26, 211 E. Main St., ca. 1908) and the **Ziegler Building #2** (Property #25, 207 E. Main St., 1906) now share a common façade, which presumably was created when the second building was built. According to the 1907 Sanborn Map, Ziegler #1 was extant but a detached building on the site of #2 housed a saloon. By the time the 1912 Sanborn Map was published, the current attached building (#2) had replaced the saloon and both establishments offered groceries. These one-story red brick buildings currently feature an updated, streamlined metal awning and metal-clad storefronts, possibly dating from the 1950s. The transom windows appear to be original, with metal covering parts of the wooden frames. A single door with wide sidelights on the Ziegler #1 (left) storefront takes up the same total area as the double door with smaller sidelights on the Ziegler #2 (right) storefront. Above the awning on both buildings, the red brick parapet is still somewhat covered with white paint. A cast-iron threshold still visible below the windows reads, "Artwell Iron Works". This building housed an auto-parts store from the 1940s until 1999; it is now vacant.

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**Damon Building #1** (Property #27, 215 E. Main St., 1912) is a red brick building with a corbelled parapet above five plain brick pilasters, which are distributed evenly across the façade. The original four-light wood sash transom windows are intact above the awning. Below the awning, the updated metal-frame window wall storefront features a double door in the center of the building. According to the 1907 Sanborn Map, this site originally included two tiny shops (a cobbler and a tailor) as well as a larger dry good store that wrapped around the rear of the smaller shops. By the time the 1912 Sanborn Map was completed, the cobbler's shop had been absorbed into the larger building (now a fruit retailer); the other shop was identified as "cleaning". By 1922, this had grown into a single large building with a concrete floor, an interior dividing wall, and three storefronts. Inside the building today, the extensions to the building — where exterior walls became interior walls — are obvious. It is currently used as an artist's studio and apartment.

The **Franz Building** (Property #28, 217-219 E. Main St., 1912) is a tan brick building. Its parapet features inset panels with the same basketweave design found on the Frazar building. The Franz Building was originally constructed by George Keith as two separate buildings and has two storefronts, both of which have been updated, although it appears to have been constructed as a single establishment. The smaller of the two, on the left, has a single door and houses office space. The larger has a double entry door and contains a retail store. A single cast-iron column separates the two storefronts, which have updated metal-framed window walls with modern buff-colored brick below the windows on both sides. A striped cloth awning covers both storefronts.

The last building on this side of the street to be included in the district is the **Damon Building #2** (Property #29, 221 E. Main St., 1925). This one-story dark red brick building features a Mission-style parapet with three large frosted-glass transom windows. The doorway is inset and likely original, although the door itself is modern. This is one of the buildings constructed by R.H. Reese.

Reese also built the **Hayes Stephens Building**, across the street (Property #30, 216 E. Main St., 1951). This small one-story brick building was constructed in what had been empty space next to a movie theater, which was removed when the bank was built in the 1950s. The Hayes Stephens Building's wooden door and single wood-framed window appear to be original. The brick façade is painted white; it has a plain parapet and an angled green wooden awning.

The **Harry Landa Building** (Property #31, 218-220-222 E. Main St., 1908-1912) is a one-story red brick building with a white painted front façade. The brick parapet features a corbelled dentil band above inset panels of varying widths, now painted in a contrasting green color. Above the awning, its transom windows are covered with painted plywood. While all three storefronts have been updated with display windows above brick veneer, cast iron columns remain on either side of all three doorways. Each of the three single-entry doors are flanked with wide sidelights and topped by a shallow transom window.

The next block includes the smallest building in the district, a one-room tan brick building (Property #32, **300 E. Main St.**, ca. 1925). An enframed modern window wall encompasses nearly the entire front façade. Wooden brackets have been added on either side of the window wall, possibly to support signage. One soldier course of alternating tan and clinker bricks rings the top of the parapet. On the northwest side of the building, four small rectangular windows have protruding sills, and an original door toward the rear of the building is topped with a jack arch.

Next door (Property #33, **302 E. Main St.**, ca. 1915, **noncontributing**), a red brick building has been covered with a tan

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brick veneer façade around the windows and doors and with stucco on the parapet. The doors and windows have been covered with painted plywood, and the awning is gone. A historic cast-iron drainpipe on the front façade separates two storefronts of unequal size. The building to the right of this one has been removed, damaging the parapet and portions of the adjoining wall. Because the façade of this building has been completely covered by the newer brick veneer, it is considered to be noncontributing to the district.

Continuing past the vacant lot, the Eagle Lake Preservation Alliance owns a one-story wood frame building (Property #34, **310 E. Main St.**, ca. 1905) with wood clapboard siding on the front façade and corrugated metal on the exposed side wall and the pitched roof. An unpainted wooden front façade, above a missing awning, features a shallow bracketed cornice. The wooden double doorway is flanked by two fixed plate-glass display windows.

The **Eagle Lake Grain Company Building** (Property #35, 312 E. Main St., 1924) is a two-story clay tile structure with a red brick façade. Concrete blocks has been used to infill vertical spaces on the sides of the building near the front. Deep wooden awnings cover the front entry and the loading platform on the southeast side of the building. The front façade features multi-paned transom windows and the original wooden double entry door. The brick parapet features four brick pilasters topped by a belt course, then an additional several feet of common-bond brickwork below the top of the stepped and peaked parapet (which resembles the Masonic Lodge parapet). This building was constructed by R.H. Reese.

The **Santa Fe Depot** (Property #36, 322 E. Main St., 1911) is a rectangular, one-story, solid red brick building in the Prairie style. It was constructed by the Santa Fe Railway System after much negotiation with the Eagle Lake City Council, which insisted that the railroad should build with brick since the building would be located within the city's "fire limits"; the railroad wanted to build a wood-frame depot. The current owner, Ken Stavinoha, has the original architectural drawings for the building and has conducted research into its history, which he presents on his website, <http://www.eaglelakedepot.com>. The building today features a red clay tile roof with open brackets that support wide eaves. Six-over-six wood sash windows, as well as paneled wooden doors, appear to be original. However, two wide wooden doors on each long elevation (which originally led from wooden platforms into the freight and baggage rooms) have been covered with modern sliding glass patio doors or other metal-framed glass doors of the type found on modern storefronts. These doors will be removed as the freight portion of the depot is restored to its original appearance. A wooden platform is present on the south side of the building. The Santa Fe Cross logo appears in blue and white tile on the northwest elevation, centered in the gable, with the words EAGLE LAKE below.

Once an automobile dealership and repair shop, the **Prairie Edge Museum** (Property #37, 400 E. Main St., 1926) now houses artifacts from the local area. This concrete block building is L-shaped; its front façade originally included several garage bays and an office area for the repair shop, as well as a regular storefront for the dealership. The sections of the building were delineated by the division between two Mission-style arched parapets. Today, the garage doors have been filled in and the entire shell covered with stucco. A shallow awning across the entire front façade is made of metal tiles, designed to resemble red clay. A garage door is extant on the ell to the rear of the building, which features its own Mission-style parapet.

**Eagle Market** (Property #38, 416 E. Main St., ca. 1905) is a one-story commercial building with a stucco exterior and a metal-frame front façade. Painted metal panels surround display windows below the corrugated metal awning; the transom windows have been filled in and covered with stucco. The parapet is stepped and displays a painted sign, EAGLE MARKET; an additional sign projects over the awning, perpendicular to the façade. This building is currently vacant.

