

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAR 31 1980

DATE ENTERED

MAY 29 1980

**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

House  
LaBorde Residence, Store and Hotel

AND/OR COMMON

Ringgold Hotel

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

601 E. Main St.

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Rio Grande City

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

\_\_ VICINITY OF

15th

STATE

Texas

CODE

048

COUNTY

Starr

CODE

427

**3 CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY** DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT**OWNERSHIP** PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION** IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS** OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE** YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO**PRESENT USE** AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER: hotel**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mrs. John J. Sheerin

STREET &amp; NUMBER

2819 Cork Cove

CITY, TOWN

San Antonio

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Texas 78230

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Starr County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rio Grande City

STATE

Texas 78582

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

6/30/73; 1/80

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Texas Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Austin

STATE

Texas 78711

# 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 checked="" 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

The Ringgold Hotel, constructed in 1897 as a residence and a store, consisted of four sections built in the form of a compound around a central courtyard. A two-story brick building with a double gallery served as the residence. Two one-story brick buildings, accommodating a general store and an office, were attached to either side of the residence. Each one-story building faced directly onto the street; however, the residence was set back several feet from the street and a front courtyard was enclosed by a wrought iron fence.

The west or store building extended to a one-story brick building, used as a warehouse, which formed the rear or north section of the compound. A brick privy with a second story water tank was attached to the northeast corner of the warehouse and a brick wall extended from the office to the privy. All of the structures had flat roofs.

The residence retains the central hall floor plan of the Greek Revival as well as the symmetrical arrangement of the front facade. A center door is flanked on each side by an equal number of evenly spaced windows. The house also retained the columnar porch, a dominant Greek Revival feature. However, the jigsaw cut brackets and gingerbread details of the double gallery are indicative of the Victorian period. A two-story gallery is also attached to the east side of the house; however its details are not as decorative. Each story of the double gallery is supported by a simple version of the Doric column. The columns consist of simple squared posts capped with plain moldings. The more slender, turned balusters of the balustrade which embellishes the second story gallery are also Victorian elements. There are stone lintels over all of the window and door openings. The majority of the windows are six over nine, double hung with wooden shutters. A corbelled brick cornice accentuates the flat roof line.

The first floor of the house originally consisted of a sitting room and parlor located on one side of an entrance hall and a dining room and kitchen on the other. The second floor contained four bedrooms. The rooms were finished with wood plank ceilings with simple moldings, wood floors and plastered walls. The house was heated by fireplaces which had carved wood mantels. All of the interior doors were fitted with transoms and the front entrance, reminiscent of the Greek Revival, had a rectangular transom over the door flanked by side lights. The stairway was decorated with slender, turned balusters and flat jigsaw ornamentation.

Both the store and office buildings were constructed with corbelled cornices corresponding in design to that of the house. The corners of the buildings were accentuated with brick quoins. A parapet extended above the roof of each building and the second story porch of the house opened onto the flat brick roofs of the store and office buildings and provided a roof garden. The door and window openings had stone lintels like those of the house. Several sets of panelled doors with barred and glass transoms were evenly spaced in the structures. A carriage entrance was located on the west side of the store building. An interesting feature of the rectangular store building was the pressed tin ceiling. The warehouse building had five arched door openings which opened into the center courtyard. Each door had a fan-shaped transom.

There are several interesting features on the property. A wine cellar was built under the office building. The courtyard was paved with brick and beautifully

(continued)

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAR 31 1980

DATE ENTERED

MAY 29 1980

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

CONTINUATION SHEET

1

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 1

landscaped. The bouganvillea, planted in the front courtyard, was brought by Mrs. LaBorde from Monterrey, Mexico and it is reported to have been the first one in the city. The front courtyard, enclosed with a wrought iron fence made in Kenton, Ohio, contained a brick cistern.

About 1917, LaBorde decided to open a hotel and employed Leo M. J. Dielmann, a San Antonio architect, to add a second story to his store, office and warehouse buildings. Dielmann introduced the gabled facade and moderately pitched roof to the store and office buildings. A corbelled cornice dominates the roof line. The front gable end of each building has a small window, which gives the effect of a half story, and brick ornamental patterns. There is also a corbelled brick window head above three window openings. A gable with a similar brick cornice and window was also incorporated into the west side of the store building above the carriage entrance. The second story of the warehouse was also completed with a gabled roof. A porch, which overlooked the courtyard, was added to the second story of the house and store and warehouse buildings.

The Hotel was purchased in 1939 and the interior was remodeled. Sixteen bathrooms were incorporated into the buildings in addition to the two public baths which were built in 1917. There are presently twenty-three guest rooms. The first floor of the house serves as the managers apartment and the east downstairs porch was enclosed. The first floor of the store building was converted into a restaurant, but is now used for storage space as is the office building.

The interior has been altered in terms of painting and the addition of partition walls and the exterior has been repointed and wainscoted with white wash; however, the original fabric has not been destroyed. The buildings, although in a state of disrepair are essentially intact and retain the architectural features original to the two construction phases.

# 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1897; 1917

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Leo M. J. Dielmann

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Ringgold Hotel was originally built as a residence and store for Francois LaBorde, a French immigrant, about 1897. About 1917, LaBorde commissioned Leo M. J. Dielmann, an important San Antonio and Texas architect, to incorporate his home into a hotel. The hotel is significant not only for the excellence of its craftsmanship and detailing, but for its reflection of the tastes and influences of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The region has historically been a center of activity and its architecture has been influenced by a variety of circumstances which include the close geographic and cultural relationship with Spain and Mexico, a large immigrant population, the isolated frontier and the climate. Several influences are evident in the hotel buildings. The residence is an adaptation of the Spanish-Mexican townhouse which usually faced onto the street and combined both residential and business uses. The courtyard and flat roofs are also of Spanish-Mexican origins. In response to the frontier, the buildings were laid out in the form of a compound which provided protection and privacy. The double galleries of the residence, a response to the hot climate, were adorned with elaborate Victorian details made of wood which was unusual because wood was scarce and costly. The regional character is noteworthy in the structural and decorative use of brick, in both construction phases, which was the most readily available and least expensive material in the area. LaBorde became a prominent businessman in Rio Grande City and San Antonio as well as a large landowner in Starr and surrounding counties. He owned one of the most handsome complexes of buildings in Rio Grande City. It is also historically important to note that the Hotel has been owned primarily by only two families during the years.

Francois LaBorde, born in 1867 in France was sent by his parents at the age of 15 to Mexico to avoid military conscription. He traveled with other French families, many of which were leaving France as a result of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. LaBorde eventually settled in Rio Grande City, where numerous other French immigrants resided, and opened a general merchandising business. On March 4, 1896, he married Eva Marks, the daughter of Ernest Marks, who was County Clerk for many years.

Local tradition relates that while LaBorde was in France on a brief visit, he commissioned a French architect to design for him a house, incorporating his general merchandising store and office. It is also reported that an unidentified San Antonio architect made monthly inspection trips to supervise the construction. Research has failed to determine the name of either of the architects. The property, on which the house and store are located, consists of two lots on Main Street which were purchased in 1896. Lot 2 was acquired from Mrs. LaBorde's mother and both lots 1 and 2 were part of a larger tract known as Porción No. 80 of the former jurisdiction of Camargo, Mexico.

(continued)

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAR 31 1980

DATE ENTERED

MAY 29 1980

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

CONTINUATION SHEET

2

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE 1

During the years, Mr. LaBorde acquired a great deal of property in Starr, Hogg and Zapata Counties some of which was used for ranching. About 1913, LaBorde established another residence in San Antonio and founded the Tomalina Milling Company. LaBorde became a prominent citizen of San Antonio and Rio Grande City as he divided his time between the two locations. The LaBordes had five children and the two girls attended Ursuline Academy in San Antonio.

About 1917, during World War I, Mr. LaBorde decided to incorporate his Rio Grande City home into a small hotel. He employed the San Antonio architect, Leo M. J. Dielmann, who had constructed the Tomalina Mill, to add a second story to the office, store and rear warehouse building. It became known as the LaBorde Hotel.

Leo M. J. Dielmann, one of the most successful and widely known architects in San Antonio and Texas, practiced architecture from 1902 until 1957 with a main office at 306 E. Commerce Street in San Antonio. Dielmann, born in San Antonio in 1881, was the son of J. C. Dielmann, a contractor and pioneer in the building and supply business. Dielmann attended St. Mary's College where he studied under Theodore Gentilz, a French artist of the late nineteenth century. He graduated in 1898 and then attended a school in Idstein, Germany where he studied Architecture and Architectural Engineering. When he returned to San Antonio, he established himself as an architect in his father's business and served as President of Dielmann Construction Company. Dielmann designed numerous residences, commercial structures and public buildings throughout Texas [see attached list of Dielmann's work]. He was a progressive man and responsible for a great advance in architecture and public improvements in Texas.

Mr. LaBorde died on August 11, 1917, shortly before the completion of the hotel. His family managed the hotel until it was acquired by Mr. George Boyle in 1939. Mr. Boyle, a Harvard graduate and geologist, changed the name to the Ringgold Hotel after Fort Ringgold which was established in Rio Grande City in 1848. He remodeled the interior to accommodate forty-five guests and added private baths to many of the rooms. During World War II, Boyle converted the first floor of the old store building into a restaurant. It later housed county offices while a new courthouse was being constructed. The Rio Grande Herald reported at the time Boyle purchased the hotel that he was a keen businessman who realized that Rio Grande City had one of the "brightest futures of any town on the last frontier." The newspaper editorialized that since the hotel was located halfway between Laredo and Brownsville on a trans-continental highway, in a county seat, and in the center of oil field activity that there was every reason to be optimistic about the hotel's success [Jan. 6, 1939].

The hotel was managed by Mr. and Mrs. William Drummond, Boyle's in-laws, until 1953 when Boyle moved into the hotel, opened an office on the first floor of the old office building and assumed management of the hotel. Mr. Boyle owned and operated the hotel until last year when it was purchased by Mrs. John Sheerin whose family has large ranch holdings in the area. Future plans include the restoration of the structure to a first-class hotel.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dielmann, Leo M. J. Dielmann's Review. San Antonio: privately published, n.d.

Interview with Mrs. Lawrence C. McGonagle, granddaughter of Francois LaBorde, 6-12-79, 9-15-79, 1-10-80.

(continued)

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

QUADRANGLE NAME Rio Grande City, North, Texas QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 14 518419 2917319

B               

C               

D               

E               

F               

G               

H               

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots Numbers 1 and 2 in Block Number 64, Town of Rio Grande City, Texas

## 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

Lynn Osborne Bobbitt

ORGANIZATION

DATE

January 26, 1980

STREET & NUMBER

410 King William

TELEPHONE

512/227-7804

CITY OR TOWN

San Antonio

STATE

Texas

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE     

LOCAL X

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

March 11, 1980

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

5/29/80

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

5/28/80

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAR 31 1980

DATE ENTERED

MAY 29 1980

CONTINUATION SHEET

3

ITEM NUMBER

9

PAGE

1

Kelsey, Anna Marietta. Through the Years, Reminiscences of Pioneer Days on the Texas Border. San Antonio: The Naylor Co., 1952.

Newton, Ada Louise. The History of Architecture Along the Rio Grande As Reflected in the Buildings Around Rio Grande City, 1749-1920. M.A. thesis, Texas A&I University, 1964.

Rio Grande Herald.

Starr County Deed Records, Rio Grande City, Texas.

Property

*La Borda House, Store, and Hotel*

8000 4149

State

*Tx - Starr*

Working Number

*3-31-80 1036*

**TECHNICAL**

Photos 3

Maps 1

**CONTROL**

*This building presents a clear illustration of how the influences of the Spanish/Mexican culture, climate, and frontier setting blended to determine design and function of buildings in this area. The craftsmanship in the wood and brick detailing is also notable.*

**HISTORIAN**

*accept  
Grosvena  
5/28/80*

**ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN**

**ARCHEOLOGIST**

**OTHER**

**HAER**

Inventory \_\_\_\_\_

Review \_\_\_\_\_

**REVIEW UNIT CHIEF**

*accept  
Grosvena  
5/28/80*

**BRANCH CHIEF**

**KEEPER**

National Register Write-up \_\_\_\_\_

Send-back \_\_\_\_\_

Entered MAY 29 1980

Federal Register Entry 2.3.81

Re-submit \_\_\_\_\_



HOTEL

HOTEL  
RINGGOLD

HOTEL  
RINGGOLD

HOTEL

HOTEL  
RINGGOLD

*Labadie House, Store and Hotel*

MAY 29 1980

Ringgold Hotel

601 E. Main Street

Rio Grande City, Starr County, Texas

Photo: Jim Merritt, Texas Historical Comm.

6/30/73; Negative on File at Comm.

Resurveyed 1/7/80; unchanged

Southwest Oblique; camera facing northeast

Photo # 1 of 3

MAR 31 1990



HOTEL  
RINGGOLD

*La Borda House, Store and Hotel* MAY 29 1980

Ringgold Hotel  
601 E. Main Street  
Rio Grande City, Starr County, Texas  
Photo: Jim Merritt, Texas Historical Comm.  
6/30/73; Negative on File at Comm.  
Resurveyed 1/7/80; unchanged  
South Elevation;;camera facing northeast  
Photo # 2 of 3

MAR 31 1980



*Lalberde House, Store and Hotel*

MAY 29 1980

Ringgold Hotel

601 E. Main Street

Rio Grande City, Starr County, Texas

Photo: Jim Merritt, Texas Historical Comm.

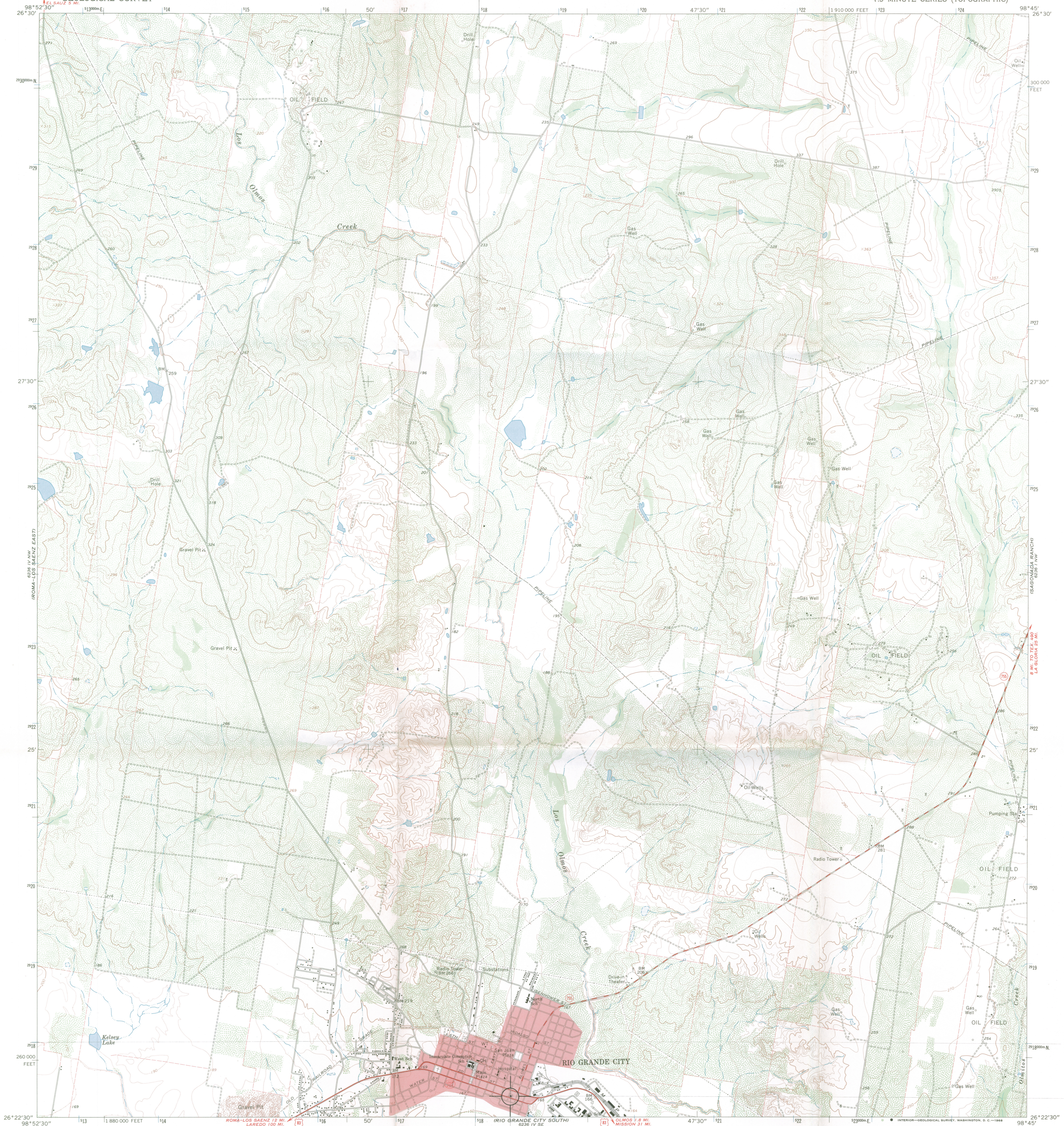
6/30/73; Negative on File at Comm.

Resurveyed 1/7/80; unchanged

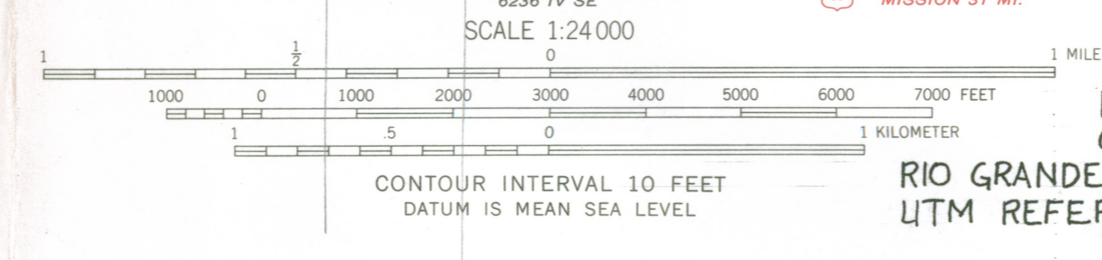
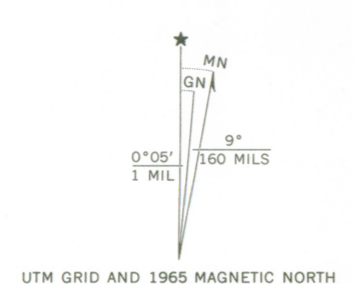
Interior Courtyard

Photo # 3 of 3

MAR 31 1980



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and International Boundary  
and Water Commission  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial  
photographs taken 1964. Field checked 1965  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,  
south zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 14, shown in blue  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark  
buildings are shown  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines



RINGGOLD HOTEL  
601 E. MAIN  
RIO GRANDE CITY, STARR COUNTY, TEXAS  
UTM REFERENCE: 14518419/2917919

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

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

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

2698-234

RIO GRANDE CITY NORTH, TEX.  
N2622.5—W9845.7  
1965  
AMS 6236 IV NE—SERIES 1965  
RECEIVED  
MAR 31 1980  
NATIONAL  
REGISTER  
MAY 29 1980

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE TEXAS

Date Entered

MAY 29 1980

Name

Location

Link House

Palestine  
Anderson County

LaBorde House, Store and Hotel

Rio Grande City  
Starr County

Also Notified

Honorable Lloyd Bentsen

Honorable John G. Tower  
Honorable Charles Wilson  
Honorable E. (Kika) De La Garza

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 6/5/80

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.