



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

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

HISTORIC NAME: Houston County Courthouse
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: N/A

2. LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 401 East Houston Avenue
CITY OR TOWN: Crockett VICINITY: N/A NOT FOR PUBLICATION: N/A
STATE: Texas CODE: TX COUNTY: Houston CODE: 225 ZIP CODE: 75835

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.)

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer Date 3/16/10
Signature of certifying official / Title Date
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 the 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 See continuation sheet.
- other, explain See continuation sheet.

Edson H. Beal Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 5-10-10

5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: PUBLIC - local

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: N/A

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: GOVERNMENT: county courthouse

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: GOVERNMENT: county courthouse

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION WALLS ROOF OTHER	CONCRETE CONCRETE, STONE/limestone ASPHALT
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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-8)

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Designed in 1938 by Houston-based architect Blum E. Hester, the Houston County Courthouse in Crockett, Texas is the fifth courthouse to occupy the town square, replacing a brick courthouse built there in 1883. Three stories tall on a raised basement, the building is bi-axial in plan, with its long axis running north-to-south; the major façades face east and west. The courthouse retains a large percentage of its original marble, terrazzo, plaster, and wood interior finishes, and its stone exterior with steel windows is completely intact. A rather austere, but excellent example of the Moderne style of architecture frequently used for civic structures during the 1930s and 1940s, the Houston County Courthouse is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A for Politics/Government and Criterion C for Architecture.

Setting and Organization

The Houston County Courthouse, designed in 1938 by Houston-based architect Blum E. Hester, is the fifth county courthouse to occupy the site locally known as the "public square." This site is the focus of the town of Crockett, and it is active with numerous small businesses, including cafés, a bank, resale shops, a travel agency, and two fraternal lodges. Nearly a dozen buildings from the turn of the 20th century survive around the public square, about half of which retain some architectural character; newer structures are generally of similar scale. The Houston County Courthouse brings people into Crockett and thus indirectly helps support these local businesses. Traffic around the courthouse square is busy throughout the day as numerous local roads converge on the center of town. The courthouse square measures 135 feet east-to-west and 130 feet north-to-south, and it is bounded on the north by East Houston Avenue (formerly Public Avenue), on the east by South Fifth Street (formerly Houston Street), on the south by Goliad Avenue (formerly Main Street) and on the west by South Fourth Street (formerly North Street).

On the square, small areas between the curb and the building are modestly landscaped with shrubs against the structure and lining the sidewalks. The very brief lawn on all four sides is lined with pull-in parking for courthouse visitors. A large spreading magnolia tree shades the east entrance, and a pine tree marks the northeast corner; these trees, along with the building's flagpole at this entrance, suggest that the east façade is the generally accepted "front" of the courthouse. A 1976 U.S. Bicentennial time capsule is buried on this side of the building. The plantings and walkways of the courthouse site are well maintained; the site slopes nearly 3 feet from southeast to northwest and is well drained. A state historic marker on the east side of the courthouse describes the history of Crockett and another on the west side details the five courthouses of Houston County that have stood on the public square.

Measuring 60 feet by 114 feet, the Houston County Courthouse is centered on the public square with its long axis running north-to-south, an orientation which affords natural ventilation to the building by the northwest-southeast breezes prevailing in this region of Texas. While all spaces receive daylight during the day, the façade facing west absorbs significant heat from the afternoon sun. The courthouse is open to staff and public access on all four sides; the west entrance to the ground floor has ramps for access but they do not meet current ADA requirements.

The building has two principal stories on a raised basement, with a third story on the central, recessed volume. According to Blum E. Hester's construction drawings, the ground (raised basement) floor—about 3 ½ feet below finish grade—was intended to house the boiler room; segregated toilet facilities for white men, colored men, and colored women; county records; and offices for the agricultural and demonstration agent, constable, justice of the peace, and other officials. The

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first floor held the offices of the tax assessor and collector, county clerk, auditor, sheriff, county school superintendent, and other contingent offices, as well as a segregated rest room for white women. The second floor housed the county courtroom, commissioner's courtroom, district courtroom, jury room and dormitory, and offices of the county judge, county commissioners, county attorney, district judge, and court reporter. In the central volume, the third (top) floor held the county jail and living quarters for the sheriff. Space was allotted for the jail to hold a maximum of 60 prisoners—with separate spaces for women and juveniles, white men, colored men, and felons—but commissioner's court minutes state that "the County does not need to care for more than possibly half this number and in laying out the jail blocks, we will leave room for further installation of cells if needed." (HCCCM 147: 515, 541)

Exterior

The fifth Houston County Courthouse has sustained little in exterior alterations over more than 60 years. The building has a poured-in-place concrete structure of columns, beams, and slabs; exterior infill walls are brick masonry and interior partitions are lath and plaster. Its central 3-story block is flanked by projecting 2-story volumes on the north and south sides, so that in plan the building's long axis extends north-to-south, and the short axis runs east-to-west. The ground floor (or raised basement) forms a plinth, or base, accommodating the sloped site and incorporating the four entrances. Monumental stairs of stone rise on the east and west sides, culminating at terraces extending from the recessed central mass.