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## Inventory of Properties

Approximate dates of construction are based on Sanborn Maps, local histories, and newspaper articles.

Property	Address	Date	Historic	Current	Style/Façade	Status
1	100 E. Post Office St.	1938	Commercial	Commercial	Gas Station	C
2	104 E. Post Office St.	1973	Government	Government	Modern	NC
3	203 E. Post Office St.	1926	Government	Government	Italian Renaissance	C
4	101 Commerce St.	1958	Commercial	Commercial	Modern	C
5	124 Commerce St.	ca. 1890	Commercial	Commercial	Vernacular (Depot)	C
6	101 N. McCarty Ave.	1910-11	Post office	Commercial	Italian Renaissance	C
7	105-107 N. McCarty Ave.	1903,1911	Commercial	Commercial	Italian Renaissance	C
8	111 N. McCarty Ave.	1912	Commercial	Commercial	Italian Renaissance	C
9	115 N. McCarty Ave.	1912	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	C
10	119-121 N. McCarty Ave.	1911	Commercial	Commercial	Beaux Arts	C
11	123-129 N. McCarty Ave.	1913	Commercial	Commercial	Beaux Arts	C
12	201 N. McCarty Ave.	1912	Hotel	Hotel	Beaux Arts	C
13	101 W. Main St.	1907,1925	Commercial	Vacant	Italian Renaissance	C
14	108 W. Main St.	1912	Commercial	Commercial	Italian Renaissance	C
15	100 E. Main St.	1956-57	Government	Government	Modern	C
16	101 E. Main St.	1926	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	C
17	105-107 E. Main St.	1904	Commercial	Commercial	2-Part Comm. Block	C
18	111-113-115-117 E. Main St.	1903	Commercial	Commercial	Italian Renaissance	C
19	119 E. Main St.	ca. 1915	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	C
20	121 E. Main St.	1909	Commercial	Commercial	Italian Renaissance	C
21	123 E. Main St.	1885-6	Commercial	Commercial	Italian Renaissance	C
22	125 E. Main St.	1923-24	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	NC
23	201 E. Main St.	1923	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	C
24	205 E. Main St.	1908	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	NC
25	207 E. Main St.	ca. 1908	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	C
26	211 E. Main St.	1906	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	C
27	215 E. Main St.	1912	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	C
28	217-219 E. Main St.	1912	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	C
29	221 E. Main St.	1925	Commercial	Commercial	Mission	C
30	216 E. Main St.	1951	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	C
31	218-220-222 E. Main St.	1908-12	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	C
32	300 E. Main St.	ca.1925	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	C
33	302 E. Main St.	ca. 1915	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	NC
34	310 E. Main St.	ca. 1925	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	C
35	312 E. Main St.	1924	Commercial	Commercial	2-Part Comm. Block	C
36	322 E. Main St.	1911	Commercial	Commercial	Prairie	C
37	400 E. Main St.	1926	Commercial	Commercial	Mission	C
38	416 E. Main St.	ca. 1905	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	C
39	103 W. Main St.	1912	Commercial	Commercial	1-Part Comm. Block	C

**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:** 1885-1958

**SIGNIFICANT DATES:**

**SIGNIFICANT PERSON:** N/A

**CULTURAL AFFILIATION:** N/A

**ARCHITECT/BUILDER:** Page, Charles H.; unknown

**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE** (see continuation sheets 8-15 through 8-19).

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY** (see continuation sheets 9-20 and 9-21).

**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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## Statement of Significance

The Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District is a mostly intact example of a small-town downtown business district in rural Texas. The district reflects Eagle Lake's commercial development in response to its importance as first a terminus and then a junction point for multiple railroad lines, as well as its location in the agriculturally rich coastal plains. The district's building stock represents three major periods of construction (1903–1913, 1923–1926, and 1956–1958) and is comprised primarily of one-part and two-part commercial blocks, nearly all constructed of brick. Several of the two-part block buildings are built with the symmetry and repetition typical of the Beaux Arts style, a popular design choice for commercial buildings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Most of these larger buildings also feature elements of the Italian Renaissance style, which was often used in commercial design as a reference to the "palaces" of Italian merchant princes.<sup>2</sup> Collectively, the district provides an early and intact visual representation of the important periods in the city's history and therefore forms a direct and tangible link to specific trends of the city's early 20th century growth. The district is nominated to the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of Commerce and Community Planning and Development, and under Criterion C for Architecture, all at the local level of significance

The period of significance for the district is extended to 1958 in order to incorporate post-World War II development, and include one building that exemplifies mid-century modern design: the First National Bank (1958), a large-scale building featuring a distinctive buff brick and multicolored ceramic tile facade. The period of significance represents a discrete period with the majority of the properties being more than fifty years of age. The district therefore does not have to meet Criteria Consideration G because the majority of properties in the district are over fifty years old, and the district exhibits a continuity of development and reflects continuous architectural trends from the turn of the century through the late 1950s.<sup>3</sup>

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## Historical Development of Eagle Lake

The area surrounding the lake called Eagle Lake was originally home to the Karankawa Indians.<sup>4</sup> The prominent water feature of the region, Eagle Lake, along with the nearby Colorado River, provided a source of water for irrigation that helped to stimulate settlement and agriculture in the area. The majority of Texas' colonists in the early 1800s settled along the Gulf Coast and inland rivers, the waters of which provided not only sustenance for those who lived near them but also a means of transporting goods and supplies to settlements.<sup>5</sup>

In 1821, scouts for Stephen F. Austin, sent to determine the suitability of the area for colonization, camped on the lakeshore. Claims on the land along the Colorado River were first granted in 1824, and settlers began to move into the area between 1828 and 1845.<sup>6</sup> The community that grew up around the lake included the Gamaliel Good family home, which became a stop on the stagecoach line from Matagorda to San Felipe and, as such, was visited by many new settlers traveling west across Texas.

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to Commercial Architecture* (Washington, DC: National Trust for Historic Preservation), 1987, 31.

<sup>3</sup> National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: How To Apply the National Register Criteria For Evaluation*, 43.

<sup>4</sup> Eagle Lake Historical Committee, *A History of Eagle Lake* (Austin: Eakin Press), 1987, 1.

<sup>5</sup> S.G. Reed, *A History of the Texas Railroads* (New York: Arno Press), 1941, 47.

<sup>6</sup> *A History of Eagle Lake*, 3-5.

