

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received AUG 25 1983  
date entered SEP 22 1983

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

1. Name

historic Brown County Jail

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 401 West Broadway N/A not for publication

city, town Brownwood N/A vicinity of congressional district

state Texas code 048 county Brown code 049

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name Brown County

street & number County Courthouse

city, town Brownwood N/A vicinity of state Texas 76801

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Brown County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Brownwood state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

(1) Recorded Texas Historic Landmark  
title (2) Texas Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
(1) 1963  
date (2) 1983  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Texas Historical Commission

city, town Austin state Texas

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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 <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Brown County Jail, constructed in 1902-1903, is a three-story, stone masonry structure built over a partial basement. The castle-like structure is superior to most late 19th- and early 20th-century American jails. As a strong statement of the consequences of breaking the law and the certainty of subsequent incarceration, the Brown County Jail is a significant public building because of the clarity of its architectural style (and stylistic origins), as well as the integration of load-bearing stone masonry construction with an evolving jail hardware.

The Brown County Jail is located diagonally across from the Brown County Courthouse, in central Brownwood. Neighboring buildings are generally older commercial structures, some of which retain their turn-of-the-century character intact.

The plan of the castle-like stone jail is that of a rectangle, with the addition of a central, projecting, front section with turret. The ground floor had the Sheriff's office on the east and jailer's quarters on the west, while the upper stories feature cells of varied sizes.

The Brown County Jail is richly textured and strongly detailed. It is constructed of rock-faced, coursed ashlar, local brown sandstone of coarse grain, laid in 10½-inch horizontal courses with 3/8-inch extruded mortar joints. The stone is closely fitted and the pitch-faced stonework is in sharp contrast to the 5-inch, scored horizontal bands which extend continuously around the building at each floor level and at transition points between architectural elements. The side walls below the gables have capped stepped parapets, and projecting corbelled turrets occur at the southwest and southeast corners of the building, as well as on the southwest corner of the tower which rises along the south facade of the jail. Parapets at the eaves and around the tower are crenelated, and project out over rusticated and dentiled horizontal cornice bands. The tower rises above the roof line and has a crenelated parapet and large corner turret. An observation room at the top of the tower projects over a bracketed arch frieze. The walls of the observation room are billeted on all four sides, and above them window openings contain smooth-shaft, tapered columns with modified Ionic capitals.

The exterior surface of the building is rich in architectural details. The main entrances to the jail are through arched openings in Romanesque style with expressed, articulated voussiors. Window openings have stone lintels above them which are two full masonry courses high. The base of the building is splayed out from the line of the first-floor window sill to the ground, and provides a visually strong lower section to balance the heavy rustication and strong verticality of the rest of the building. Windows have one-over-one, double-hung sashes and are set in behind vertical bars.

The roof of the building consists of a long gabled portion which extends the length of the structure and is steeply pitched (11/12). Intersecting the main gable is a gabled roof of lesser pitch (3/12) which runs south to a stepped parapet adjacent to the tower. The roof of the main gable was originally covered with slate but is now covered with diagonal asphalt shingles. The intersecting roof is intact and is covered by standing-seam ternmetal installed in short pans. Gutters run parallel to the length of the building behind the parapets.

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Structurally, the Brown County Jail utilizes 18 inch-thick, load-bearing masonry walls for vertical support. Floors are constructed of composite concrete and steel elements. Used extensively in jails and in other fireproof buildings until the early twentieth century, the system consists of 7½ by ¾-inch I-beams about 3 feet on center which, in the jail, reach a maximum span of about 28 feet. Corrugated sheet iron is compressed between sections of steel and bows upwards to create a structural vault with a depth of about 6 inches. Concrete was then poured over the assembly to create a modular structural bay with a critical section depth of 11 inches. The structural system of the floor is able to support heavy dead loads, as evidenced by the massive jail cells and hardware which have been accommodated for 80 years with no indication of structural failure. The roof of the building is framed with wood rafters and decking.

The interior of the jail is organized to house a sheriff's office and jail keeper's apartment on the first floor; the upper floors of the building are dedicated exclusively to jail use. For security, the residential functions on the first floor are separated from the first-floor access to the upper jail functions by heavy steel doors. The first floor is typically turn-of-the-century in its finishes and detailing. Walls are plastered and doors and windows are trimmed with painted wooden moldings. The floors, originally scored concrete, have been covered with various finishes such as carpet and vinyl asbestos tile over the years. The ceiling consists of the exposed steel and corrugated sheet-metal structural system. Doors have operable transoms for air circulation.

The second and third floors house the jail cells and consist of east and west wings about a central circulation core. A mezzanine level is located between the floors and houses "circulation" in the central core and cells in the east wing. The cell arrangement reflects the need for different levels of security and prisoner groupings, and ranges from large cell blocks to smaller individual and two-person cells. A solitary confinement cell of solid sheet steel and a trap door in the steel floor for executions by hanging complete the operational hardware of the jail.

The arrangement of cells and the segregation of prisoners according to security needs reflects various aspects of prison reform in the United States in the 19th century. The Auburn Cell-Block System, which served as the model for most American prisons, separated cell blocks from the buildings around them. In essence, the building acted as a shell and the cell blocks were discrete elements inside the building. The arrangement of the Brown County Jail is derived from the Auburn System, and is modified or scaled down to function on the county level.

The most significant landscape feature associated with the jail is the low, rusticated stone wall which is surmounted by an ornamental iron fence punctuated by a series of elegantly detailed posts. The wall and fence, which were completed in November 1903, are stylistically consistent with the jail itself, and serve not only to enclose the jail property but also to integrate the building visually with the adjoining streetscape.

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Changes to the jail during its eighty-year history have been remarkably few. The slate roof was removed and asphalt shingles were applied, openings in the tower on either side of the Ionic columns were blocked up, and interior finishes were altered. Tile and linoleum were laid on the floors and the walls were painted. Other changes have occurred in response to the demands of state jail codes, causing the rearrangement of cells, the pouring of new concrete floors in limited areas, and the installation of new locking devices and new types of steel bars. Such changes are indicative of advances made in the technical field of locking devices and metallurgy by businesses such as the Pauly Jail Building and Manufacturing Company of St. Louis and the Southern Steel Company of San Antonio.

## 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) incarceration

**Specific dates** 1902, 1903

**Builder/Architect** Martin, Moodie & Co.; Youngblood Bros.

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Brown County Jail, constructed in 1902 and 1903, exemplifies the principles which governed jail design in America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Designed and constructed by two of the leading jail companies in the South--Youngblood Brothers of Troy, Alabama; and Martin, Moodie & Co. of Comanche, Texas--the Brown County jail successfully assured the local population of their safety from various "lawless elements" while simultaneously conveying physical strength, impregnability, and the seriousness of incarceration to those who were imprisoned there. It was the first jail constructed in Texas by Youngblood Brothers, a firm which operates today as the Southern Steel Company, and which provided the equipment for many of America's largest prisons such as Riker's Island, New York. Architecturally, the Brown County Jail is one of the most significant turn-of-the-century jails in Texas.

Brown County, located near the geographical center of Texas, was created in 1856 and named in honor of Captain Henry S. Brown, a member of Green C. DeWitt's colony and a delegate from Gonzales to the Convention of 1832 at San Felipe de Austin. Settlement of the county was slow, due largely to its proximity to the Comanche frontier, and a chaotic period of lawlessness lasted well into the 1880s. Perhaps in response to this chaos, the county authorized construction of its first jail in 1876, a structure which was located at the corner of North Fiske and Water streets.

In March 1880, the jail and nearby courthouse burned and all county records were lost. Subsequently, commissioners contracted with Martin, Byrne & Johnston in 1881, and this prominent firm completed a new Brown County Jail.

By 1901, the commissioners decided that the 1881 jail was insufficient for the county's needs. In an election held in December, voters authorized the issuance of \$30,000 in bonds and the county took steps to acquire Block 9 of Brownwood proper from Brook Smith and the Brownwood Ice and Light Co. Simultaneously, the commissioners published a notice in the Dallas Daily News in which they requested that jail contractors submit plans, specifications, and bids by February 6, 1902, for the erection of a stone or brick fire-proof jail furnished with the latest improved steel cells and all other modern improvements.

A number of jail contractors bid on the Brown County Jail, and commissioners spent almost three days considering the alternatives. On February 6, they accepted the low bid of \$24,925.60, awarding the contract to the firm of Martin, Moodie & Co. of Comanche, Texas, in partnership with Youngblood Bros. of Troy, Alabama, and appointed local architect and contractor William Hood as the superintendant of construction.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Ashley, Joe B. Reminiscences concerning the Brown County Jail. Recorded for the Brown County Museum of History, January 31, 1983, and filed there.  
Carnes, Virginia Morton. Interview with Virginia M. Carnes by M. Freeman, March 9, 1975, Brownwood, Texas.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Brownwood, Texas

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	4	5	0	1	8	6	0	3	5	0	9	6	2	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

### Verbal boundary description and justification

All of Block 9, Brownwood Proper.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martha Doty Freeman and Joe C. Freeman

organization Walker, Doty & Freeman

date May 26, 1983

street & number 506<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> W. 7th

telephone (512) 478-1316

city or town Austin

state Texas 78701

## 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 State Historic Preservation Officer

date 19 Aug. 1983

For NPS use only

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

Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 9/22/83

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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A plethora of experience and talent was represented within the party that assembled to design, construct, and superintend the jail project. William Martin, senior partner in the Comanche firm, was born in Jefferson County, Indiana, on November 10, 1845. He came to Texas in 1870 and settled in Comanche County. In partnership with Dave C. Byrne and John S. Johnston, he built various jails and courthouses in Bastrop, Comanche, Columbus, Caldwell, Goliad, Matagorda, Fayette, and Victoria counties. He was a member of the firm of Martin, Holderness & Oates at one time, and a prominent member of Comanche's banking community.

In about 1895, Martin formed a business with Peter Moodie, a local contractor who was born in Glasgow, Scotland, on October 12, 1843, and who trained as a stonemason before emigrating to the United States in 1864. Moodie traveled extensively in the West and Midwest before settling in Hearne, Texas, where he built railroad shops and buildings for the Texas and Pacific Railroad Company. Later, he was involved in the construction of courthouses in Cherokee, Jasper, Red River, Montgomery, and Hood counties, and built the courthouse in Shreveport, Louisiana. He constructed the Carnegie Library and Central Fire Station in Houston, and Simmons College at Abilene. His partnership with William Martin yielded such buildings as the Brown and Comanche County jails and the McCulloch County Courthouse.

The Brown County Jail was only one among many structures erected by Martin & Moodie. But it was the first such building constructed in Texas by their partners, the Youngblood Brothers. Based in Troy, Alabama, James Algernon, David F. and George Lester Youngblood had worked for the Pauly Jail Company in St. Louis. They returned to Troy where they invented a number of pieces of equipment such as the portable cage. By 1900, they looked to Texas, hoping to expand their trade area, and David Youngblood made contact with Martin & Moodie in Comanche. The two firms associated for the purpose of building the Brown County Jail.

The choice of an irregular castellated style for the structure is of particular interest. Late 18th- and early 19th-century English architects such as Robert Adam and James Wyatt began to shift from rational architecture to more irregular and Romantic styles. The Victorian era saw a great revival of castle building in Britain, as witnessed by the construction of Queen Victoria's Scottish Baronial home, Balmoral. Americans, ever eager to follow European trends in architecture, built few domestic castles, but adapted that style to public buildings and to jails in particular. Most such Texas jails seem to have been relatively sedate, symmetrical structures with crenellation added as an afterthought. The Brown County Jail, however, has a very robust, sculptural quality indicating a degree of architectural sophistication beyond that of most contemporaneous Texas jails. The influence of the German-born founders of the Pauly Jail Building and Manufacturing Company, and the Scottish-born contractor Peter Moodie, apparently combined to create this extraordinary, castellated, Romanesque jail. The simplification of form and influence of local building materials indicate an interesting Americanization of the European precedent. Curiously, Martin and Moodie built an identical jail in adjoining Comanche County, which unfortunately had its upper floors removed.

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Construction of the jail was supervised by local contractor William Hood who, with Tom Lovell, had designed and constructed St. John's Episcopal Church in Brownwood (National Register, 1979), and with Lovell and Miller had built the Hill County Courthouse. Labor probably came from Comanche and Brownwood where an abundance of Scottish and English stonemasons worked regularly on Martin & Moodie's projects.

Work began soon after the contract was signed, and the foundation was completed by April 21, 1902. A complaint by the commissioners in August that little work had been done over the summer resulted in the completion of the first story up to the I-beams by October 4, completion of the stonework and preparation of the building for the roof by January 29, 1903, installation of the roof by early March, and acceptance of the jail by the Commissioner's Court on June 29. Local stonemason Al Morton completed his work of filling the jail yard and building a stone wall around the perimeter of the building, while L.S. Leversedge & Son of Dallas erected an iron fence with posts and gates on top of the coping.

The history of the building after 1903 was relatively uneventful. Increasingly, however, complaints were heard about the difficulty of modifying the structure. Eventually, the inability of the county to alter the jail so that it would conform to state standards resulted in the construction of a new jail in 1981 and the decision by the county to lease the old jail to the Brown County Historical Society for adaptation as a local history museum.

Today, the Brown County Jail is one of the most visually arresting structures in west-central Texas, and one of the most successful expressions of the era in Texas jail building when prisons conveyed sensations of fortress-like strength and romantic Medieval military traditions. The building is also significant because it is the first Texas jail built by the Youngblood Brothers, a firm which incorporated as The Southern Structural Steel Company and became one of the most prolific manufacturers in the United States. Finally, the building achieves significance as the generator of a number of important research topics concerning the little-explored history of contracting and jail-building companies in Texas, the little-understood relationship between such companies and various Texas architects, and the far-reaching influence of the Pauly Jail Building and Manufacturing Company of St. Louis on jail design and construction throughout the United States.

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- The Comanche Chief. Regular editions and special edition of March 14, 1903.
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Anniston, Alabama: Higgenbotham, Inc., 1973.
- Hammond, C.M. Making Prison Equipment in Texas, The Texas Weekly, 9, (July 8, 1933), 8-9.
- Handbook of Correctional Institution Design and Construction. Washington: United States  
Bureau of Prisons, 1949.
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tural Steel Company.
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Texas.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Brown County Jail  
Brown County  
TEXAS

AUG 25 1983

Working No. \_\_\_\_\_

Fed. Reg. Date: 2-7-84

Date Due: 9/22/83 - 10/9/83

Action:  ACCEPT 9/22/83

RETURN \_\_\_\_\_

REJECT \_\_\_\_\_

Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: \_\_\_\_\_ technical corrections cited below  
\_\_\_\_\_ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

<b>Condition</b> <input type="checkbox"/> excellent <input type="checkbox"/> good <input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> ruins <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<b>Check one</b> <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered <input type="checkbox"/> altered	<b>Check one</b> <input type="checkbox"/> original site <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

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**8. Significance**

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_\_ state      \_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

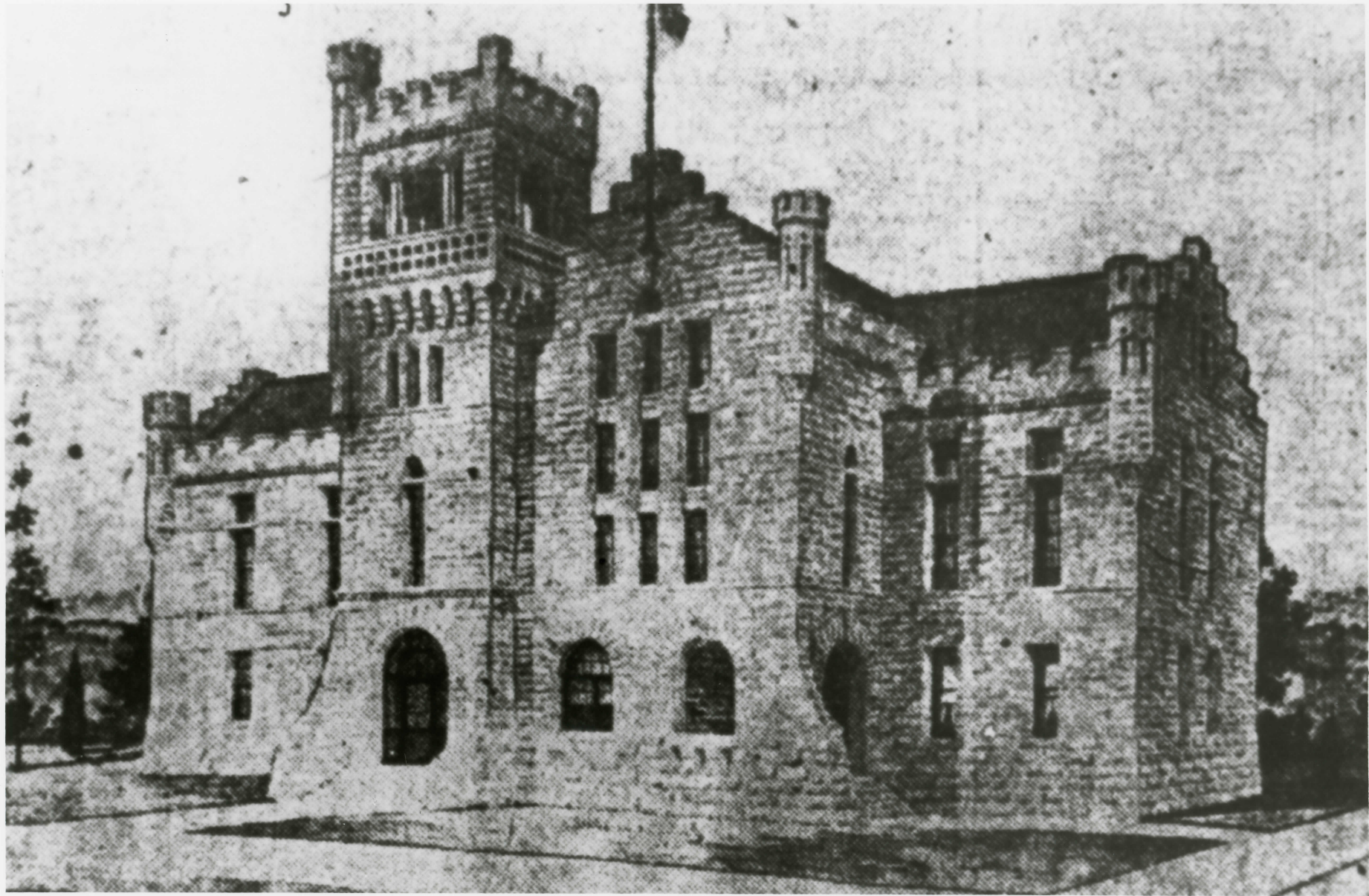
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**13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



Brown County Jail

401 Brownwood, Brown County, Brownwood, Texas

Photo from the Dallas Morning News, June 7, 1903,  
p. 23: on file with Walker, Doty, & Freeman,  
506½ West 7th, Austin

Oblique View of main elevation, looking northwest

Photo 1 of 4



ONE  
WAY

NO  
LEFT  
ENTER

Brown County Jail  
401 Broadway, Brownwood, Brown County, Texas

Photo by M. Freeman, May 1983; neg. on file with  
Walker, Doty & Freeman, 506½ West 7th, Austin

Oblique View of Main Elevation, looking northwest

Photo 2 of 4



Brown County Jail  
401 Broadway, Brownwood, Brown County, Texas

Photo by M. Freeman, May 1983; neg. on file with  
Walker, Doty & Freeman, 506½ West 7th, Austin

View of main entrance, looking north

Photo 3 of 4



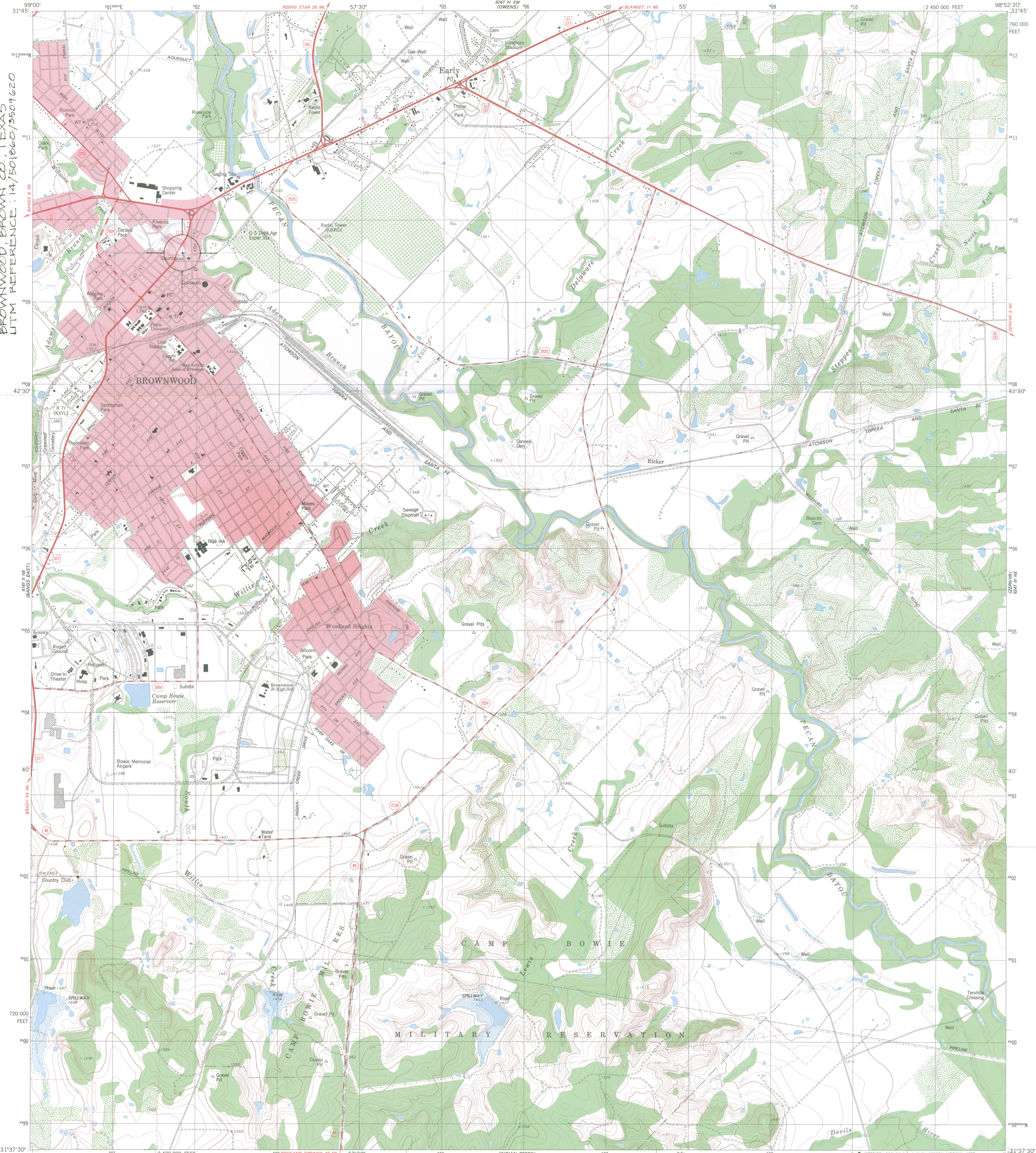
Brown County Jail  
401 Broadway, Brownwood, Brown County, Texas

Photo by M. Freeman, May 1983; neg. on file with  
Walker, Doty & Freeman, 506½ West 7th, Austin

Oblique view of rear (north) elevation, looking  
southwest

Photo 4 of 4

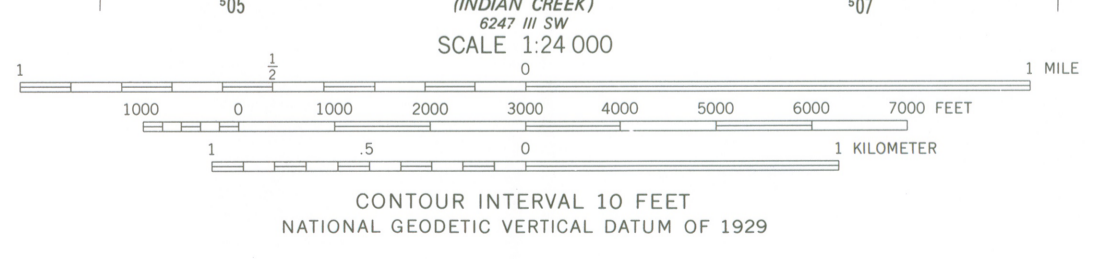
BROWN COUNTY JAIL  
401 WEST BROADWAY  
BROWNWOOD, BROWN CO., TEXAS  
UTM REFERENCE: 14J501860/35091620



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1975. Field checked 1976. Map edited 1980  
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks. Texas coordinate system, central zone (Lambert conformal conic) 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 14 1927 North American datum  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 13 meters south and 31 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks  
Areas covered by dashed light-blue pattern are subject to controlled inundation  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map



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

BROWNWOOD, TEX.  
NW/4 ZEPHYR 15' QUADRANGLE  
N3137.5—W9852.57.5  
1980  
DMA 6247 III NW—SERIES 4882