Exterior walls between concrete columns are constructed of brick and sheathed in stone veneer approximately 4 inches thick. Stone on the ground floor, entry steps and terraces, and cornices is Carthage Stone, a gray marble with very subtle veining taken from quarries near Carthage, Missouri, which are now closed. The stone on the first, second, and third floors is Texas Cordova Cream limestone, a Cretaceous limestone still quarried in Liberty Hill, Texas.

The wall construction of stone/brick/plaster is grouted solid, without a cavity, moisture barrier, or flashing over window heads. The first evidence of problems with the stone was in 1945, when pointing, caulking, and sealing work was done in response to moisture appearing on the interior; subsequent repairs to the masonry were made in 1995. The monumental stairs to the east and west entries and the smaller north and south stairs are cast-in-place concrete structures with facing of Carthage Stone. These steps were waterproofed in 1995 to repair leakage into spaces below.

Steel windows of single-pane glass are installed in continuous vertical chases with Verde Antique (green) marble spandrels, giving the implication of an arcade of pilasters around the façades. The windows are a stacked awning type, with sashes ganged together so that when the lower window is pushed open, the windows above it also are opened. They were recaulked in 1945 and again in 1995, at which time the steel frames were painted silver. All of the original windows survive.

The original roofing was a built-up type composed of layers of roofing felt, tar, and aggregate ballast. The flat roof was an immediate problem and was first repaired in 1945 and replaced in 1947. The current roof is also a built-up type. The roof over the third floor drains through downspouts onto the adjacent second floor roofs. Each of the second floor roofs is drained by two internal 5-inch diameter downspouts that drain under the building to the curb.

While buildings in the Moderne style often have a rich sculptural program of stylized ornament, the Houston County Courthouse is rather austere. A simple pattern of three waves—originally gold leafed but removed during subsequent stone cleaning—is incised above the north and south entrances. The words HOUSTON COUNTY COURT HOUSE are incised

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on the east and west façades and also once were gilded; centered within these letters is a clock face. Truncated sections of vertical fluting are the only other sculptural ornamentation, marking the edge of the building's cornice, extending along the tops of the window recesses, and capping the terrace walls and stair buttresses. The east and west entrances are framed by curved glass sidelights with coffered panels of extruded aluminum in the spandrels above. Entry vestibules with zig-zag aluminum grills lead to the formal lobby on the first floor.

Interior

The plan of the courthouse is organized by the four entrances and axial corridors that divide each floor into four quadrants. Floors are terrazzo throughout with inset rubber mats behind service counters. Walls and ceilings are painted plaster. Stairs at the north and south ends and a formal stair in the center connect the three upper levels with the ground floor. A horizontal aluminum handrail accentuates the sweeping rise of the main staircase from the lobby to the courtrooms on the second floor. A design in the terrazzo floor of the first floor lobby—a large white star in a green and yellow halo—marks the center of the building. Walls of the first and second floor halls have a wainscot of unusual red "Colorozza" travertine with a base and cap of "Imperial Red" marble. A red and white "Perma Chrome" glazed tile provides a more utilitarian wainscot for the ground floor.

Two courtrooms occupy the second floor, each with a distinctive character based on the woodwork veneers used. The smaller County Courtroom has light-toned oak furnishings but has lost its oak wainscot. A portion of the original red-bordered brown linoleum flooring may be seen where a radiator cabinet has been removed. The District Courtroom is furnished in dark-stained walnut and has also lost its tall walnut wainscot. Original plaster ceilings, with insets of "Corkoustic" tile, custom light fixtures, and aluminum ventilation grills, are concealed by later suspended acoustic ceilings.

Original doors are oak veneer construction with oak frames. Door types are a mixture of flush panel doors, half-glazed doors, and combinations of doors with transoms and/or half sidelights to bring natural light into interior spaces. All the doors in the building are in good, operable condition; although naturally darkened with time, the doors and trim do not require refinishing. Original door hardware is nickel over brass. Door knobs are flat round with two concentric rings on the face; plates are a tall, narrow Moderne design with stepped corners. Most hardware remains in working condition. In remodeled areas, some old doors were reused, while newer doors are painted wood.

Original interior woodwork—including base boards, door and ventilating window trim, and picture molds—is oak with a linseed oil and wax finish. Nearly all of this material survives and is in good condition. About a dozen offices have had a ¼-inch plywood paneling applied over the original plaster, possibly to conceal the bad state of the original plaster due to water penetration. Most original incandescent lighting fixtures have been replaced with fluorescent fixtures, but original incandescent light fixtures remain in a few isolated areas.

The District Courtroom retains its original compliment of furnishings: judge's bench, jury box seating, attorneys' table, railings, and audience pews, all in walnut. The County Courtroom was remodeled in 1976 and only the original oak audience pews remain. A few original office desks and chairs may be found around the building but most of the office furniture and filing cabinets are not original.

The building was designed for cooling by natural ventilation. Heating was provided utilizing a gas-fired steam boiler with wall mounted radiators. Roof-mounted exhaust fans provided extra air circulation to the two courtrooms.

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Integrity

The Houston County Courthouse has undergone relatively few modifications since its completion in 1939, although a major renovation was undertaken in 1975–1976. The most intrusive modification has been the mid-1970s installation of suspended acoustical ceilings (with new light fixtures) to conceal air conditioning ductwork. Only a few partitions have been changed, most notably on the third floor, when the jail was removed and relocated to a separate structure; its former space became a district attorney's office, jury room, legal library, hospitality area, rest room, and County Historical Commission area. The primary courtroom was reduced in size to create two offices for the county judge on the second floor. The district clerk's office was made into a second district judge's office, and the district clerk relocated into the former jury room.

