

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**



612

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: W.R. Banks Library
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: L. W. Minor Street , building #0508
CITY OR TOWN: Prairie View
STATE: Texas **CODE:** TX **COUNTY:** Waller **CODE:** 473

NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A
VICINITY: N/A
ZIP CODE: 77446-0519

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination
request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally
☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6/3/99

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: Public-State

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: Building

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:	CONTRIBUTING	NONCONTRIBUTING	
	1	0	BUILDINGS
	0	0	SITES
	0	0	STRUCTURES
	0	0	OBJECTS
	1	0	TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: Historic and Architectural Resources of Prairie View A&M University, Waller County, Texas

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: EDUCATION/library

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: EDUCATION/education-related

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Modern Movement: Moderne

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION CONCRETE
WALLS BRICK
ROOF SYNTHETIC/Foam
OTHER GLASS;STONE/Limestone

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-7).

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W.R. Banks Library
Prairie View, Waller County, Texas

Description

Built in 1945 to house the campus library, this 3-story brick building reflects the geometric compositions favored by architectural modernism in vogue during the 1940s. The symmetrically arranged façade features a hierarchy of fenestration that draws the visitor to the main entrance. Despite changes in window materials, the building retains sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association to remain recognizable to its period of significance.

W.R. Banks Library Building is located on L.W. Minor Street at the heart of campus activity. The building is constructed of load-bearing bricks. (see photos 1 and 2) The modestly detailed, rectangular-shaped building features a brick foundation. Cast stone bands appear at the water table, the sills and the parapet of the building. A concrete walkway leads to the entrance, which is flanked by paired windows. Large window expanses characterize the building and provide panoramic views of the campus. The interior of the library is comprised of 57,225 square feet of space.

The current vestibule originally led to a stairway that led to the lobby of the building. The library was equipped with general office areas, an art room, several alcoves for group study endeavors. Past the lobby on the right was the Stack Room. On the north wall to the left was the reference room and on the right periodicals. On the floors above were the large stacks of fiction and non-fiction books. Special attention was placed on the acoustical aspect in the reference, periodicals, lobby area, graduate and art rooms, and the stair and hallways.

