

PH0691542

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED OCT 26 1976  
DATE ENTERED DEC 12 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC  
Comal County Courthouse  
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
North Seguin Avenue, near East San Antonio Street  
CITY, TOWN  
New Braunfels VICINITY OF  
STATE  
Texas CODE  
048 COUNTY  
Comal CODE  
091

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
County of Comal  
STREET & NUMBER  
North Seguin Avenue, near East San Antonio Street  
CITY, TOWN  
New Braunfels VICINITY OF  
STATE  
Texas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Office of the County Clerk, Comal County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER  
North Seguin Avenue, near East San Antonio Street  
CITY, TOWN  
New Braunfels STATE  
Texas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

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



# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located across from the northeast corner of the public square, the Comal County Courthouse is an excellent example of Romanesque Revival design, as interpreted by architect J. Riely Gordon. Although the roofing has been replaced and an addition has been made on the east, the courthouse retains most of its original exterior fabric. While modernized, the interior spaces still reveal the original concept of the plan. The main entrance is on the southeast <sup>west</sup> reentrant angle of the Greek-cross plan. On the ground floor within the arms of the cross are located the offices of the treasurer, county attorney and county clerk, and the courts of the commissioners and the county. On the second floor, expressed by a curved mass, is the district courtroom which originally had a two-story ceiling height. All these spaces radiated from a central core containing an open stairwell which facilitated natural ventilation by allowing hot air to rise and vent through the tower--thus the tower not only unified the courthouse massing but also served a functional purpose. The iron stairway, the woodwork, and much of the flooring is original.

The exterior walls are native limestone in a handsome light gold color. The texture of pitch-faced ashlar was subtly accented by cut-stone lintels and delicate stringcourse moldings. Common features on Romanesque architecture, the dormers, incorporating carved engaged columns, add to the picturesqueness of the building and relieve the austerity of the roof forms. The stone tower, with its gentle batter, is noteworthy for simplicity and originality. At the cornice of the tower as well as the main walls, a dentil course provides a delicate accent.

The entrance porches are also noteworthy. Supporting the entrance balcony are polished Syrian columns of pink granite; overhead, slender columns support capitals with handsomely carved Sullivanesque details. However, the entrances on the northwest, northeast, and southeast have been modified; the southwest (main) entrance is largely original, although an aluminum and glass door has replaced the original paneled wooden door. Similar in design to many of Gordon's Texas courthouses, the Comal County Courthouse contains two two-story quarter-circular entrance galleries set into the front ells (southwest and northwest), while the rear ells contain two three-story quarter-circular bays. A brick parapet with punched brick detail crowns each bay. The entrance and open second floor gallery of the northwest bay have been enclosed.

b



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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

In 1930 A. C. Moeller was awarded the contract for a jail which was to be annexed to the courthouse--an unusual arrangement in Texas. Architect Jeremiah Schmidt designed the addition and the Southern Prison Company provided the jail equipment which is still in use. Through the use of limestone and compatible details the addition harmonizes with the courthouse.

In 1966 the courthouse was remodeled according to plans by Jeremiah Schmidt. Although the interior was modernized, much of the original interior character is yet apparent.



# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1897-1898

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Architect, J. Riely Gordon

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Comal County Courthouse is noteworthy for its beauty, style, and association with one of the most talented nineteenth-century architects to practice in Texas. A work of limestone, handsome proportions and details distinguish this temple of justice. In addition, it is an outstanding example of the Romanesque Revival Style that was prominent nationally, yet the materials of construction reflect the region--it unifies with other limestone buildings in the community.

A German settlement founded in 1845 by Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels, New Braunfels was laid out around a public square which was reserved for a market place rather than a public building, as was the Anglo-American custom. Named for the Comal River, the county was organized the following year and three years later a frame courthouse was contracted. In 1857, through a competition, plans for a new stone courthouse were selected and a new courthouse was built.

The German tradition of incorporating a markt platz into the town plan was responsible for locating the courthouses, including the present building, off the square. Although many citizens advocated placement of the present courthouse on the square, German custom prevailed and it was sited on a corner site across from the public space. Today only a bandstand and landscaping occupy the square.

Late in 1897, because their courthouse was in a "very dilapidated condition; and considered unsafe by many citizens," the commissioners' court deemed it their duty to provide a new safe and substantial building. Subsequently Albert F. Beckmann of San Antonio was invited to meet with county commissioners but J. Riely Gordon, also from San Antonio, wrote the commissioners and requested the opportunity for an interview. Both architects submitted designs. Following a visit to the Gonzales County Courthouse, also the work of Gordon, and after considering competition drawings--although both architects advised the court not to sponsor a competition--by a vote of three to one Gordon was awarded the commission for a 5% fee.



# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Comal County Commissioners' Court Minutes, Office of the County Clerk, Comal County Courthouse, Vols. A, B, H, and N.

Willard B. Robinson and Todd Webb, Texas Public Buildings of the Nineteenth Century (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974).

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY about one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,4	5,8,4	6,8,0	3,2	8,6	0,5,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C							D			

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The courthouse is located across from the northeast corner of the public square on North Seguin Avenue, near East San Antonio Street, and at the intersection of farm to market road 453 and state highway spur 3.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Willard B. Robinson, Professor of Architecture

ORGANIZATION

Texas Tech University

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 4499

TELEPHONE

806 742 2464

CITY OR TOWN

Lubbock,

STATE

Texas

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

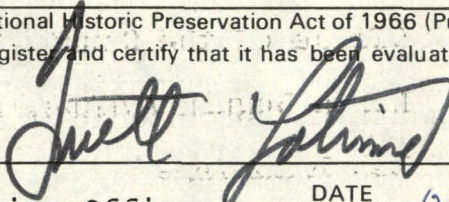
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE

Texas State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

Oct. 21, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

12/12/96

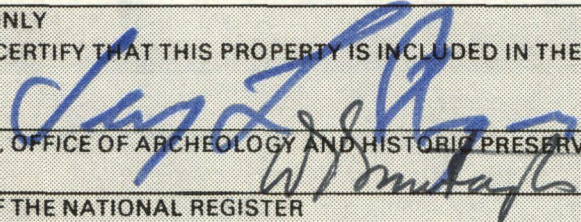
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

12/10/76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER





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In February, 1898, bids were received for construction and the contract was awarded to Fischer and Lambie of Austin for \$36,900. In May the cornerstone was levelled and in December, 1898, the court extended appreciation to the contractors for their excellent workmanship on the structure, just recently completed.

The courthouse plan based upon the Greek cross had been used by Gordon for several other Texas courthouses and the architect claimed a copyright on the arrangement. However, each courthouse on the same plan incorporated different materials and the detailing varied considerably, making each a unique building.

In 1899 the grounds around the courthouse were finished. Louis Moeller provided clay for the surfacing.







Comal County Courthouse  
New Braunfels, Texas

Texas Historical Commission, 1970  
Texas Historical Commission

Southwest oblique of south facade  
Photo #1 of 4

OCT 26 1976

DEC 12 1976

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER







Comal County Courthouse  
New Braunfels, Texas

Texas Historical Commission, 1970  
Texas Historical Commission

Detail of southwest (main) entrance.  
Photo #2 *24*

OCT 26 1976

DEC 12 1976

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER







COMAL COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
Dallas County Courthouse  
Dallas, Texas  
NEW BRAUNFELS, TEXAS

Texas Historical Commission, 1970  
Texas Historical Commission

Northwest oblique  
Photo #3 *of 4*

OCT 26 1976

DEC 12 1976

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER







OCT 26 1976

NPS Number

12/12/76

Title:

Comal County Courthouse  
Comal County, Texas

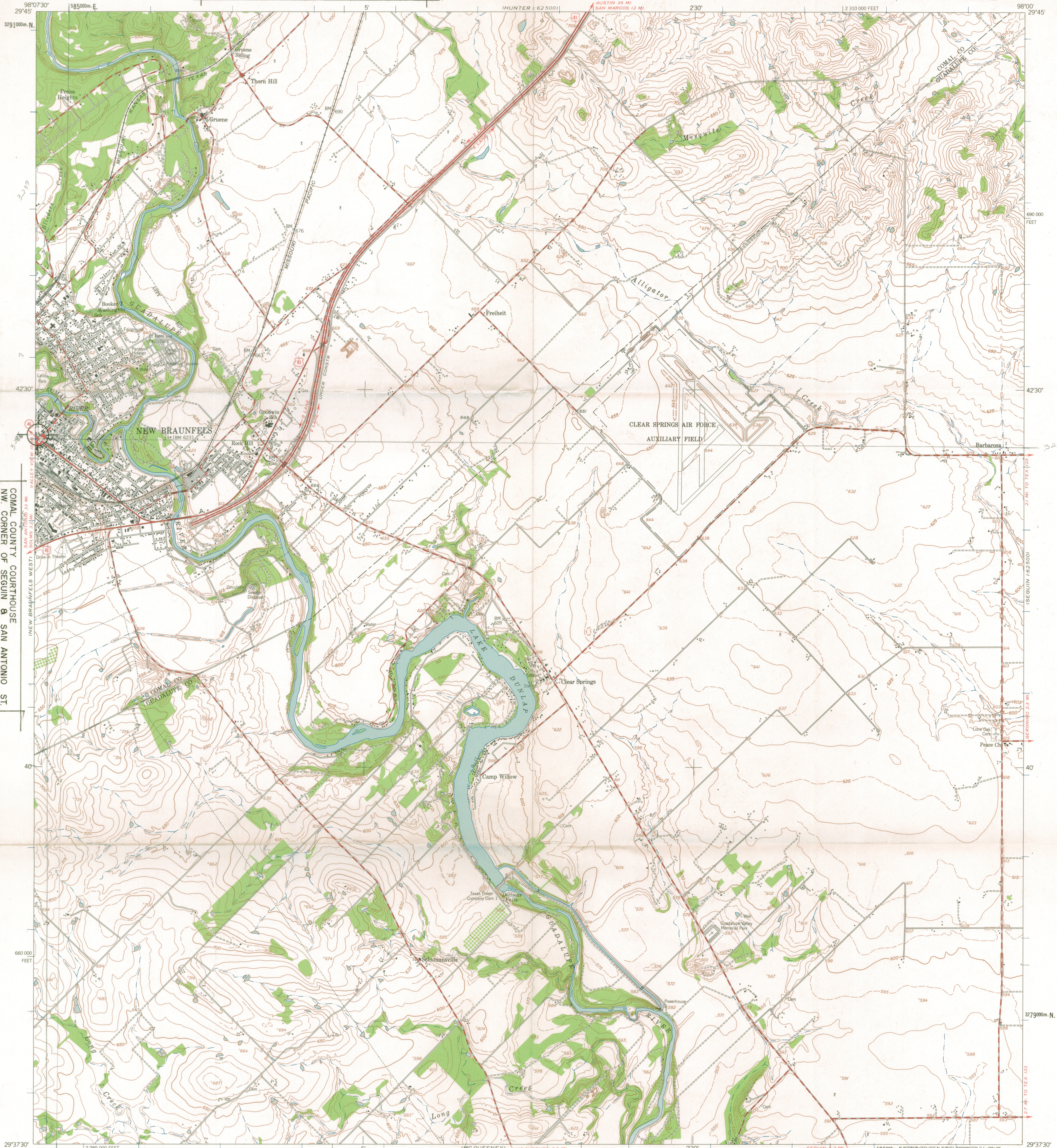
Loc.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ 424

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

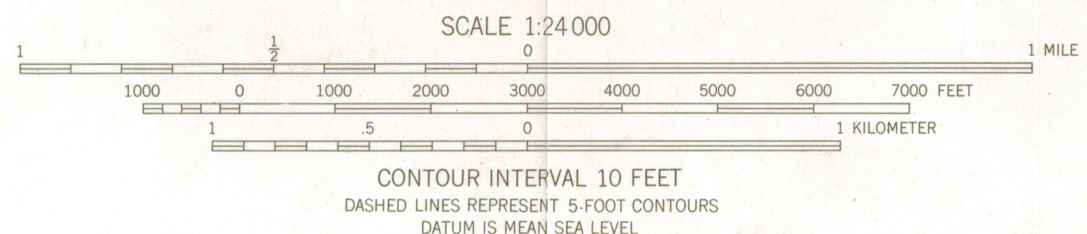
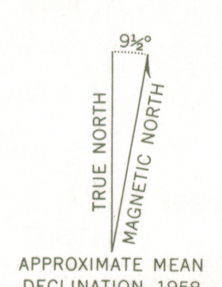
DEC 12 1976





COMAL COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
NW CORNER OF SEGUIN & SAN ANTONIO ST.  
NEW BRAUNFELS, TEXAS  
14 / 584680 / 3286050

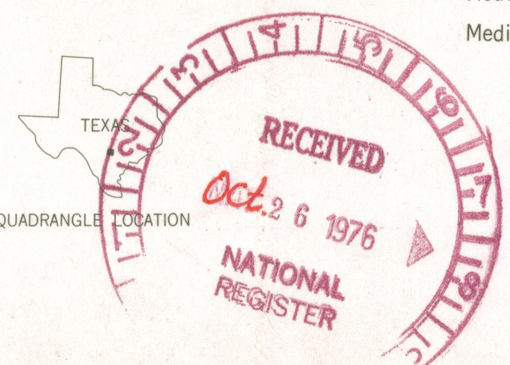
Mapped by the Army Map Service  
Published for civil use by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and USCE  
Topography from aerial photographs by photogrammetric methods  
Aerial photographs taken 1956. Field check 1958  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,  
south central zone  
1,000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 14, shown in blue



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 25, COLORADO OR WASHINGTON 25, D.C.  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



NEW BRAUNFELS EAST, TEX.  
NE/4 NEW BRAUNFELS 15' QUADRANGLE  
N2937.5-W9800/7.5

1958  
2998-414

MAY 18 1970



file: Co. Courthouse

# COUNTY OF COMAL

MAX R. WOMMACK  
County Judge

Comal County Courthouse  
NEW BRAUNFELS, TEXAS 78130

May 14, 1975



Texas Historical Commission,  
Box 12276, Capitol Station,  
Austin, Texas 78711

Gentlemen:

Ref: Your ltr dtd May 9, 1975

We consider our courthouse to be of historical significance and have no plans to violate its historical or architectural integrity. There are some changes in process, but they are functional and not structural. They are reported below for your information.

We have remodeled a former commercial building next door and converted it into a courthouse annex office building. Several departments and offices presently located in the courthouse building itself are moving into the annex. The remaining offices and personnel will expand and move around to provide more efficient working space in the courthouse building.

There will be no demolition or destruction, nor structural changes, in the existing courthouse building. We shall move around some temporary partitions to conform to our new space allocation plan, but no permanent walls will be removed or constructed. In short, we do not believe we are doing anything that falls within the purview of Sec. 14, Art. 6145 VTCS.

Thank you for the referenced letter which provides useful information in succinct form. If you have any question about the work we are doing, please accept our invitation to write, call, or visit with us.

Sincerely,

*Max R. Wommack*  
Max R. Wommack

copy to: County Historical Society.

RECEIVED  
MAY 15 1975  
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION



# NATIONAL REGISTER DATA SHEET

1 NAME as it appears on federal register: **COMAL COUNTY COURTHOUSE** 7 OTHER NAMES: \_\_\_\_\_ 8 date of entry: **12.12.76** 9 county code: **091**

10 LOCATION street & number **N. SEGUIN AVE., NEAR E. SAN ANTONIO ST./NEW BRAUNFELS** city / town **NEW BRAUNFELS** state **TX** county **COMAL** 11 NPS REGION: **SOUTHWEST**

12 OWNER  PRIVATE  STATE  MUNICIPAL  COUNTY  MULTIPLE  FEDERAL (agency name) \_\_\_\_\_ 13 ADMINISTRATOR: \_\_\_\_\_

14 EXISTING SURVEYS  HABS  HAER  NHL  FUNDED?  YES  NO 15 CONGRESS. DISTRICT **21ST** 16 SOURCE OF NOMINATION  STATE  FEDERAL

17 WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT?  YES, NAME \_\_\_\_\_  NO 18 WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK?  YES, NAME \_\_\_\_\_  NO 19 ACREAGE **1 ACRE** 20 ACRES **5480** LOCAL  PRIVATE ORGANIZATION

21 CONDITION  deteriorated  altered  original site 22 features:  SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-1  SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-2  SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-3  
 excellent  ruins  unaltered  moved  
 good  unexposed  reconstructed  unknown  
 fair  unexcavated  excavated  
 INTERIOR  NOT INTACT-0  NOT INTACT-0  
 UNKNOWN-4  UNKNOWN-5  
 NOT APPLICABLE-7  NOT APPLICABLE-8  
 EXTERIOR  NOT APPLICABLE-9  
 ENVIRONS  UNKNOWN-6  NOT APPLICABLE-9

23 ACCESS  YES - Restricted  YES - Unrestricted  No Access  Unknown 24 ADAPTIVE USE  YES  NO 25 SAVED?  YES  NO IS PROPERTY A HISTORIC DISTRICT?  yes  no

26 AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:  ARCHEOLOGY - prehistoric-2  COMMERCE-6  ENTERTAINMENT-26  LANDSCAPE ARCH.-15  POLITICS / GOVT - 21  RECREATION-28  
 ARCHEOLOGY - historic-1  COMMUNICATIONS-7  EXPLORATION-12  LAW-16  RELIGION-22  SETTLEMENT-29  
 AGRICULTURE-3  CONSERVATION-8  HEALTH-27  LITERATURE-17  SCIENCE-23  URBAN PLANNING-31  
 ARCHITECTURE-4  ECONOMICS-9  INDUSTRY-13  MILITARY-18  SOCIAL / HUMANITARIAN-24  OTHER (SPECIFY) \_\_\_\_\_  
 ART-5  EDUCATION-10  INVENTION-14  PHILOSOPHY-20  TRANSPORTATION-25

27 CLAIMS: explain 'first'   
 'oldest'   
 'only'

28 functions WHEN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT: **COURTHOUSE** 29 dates of initial construction: **1817-78** 30 ETHNIC GROUP ASSOCIATION \_\_\_\_\_  
 CURRENTLY: **COURTHOUSE** major alterations: **1930, 1966** historic events: \_\_\_\_\_

31 architectural style(s): **RICHARDSONIAN ROMANESQUE** 32 architect: **J. RIELY GORDON \*** 33 master builder: \_\_\_\_\_ 34 engineer: \_\_\_\_\_

35 landscape architect / garden designer: \_\_\_\_\_ 36 interior decorator: \_\_\_\_\_ 37 artist: \_\_\_\_\_ 38 artisan: \_\_\_\_\_ 39 builder / contractor: **A.C. MOELLER (JAIL)**

40 NAMES give role & date PERSONAL: \_\_\_\_\_  
 EVENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 INSTITUTIONAL: \_\_\_\_\_

41 NATIONAL REGISTER WRITE-UP **ROCK-FACED LIMESTONE, 3 1/2 STORIES, MODIFIED GREEK CROSS, STANDING SEAM TIN HIPPED ROOF WITH GABLED DORMERS AND CENTRAL ARCADED BELL TOWER, REINTEGRANT CORNER ENTRANCE WITH SEGMENTAL-ARCHED TRANSOM AND SIDE LIGHTS ARTICULATED BY 2-STORY BALUSTRADED BOWED PORCH, SMOOTHLY DRESSED BELT COURSES, DENTICULATED CORNICE; 1-STORY REAR JAIL ADDITION, 1930; INTERIOR ALTERATIONS, 1966. RICHARDSONIAN ROMANESQUE, EXAMPLE OF THE WORK OF PROMINENT ARCHITECT J. RIELY GORDON.**



3

27 JEREMIAH SCHMIDT - JAIL