NPS Form 10-900 (Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



NATIONAL

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property		
historic name <u>Hamilton Hotel</u>		
other names/site number N/A		
2. Location		
street & number 815 Salinas Street		N/A not for publication
city or townLaredo		N 🕰 vicinity
stateTexas codeTX _ county	Webb	code479 zip code78040_
3. State/Federal Agency Certification		
□ request for determination of eligibility meets the documen Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional re □ meets □ does not meet the National Register criteria. It is nationally □ statewide □ locally. (□ See continuation is Signature of certifying official/Title □ State Historic Preservation Officer State of Federal agency and bureau  In my opinion, the property □ meets □ does not meet the comments.)	quirements set forth in 36 CFR P. ecommend that this property be disheet for additional comments.)  Date  Texas Historical Comments.	art 60. In my opinion, the property considered significant ommission
Signature of certifying official/Title	Date	
State or Federal agency and bureau		
4. National Park Service Certification		tered in the
I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	tional Register Date of Action
entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.	Clara Byen	4/14/92
☐ determined eligible for the  National Register  ☐ See continuation sheet.	O .	,
determined not eligible for the National Register.	_	
removed from the National Register.		
other, (explain:)		

Hamilton	Hotel	
Name of Proper	rty	_

Webb	County,	Texas	
County ar		A CONTRACT OF THE PARTY OF THE	

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Numbe (Do not in	r of Res	ources within Prope viously listed resources in	rty the count.)
☑ private	□ building(s)	Contribu	uting	Noncontributing	
□ public-local	district	1		0	buildings
<ul><li>□ public-State</li><li>□ public-Federal</li></ul>	□ site □ structure	0	A Joseph	0	sites
	□ object	0		0	structure
		0	Study 10	0	objects
		1	use the same	0	Total
Name of related multiple p (Enter "N/A" if property is not part	or operty listing of a multiple property listing.)			tributing resources p Register	previously listed
N/A		N/A		William William W.	
6. Function or Use					- Callery
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current F			
Domestic: Hotel				de: Business	
7. Description Architectural Classification		Materials			
(Enter categories from instructions)		(Enter catego			
Mission/Spanish Colo	nial Revival	foundation	conc	erete	
production and the second tells		walls	brio	ek .	
The state of the s	y Charge Byte y 1968 - 1972 and the Calabora	roof	tile		
				e, stucco, cast	

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets 7-1 and 7-2.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number <sup>7</sup>	Page1	Hamilton Hotel Laredo, Webb County, Texas	
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Description:

The Hamilton Hotel is a masonry Spanish Renaissance Revival hotel with a roughly rectangular plan and a flat roof; the less dominant, 7-story block on the north side was constructed in 1923, while the main, 13-story block on the south side was constructed in 1927-1928. The foundation is concrete and the exterior walls are light red brick with decorative tile and stucco. Interior detailing, particularly in the first floor lobby, also reflects the Spanish influence. Approximately two blocks west of the Webb County Courthouse, the Hamilton Hotel overlooks Jarvis Plaza near the center of the business district. The building faces west on Salinas Street and is bounded by Houston Street to the north, an alley to the east and Matamoros Street to the south. In excellent physical condition, the Hamilton Hotel retains a high level of architectural and historical integrity.

Webb County is in southwest Texas on the south plains, across the Rio Grande from Mexico. Topographical features in this area are characteristic of the interior lowlands; the county's rolling terrain is covered with brush. The area surrounding the Hamilton Hotel exhibits topographical features common to South Texas settlement. Laredo (1990 population 116,698), on the north bank of the Rio Grande, serves as county seat and as the region's economic hub, based on agribusiness, manufacturing, and service industries. The central business district follows a strict rectilinear plan laid out on the cardinal directions, and is generally flat with little variation. The building was advantageously placed at the northeast corner of Jarvis Plaza, the focal point of several important local buildings including the 1906 Federal Building, just blocks away from the intersection of several railroad tracks. (See USGS map.)