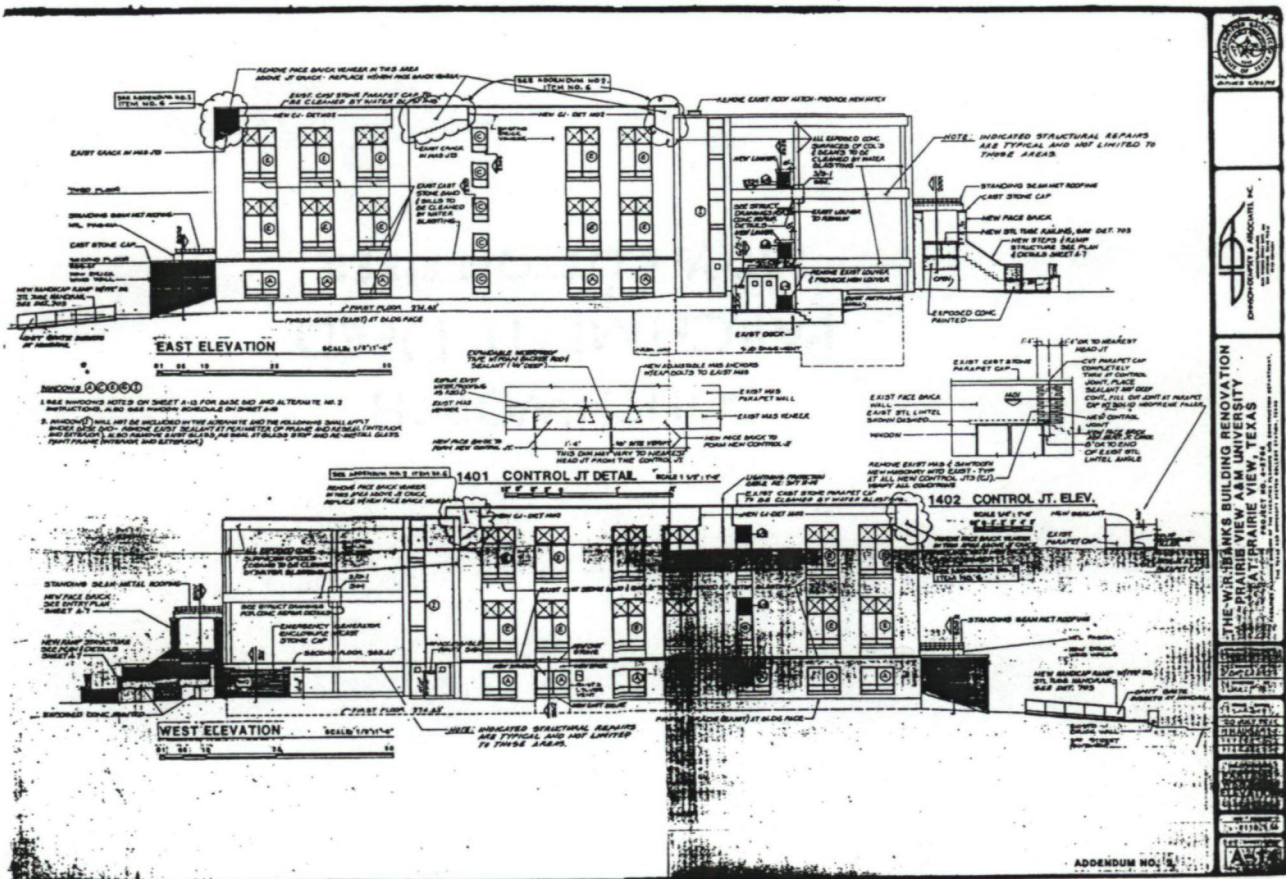
The 1992 renovation of the W.R. Banks building resulted in the demolition of all interior features. (see 7-6 thru 7-8) New elevators were installed in the building, and it was made ADA accessible. Outside, special attention was given to the preservation of the historic trees surrounding the library. The library currently houses the Fiscal Affairs department, Office of Human Resources, Mathematics Department, Academic Advising and Testing.

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W.R. Banks Library
Prairie View, Waller County, Texas