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The Goods purchased 2300 acres of land adjoining the lake in 1856; a half-interest in 600 of those acres were sold to DeWitt Clinton Harris of the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos, and Colorado Railway. The town of Eagle Lake was originally platted as a station on that railroad, and the town was incorporated in 1888. By then, it was reported to have approximately 20 businesses, as well as four churches, three schools, several hotels, and a newspaper (*The Canoe*).<sup>7</sup>

The city's rapid development was made possible by the three railroad lines that intersected just east of the historic district. The first railroad to reach Eagle Lake – the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos, and Colorado – moved passengers and freight between Harrisburg, a town located on Galveston Bay near present-day Houston, and Columbus. Eagle Lake was one of only four stops along the route (the others being Stafford and Richmond to the east, and Alleyton to the west).<sup>8</sup> As the railroad business grew, smaller rail lines were acquired by larger systems, and as a result, the same tracks were known by a series of railway company names (and, therefore, may be labeled differently on maps over time). For example, the B.B.B. & C was foreclosed in 1867 and, under new ownership, became the Galveston, Harrisburg & San Antonio Railway with the goal of extending the line from Columbus to San Antonio. In 1905, it became one of 40 independent railroad lines to be purchased by the Southern Pacific System, although it continued to operate as the G.H. & S.A. and is so designated on many Eagle Lake maps.<sup>9</sup>

The San Antonio & Aransas Pass Railroad, built between 1884 and 1888, ran through Eagle Lake, connecting San Antonio, Corpus Christi, and Houston, as well as many other central Texas communities. The track and its depot were located at the rear of the commercial buildings that faced Main Street. Because of its rapid expansion, financial difficulties forced the S.A. & A.P. into receivership in 1890. It was purchased by the Southern Pacific System in 1892, but Southern Pacific was forced to sell its stock by the Railroad Commission, which prohibited a single entity from owning parallel and competing rail lines. Those restrictions were lifted in 1925 by the Interstate Commerce Commission, and the S.A. & A.P. was again purchased by Southern Pacific and leased to the G.H. & S.A. In 1934, Southern Pacific consolidated several of the companies under its control, including the G.H. & S.A., into the Texas & New Orleans Railroad Company.<sup>10</sup> The "SAP", as it was known, offered "double daily service" to Houston from Eagle Lake in 1903 and was one of many railroads that employed "immigration agents" to bring settlers from other parts of the United States to the area.

J.T. Westmoreland, an Eagle Lake land and real estate agent, served in this capacity for the Southern Pacific Association, the San Antonio & Aransas Pass Land and Immigration Department, and the Frisco System Land and Immigration Association. As an immigration agent for the railroads, Westmoreland advertised Texas agricultural lands for sale, promoted the community of Eagle Lake, and worked with other "immigration and colonization" agents to facilitate real estate transactions in the area. Westmoreland appears to have been a major force in the expansion of the community, based on the wide variety of advertisements and business correspondence that have been collected in Eagle Lake's community archives.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 5-10.

<sup>8</sup> *A History of the Texas Railroads*, 30-38.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 190.

<sup>10</sup> *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "SAN ANTONIO AND ARANSAS PASS RAILWAY," <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/SS/eqs6.html> (accessed March 16, 2006).

<sup>11</sup> J.T. Westmoreland Collection, Eula and David Wintermann Library, Eagle Lake, Texas.

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Westmoreland was not the only local resident whose business endeavors benefited the city's development. Rice cultivation was introduced in Eagle Lake by William Dunovant in 1896; he also raised sugarcane and used the lake as a source of irrigation water for both crops.<sup>12</sup> To facilitate the shipping of his crops to market, Dunovant and William T. Eldridge (a major sugar producer), along with other associates, bought a spur of railroad track from the Galveston, Harrisburg & San Antonio Railroad and added track to connect their farms to the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad at Sealy, to the north, and the town of Bay City to the south. The track was further extended to Matagorda in 1903. This enterprise, the Cane Belt Railway, played a major role in the agricultural development of the area by enabling connections beyond the state of Texas. It was sold to the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railway in 1903 and leased to the Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe (part of the Santa Fe System) in 1905.<sup>13</sup> The railroads that had brought Dunovant and Eldridge together were ultimately the setting for a tragic end to their partnership. Eldridge murdered Dunovant on an S.A. & A.P. train in 1902, apparently over differences in the management of the Cane Belt Railway. Dunovant's brother-in-law made an unsuccessful attempt on Eldridge's life in retaliation, and Eldridge shot and killed him on an S.A. & A.P. train as well. Eldridge was acquitted in 1908.<sup>14</sup> He continued to be an important player in the Texas railroad business and the sugar industry; he bought, improved, and sold seven other small railroads and was responsible for building Sugar Land, a 435-home company town for the Imperial Sugar Company near Houston, prior to his death in 1932.<sup>15</sup>

In the early 1900s, the lake was a popular destination for both hunting and recreation, and "excursion trains" full of passengers from Houston visited Eagle Lake on the weekends. Likewise, Eagle Lake residents traveled to destinations such as Galveston and Houston during daytrips promoted by the railroads.<sup>16</sup> This recreational tourist traffic, in addition to the employment opportunities at the sugar and rice mills and the business brought to town by the railroads, spurred a tremendous growth in both the city's economy and population for 40 years. The 1880 census was the first to identify residents of Colorado County by the towns in which they lived. Four hundred and six people were recorded as residing in the town of Eagle Lake that year, a number that grew to 1107 by 1900 (an increase of 69%). The population continued to grow rapidly for the next ten years, advancing to 1719 by 1910 (a 35% increase). By 1920 the growth rate had cooled to around 15%, which continued through the 1930 census<sup>17</sup>.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the rate of passenger train travel declined dramatically due to the increasing availability of automobiles. The peak year for passenger travel on Texas railroads was 1920, with nearly 31 million travelers over the rails. By 1937, that number had declined to just over 4.5 million.<sup>18</sup> Eagle Lake certainly felt the economic effects of this change, and only a few buildings in the historic district were constructed after 1930.

Eagle Lake's loss of status as a popular railroad destination may have been eased somewhat by its inclusion as a stop on the Old Spanish Trail (OST) highway. One of several transcontinental highway for automobile tourists, the OST

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<sup>12</sup> *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "EAGLE LAKE, TX," <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/EE/hge1.html> (accessed February 14, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "CANE BELT RAILROAD," <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/CC/eqc2.html> (accessed March 16, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> *History of Eagle Lake*, 104-108.

<sup>15</sup> *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. "ELDRIDGE, WILLIAM THOMAS," <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/EE/fel33.html> (accessed April 23, 2006).

<sup>16</sup> *Eagle Lake Headlight*, advertisement, May 1, 1903.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Census, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930. Data indicates a population of 2017 in 1920 and 2343 in 1930.

<sup>18</sup> *A History of Texas Railroads*, 664.

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connected two north-south tourist roads, the Dixie Highway (which ran from Michigan to Florida) and the Jackson Highway (from Chicago to New Orleans), along its route from St. Augustine, Florida, to San Diego California. From Houston, the OST followed the road today known as ALT US 90; at Eagle Lake, the OST changed course to follow Farm Road 102 to US 90 at Columbus. The route, as well as historical information about Spanish exploration and colonization in Texas, was published in travel guides between the mid-1920s and 1931.<sup>19</sup> For example, Eagle Lake was on the "Richmond to Columbus" route in the Automobile Red Book of 1924, the "Foremost Road Guide of the the Southwest". The highway was promoted until the 1960s, when Interstates 8 and 10 were completed, bypassing many sections of old U.S. 90 and the towns through which they ran.<sup>20</sup>

At that point, around 1970, the Eagle Lake population peaked at around 3600 residents, which is the size of the city today<sup>21</sup>. Although the city of Eagle Lake is too far from I-10 to benefit economically from interstate automobile travel and tourism, the surrounding farmland is still productive and one railroad (now operating under the Union Pacific name) continues to run through the downtown business district, carrying agricultural products as well as sand and gravel from local quarries. As a result, the city is still a major shipping center for the region.