The 1927-1928 main building's form is that of a 3-part vertical block. Its 2-story base at the south and west facades is heavily ornamented (see Photograph 1). Although the original store fronts have been altered, round brick arches with keystones, above the elaborate copper marquee, mark the original fenestration pattern. Surrounding these arches and on the 2nd level are glazed tile and mosaic panels that depict flora and fauna (see Photograph 2).

The eight stories of the midsection shaft bear 4/4 wood windows with vertical muntins; these windows provide a continuous rhythm around the building that accentuates verticality. Above each window on the south facade is a spandrel of ornamental stucco and tile, these spandrels are also above each window on the three northernmost and southernmost bays of the west facade.

Stylized tile pilasters delineate the bays on the 3-story "capital" of the main building. Round arches surmount the upper row of windows above which the flora and fauna glazed tile and mosaic panels continue. Similar 1-story, square towers delineate the northwest and southwest corners at the peak of the building. Each has a red barrel tile roof and small 2-story octagonal tower. A stucco wall acts as parapet with brick coping. Cast stone pinnacles, balconies, and oriel bays further decorate the parapet (see Photograph 3).

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number7	Page 2	Hamilton Hotel		
		ge	Laredo, Webb County, Texas	

Neither the east nor the north facades of the main building bear such detailed ornamentation, but each has 2/2 wood windows, continuing a vertical rhythm (see Photograph 4). The north facade abuts the 1923 (south) block of the building.

The south block of the building follows the form of a 2-part vertical block. The foundation is concrete and the exterior walls are yellow brick (see Photograph 5). The north and west facades exhibit modest ornamentation. Some of the original store front windows have been altered, but the elaborate copper marquee above continues along the west facade from the 1927-1928 main building. Above the marquee is a cast stone belt course that wraps around to the north facade. The six upper stories of the west facade have rows of paired 6/1 wood windows, while the upper stories of the north and east facades have rows of single 6/1 wood windows. A brick cornice with dentils tops the parapet.

Alterations have not obscured all of the original elaborate ornamentation of the interior public spaces in the Hamilton Hotel. The terrazzo floors and ornamental tile chair rail provide a sense of the lobby's earlier adornment, as does elliptical vaulting with plaster ribs stained to imitate wood (see Photograph 6). Elevators installed in 1924 still survive. Later alterations include enclosing previously open space, such as the ballroom and sample rooms. A noticeable exterior modification is the removal of original storefront windows; however, this disturbance does not detract from the overall distinction of the building. The Hamilton Hotel conveys its significance through its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Record #\_

Webb	County,	Texas
webb	country,	rexas

County and State

8. St	atement of Significance	The second secon
(Mark	cable National Register Criteria  "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property tional Register listing.)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) Architecture
□ A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	Architecture
□В	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.	
⊠ C	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.	Period of Significance
□ <b>D</b>	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	1927-1928
	ria Considerations N/A "x" in all the boxes that apply.)	Significant Dates
Prope	erty is:	1927-1928
	owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	
□В	removed from its original location.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A
□С	a birthplace or grave.	
	a cemetery.	Cultural Affiliation N/A
	a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	
□ <b>F</b>	a commemorative property.	
□ G	less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.	Architect/Builder Ayres, Atlee B.
		Ayres, Robert M.
	ative Statement of Significance See Continuation Sin the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)	heets 8-3 through 8-5.
	ajor Bibliographical References	
	ography See Continuation Sheet 9-6. he books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one	e or more continuation sheets.)
Previ	ous documentation on file (NPS): N/A	Primary location of additional data:
	preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested previously listed in the National Register previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic Landmark	<ul> <li> ☒ State Historic Preservation Office</li> <li>☐ Other State agency</li> <li>☐ Federal agency</li> <li>☐ Local government</li> <li>☐ University</li> <li>☐ Other</li> </ul>
	recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	Name of repository:
	recorded by Historic American Engineering	Texas Historical Commission, Austin, TX

Hamilton Hotel Name of Property	Webb County and	County, Texas
10. Geographical Data	County und	2
10. Geograpinour Data		
Acreage of Property 1ess than one acre		
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)		
1 1 4 4 9 8 6 0 3 0 4 2 4 6 0  Zone Easting Northing 2	3 Zone 4 L	Easting Northing  e continuation sheet
<b>Verbal Boundary Description</b> See Continuation Sheet 3 (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)	LO-7.	
<b>Boundary Justification</b> See Continuation Sheet 10-(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)	-7.	
11. Form Prepared By		
name/title Amy E. Dase, Historian, Texas Historical	Commission	(with research by Gloria Cansec
organization Webb County Heritage Foundation, Inc.	date	March, 1990; October, 1991
street & number P.O. Drawer 29	telephone	512/727-0977
city or town Laredo	state _TX	zip code78042
Additional Documentation		
Submit the following items with the completed form:		
Continuation Sheets		
Maps		
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the pro	perty's location.	
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having	large acreage or	r numerous resources.
Photographs		

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner	
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)	
name _ Hamilton Historic Hotel, Inc.	
street & number815 Salinas Street	telephone512/723-7421
city or townLaredo	state TX zip code 78040

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _	8	Page3	Hamilton Hotel Laredo, Webb County, Texas	
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Statement of Significance:

The Hamilton Hotel, constructed in phases between 1923 and 1928, is an exceptional example of a Spanish Renaissance Revival building in downtown Laredo. The building, bearing skillful treatment of form, scale and ornamentation, meets Criterion C in the area of Architecture as one of the best illustrations of commercial design in the city and as the work of master architects Atlee B. and Robert M. Ayres.

Prior to its official organization, the Webb County area had been under Mexican rule, part of the state of Tamaulipas. In the 14 May 1836 Treaty of Velasco the Republic of Texas claimed the area. Permanent Anglo-American settlement began about 1845 following statehood. The establishment of Fort McIntosh on 3 March 1849 led to securing the Rio Grande as the southern boundary of Texas.

Both the Texas-Mexican Railway and the International-Great Northern Railway reached Laredo in 1881 and the following year the Rio Grande and Eagle Pass Railway was built. The result was unprecedented growth in the community and the need for many services including hotels. J.M. Hamilton constructed the Hotel Hamilton on the south corner of the block sometime between 1885 and 1889. The 3-story brick and frame building had Victorian-era detailing and a detached kitchen. (Photographs of this building on are file at the Institute of Texas Culture in San Antonio.) The hotel was expanded to the east (this expansion is now the extant Southern Hotel) between 1905 and 1909. In 1916, Milus Little purchased the hotel; he had previously been responsible for constructing the Little Hotel, the J.C. Penney Building, and the Bender Hotel in Laredo. Little and his partner, L.L. Stephenson, began plans for further expansion of the Hamilton Hotel that would not come to fruition until the 1920s.

The 1920s was an era of unrivaled prosperity across the United States paralleled by commercial growth and consequent construction booms. Laredo flourished as an urban center. The economy thrived on the numerous rail systems that ran through town, affording transportation for local industries and international travelers.

In 1923, a 7-story building (connected to the north side of the 19th century building) was constructed at the north end of the block. The architect for this project remains unknown, although Charles H. Page and Company, an important Austin architect, solicited a bid for a 4-story hotel to Little. George Walling, another noted Austin architect, may have also worked on this project.

As the decade progressed the need for more hotel space increased and the owner responded. Architects Atlee B. Ayres & Robert M. Ayres, San Antonio's most prominent architectural firm, designed this monumental 13-story building in the place of the 19th century building. A draftsman with the architects' office was assigned to the project and worked with the general contractors, C.M. Schoenfeld of San Antonio.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Section	number		Page		

Hamilton Hotel Laredo, Webb County, Texas

Robert and his father, Atlee Ayres, were two of Texas' most important architects in the 20th century; their work left a lasting impact on South Texas' distinctive Spanish-influenced building designs. Atlee Ayres (1873-1969), born in Hillsboro, Ohio, came to San Antonio with his parents in 1888. As a collegian, he took courses at the Metropolitan School of Art in New York City, a subsidiary of Columbia University. There he won first prize in the school's annual design competition. His teachers included William Ware, a student of Richard Morris Hunt. He took drawing lessons at the Art Students League and studied painting under Frank Vincent Dumont. Following his 1894 graduation, he returned to San Antonio briefly, working for other architects and then practicing in Mexico until 1900. He shared a firm with C.A. Coughlin from 1900 until 1905 when Coughlin died. Atlee then practiced alone in San Antonio designing the 1906 Heimann Building, the 1909 First Presbyterian Church, and numerous residences for prestigious San Antonio citizens like Colonel George W. Brackenridge. He was appointed State Architect of Texas in 1915, which allowed him opportunities to design several buildings for the state. In 1922, when son Robert (1898-1977) graduated with an architecture degree from the University of Pennsylvania, they joined in partnership. In 1926 Atlee published Mexican Architecture, a collection of photographs, drawings, and texts on buildings of colonial Mexico.

The Ayres team designed many important buildings in San Antonio, including the 1925 Municipal Auditorium (National Register 1981), the 1927 Plaza Hotel, the 1928 Federal Reserve Bank Building, and the 1931 Administration Building at Randolph Field, known as the "Taj Mahal" (National Register 1987). Their work outside San Antonio includes the Blind Institute and, on the University of Texas campus, Carothers Dormitory and the Pharmacy Building in Austin; county courthouses in Kingsville, Alice, Refugio, Del Rio (National Register 1977), and Brownsville (National Register 1980); and Episcopal churches in Kerrville and Corpus Christi. In addition, the architects designed several hundred homes in San Antonio and other cities and became strongly associated with distinctive and prevalent Spanish traditions of composition.

Their 1923-1928 hotel is a mature example of a 3-part vertical block building, the most predominant form for large commercial buildings in the 1920s. Its composition is analogous to the units of a classical column with an obvious base, an elongated midsection, and a distinct upper zone. The base originally framed wide-windowed retail space between structural piers and is set off from upper stories by a strong horizontal motif. The tower shaft consists of identical superimposed stories for hotel rooms that outline the building's vertical spirit. The upper zone is decorative in finish. Engulfed in vigor, progress, and capitalism, this silhouette became the embodiment of 20th century America for a town the size of Laredo.

The hotel exhibits features typical of the Spanish Renaissance Revival style including a red barrel tile roof and the asymmetry in the treatment of towers, balconies, pinnacles, and oriel bays. Renaissance inspired, glazed tile and mosaic ornament give the building a rich and colorful individuality.

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The 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego that imitated elaborate Spanish prototypes with precision influenced the Spanish Renaissance Revival architecture of the hotel. Exposition designer Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, well versed in Spanish Colonial architecture, used the exposition to explore more richly detailed Spanish precedents. The Exposition's positive publicity inspired architects like Ayres & Ayres to translate architectural traditions directly from Spain. The popularity of the style peaked in the 1920s and 1930s.

Still one of the most prominent buildings on the Laredo skyline, the building retains a high degree of architectural and historical integrity. Its construction marked the transformation of the community into a flourishing metropolis. The Hamilton Hotel serves as a reminder of the exuberant, optimistic expectations that characterized urban landscapes prior to the Great Depression.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section	number	9	Page	6
Section	HUHHDEL		ayo	-

Hamilton Hotel Laredo, Webb County, Texas

Bibliography:

Ayres & Ayres Collection. Architectural Drawings Collection, University of Texas at Austin.

Cultural Resources Survey conducted by HUD and the Department of the Interior, 1981.

Laredo City Directory, 1911.

Laredo Times, 29 June 1983; 9 October 1943; 8 May 1926.

Longstreth, Richard. The Buildings of Main Street; A Guide to American Commercial Architecture. Washington, D.C.: Preservation Press, 1987.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps.

Texas General Contractors Association Monthly Bulletin. November 1922:14, November 1924:27, December 1924:26, October 1925:20, December 1926:33, May 1927:23.

Webb County. Deed Records, 2:581; 87:333-334.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Section number	Page	Laredo, Webb County, Texas	

Verbal Boundary Description:

Western Subdivision, Block 73, all of Lot 1, west 35.5 feet of Lot 2, west 35.5 feet of Lot 9, and all of Lot 10.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the area that has been historically associated with the property and that retains its historic and architectural integrity.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Hamilton Hotel Laredo, Webb County, Texas

Photograph Log

Hamilton Hotel
815 Salinas Street
Laredo, Webb County, Texas
Photographed by Ricardo Santos
November 1989
Negatives with Webb County Heritage Foundation, P.O. Drawer 29, Laredo 78042
Southwest oblique of main block, camera facing northeast
Photograph 1 of 6

Hamilton Hotel
815 Salinas Street
Laredo, Webb County, Texas
Photographed by Ricardo Santos
November 1989
Negatives with Webb County Heritage Foundation, P.O. Drawer 29, Laredo 78042
Detail on west facade of main block, camera facing east
Photograph 2 of 6

Hamilton Hotel
815 Salinas Street
Laredo, Webb County, Texas
Photographed by Ricardo Santos
November 1989
Negatives with Webb County Heritage Foundation, P.O. Drawer 29, Laredo 78042
Detail on northwest corner of main block, camera facing east
Photograph 3 of 6

Hamilton Hotel
815 Salinas Street
Laredo, Webb County, Texas
Photographed by Ricardo Santos
November 1989
Negatives with Webb County Heritage Foundation, P.O. Drawer 29, Laredo 78042
East facade of main block, camera facing northwest
Photograph 4 of 6

Hamilton Hotel
815 Salinas Street
Laredo, Webb County, Texas
Photographed by Ricardo Santos
November 1989
Negatives with Webb County Heritage Foundation, P.O. Drawer 29, Laredo 78042
Northwest oblique of 1923 building, camera facing southeast
Photograph 5 of 6

Hamilton Hotel
815 Salinas Street
Laredo, Webb County, Texas
Photographed by Ricardo Santos
November 1989
Negatives with Webb County Heritage Foundation, P.O. Drawer 29, Laredo 78042
Interior detail
Photograph 6 of 6

## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINAT	TION				
PROPERTY Hamilton Hotel NAME:					
MULTIPLE NAME:					
STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, We	ebb				
DATE RECEIVED: 3/12/ DATE OF 16TH DAY: 4/09/ DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:					
REFERENCE NUMBER: 9200036	5 3				
NOMINATOR: STATE					
REASONS FOR REVIEW:					
APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: OTHER: N PDIL: REQUEST: N SAMPLE:	N PER	RIOD:	N	PROGRAM UNAPP	
COMMENT WAIVER: N			,		
ACCEPTRETURN	RES	JECT _	1/19		intered in the National Register
ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS	:				

RECOM./CRITERIA	
REVIEWER	
DISCIPLINE	
DATE	

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

CLASSIFICATION	
countresource type	
STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION	
FUNCTION	
historiccurrent	
DESCRIPTION	3,14
architectural classification materials descriptive text	
SIGNIFICANCE	1174301 9
Period Areas of SignificanceCheck and justify below	W
Specific dates  Builder/Architect Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)	
summary paragraphcompletenessclarityapplicable criteriajustification of areas checkedrelating significance to the resourcecontextrelationship of integrity to significancejustification of exceptionother	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
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HAMILTON HOTEL 815 SALINAS STREET LAREDO, WEBB CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 1 of 6



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HAMILTON HOTEL 815 SALINAS STREET LAREDO, WEBB CO, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 2 of 6



Hamilton Notel 813. Selinas Landa Labb Courty, Texas

Photosop Rinardo Santes Veren ber 1989

Sover were Corner detail

HAMILTON HOTEL 815 SALINAS STREET LAREDO, WEBB CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 3 of 16



HAMILTON HOTEL 815 SALINAS STREET LAREDO, WEBB CO, TEXAS PHOTOGRAPH 4 of 6



HAMILTON HOTEL 815 SALINAS STREET LAREDO, WEBB CO, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 5of 6



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HAMILTON HOTEL 815 SALINAS STREET LAREDO, WEBB CO, TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 6 of 6

