

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

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

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number A11

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3. Name: Farmers Union Gin Company

Location: 120 Grove Street

Classification: Category - building; Ownership - private; Status - work in progress;
Accessible - yes, unrestricted; Present use - commercial (restaurant)

Owner of property: Randall Morris, William Crook, H. Arlan Connors
c/o Randall Morris and Associates
216 North Street
San Marcos, Texas 78666

Description: Condition - good; Altered; Original site

Next to the MKT tracks in the town's industrial area is the Farmers Union Gin Company building. The complex centers on a rectangular, buff-brick building under a gabled, corrugated-tin roof. This was the ginning room, built 1910-11. Five windows with six-over-six lights under brown-brick, segmental arches connected by a string course, and a nine-pane roundel, also framed by brown brick, add elegance to the south facade. A round metal stack, capped by a cone, protrudes above the roofline. On this facade's west end the original sliding door is in place under a metal canopy that shelters the scales.

As built, the north facade generally echoed the south. Its exterior wall became an interior one when a red-brick building was erected to house a third battery during the early 1920s. The east facade includes another sliding door and a second string course. The west end was enclosed by late 1920s construction for the coal room. Utilitarian structures toward the northwest were auxiliary to the gin's operation and date from the same general period.

The interior is naturally, unadorned, but does show the building's character. Iron trusses support the gin-room roof; there is no ceiling. Wooden posts 5 inches square brace the walls. The walls' double thickness is evident by the absence of segmental arches on the interior; the windows display flat wooden lintels. Concrete, reputed to be of an extraordinary hardness, supports the heavy equipment and remains intact.

Just southwest of the main building is a small structure with a hipped, metal roof that protected the cotton wagons. It and the aforementioned attached buildings should all be considered "contributing," but vary in their significance.

Rehabilitation is planned as a restaurant.

Significance: Period - 1900- : Areas of significance - architecture, industry.
Specific dates - 1910-1911.

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For about 50 years, cotton was a mainstay of the Hays County economy. Central to the industry was the Farmers Union Gin Company of San Marcos. It was housed in a utilitarian building made handsome with Victorian string courses, arched windows, and polychrome decoration.

In 1908, five area farmers bought five acres of land on the MKT line. They convinced Oscar Calvin Smith, Sr., whose father had owned a gin in nearby Waelder, to organize a local facility. In 1909 the property was conveyed to the Farmers Union Gin Company, which was in full and prosperous operation by that summer in an iron building already on the site.

A fire in 1910 destroyed the metal structure but spared the Murray-Corliss Steam Engine that ran until 1966 and is now in an Alamo, Texas, Steam Engine Museum. Oscar Smith rebuilt in 1910-1911 in brick on a scale three times the size of the earlier structure that allowed three bales to be ginned at once. The gin's location in the heart of town and near the cotton buyer's yard and cotton seed mill ensured its success. It was the hub of a highly efficient and modernized complex that saw the raw material and by-product fully processed and shipped in a smooth series of operations. In addition to the extensive ginning operation, the Farmers Union Company sold out-of-state coal to local residents. A further company diversification was the construction from junked Model T parts of early motorized chassis for cotton transport.

Smith eventually bought out the original investors and continued the business in 1931 as O.C. Smith and Company. He was a city councilman and mayor. His son Max was in the Texas Legislature and was elected Hays County judge. Another son, Edwin, ran the gin from 1948-1966. Calvin and Gwenolyn, the other children, distinguished themselves in the field of education.

With the decline of cotton production, the gin became quieter, and was the last in Hays County to close, in 1966. The building is being rehabilitated as an eating place, appropriately named the Farmers Union Company Restaurant.

Bibliography:

Interviews with Gwen Smith and Edwin Smith, May 26, 1982.

Kathleen M. Morris. "The Farmers Union Gin Company:", unpublished monograph on file at the San Marcos Public Library. A full bibliography is appended to this monograph.

Geographical data: Acreage - approximately one acre
UTM reference - 14 / 602330 / 3305330

Verbal Boundary Description - The nominated property is roughly a triangle, the westernmost angle of which is at a telephone pole 65 yards west of the Grove Street-Hull Street intersection. The northern boundary runs from the telephone pole along the rear wall of the rearmost building, and is stated on the property plat as "N 53° 00' 00" E" and measures 339.94 ft. The eastern boundary, 182.68 ft., is stated as "S 36° 00' 39" E" Returning to the telephone pole, the southern boundary reads "S 83° 00' 00" W" (measuring 49.17 ft.) and "S 81° 15' 00" W" (measuring 333.98 ft.), making the total southern measurement 383.15 ft. Includes main and auxiliary buildings.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Farmers Union Gin Company (San Marcos MRA)
Hays County
TEXAS

Working No. 7-14-83
Fed. Reg. Date: 2.7.84
Date Due: 8/11/83 - 8/28/83
Action: ACCEPT 8/26/83
 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	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property _____

5. Location of Legal Description _____

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	
	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	
	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

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

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

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

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



Historic Resources of San Marcos
San Marcos, Hays County, Texas
#3. Farmers Union Gin Company

Photo courtesy of Randall Morris, taken c.
1919-1920. Copy photo by Sally S. Victor,
July, 1982.

Negative property of HASM, on file at SMPL.
Southeast oblique, camera facing northwest.
Photo 13 of 150.



Historic Resources of San Marcos
San Marcos, Hays County, Texas
#3. Farmers Union Gin Company.

Photo by Lissa Anderson, June, 1982.
Negative property of HASM, on file at SMPL.

Southeast oblique, camera facing northwest.
Photo 14 of 150.



Historic Resources of San Marcos
San Marcos, Hays County, Texas
#3. Farmers Union Gin Company

Photo by Lissa Anderson, June, 1982.
Negative property of HASM, on file at SMPL.

West facade, camera facing east.
Photo 15 of 150.



Historic Resources of San Marcos
San Marcos, Hays County, Texas
#3. Farmers Union Gin Company

Photo by Lissa Anderson, June, 1982.
Negative property of HASM, on file at SMPL.

Northwest oblique, camera facing southeast.
Photo 16 of 150.

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000853