## Growth of the Commercial District

In 1888, the city of Eagle Lake was incorporated and the perimeter of the town was platted. The community, which had developed first along the banks of the Colorado River, now found a focus at the junction of the Galveston, Harrisburg, and San Antonio Railway and the San Antonio & Aransas Pass Railway. The street grid was oriented to the nearby rail lines, rather than on a strict N/S/E/W axis, with Main Street located equidistant between and parallel to the two lines of track. A public square, bordered by Main Street to the west and the railroad to the east, formed the center of community activity.

Businesses in Eagle Lake's commercial district served the growing community as well as the many railroad passengers who traveled through. Saloons, barbershops, dry goods stores, groceries, bakeries, banks and hardware stores filled first floor spaces, while the offices of attorneys, architects, doctors, and dentists, as well as meeting halls and a theater could be found above the stores. As noted in many articles from the *Eagle Lake Headlight* (founded in 1903), entrepreneurs and professionals frequently moved their stores and offices from building to building as their businesses grew. While some upper floors have now been converted into apartments, the function of the first-floor spaces has remained generally the same over time, with a barbershop still operating today in the Norris Building, in the same space designated as such on a Sanborn Fire Insurance map from 1907.

Wood frame buildings from the 1800s were gradually replaced by brick structures around the turn of the century, with most extant buildings in the district constructed between 1900 and 1913. These brick buildings represent an intact, cohesive assemblage of the Italian Renaissance, Beaux Arts, and Commercial Style business-district architecture commonly constructed between 1900-1925. Ten of the buildings on the square were two-part commercial blocks, and most of these exhibit design characteristics consistent with Italian Renaissance architecture. These elements include full arched windows, some of which are hooded, on many buildings; segmental-arched windows, on the Norris building;

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<sup>19</sup> Drive the Old Spanish Trail website, online at <http://www.drivetheost.com>; accessed April 20, 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Census records indicate a population of 3587 in 1970, 3921 in 1980 (+9%), 3551 in 1990 (-10%) and 3664 in 2000 (+3%). "Population and Economic Detail for Cities, Counties, MSAs and States" published by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, online at <http://www.cpa.state.tx.us/ecodata/popdata/popfiles.html>; accessed April 11, 2006.

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elaborate bracketed cornices, on the Ficklen-Frank Stephens building and Frank Stephens Co. Building; and corbelled brick parapets with dentils (on most buildings in the district). Three of the large buildings on the square (the Norris building, the Masonic Lodge building, and the Baring-Hughes building) are designed in the Beaux Arts style, with an emphasis on symmetry rather than ornamentation. The one-story buildings in the district are generally found on Main Street east of the square, and most of these are fairly similar in their scale and lack of ornament; however, they can be differentiated from one another by the detailing of brickwork on their parapets, where that is extant.

The buildings on Post Office Street, along with the modern buildings on the square, are not only geographically separate, but also vastly different in design and scale from each other as well as the rest of the district. These seven buildings are detached, whereas nearly all of the district's other buildings share walls with their neighbors. They stand out architecturally as well; the 1926 Italian Renaissance City Hall was designed by Charles Page of Austin, and the First National Bank, city hall, and post office are all post-war Modern structures.

The firm of Meriwether & Barnes, Architects and Engineers, designed one of the commercial buildings in the district (the Norris building) before dissolving the partnership in 1904, whereupon architect A.E. Barnes moved to Houston.<sup>22</sup> Barnes later designed the Farris Hotel, then known as the Hotel Dallas, as well as the Dobbins-Nathan building and the Masonic Lodge. Many of the commercial buildings in Eagle Lake were built by the same few contractors. The Hughs-Griffith building on McCarty Avenue was constructed by Tom Howard, a contractor from Bay City (a stop on the Cane Belt Railroad), in 1910. Eagle Lake contractor R. M. Eggers copied the Hughs building almost exactly in building the Hughs-Griffith building (located behind the Hughs building, on West Main Street). The Nathan and Fitzgerald buildings (next to the Hughs building on McCarty) are also very similar; they were built by George W. Keith, who owned the local lumberyard. J. M. Bryant was the contractor on the Barnes-designed Hotel Dallas (1912); George Keith is credited with the Masonic Lodge building in 1911; and O. J. Howard built the Baring-Hughes building next to the Masonic Lodge in 1913.

O.J. Howard and George Keith built most of the rest of the buildings on East Main Street, with R.H. Reese constructing several of the one-story buildings at the other end of the historic district, including the Damon #2 building with its Mission-style parapet and the Eagle Lake Grain building.

## Architecture in the District

The Eagle Lake Commercial District includes a high percentage of architecturally significant buildings, representing high styles and common commercial forms. Most commercial buildings in the district can be characterized as 1-part or 2-part commercial blocks, terminology devised by Richard Longstreth in *The Buildings of Main Street* (1987). As commercial buildings often do not always exhibit the characteristics of high styles, Longstreth's typology is based on facade organization. Architectural detailing may be either prominent or totally lacking; high-style examples are identified by both style and facade composition.

**One-part commercial blocks** can be free-standing or part of a row. The one-part commercial block usually consists of one or two windows and a central doorway. False parapet fronts or brick coping often enhance the upper wall. The common vernacular storefront type typically features a large, plate glass display window on either side of a deeply

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<sup>22</sup> *Eagle Lake Headlight*, January 29, 1904.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 20

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

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recessed entryway. Transoms above the display windows provide additional light into the interior. These buildings account for 42% of all properties in the district.

**Two-part commercial blocks** represent 29% of all properties in the district. This type is distinguished by its division of the facade into two distinct sections. The ground floor is similar to the one-part commercial block while the upper portion is commonly punctuated with smaller window openings at regular intervals. Many commercial blocks in Eagle Lake are substantial, built of brick, and featuring various levels of Italian Renaissance detailing, including elaborate brick parapets, tall arched windows, flat windows with solid lintels, and carved window surrounds and quoins.

Historic properties in the district are generally well-maintained, and most retain integrity of setting, design, location, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Contributing properties date from the period of significance and retain most of their character-defining features. Alteration to storefronts is common in the district, whereby lower sections of buildings were modified while leaving the upper section original. Noncontributing properties date from after the period of significance or have multiple character-defining features compromised, e.g. window or door replacements, replacement or covering of original materials above the storefront.