Walnut wainscoting has been removed from the District Courtroom and, in efforts to control traffic noise from the surrounding public square, windows on the north side of the courtroom have been covered with wood battens over insulation board. Otherwise, interior finishes have suffered little damage from leaks or moisture infiltration. Plumbing fixtures in the rest rooms are original.

In 1995 repairs were performed to clean and, in some places, re-point the exterior stone veneer; windows also were repainted and reglazed at that time. Also in 1995, the west entrance of the building was made wheelchair accessible, and plaster ceilings beneath the terrace were repaired. Finally, the boiler was replaced in 1996 and twelve radiators were removed at that time. The remainder of the original radiator heating system remains in place.

On its exterior and interior, the Houston County Courthouse retains a high degree of integrity, and it is an excellent example of the Moderne style of architecture frequently used for civic structures during the 1930s and 1940s. The building is therefore nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, at the local level of significance, under Criterion C for Architecture. It is also nominated under Criterion A for Politics/Government, for its continued significance as the seat of Houston County government and the public center of the town of Crockett.

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 VALUES, 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: Architecture; Politics / Government

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1938-1960

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1938

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: N/A

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT / BUILDER: Hester, Blum E. – Architect
Eckert-Fair Construction Company – Builder

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-9 through 8-19)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheets 9-20 through 9-21)

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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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The 1938 Houston County Courthouse is the last of five courthouses to be located on the public square in Crockett, the county seat. Designed by architect Blum E. Hester, the courthouse was one of several new civic buildings constructed in the town under the New Deal's Public Works Administration. The building is an excellent example of late-1930s Art Moderne public architecture and, among the Texas courthouses of the period, one of the most straightforward, yet elegant, interpretations of the style. For its important role as the center of civic life in Houston County, and as the principal seat of county government, the Houston County Courthouse is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government. As an excellent example of the Art Moderne style as applied to a civic building—and the greatest example of the style in the county—the Houston County Courthouse is also eligible under Criterion C for Architecture.

A Brief History of Houston County, Texas

Today's Houston County spans a portion of the Old San Antonio Road, one of the oldest trade and travel routes in historic-era Texas. First blazed to connect 17th-century Spanish expansion attempts into East Texas with Spain's settlements in Mexico, the road served long after as a principal trade and travel route through Texas. Various indigenous tribes—including the Alabama, Coushatta, Cherokee, and Tejas—made their homes in the area through the 19th century. The first East Texas mission, San Francisco de los Tejas, was established in the northeastern part of the county near Weches in 1690, although Native defenses of their homelands forced its abandonment three years later. Spanish influences were longer lived in the Nacogdoches area, however, and the San Antonio Road through Houston County remained a well-traveled route (Bishop 1996: 3: 728).

In 1821 Daniel McLean and John Sheridan permanently settled near what is today the town of Augusta. The area was part of the Joseph Vehlein colonization grant in 1828, and some of the region's oldest settlers, the Jacob Masters, Elijah Gossett and Joseph R. Rice families, arrived about this time. Settlement continued into the 1830s, and many of the area's inhabitants, including the Gossett family, participated in the Texas Revolution (Bishop 1996: 3: 728).

Houston County was created by the Congress of Texas on June 4, 1837, the first new county to be carved from the Republic's original 23 counties. In their petition, more than 100 citizens of the area asked the Congress to "make for us a county on the East side of Trinity River, beginning at Robbins's Ferry" and spanning either side of the Old San Antonio Road. Senator Jesse Grimes introduced a bill creating Houston County out of sprawling Nacogdoches County and designating it as "Houston County" in honor of the new president of the Republic of Texas, Sam Houston. The original boundaries included today's Trinity and Anderson counties and a portion of Henderson County (Gournay 1995: 38; Aldrich 1943: 7-9; Bishop 1996: 3: 728).

County government was organized soon thereafter, and the county seat was selected. Andrew E. Gossett (one of Elijah's sons) donated the land on the Old San Antonio Road for the new town of Crockett. His own home was east, less than two miles away. Because of his generosity, Gossett was given the privilege of naming the town. He chose Crockett in honor of the hero of the Alamo, who was also a family friend. Family tradition has it that Crockett camped on Gossett land en route to the Alamo and renewed old acquaintance (Bishop 1996: 3: 728; Aldrich 1943: 152-154).

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In spite of their auspicious namesakes, Crockett and Houston County were sparsely settled during the early years of the Republic. The town of Crockett was incorporated by the Congress on December 29, 1837, in the same legislation that granted city status to Houston, Washington, and Refugio. In 1837, it was home to only a "solitary citizen who kept store in a sixteen foot log cabin" according to a reminiscence published in the *Crockett Printer*, December 1853. By 1838, however, the town had twice-a-month mail delivery and some stagecoach service from Nacogdoches. A log structure, built around 1838 served as the county's first seat of government. (*Crockett Printer* 1853a; Bishop 1996: 3: 728; Bishop and Long 1996: 2: 410).