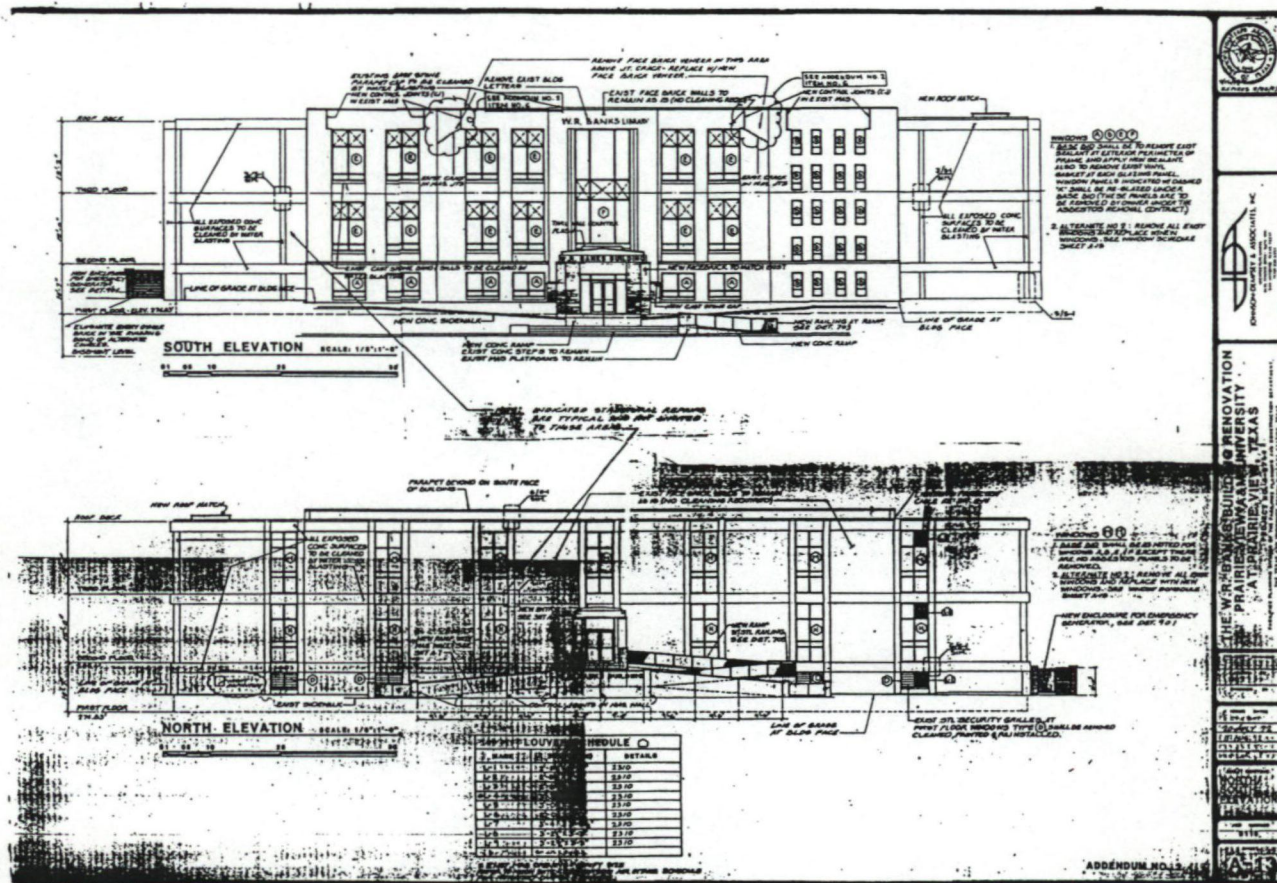


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W.R. Banks Library
Prairie View, Waller County, Texas



8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

- ☒ **A** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.
- ☒ **B** 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 VALUE, OR REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENTS LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION.
- ☐ **D** PROPERTY HAS YIELDED, OR IS LIKELY TO YIELD, INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PREHISTORY OR HISTORY.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Education; Ethnic Heritage/Black

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1945-1948

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1946

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: Banks, Willette Rutherford

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Hanton, P.B. (Architect)

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-8 through 8-9).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY See bibliographic references for the associated historic context, *Historic and Architectural Resources of Prairie View A&M University, Waller County, Texas*.

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- ☐ 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
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

PRIMARY LOCATION OF ADDITIONAL DATA:

- ☒ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository:

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W. R Banks Library
Prairie View, Waller County, Texas

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Statement of Significance

Architect P.B Hanton designed this building in 1945 to house campus library collections in a period of expanding enrollment. Construction of the building was overseen by Dr. W.R. Banks, the visionary principal of the college. Upon his retirement in 1946, the library was renamed in honor of his tireless work on behalf of the university's financial and educational resources. This building represents the developing role of college level curriculum as a focal point of the education available on campus in the mid-20th century. The history of the building is related to the historic context, *Development of Prairie View A&M University, 1876-1998*. As the campus building most strongly associated with Bank's leadership on campus, the library is therefore nominated at a local level of significance under Criteria A and B in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage.

Willette Rutherford Banks was born to Jabe M. and Laura Mc Curry Banks on 8 August 1881. He and his family lived in the Northeast Georgia hills in a town called Hartwell. He overcame many obstacles to become a great center of r the Atlanta University football team, a varsity debater, a leader in the Y.M.C.A., and editor of the college paper. His college career was to give him the faithful and brilliant companion of his life, Glovinia Virginia Perry (married June 1911), and the supreme intellectual stimulation of studying with W.E. B DuBois, who remained a lifelong friend and confidant.

His record and family contacts in the C.M.E. Church brought him the presidency of Texas College in Tyler, Texas in May 1915 to 1925 where his brilliant talents as an administrator attracted national attention. Ten years later, southern leaders in the Educational Awakening suggested W.R. Banks to serve as president and on the Board of Directors of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, making him the seventh principal of Prairie View A&M College.

Believing that Prairie View College must serve the state of Texas at the point of her greatest need, W.R. Banks worked tirelessly on many fronts to make his foundation contacts overcome the provincialism that might limit the opportunity of his people. He built eight capital buildings and a model farm, the library that still bears his name; he built his staff with foundation scholarships; he got his college accredited by the Southern Association in December of 1934.. Indeed, Texas became his campus and every Negro "his" student. In September 1946, he retired to a cottage that would shelter his last years. After the death of his wife in 1963, his retirement from the national stage became complete. The boards of many colleges, including his alma mater, the quiet precincts of the foundations, the national meeting of the state teachers and the Negro land grant colleges were to see the figure of the tall, gaunt, determined man no more. Willette Rutherford Banks died October 16, 1969 in his eighty-eighth year.

Mr. Banks was a trustee of several prominent institutions of higher education comprising Atlanta University in Georgia, Miles Memorial College in Birmingham, Alabama, Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, Paine College in Augusta, Georgia, Texas College in Tyler, Texas. And to these accomplishments can also be

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attributed president of the Negro Land Grant College President's Association (1934-35), president of the Texas Historical Commission Association of Negro Colleges (1934-37) and author of *The Negro in Texas* (The Book of Knowledge, Vol. 21, 1928). Other accomplishments included his teaching at Fort Valley Industrial School in Benson, Alabama (1909-12), principal of Kowaliga Industrial School also in Benson, Alabama (1912-15). Mr. Bank's philosophy of education was once stated tersely as: "Education should strive to serve citizens at the points of their greatest needs; and bring the training of students into closer relationship with their life's occupations and conditions" (From Progress for Twelve Years of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas).

Summary

During his administration, principal Banks made many progressive steps in development of the institution, such as, all graduates were recognized by the State Department of Education in practically every state in the Union, it received a Class "A" rating with the Southern Association of college and Secondary Schools, while holding an active membership in the American council of Education. In addition, its hospital was recognized by the American College of Surgeons and the American Hospital Association, Prairie View's graduates were admitted without examination to the Graduate Divisions of the leading colleges in the country and its off-campus activities embracing Agricultural Extension, Vocational Agriculture, and Home Economics, Trades and Industries, Extension and Correspondence School had more than tripled in size and usefulness. The W.R. Banks Library represents the work of Mr. Banks. And its construction in 1945 reflects the expansion of the A&M university system. The history of the building is related to the historic context, Development of Prairie View A&M University, 1876-1998. It is therefore nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and B in the areas of Education and Ethnic Heritage at a local level of significance.

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Prairie View, Waller County, Texas

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Bibliography

(See bibliographic references in associated historic context, Historic and Architectural Resources of Prairie View A&M University, Waller County, Texas)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: less than an acre

UTM REFERENCES	Zone Easting	Northing
	1 15 211900	3332680

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheet 10-11)

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION (see continuation sheet 10-11)

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Karen Charleston, Staff Assistant

ORGANIZATION: Prairie View A&M University

DATE: 8 May 1998

STREET & NUMBER: P.O. Box 519

TELEPHONE: 409/857-3200

CITY OR TOWN: Prairie View

STATE: TX

ZIP CODE: 77446-0519

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (see continuation sheet Map-12)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-13)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Prairie View A&M University

STREET & NUMBER: P.O. Box 519

TELEPHONE: 409/857-3200

CITY OR TOWN: Prairie View

STATE: TX

ZIP CODE: 77446-0519

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W.R. Banks Library
Prairie View, Waller County, Texas

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property is a rectangular parcel of land measuring 196.1 feet x 217.7 feet, whose northwest corner is 28.4 feet in a northwesterly direction from the northwest foundation corner of the W.R. Banks building and whose southeast corner is 99.5 feet in a southeasterly direction from the most southerly southeast foundation corner of the W.R. Banks building.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

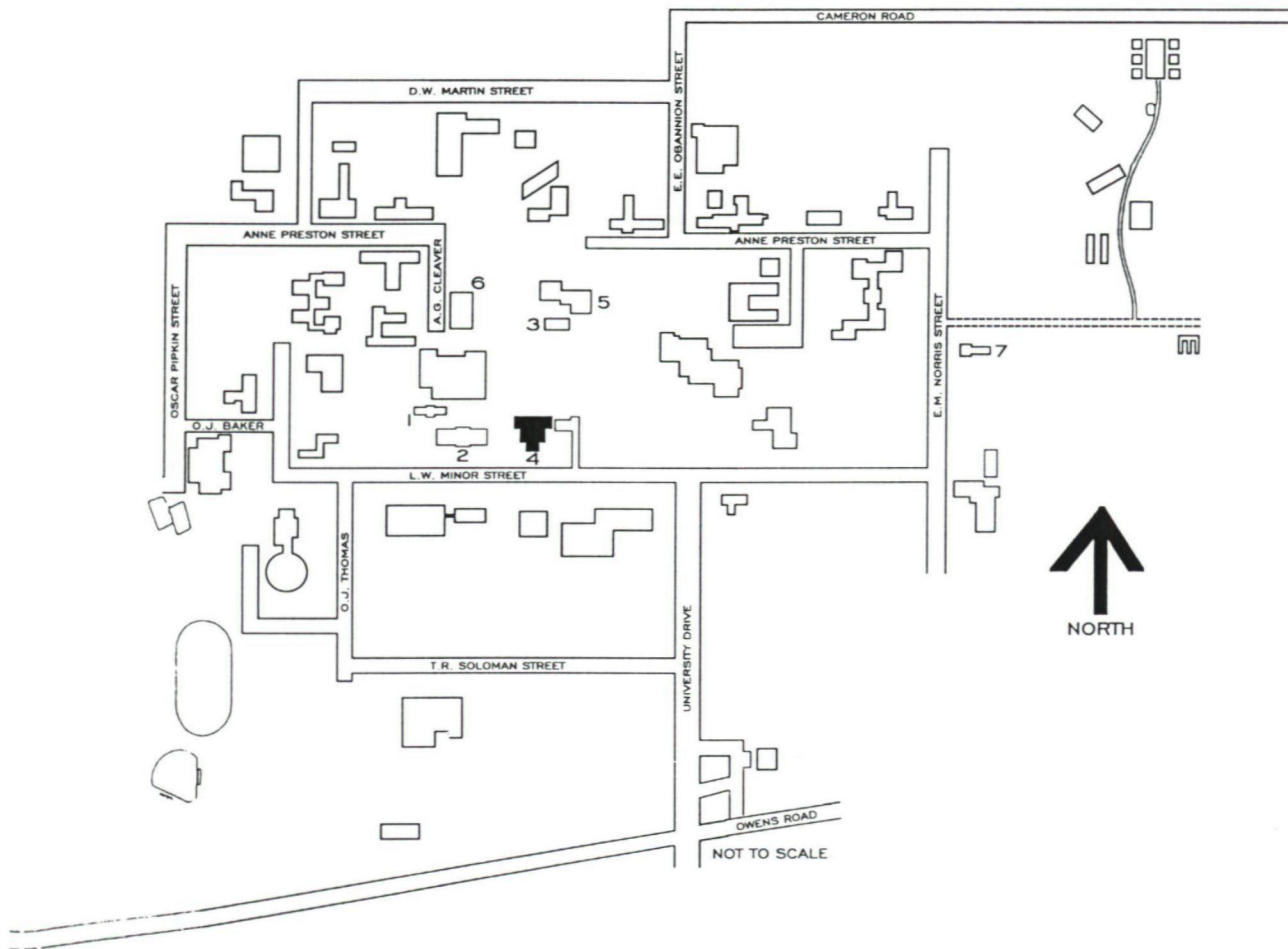
The boundaries include resources associated with the 1945 college building that retain their historic and architectural integrity.

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W.R. Banks Library
Prairie View, Waller County, Texas



BUILDING KEY

1. L.C. ANDERSON HALL-#0541
2. ANNIE LAURIE EVANS HALL-#0544
3. G.R. WOOLFOLK SOCIAL & POLITICAL SCIENCE
BUILDING-#0503
- 4. W.R. BANKS LIBRARY -#0508
5. FRY-THOMAS POWER PLANT-#0529
6. HILLIARD HALL -#0537
7. VETERINARY HOSPITAL-#0517

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Photo Log

(Photos taken in 1997 by Charles Peveto, staff member of the Texas Historical Commission)

- 1) Front façade
Camera facing north
- 2) West side of building
Camera facing east

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Banks, W.R., Library
NAME:

MULTIPLE Praire View A&M University MPS
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Waller

DATE RECEIVED: 4/21/99 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/03/99
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/19/99 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/05/99
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 99000612

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 6/3/99 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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



W. R. BANKS LIBRARY
L. W. MINOR STREET, BUILDING #0508
PRAIRIE VIEW, WALLER CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 1 of 2

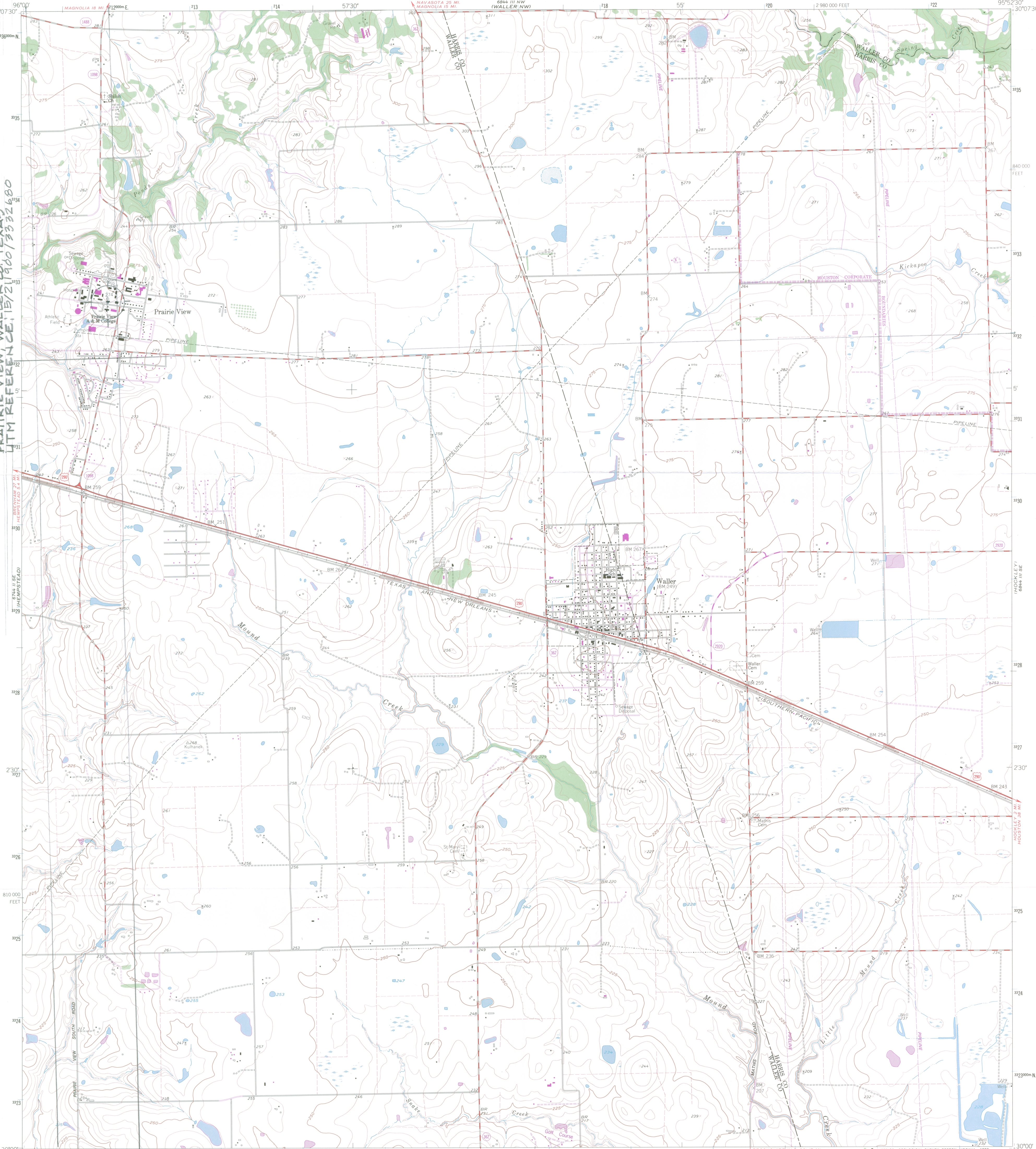


5:29:58

W.R. BANKS LIBRARY
L.W. MINOR STREET, BUILDING #0508
PRAIRIE VIEW, WALLER CO., TEXAS

PHOTOGRAPH 2 of 2

W.R. BANKS LIBRARY
L.W. MINOR STREET BUILDING #0508
PRAIRIE VIEW, WALLER CO. TEXAS
UTM REFERENCE: 15T21900/3332680



(SUNNY SIDE)
6844 III NE

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

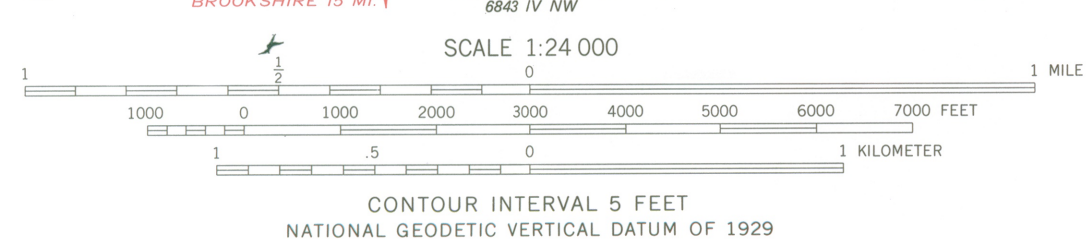
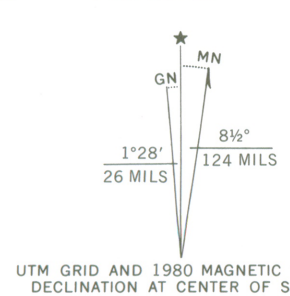
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1958. Topography by planetable surveys 1960

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,
south central zone
1000 meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 15, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines
where generally visible on aerial photographs
This information is unchecked

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983
move the projection lines 19 meters south and
23 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled from
aerial photographs taken 1977 and other source data
This information not field checked. Map edited 1980



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

3095-222

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

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