## SUMMARY

The Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District is an intact assemblage of commercial buildings that represent the aspirations and wherewithal of their original owners. Built on land platted by the railroad and with revenues gained through the community's location as an important stop on not one but three railway lines, these buildings provide a record of both the development of the community and the architecture typical of central Texas towns in the early 20th century. In Eagle Lake, these two factors are inextricable. First, a wave of construction around 1910, at the height of the railroad boom, incorporated formal architectural styles such as Italian Renaissance and Beaux Arts, as well as typical one-part commercial block variations. Most of the buildings in the district were constructed around this time. Only a few buildings were constructed later, in the 1920s, because by then passenger railroad travel was giving way to the automobile. These buildings utilized the Prairie and Mission styles popular at the time. Updated storefronts, modified in the post-war boom of the 1950s and 1960s, and the construction of a municipal building and bank in the Modern style, reflect the last period of major economic activity in this district. As a result, the district meets Criterion A, in the areas of Commerce and Community Planning and Development, and Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, at the local level of significance.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 21

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 22

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**ACREAGE OF PROPERTY:** approximately 16 acres

**UTM REFERENCES:** Zone 14

	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
1.	758304	3276174
2.	758445	3276030
3.	758567	3275818
4.	758435	3275684
5.	758130	3276006

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:** (see continuation sheet 10-22)

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:** (see continuation sheet 10-22)

**11. FORM PREPARED BY** (with assistance from Gregory Smith, National Register Coordinator)

**NAME/TITLE:** Stephanie McDougal

**ORGANIZATION:** University of Texas at Austin

**DATE:** May 2006

**STREET & NUMBER:** 136 Sea Mist Dr.

**TELEPHONE:** 281-755-2144

**CITY OR TOWN:** League City

**STATE:** Texas

**ZIP CODE:** 77573

**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

**CONTINUATION SHEETS**

**MAPS** (see continuation sheet Map-23 and Map-24)

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

**PROPERTY OWNER**

**NAME:** On file with the Texas Historical Commission

**STREET & NUMBER:**

**TELEPHONE:**

**CITY OR TOWN:**

**STATE:** Texas

**ZIP CODE:**

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 23

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

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**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Beginning at the west corner of the lot at 108 West Main Street proceed northeast to the north corner of 201 North McCarty Avenue, to include all commercial buildings on West Main Street and North McCarty Avenue. Then proceed southeast to the lot line between 100 East Post Office Street and 104 East Post Office Street. Then proceed around the perimeter of 203 E. Post Office Street. Then proceed southeast on Post Office to a point directly across the railroad track from the east corner of 416 East Main Street. Then proceed southwest to the middle of Main Street at the south corner of 416 East Main Street. Then proceed northwest to the intersection of Main and Lake. Then proceed southwest to the rear of the lot at 221 East Main Street. Finally, proceed northwest along the rear of the lots facing northeast on Main Street to reach the starting point at the west corner of 108 West Main.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

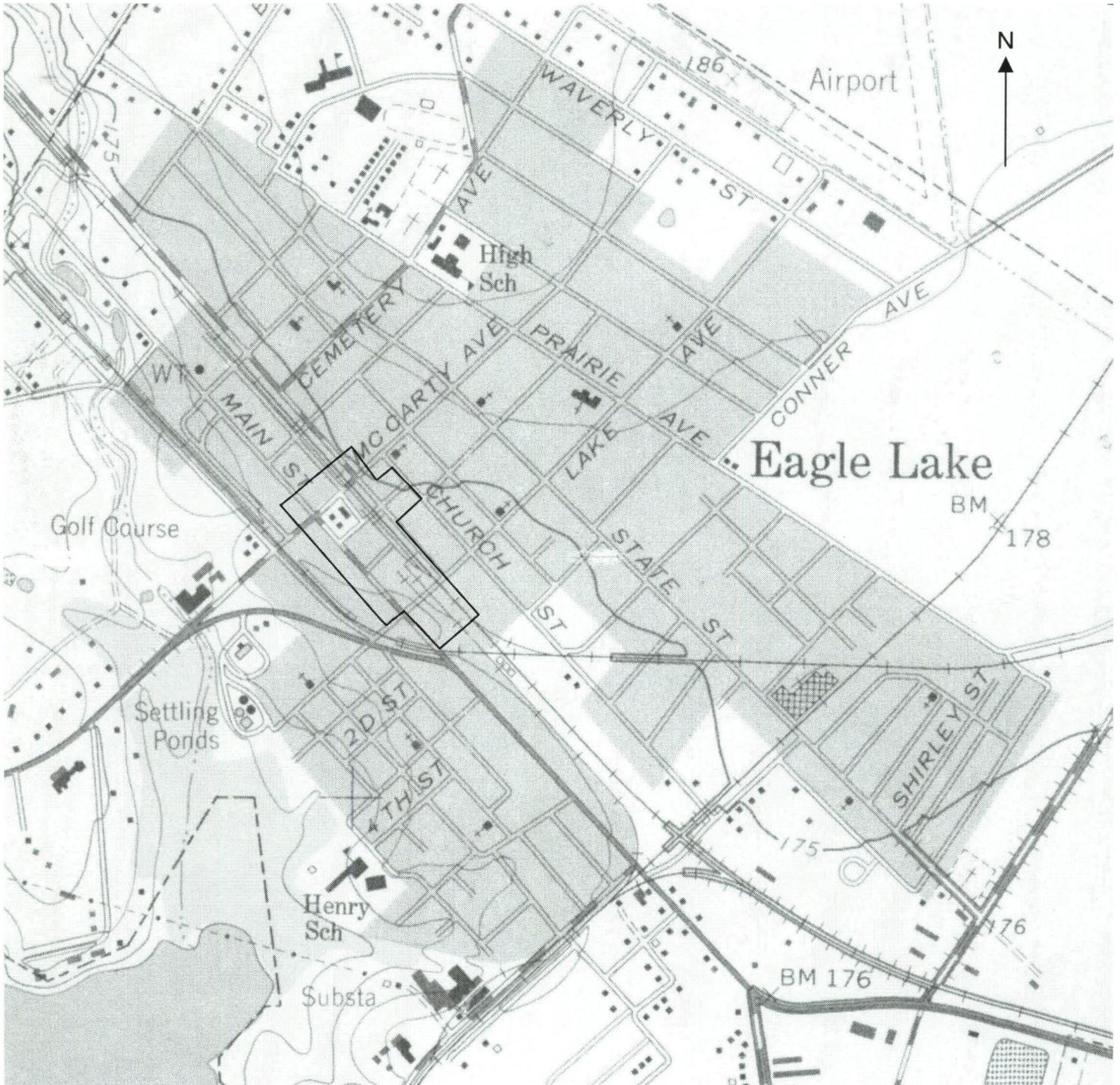
The buildings in this district are located on 11 contiguous blocks in downtown Eagle Lake, including all buildings around the square and on Main Street from the square to Lake Street. The boundaries generally conform to the lot lines of these buildings, which results in a slightly irregular shape to include the entire lot at 203 East Post Office Street. The boundary lines were drawn to include all contributing commercial buildings in the historic downtown area. Immediately beyond these boundaries are residential buildings (to the east and northeast) and newer commercial buildings (to the south and west). The buildings within the historic district clearly represent a cohesive style and period of architecture not found anywhere else in the city.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Map Page 24