The county grew during the first half of the 1840s. The new Texas legislature redefined the county boundaries in 1846, after creating Anderson and Henderson counties; the legislature established 31 new counties in March and April of that year. Trinity County was established out of the southern part of Houston County in 1851. In spite of its reduced size, Houston County's population rose to 2,721 in 1850, approximately 25 percent of whom were African-American slaves. Settlement occurred along the county's major river courses (the Trinity and Neches), which were linked by the Old San Antonio Road. Cotton and corn production were important aspects of the county's antebellum economy, as was the case in many parts of East Texas at the time (Gournay 1995: 45, 50, 61; Bishop 1996: 3: 278; Walker 1872: 64, 66).

The growing population and agricultural activity led the citizens of Houston County to ask the legislature for authority to levy a special tax to build a new courthouse. Sixty-nine citizens signed the petition, which was authorized in late 1850. The following year, a brick courthouse replaced the log structure. (Aldrich 1943: 30-33; *Crockett Printer* 1853b).

Houston County and Crockett grew rapidly during the 1850s. By 1853 the town had a telegraph office, Masonic Hall, six stores, two taverns, boot and shoemaker, lawyers and doctors, and several crafts shops. According to the local paper, "all the usual means and appliances of civilized life may be found in our village" (*Crockett Printer* 1853b). The county's population reached over 8,000 inhabitants in 1860, more than 2,800 of whom were slaves. The agricultural economy expanded—especially cotton and corn production—and Crockett, with 538 inhabitants, continued to be the county's commercial center (Walker 1872: 64, 66, 272; Bishop and Long 1996: 2: 410).

Houston County strongly favored the Confederacy, voting 552 to 38 for secession and volunteering for military and other Confederate service. Crockett was a mustering and training center for Confederate troops during the Civil War (Bishop 1996: 3: 478; HCHC 1979: 17-19).

Between 1864 and 1871 Crockett witnessed four major fires. Fire swept through much of downtown in 1864, destroying 22 businesses and the town's only hotel (Bishop 1996: 3: 478; HCHC 1979: 17-19). In February 1865, almost at war's end, the 1851 brick courthouse burned, consuming most of the county records. Aldrich (1943: 33) noted, "The cause of the fire that destroyed the courthouse was never solved, but a prominent citizen of Crockett was suspected of having caused the fire in order to destroy some records." Meetings and court sessions were then held on the southwest corner of the square in a building owned by L.E. Downes (Aldrich 1943: 33).

The county suffered from a prolonged drought in 1870 and 1871, and fires continued to plague Crockett. According to a petition of the county's citizens seeking tax relief from the Texas legislature, a fire in April 1871 consumed much of downtown including the new county jail, and "on the first day of October the entire portion of the town remaining was destroyed" (Aldrich 1943: 34).

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The end of the war and Reconstruction had delayed the construction of another courthouse until about 1871 when a two-story frame structure was built. Local merchant John H. Burnett erected the new structure that housed the courts and county offices, as well as the county jail.

While 1871, with its drought and fires, was disastrous for Crockett and Houston County, the following year saw an economic resurgence. The Houston and Great Northern Railroad (H&GNRR), en route from Houston to the Red River, built track through Crockett and Houston County. Connecting the county's agricultural markets to Houston, the rail line spurred immigration and increased agricultural production, as well as opening the county's forests to timbering. By 1880 the county's population had doubled to more than 16,000, and the acreage under cultivation had increased more than tenfold (Bishop 1996: 3: 729).

The last two decades of the century saw continued growth in the economy and population. The county had more than 25,000 inhabitants by 1900, and the timber industry was a significant part of the county's economy. Crockett, a major stop on the rail line, also boomed when the H&GNRR (soon to become the International-Great Northern line) came through. By 1885 it had more than 1,200 inhabitants and was home to a bank, hotel, opera house, a weekly newspaper, and several schools and churches (Bishop 196: 3: 279; Bishop and Long 1996: 2: 410; Young 1996: 3: 732).

Even in the 1880s, however, the county seat was not safe from fire. On November 2, 1882, the courthouse again burned. The two-story building also contained the county's jail, and two prisoners were killed in the fire that probably began in the jailor's room (HCHC 1979: 24; Aldrich 1943: 33). The county agreed to a bond issue of \$20,000 to build a new courthouse, and in 1883 the commissioners hired prominent Waco architect W.C. Dodson to design the structure (HCHC 1979: 24). This new, highly decorative brick courthouse reflected the county's new prosperity.

The first three decades of the 20th century saw an expansion of the county's agricultural economy, with timbering and lignite coal mining providing additional stimuli. The population, however, only increased by 5,000 people in the period. Cotton continued to be a major agricultural product, reaching a production of more than 48,000 bales in 1926. The Great Depression, drought, and the boll weevil took their toll on cotton and other farm produce in the late 1920s and early '30s, and the county's economy generally declined. While federal work projects and oil exploration in the mid-1930s helped the economy, the county did not see significant economic recovery until the early 1940s. Today, the county continues to rely on agriculture, although cotton and other crops have given way in importance to stock raising. Timber, particularly pine and ash, is also important to the economy, as are oil and natural gas production (Bishop 196: 3: 279-280).

Houston County looked to federal funding in 1938 to help finance a new courthouse. One of the New Deal's most successful programs, the Public Works Administration (PWA), provided financing for new public buildings including courthouses. The PWA made grants to government entities to cover up to 30% of the cost of new or remodeled public buildings. The Houston County Commissioners Court voted on February 3, 1938, to seek PWA funds for a courthouse, and by October of the same year had vacated the 1883 building (HCCCM 1147:334, 425).

The new courthouse was part of a public building revival in Crockett. In 1937 the city had constructed a new brick city hall just off the square. About the same time, a new post office had been built at a cost of \$85,000, one block from the courthouse (City of Crockett c.1937: 6-7). Designed by Blum E. Hester, Architect, Houston, Texas, and built by the Eckert-Fair Construction Company of Dallas, the new Houston County Courthouse cost more than \$180,000 and was

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accepted by the commissioners' court on January 8, 1940. As well as containing all the county offices and courtrooms, the building also housed the county jail on the top floor (HCCCM 147: 334, 441-445, 548).

Courthouses of Houston County

Houston County has seen five courthouses, all located on today's public square in Crockett. The town was laid out in 1837 with 36 blocks around a one-block town square. This layout was one of the most common in Texas and is also represented in cities as large as Houston and Dallas, and as small as Decatur and Belton. The town's original plat was lost, likely to one of the fires that plagued the early courthouses, and was redrawn in the 1960s (Bishop n.d.; Robinson 1972: 340-341). The courthouse square is bounded on the north by East Houston Avenue (formerly Public Avenue), on the east by South Fifth Street (formerly Houston Street), on the south by Goliad Avenue (formerly Main Street), and on the west by South Fourth Street (formerly North Street).

First Courthouse, 1838–1851

Due to several courthouse fires in the 19th century, records about early county business are scarce. Little is known about the first county court building. According to Aldrich (1943: 30), it was a log building constructed as early as January or February 1838, by John Erwin, a Houston County pioneer. It stood in today's courthouse square.

Second Courthouse, 1851–1865

Like the first courthouse, little is known about this structure. It, too, stood on the public square, built of locally-made brick. Aldrich (1943: 30-33) noted that "the brick yard was located about where the residence of Dr. W.C. Lipscomb stands [on South Seventh Street]" (see also HCHC 1979: 17). This two-story brick courthouse burned in February 1865, likely the result of arson. According to the Crockett *Quid Nunc* (1865a), the fire may have started in the district clerk's office, and "nearly all the county records [were] lost." All the records and equipment in the second floor were burned, as well as most of the records in the rest of the building. The county solicited bids in March "to take down and stack bricks of the courthouse, payable in brick," although there are no records to verify whether this was done (Crockett *Quid Nunc* 1865b).

Third Courthouse, 1871–1882

Between 1865 and 1871 the county utilized various buildings in town for county business. The County Commissioners Court, in a petition to the Texas legislature, asked to retain their state taxes to build a new courthouse:

We are compelled to Hold our dist. Courts in a room over a Store House whis [sic] is of great inconvenience, our courts of necessiry [sic] holding fifteen weeks in the year.... In fact it will take all the tax, raised for purposes of that character to pay for Rents, for court [sic] House room, Jury rooms &c. &c the expense of boarding prisoners in the jail of other counties and other expenses attending conveying prisoners to & from the county. (quoted in Aldrich 1943: 35-36)

The third courthouse was constructed in 1871 after a delay of six years. Completed at a cost of nearly \$5,000, the frame two-story building contained county offices, a second-floor courtroom, and the county jail. It was built by local merchant

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John H. Burnett. Burnett, a large property owner southeast of Crockett on today's SH 7, immigrated to Houston County from Somerville, Georgia, in 1854. His store was located at the corner of North Fifth and East Houston (HCHC 1979: 22). The county was still short of funds for the courthouse in 1874 when the county requested authority to levy a special tax to pay John H. Burnett for construction of a courthouse and jail (HCHC 1979: 22).

This courthouse burned on November 2, 1882, again destroying the county's records, but also killing two prisoners in the building's jail (HCHC 1979: 24).

Fourth Courthouse, 1883-1938

In 1883, the Houston County Commissioners' Court contracted with Waco-based architect Wesley Clark Dodson to design a new county courthouse. Dodson was a prominent Texas courthouse designer in the last quarter of the 19th century. Noted as an "old guard Victorian architect in Texas, an accomplished practitioner of the Second Empire mode," by architectural historian Jay Henry, Dodson designed a number of courthouses throughout the state, including those in McLennan (1876), Lampasas (1883), Johnson (1881-1883), Anderson (1884-1885), Parker (1885, with William Dudley), Hood (1889-1891), Bonham (1887-1888, with William Dudley), Denton (1895-1896), and Coryell (1897-1898) counties (Robinson 1983: 261-300 *passim*). The Houston County edifice was similar to those he designed during this period in Lampasas, Johnson, and Anderson counties.

Although the architectural drawings for the 1883 Houston County courthouse no longer exist, the deed records contain more than thirteen pages of specifications for the building (HCDR 5: 209-222). Among the details, the specifications noted that "The old cistern or well on the site of the building must be filled with dirt, wet and flooded every 2 ft. and made solid...." (HCDR 5: 211).

Dodson's design for Houston County was very similar to those for the contemporaneous buildings in Johnson and Lampasas counties. Utilizing the fashionable Second Empire styling of the day, he placed a central clock tower in the midst of a picturesque, symmetrical, polychromed structure. The \$20,000 red brick building stood in the middle of the open town square, as had its predecessors. A stone-lined well sat at the south end of the building. In 1885 the blocks surrounding the square were fairly well developed with a number of brick buildings, particularly on the east side. Over the next ten years, the square was completely surrounded by one-and-two-story, primarily brick buildings (Sanborn Map Company 1885, 1896).

In 1907 the county built a separate two-story brick structure on the square at the southeast corner of the courthouse. Titled the County Clerk Office, it held the clerk's office and a vault on the first floor and had a jury room on the second floor. The well was enclosed in a one-story shed that may have been the first gazebo on the grounds (Sanborn Map Company 1907). Five years later the courthouse square also held a one-story frame building that may have contained water closets and a water tower (Sanborn Map Company 1912). By 1925 the small building had disappeared, and the gazebo had taken on its hexagonal shape (Sanborn Map Company 1925). Photographs of the public square after the turn of the century of the fourth courthouse show a very small irregularly shaped yard around the courthouse, held in place with a retaining wall. Informal walks crossed the lawn, and a few trees were placed at irregular intervals.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the Houston County Courthouse (in all of its incarnations) and the public square to the civic life of the county and to its individual citizens. Crockett has served as the commercial and banking

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas

center for the county since its founding.

The first courthouse provided shelter during Indian defenses in 1839. Civil War musters held in Crockett likely centered around the courthouse square, the largest open area in town. The commercial and banking industries thrived around the courthouse, though having to rebuild after each devastating fire. Crockett town fathers solicited the Houston and Great Northern Railroad, providing further impetus to the burgeoning commercial enterprises on the town square. Photos of the town show the courthouse at the center, with the large square providing ample room for buggies and wagons and later, automobiles. The proximity to courts and land records drew attorneys and land dealers, as well as abstract companies; the square was the best business address in the town. When oil was discovered in the southwestern part of the county in 1934, it had a major impact on the county, shown very dramatically in the county clerk's office. Activity in the records was such that on the second day after Boone Bros. No. 1 Discovery well came in, the county commissioners authorized a 20 foot-by-40 foot annex. A frame structure attached to the brick building, the addition was completed in 48 hours (September 15, 1934) and housed land and abstract records, as well as the 100 or so people using those records.

Fifth Courthouse, 1939 to present

Among the New Deal's National Recovery Act (1933) programs was the Public Works Administration (PWA). Designed to provide loans and grants for local government construction projects, the PWA assisted counties and cities throughout Texas. Many 19th-century courthouses were replaced through this program, which has been called "the nemesis of many fine Victorian courthouses." (Robinson 1983: 272) Many counties and municipalities were able to build modern, fire-proof buildings in the depths of the Great Depression utilizing PWA funds, thereby employing local workers and contractors, and putting federal money into local economies.

On February 18, 1938 the County Commissioner's Court filed an application for a 45% grant with the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works. As described in the county's application, the uses of the building were:

- Ground Floor: County records, boiler room, toilets for white men, colored men, and colored women, agricultural and demonstration Agent, Constable, Justice of the Peace, and other agency offices and storage.
- First Floor: Tax Assessor and Collector, County Clerk, Auditor, Sheriff, County School Superintendent, contingent offices, and white women's toilet.
- Second Floor: County Courtroom, County Judge, County Commissioners and Court, County Judge, County Attorney, Jury Room and Dormitory, Court Reporter, District Judge, District Courtroom.
- Third Floor: Jail (facilities for up to 60 prisoners: Women & juvenile, white men, colored men, felons), Sheriff's living quarters.

On March 14, 1938 the Houston County Commissioners Court hired architect Blum E. Hester of Houston "to prepare the necessary preliminary plans and specifications and application required by the Federal Government" to secure PWA funds

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Houston County Courthouse
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for the construction of a new county courthouse. (HCCCM 147: 334) Hester's initial contract contained no compensation; evidently that would come later when the PWA moneys were approved.

The application for PWA funding was successful, and on September 3, 1938 the county held a bond election to finance its portion of the new courthouse. Inspired by local Lions Club efforts, voters approved the \$120,000 bond issue by a count of 1,069 to 632. In mid-October the commissioners ordered that the existing courthouse be vacated, and they designated the Crockett Hotel dining room as the courtroom for both county and district court purposes. The county also rented the first floor of the Moore Building for county use. D.J. Dincan secured the contract to demolish the courthouse and annex. At the end of October the commissioners approved Hester's plans and specifications for the new building and forwarded them to the regional director of the PWA for approval. (HCCCM 147: 334; 424-439; HCHC 1975: 27)

Moving quickly, the county opened construction bids on November 16, 1938. The bid documents included a base bid and fifteen alternates. The project attracted ten bidders: Tellepsen Construction Co., Houston; James T. Taylor, Fort Worth; Gilbert Falbo, San Antonio; Hal C. Dyer, Dallas; A.E. Rheiner, San Antonio; Templeton Cannon, San Angelo; R.F. Ball, Fort Worth; Knutson Construction Co., Houston; A.N. Evans, Columbus; and Eckert-Fair Construction Co., Dallas. Hester tabulated the complicated bids and concluded that Eckert-Fair Construction's \$183,000 bid was the lowest. The commissioners awarded the contract to the Dallas-based company the same day, "subject to the approval of the Regional Director PWA." On the first of December, the Commissioners Court opened three bids for courthouse equipment and awarded the contract to Wilhide Equipment Company of Dallas. (HCCCM 147: 441-445, 448-449)

The cornerstone for the new building was laid in July 1939 and contained a wide variety of memorial objects, according to the minutes of the Commissioners Court (147: 519):

- A wrapped coin by Mrs. & Mrs. W. K. McClain
- An envelope containing pictures of the old Courthouse Building which was raised [razed] by Mrs. Kelly
- One copy of the *Grapeland Messenger* (a weekly paper)
- A Maxonic [sic] Keystone by Judge Bradley, County Judge
- A New Testament dedicated to friends of Houston County and to the memory of Charles E. Hester by Blum E. Hester, Architect
- A Fountain pen used fourteen years in the County Court by Commissioner Story
- A Lodge certificate of K P and Masonic Lodges, membership cards of County and District Clerk by J. Dawson Robbins, County Clerk
- Four (4) additions [sic] of the *Crockett Courier* (a weekly paper)
- A photograph from zinki [sic] etching of wood Courthouse structure in 1870 by G.D. McClain
- The names of the Crockett Girl Scouts
- A copper plate bearing the name J. A. Brasher, County Treasurer
- A parcel from the First National Bank, containing the names and signatures of employees and W.E. Hail, Jr.
- A New Testament signed by Mr. A.B. English and Juanita Browning
- A Masonic Grand Lodge Certificate
- A marriage certificate by Jeff Franklin
- A letter from present Commissioner Court members with their signatures

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Houston County Courthouse
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- A sealed package submitted by Judge Aldrich containing copy of charter of Lions Club, copy of program Charter Night, List of present membership and a brief statement of projects they have sponcered [*sic*]
- Package by Judge Aldrich
- Booklet by Mrs. Hughes
- Brief statement of the program for the Centinial [*sic*] program, by the city council and chamber of commerce
- The names of the Crockett Boy Scouts
- A card by Rosser Bradley
- List of all county officers
- A personal note from G.B. Lake
- Copy of the Acts of the Apostles by Mr. Brightman

On the recommendation of architect Blum E. Hester, Houston County Commissioners accepted the new courthouse on October 19, 1939. The project had overrun its schedule by nine days, but the court agreed to waive any liquidated damages for the additional days. Almost a month later, on November 17, the court accepted the furnishings and equipment installations at a final cost of \$210,589.40. On January 8, 1940, the Commissioners Court made a "final acceptance" of the building and furnishings (HCCCM 147: 548, 5545, 570).

Dedication likely followed soon thereafter; the only mention of a dedication ceremony is an oblique reference to one (HCHC 1975: 28). At the time of the courthouse's completion, T.G.W. Tarver, an African-American citizen, wrote a 17-stanza poem titled "Houston County Courthouses in Rhyme; A Dedication Poem" in honor of the new building. Tarver's ode to the edifice reveals the county's preoccupation with ideas of modernity and its unhappiness with the 1883 building:

‘Twas a refuge for bacteria,
Of many and various kinds:
Which might infect our people --
Or e’en affect their minds.

Hence the old building was condemned,
It sooner or later would fall,
And crush to death officials
Housed in between its walls.

It was our noble Lion’s Club,
That gave this move a start,
To erect a modern courthouse,
We all, then played a part.

We exercised our franchise,
In a wondrous way,
By voting for a modern courthouse
With thousands, in bonds, to pay.

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For architectural culture
And skill, it holds its part,
Among the many structures,
Endeared to human heart.

For grandeur and for beauty,
Its rivals are but few;
Within the bounds of Texas,
It stands as something new.

One story above another,
Is an uplift towards the sky;
It stands out as a beacon
To its zenith -- three floors high.

On the pinnacle of the building,
The jail stands there aloof;
By its structure and position,
From jail-breaks should be proof.

Blum E. Hester, Architect (1902–1977)

Archival research has produced little information about architect Blum E. Hester. He was born in Houston County in 1902; where he obtained his architectural training is unknown. In 1934 oilman Harry M. Crighton, then the mayor of Conroe, Texas, commissioned Hester to design a "movie palace," and the Crighton Theatre still stands today on Main Street in Conroe.

Advertisements for Blum E. Hester, Architect (Texas Registration No. 484), appear in Houston city directories between 1936 and 1940. During this period he is listed as having an office in the Merchants and Manufacturers (M&M) Building on Main Street in downtown Houston; built in 1930, the Art Deco-styled M&M Building was the tallest building in Houston at that time, which suggests that Hester was an architect interested in modern styles and construction techniques, and that he had the means to lease office space in the city's most prominent building. In 1936 Hester's residence is listed at 4201 Rice Boulevard, while in 1940 he and his wife Elaine are listed as residing at 3805 University Boulevard. (Morrison & Fourmy 1936: 729; 1940: 475) His whereabouts before 1936, however, have not been discovered.

As far as has been determined, Hester did not design any courthouses other than the Houston County Courthouse in Crockett. Hester and his wife moved to Crockett during the construction of the courthouse or shortly after its completion, and he soon left the full-time practice of architecture and entered the ministry in Crockett. In addition to the county courthouse, Hester designed the Full Gospel Worship Temple on South Seventh Street in Crockett, now the Waller Funeral Home, as well as a church on State Highway 7 approximately five miles west of Kennard. He died in Crockett, January 25, 1977 and is buried in Evergreen Memorial Park. (HCHC 1987: 255; Bishop 2000)

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas

Architectural Significance

The Houston County Courthouse is an excellent example of late-1930s Art Moderne civic architecture and, among the Texas courthouses of the period, one of the most straightforward interpretations of the style. With its contemporaries—the courthouses in Castro, Cherokee, Childress, Comanche, Falls, Rockwall, Ward, and Washington counties—the Houston County Courthouse shares a number of common features:

- Its plan and massing are straightforward, with two major entrance elevations. This is a departure from the four relatively equal entry sequences found in Moderne courthouses of the middle 1930s; by 1939, an imposing, raised central entrance clearly delineated the primary points of entry into the building. Lower wings typically project from either side of the center section.
- Each of these late-1930s courthouses shares a similar design in regard to fenestration. Narrow vertical stacks of windows on either side of the main entrance are echoed in more numerous and significantly wider stacks of windows on the symmetrical facades of the projecting wings. The effect is such so as to emphasize the verticality of the center section while conveying a sense of groundedness and *gravitas* in the secondary masses.
- Most of the courthouses of the period are faced entirely with stone, usually limestone; only two (Falls County and Ward County) incorporate brick and/or concrete into what is otherwise a mostly-stone façade.

Of this group, the Houston County Courthouse is elegant in its simplicity and unequalled in this regard. It utilizes a “stripped classical” motif characteristic of the Art Moderne style—fluting, of the sort that one would find on a classical column—but in this application presented in profile as a restrained wave pattern above the entry doors. The fluting motif further provides a subtle texture on the cornice and wall caps, as well as the piers flanking the main entrances. Spandrels of Verde Antique marble—a metamorphic serpentine stone of a rich, dark green with white veining—are used between windows to create dark vertical bands against the cream and gray limestone. No other courthouse mentioned here so clearly delineates the contrast between solid and void in its fenestration.

Hester’s design of the Houston County Courthouse is also unusual for this period in that it incorporates a clock face on each elevation, like the W.C. Dodson-designed courthouse of 1883 that this building replaced. The presence of a multi-faced clock tower, high above the town square, is a common feature in late 19th century architecture; in this context, clocks served as much more than decoration, providing a value to the community by helping to standardize the keeping of time. By the 1930s, of course, this function was no longer essential, and clock faces were more commonly designed for main entrance façades and not the minor elevations of civic structures. The presence of the clock faces on all four sides of this structure establishes continuity with the past and reinforces the role of the courthouse at the center of community life.

Historical Significance

The current courthouse was built at a time when Houston County was looking back on its first hundred years, having celebrated its centennial in 1936–1937. Under the administration of Crockett mayor John Gordon Beasley, Sr., improvements included a new city hall, the David Crockett Memorial Building, and a new 50-acre city park. Unsurprisingly, Houston County commissioners were also interested in the building loans offered under the New Deal’s National Recovery Act program and the Public Works Administration.

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Houston County Courthouse
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Since 1939, the courthouse and the public square have been the site of numerous public events. Celebrations, such as the Fiddler's Festival, occurred yearly on the ground ending with street dances until midnight. Election results drew citizens to the square. All parade patterns circle the square. U.S. Bicentennial (1975-76) and Texas Sesquicentennial (1986-87) events were held on the courthouse steps and inside. The Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Merchants Beautification Committee use the steps of the building for their public events.

The courthouse has been the headquarters and repository of the Houston County Historical Commission and its predecessor, the Houston County Historical Survey Committee, since 1962. Whether located on the third floor or in its present first floor location, the office and the commissioners have been an integral part of Houston County's record-setting preservation initiatives. (HCHC 1979: 164-165, 178-189, 204) The commission erected a historical marker for the "County Seat of Crockett" on the northeast lawn in 1962 and another for the "Five Houston County Courthouses" on the northwest corner in 1979.

For its important role as the center of civic life in Houston County, and as the principal seat of county government, the Houston County Courthouse is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Politics/Government. As an excellent example of the Art Moderne style as applied to a public building—and the greatest example of the style in the county—the Houston County Courthouse is also eligible under Criterion C for Architecture.

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Houston County Courthouse
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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: less than one acre (17,550 square feet)

UTM REFERENCES	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
	15	266204	3467595

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The Houston County Courthouse is centrally located on the courthouse square, which includes one full block in Crockett, Texas, bounded on the north by East Houston Avenue (formerly Public Avenue), on the east by South Fifth Street (formerly Houston Street), on the south by Goliad Avenue (formerly Main Street) and on the west by South Fourth Street (formerly North Street).

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: Nomination includes all property historically associated with the building

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Rachel Leibowitz, Historian, Texas Historical Commission, based upon the Houston County Courthouse Master Plan by Gerald Moorhead of Ray Bailey Architects, Inc., with Sue Winton Moss, