

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received **MAR 26 1980**

date entered

MAY 23 1980

1. Name

historic Hays County Courthouse

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Public Square not for publication

city, town San Marcos vicinity of congressional district 10

state Texas code 048 county Hays code 209

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name County of Hays

street & number Public Square

city, town San Marcos vicinity of state Texas

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hays County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town San Marcos state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Recorded Texas Historic Landmark;
Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1974; 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Texas Historical Commission

city, town Austin state Texas

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

A dominant landmark in San Marcos, Texas, the fourth Hays County Courthouse, built in 1909, reflects early settlement here, when the public square was the nucleus of the 19th century Texas town and the center for its social, commercial, and governmental life. Designed by C.H. Page and Brothers of Austin, this impressive Classical revival structure in the Corinthian order is arranged in a symmetrical cruciform plan and exhibits fine workmanship, especially in the Greek details of the monumental entrances and design of the interior.

Aligned with a north to south and east to west orientation, the corridors cross to form a three story domed rotunda on the interior. The narrow arms of the cruciform plan project to the north and south, while the wide arms project to the east and west. Corridors extending through both arms of the cross are flanked by offices and originally provided access from all four sides of the building. Entry to the courthouse is now gained only through the south facade which faces San Antonio Street and the north rear entrance which opens onto Hopkins Street.

The structure of the courthouse consists of masonry bearing walls with wood and iron beams. Lath work and plaster cover and protect the ironwork throughout the building. The exterior walls are constructed with Elgin brick of gray and buff tones, while the basement and foundation are stone and cement. Exterior trim, such as the window and door facings, and the continuous moulded stringcourse between the first and second floors, are white limestone. The dominant feature of the courthouse is the monumental, slightly projecting tetrastyle portico of the south facade, with its tall white stone columns topped with Corinthian capitals supporting a full entablature. Large stone pedestals support the four columns which are complimented by two pairs of identical pedestaled columns on either side of the rear north entrance. The entablature of the portico, comprised of a triple fascia frieze and cornice with dentils and modillions, continues around the roof line of the structure. A low pitched pediment with dentils, modillions, and a circular window crowns the entablatures above the north and south entrances. Terminating the east and west wings are domed corner projections with rounded pediments with modillions.

Rising above the low hipped roof of the structure is a huge central copper plated dome supported by an iron and wood frame. A round clock tower located directly above the dome supports a 9 ft. statue of the goddess of Justice with the sword and scales in her hands. It was decided by the Commissioners' Court that their weight would damage the roof and the clocks were never installed in the tower. Fenestration of the building consists of numerous double-hung sash type windows which are arched and accentuated with limestone archivolt trim on the first level. The taller first floor windows located in the rear northern wing are not arched, however, and some facade windows contain louvered shutters. Exterior wall decoration between the floors consists of a moulded limestone stringcourse and a series of squared receding brickwork patterns located between the second and third level windows. Entrances to the central rotunda on the south facade and the north rear consist of arched openings with modern glass office doors. Original heavy double entrance doors with beveled glass panels contain large brass hinges, locks, and knobs, and are still in good repair.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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The interior spatial arrangement of the courthouse is centered around the open rotunda on all three floors with offices located in each of the quadrants formed by the corridors. The entire east side of the first floor houses the County Judge's office, the Commissioners' Court, and a receptionist's office, while the County Clerk's office occupies the whole west side. On the first level the arched doorways with the egg-and-dart mouldings open onto the rotunda and terrazo floor containing a central Lone Star mosaic. The circular 14 ft. high wall surrounding the rotunda, with its original brick wainscoting and walnut panelling, contains a marble and iron stairway leading to the second floor balcony. This elaborate stairway displays its original finial topped-iron newel posts and intricate grillwork with oak handrails. The balcony is supported by hidden brackets extending from the originally white plastered walls below. Panelling is not employed on the walls of the second level and the aging plaster is in need of repair. Noteworthy decorative features of the second level balcony include the colorful tile flooring with mosaic designs, the wrought iron balustrade with iron posts and finials, and an oak handrail. Some of the offices on the second level include the Sheriff's Department, Justice of the Peace, and Criminal District Attorney. The main courtroom with double doors opens onto the third floor balcony bounded by an iron balustrade similar to the one on the second level. Adjoining rooms to the courtroom include various offices, a jury room, and a law library.