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas



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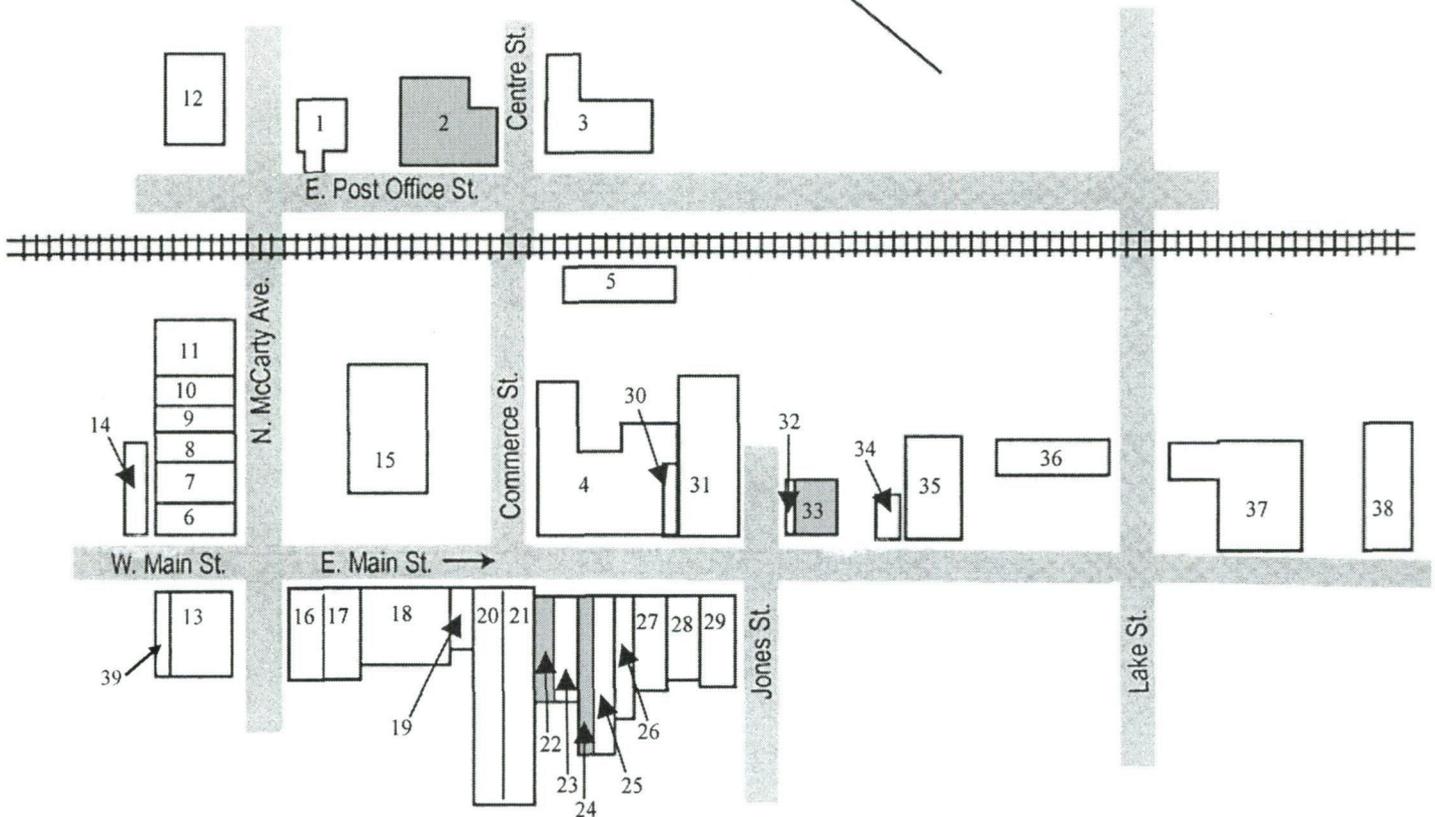
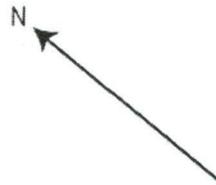
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Map Page 25

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District

□ Contributing  
■ Noncontributing



**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 26

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

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West side of the square, facing southwest



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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 27

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

West side of the square, facing northeast



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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 28

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

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**Old City Hall** (Property #3, 203 E. Post Office St., 1926)



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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 29

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

**First National Bank** (Property #4, 101 Commerce St., 1958),



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 30

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

**Southern Pacific Depot** (Property #5, 124 Commerce St., ca. 1890)



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 31

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

- (L) **Hughs-Landa Building** (Property #7, 105 [107] N. McCarty Ave., 1903, 1911)  
(R) **Fitzgerald Building** (Property #8, 111 N. McCarty Ave., 1912)



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 32

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

**The Farris Hotel** (Property #12, 201 N. McCarty Ave., 1912)



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 33

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

- (L) The **Gotlieb Hermann Building** (Property #13, 101 W. Main St., 1907)  
(R) The **C. H. Brosig Building** (Property #39, 103 W. Main St., 1912)



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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 34

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

(L) The **Hughs-Griffith Building** (Property #14, 108 W. Main St., 1912)  
(R) The **Hughs Building** (Property #6, 101 N. McCarty Ave., 1910-11),



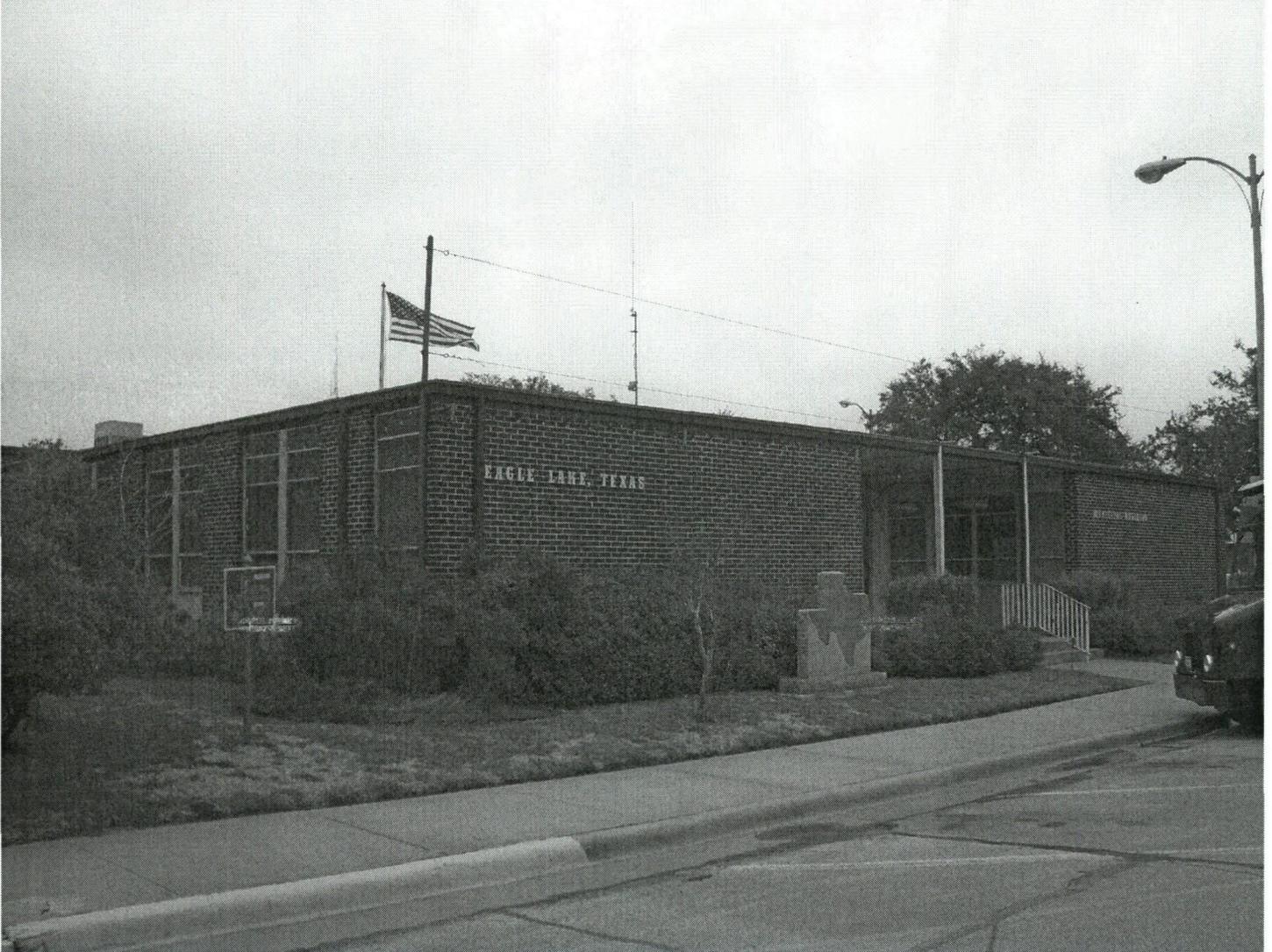
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 35

