## **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 Conners

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 equiptment 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.

WASO Form - 177 ("R" June 1984)

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

	diff company (San Marcos Min	A)		
Hays County				
TEXAS				
			Working No. <u>7-/4-83</u>	
			Fed. Reg. Date: 217.84  Date Due: 8/11/83-8/28/83	
			Date Due:8/11/83 - 8/28/83	
			Action:ACCEPT 8/2-6/83	
resubmission		Unifored	in theRETURN	
	son or local government		1 Register REJECT	
owner objection	John of Total government	No. O. LOMA	Federal Agency:	
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Substantive Review:	sample request	appeal	☐ NR decision	
Reviewer's comments:		Contract the second		
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			Discipline	
			Date	
			see continuation sheet	
			VIETE STATE	
Nomination returned for	or:technical corrections cited belo			
	substantive reasons discussed b	elow		
1. Name				
2. Location				
0.01.10.1				
3. Classification				
Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
	Public Acquisition	Accessible		
		1 3		
4. Owner of Property				
		1600	10 NO	
5. Location of Legal Description				
			Who are a statement to the way of the same	
6. Representation in E				
Has this property been	determined eligible?	no no		
7. D				
7. Description				
Condition	Char	ck one	Check one	
		unaltered	original site	
excellent		altered		
good		artereu	☐ moved date	
fair	unexposed			
Describe the present on	d original (if known) physical appearance			
Describe the present an	d original (if known) physical appearance			
П .				
summary paragraph				
completeness				
clarity				
alterations/integrity				
dates				
boundary selection				

8. Significance	ASSAURT CONT.
Period Areas of Significance—Check and justify below	
Specific dates Builder/Architect	
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)	
	Farmers Brion (the Company (San Harcos MAA)
summary paragraph	Haya County
completeness	A MAY
□ 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 Control of the Co
The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:	
national state local	
State Historic Preservation Officer signature	
title date	
13. Other	
	Service Control of the Control of th
Maps	
Photographs	
Other	The second secon
Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to	The state of the s
Signed Date	Phone:



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.

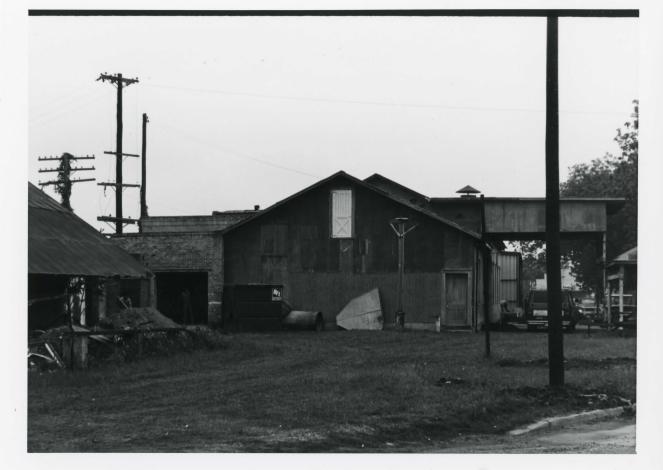
Negative property of HASM, on file at SMPL. Southeast oblique, camera facing northwest. Photo 13 of 150.



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.

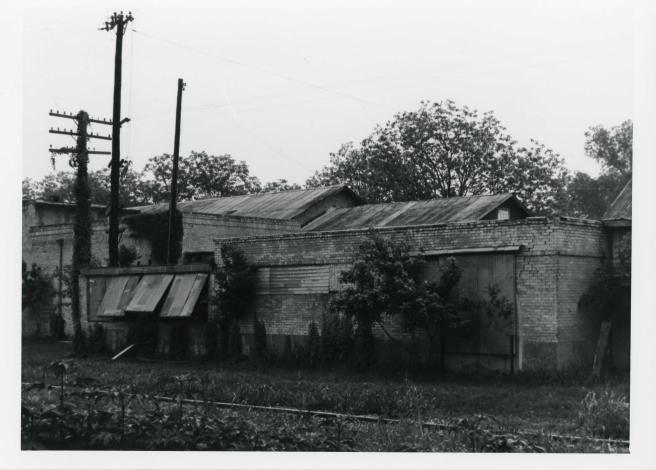
Southeast oblique, camera facing northwest. Photo 14 of 150.



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