Although alterations and additions to the Hays County Courthouse have been necessary since 1909 to increase office space for a growing county government, the architectural integrity of the structure is virtually intact. The original architect, C.H. Page and Brothers, returned in 1965 to replace the second floor courtroom with additional offices. Extensive remodelling of the east and west offices on the first floor was done throughout the 1970's, and a new vault and basement were added to house court documents. General maintenance has included repairs to the roof and flooring. Aluminum paint now protects the statue and all the domes of the roof. Additions in 1962 included the installation of an elevator, new restrooms, and an air conditioning system. Original furnishings, such as large oak tables, and oak chairs and desks are still in use throughout the Courthouse. Future plans include partial restoration of the interior and repair of the plaster work.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1908–1909 **Builder/Architect** C.H. Page and Brothers

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Constructed to replace the limestone courthouse destroyed in 1908, the present Hays County Courthouse in San Marcos, Texas, has been the focus of governmental and law enforcement activities throughout the county for three quarters of a century. One of the most significant extant examples of monumental Classical Revival architecture in the state, the Hays County Courthouse, although remodelled, still retains most of its original fine workmanship and many handsome details. The manner in which the mass of the domed courthouse dominates the surrounding town and countryside is impressive, and clearly reflects the impact this governmental center had on the daily activities of the early Community. The early history of the courthouse is bound to the increased prosperity and population in the county at the end of the 19th century, a result of the establishment of the International-Great Northern Railroad line.

Hays County, which was created on May 1, 1848, by a bill introduced to the Legislature by General Edward Burleson, was named for John Coffee Hays, a prominent Texas ranger, pioneer, and politician. The area which now occupies Hays County was known to the early Spanish explorers and lay at the edge of one of the main travel routes from San Antonio to East Texas. While small Spanish settlements were abandoned in the County in 1812, early Anglo-American settlers were granted land by the governments of Coahuila and Texas as early as 1831. Some of the original settlers, who received Mexican land grants in 1835 were members of John Coffee Hays' Texas Rangers.

Hays came to Texas from Mississippi in 1837 and settled in San Antonio. He was commissioned by the Republic of Texas to conduct surveys on the frontier. A reputable Indian fighter, he became captain of a Texas Ranger Company in 1840, and also served in the War with Mexico. Hays later became a prominent politician and in 1848 he served on a commission to settle a territorial dispute between Texas and the U. S. over New Mexico territory. With the onset of the Gold Rush, Hays moved to California where he served as sheriff of San Francisco County and was appointed surveyor general of California by President Franklin Pierce.

The site for the present Courthouse and its three predecessors was donated to the county in 1851 by General Edward Burleson, Dr. Eli T. Merriman, and William Lindsey. They had purchased 340 acres of the Juan Veramendi Grant and laid out the town of San Marcos, specifying public use for this block. The county borders have been modified four times since 1848, but the county seat and courthouse has remained in San Marcos. The original 1861 courthouse was a pine structure which burned in 1868. Replacing this structure was a soft stone courthouse built in 1871, and condemned as hazardous by the County Commissioner in 1881. After it was torn down, a new limestone structure designed by architect F.E. Ruffini was completed in 1883, but also destroyed by fire in 1908. Although Hezekiah Williams planned for the next county seat to be located in Hays City, 11 miles to the northwest, he was unsuccessful in attracting new settlers here, and San Marcos remained the county center. The fourth and present Courthouse is currently in good condition, but the interior, in particular the second and third floor, is in need of restoration and redecoration.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Dobie, Dudley R., History of Hays County (M.A. Thesis, U.T. Austin, 1932).
 Robinson, Willard B., "The Public Square as a Determinant of Courthouse Form in Texas,"
 S/W Hist. Quart, v. 75, #3, 1971-72, p. 339.
 Webb, Walter Prescott, The Handbook of Texas Volume I, p. 789.

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property 1.4 acres

Quadrangle name San Marcos North, Texas

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	4
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3	3	0	6	0	4	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

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 Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The Hays County Courthouse occupies the Courthouse Square and is bounded on the north by Hopkins Street, on the west by Guadalupe Street, on the east by Lyndon B. Johnson Drive, and on the south by San Antonio Street.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Barbara C. Nagel

organization Texas Historical Commission date February 13, 1980

street & number P.O. Box 12276 telephone (512) 453-8873

city or town Austin state Texas

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

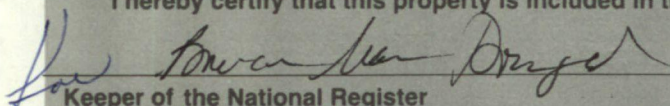
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage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

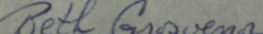
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date February 14, 1980

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register


 Keeper of the National Register date 5/23/80

Attest: 
 Chief of Registration date 5/19/80

Property Hayes County Courthouse

80004134

State Tx - Hayes

Working Number 3-26-80 980

TECHNICAL

CONTROL

Photos 5
Maps 1

A major ex. of monumental Classical Revival architecture in TX, the courthouse sits on the original courthouse square and has served as the seat of govt since 1909. Subsequent alterations and remodelings have been primarily to the interior - the exterior remain essentially intact.

HISTORIAN

*accept
Grosvena
5/19/80*

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____
Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

*accept
Grosvena
5/19/80*

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up _____
Federal Register Entry 2.3.81

Send-back _____
Re-submit _____

Entered MAY 23 1980



Hays County Courthouse
Public Square
San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photo by Carol Kennedy, 1979.
Negative on file at Texas Historical Commission.

South facade, camera facing north.

Photo 1 of 5.

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Hays County Courthouse
Public Square
San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photo by Carol Kennedy, 1979.
Negative on file at Texas Historical Commission

West facade, camera facing east.

Photo 2 of 5.

MAR 26 1980

MAY 23 1980



Hays County Courthouse
Public Square
San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photo by Carol Kennedy, 1979.
Negative on file at Texas Historical Commission

East facade, camera facing west.

Photo 3 of 5.

MAR 26 1980

MAY 23 1980



Hays County Courthouse
Public Square
San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

Photo by Carol Kennedy, 1979.
Negative on file at Texas Historical Commission

Northeast oblique, camera facing southwest.

Photo 4 of 5.

MAY 23 1980

MAR 26 1980



Hays County Courthouse
Public Square
San Marcos, Hays County, Texas

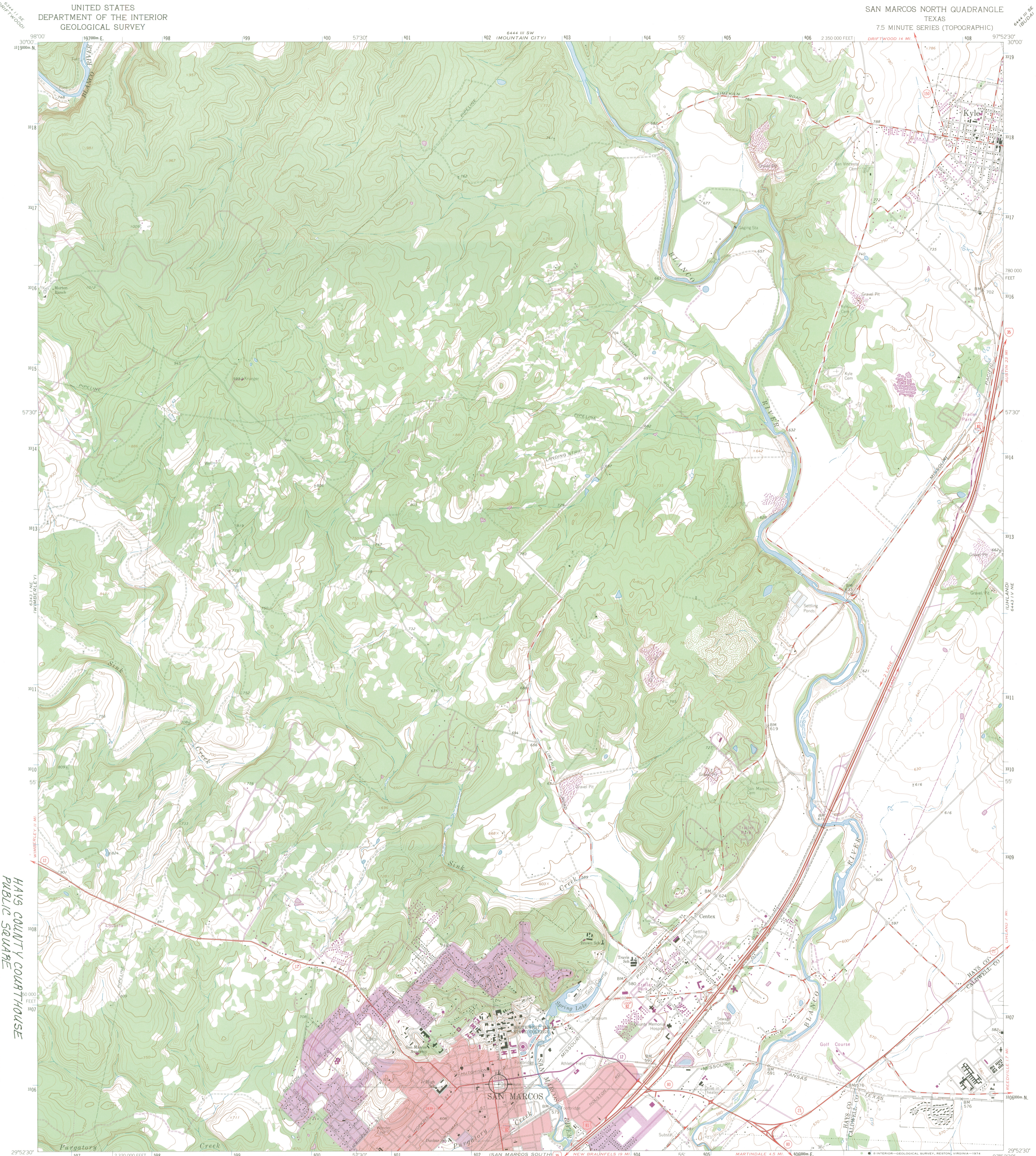
Photo by Carol Kennedy, 1979.
Negative on file at Texas Historical Commission.

North facade, camera facing south.

Photo 5 of 5.

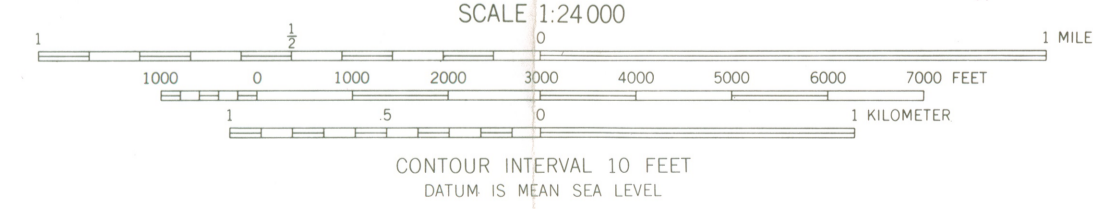
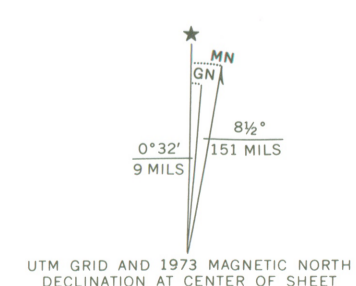
MAY 23 1980

MAR 26 1980



HAYS COUNTY COURTHOUSE
PUBLIC SQUARE
SAN MARCOS, HAYS COUNTY, TEXAS
UTM REF: 14J602324J3306040

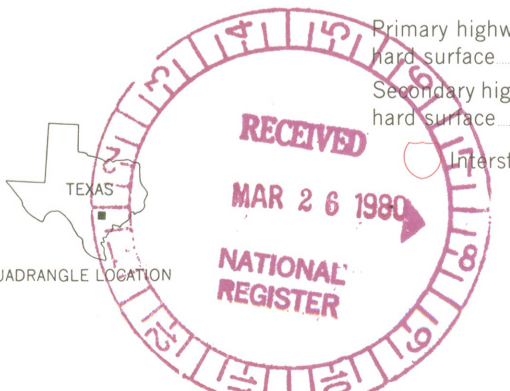
Mapped by the Army Map Service
Edited and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and USCE
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1958. Field checked by USGS 1964
Polycyclic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate 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
Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from
aerial photographs taken 1973. This information not field checked
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



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

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

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



SAN MARCOS NORTH, TEX.
N2952.5 - W9752.5/7.5

1964
PHOTOREVISED 1973
ANS 6443 IV NW - SERIES Y882

2997-333

MAY 23 1980

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE TEXAS

Date Entered MAY 23 1980

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Miller, John Hickman, House	Dallas Dallas County
Warren-Crowell House	Terrell Kaufman County
Whaley House	Longview Gregg County
Park Hotel	Seguin Guadalupe County
Taylor National Bank	Taylor Williamson County
Hays County Courthouse	San Marcos Hays County
Scanlan Building	Houston Harris County

Also Notified

Honorable Lloyd Bentsen

Honorable John G. Tower
Honorable James M. Collins
Honorable Ray Roberts
Honorable Abraham Kazen, Jr.
Honorable James M. Leath
Honorable J. J. (Jake) Pickle
Honorable Mickey Leland

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

NR Byers/bjr 6/2/80
For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.