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

**Eagle Lake Municipal Building** (Property #15, 100 E. Main St., 1956-57)



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 36

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

(L) **Dobbins-Nathan Building** (Property #17, 105-107 E. Main St., 1904)

(R) **Frazar Opera House** (Property #16, 101 E. Main St., 1896, 1926)



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 37

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

(L) **Creative Expressions** florist shop (Property #19, 119 E. Main St., ca. 1915).

(R) **Norris Building** (Property #18, 111-117 E. Main St., 1903),



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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 38

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

(L) **Ficklen-Frank Stephens Building**, (Property #21, 121 E. Main St., 1885-86)

(R) **Frank Stephens Co. Building** (Property #20, 123 E. Main St., 1909)



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 39

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

- (L) **The Eagle Lake State Bank Building** (Property #24, 205 E. Main St., 1908).  
(R) **Westmoreland Building** (Property #23, 201 E. Main St., ca. 1910)



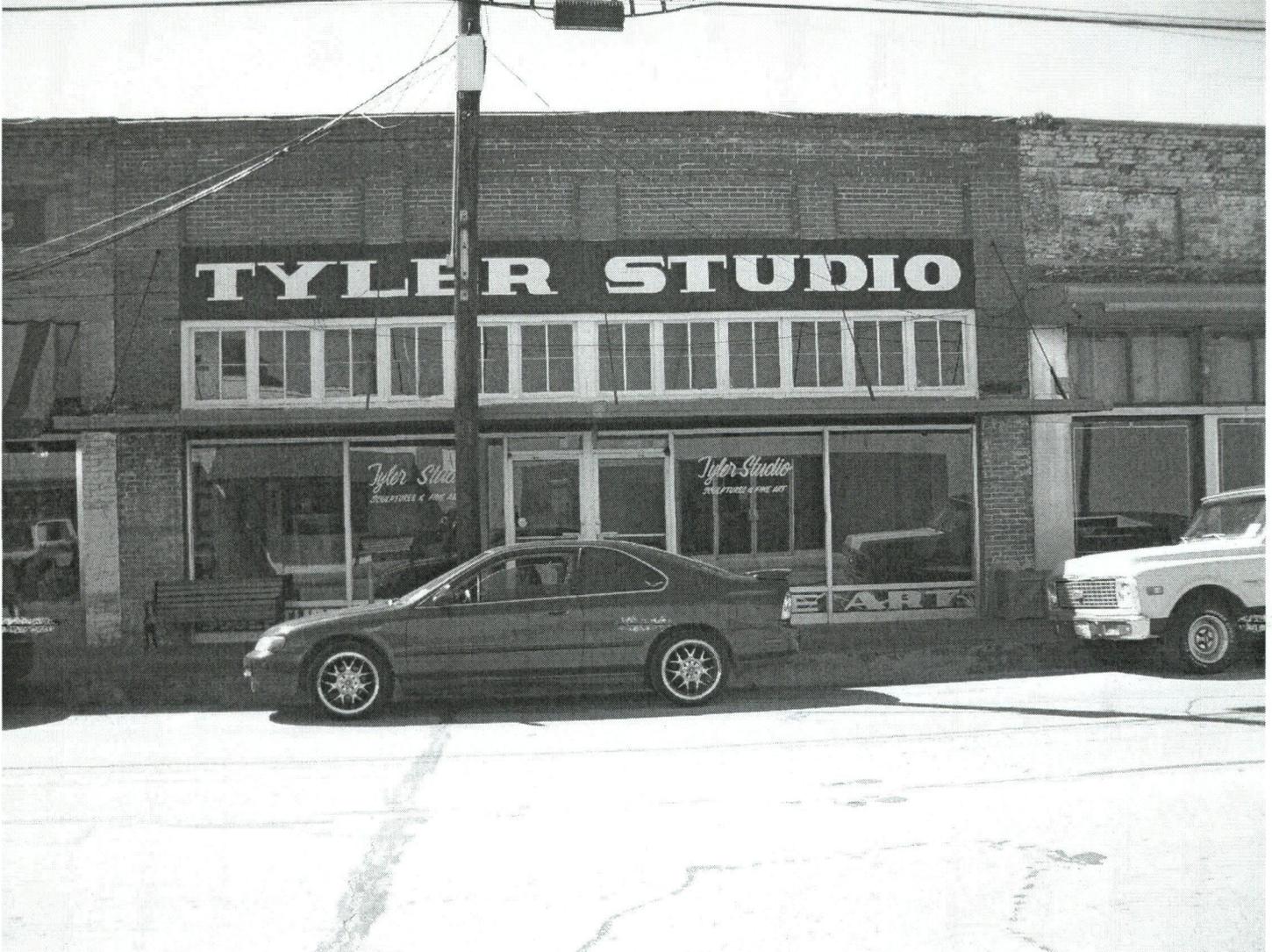
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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 40

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

**Damon Building #1** (Property #27, 215 E. Main St., 1912)



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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 41

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

**Damon Building #2** (Property #29, 221 E. Main St., 1925).



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 42

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

(L) Property #34 (310 E. Main St., ca. 1905)

(R) **Eagle Lake Grain Company Building** (Property #35, 312 E. Main St., 1924)



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section Photo Page 43

Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

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**Santa Fe Depot** (Property #36, 322 E. Main St., 1911)



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Colorado

DATE RECEIVED: 4/20/07 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/04/07  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/19/07 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/03/07  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 07000494

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 6.5.07 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.



WEST

ALTERNATE

90

FARM  
ROAD  
102

←

→

MAIN  
W CARLY

CLOSED

HUGHES BUILDING

101 N. MCCARTY AVE

EAGLE LAKE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

COLORADO COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPHER: STEPHANIE MCDUGAL

MAY 9, 2006

ORIGINAL NEGATIVE ON FILE AT TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION, AUSTIN TX

OBLIQUE VIEW, FACING NORTH

PHOTO #4, ROLL #1



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COLORADO COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPHER: STEPHANIE MCDUGAL

MAY 9, 2006

ORIGINAL NEGATIVE ON FILE AT TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION, AUSTIN TX

OBLIQUE VIEW, FACING WEST

PHOTO # 13, ROLL # 3



AUTO

LIFE

205  
E. MAIN

INSURANCE

BUSINESS

The Pacific  
Baumgardner  
Agency

The Baumgardner Agency  
MON - FRI 9:00-5:00  
TUE - THU 9:00-4:00  
SAT 10:00-12:00  
SUN 12:00-4:00

THE GREAT WESTERN HOTEL

12-248

THE EAGLE LAKE STATE BANK BUILDING & WESTMORELAND-PHILLIPS BUILDING  
205 & 125 (201) E. MAIN STREET  
EAGLE LAKE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
COLORADO COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPHER: STEPHANIE MCDUGAL

MAY 9, 2006

ORIGINAL NEGATIVE ON FILE AT TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION, AUSTIN TX

OBLIQUE VIEW, FACING WEST

PHOTO #16, ROLL #2

FARRIS HOTEL



THE FARRIS HOTEL  
201 N. MCCARTY AVENUE  
EAGLE LAKE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
COLORADO COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPHER: STEPHANIE MCDUGAL

MAY 9, 2006

ORIGINAL NEGATIVE ON FILE AT TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION, AUSTIN TX

STRAIGHT VIEW, FACING NORTHWEST

PHOTO #22, ROLL #1







EAGLE LAKE





STOP

4-WAY

COMMUNITY CENTER AND LIBRARY







OLD CITY HALL

203 E. POST OFFICE ST.

EAGLE LAKE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

COLORADO COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPHER: STEPHANIE MCDUGAL

MAY 9, 2006

ORIGINAL NEGATIVE ON FILE AT TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION, AUSTIN TX

OBLIQUE VIEW, FACING EAST

PHOTO #33, ROLL #1

116 1000 00

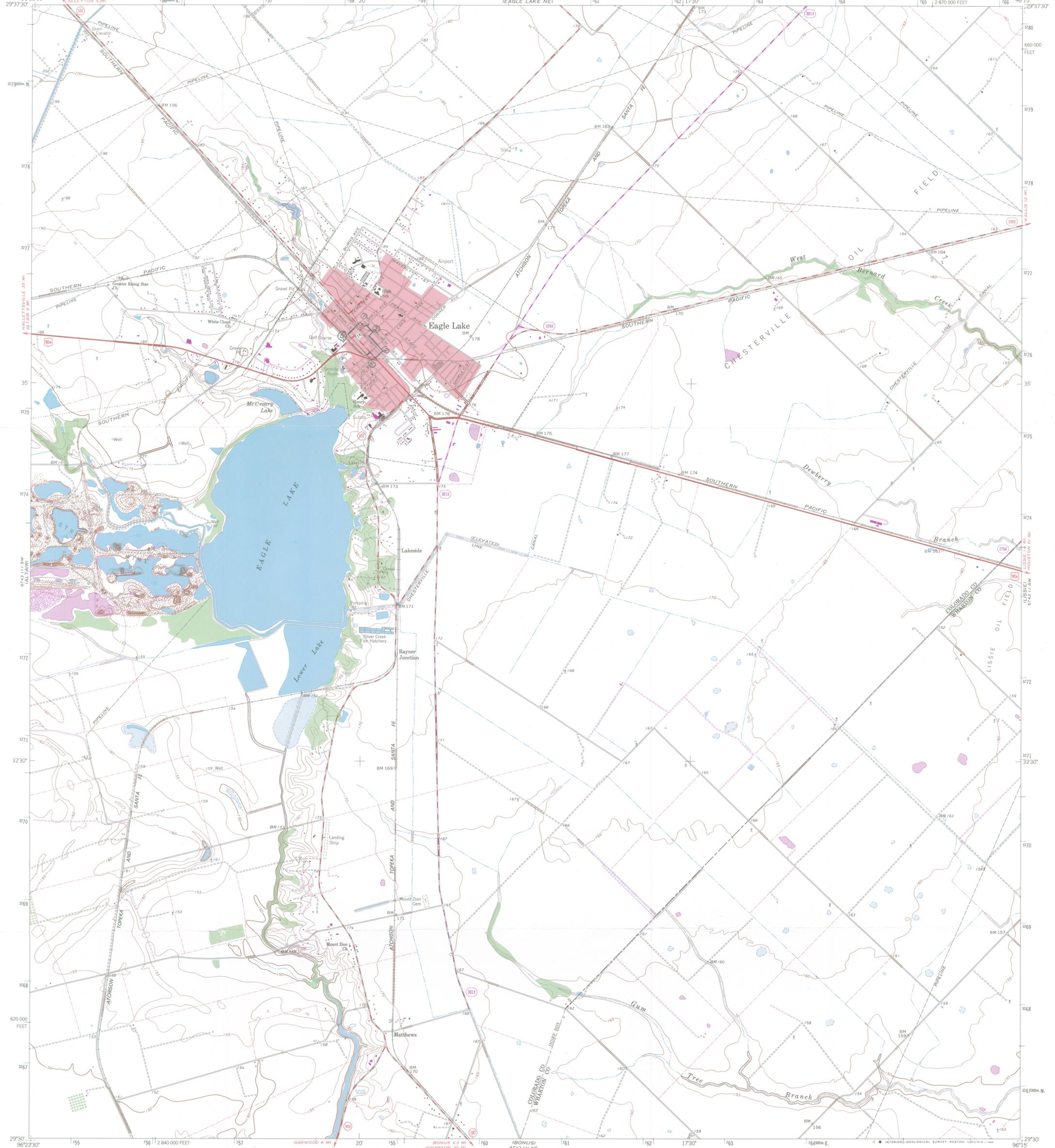
6743 11 W  
ALLEYTON

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

EAGLE LAKE COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
EAGLE LAKE, COLORADO CO., TEXAS  
ZONE 14  
① 758304E 3276174N  
② 758415E 3274020N  
③ 758507E 3275818N  
④ 758435E 3275684N  
⑤ 758130E 3276006N

EAGLE LAKE QUADRANGLE  
TEXAS  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

6743 11 W  
REXVILLE



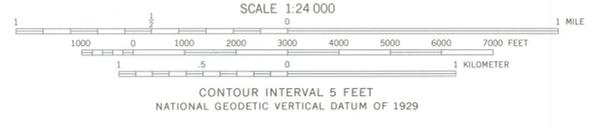
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1962. Topography by planetable surveys 1963

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system, south central zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 14, shown in blue

Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983  
move the projection lines 21 meters south and  
25 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks



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



Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled from aerial photographs taken 1978 and other source data  
This information not field checked. Map edited 1981

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

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EAGLE LAKE, TEX.  
N2930-W9615/7.5

1963  
PHOTOREVISED 1981  
DMA 6743 11 SE-SERIES V882

6743 11 W  
REXVILLE

6743 11 W  
REXVILLE



# TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Rick Perry • *Governor*

John L. Nau, III • *Chairman*

F. Lawrence Oaks • *Executive Director*

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

TO: Linda McClelland  
National Register of Historic Places

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

RE: Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District, Eagle Lake, Colorado County, Texas

DATE: April 16, 2007



- The following materials are submitted regarding the Eagle Lake Commercial Historic District :

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

### COMMENTS:

SHPO requests substantive review

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

Other: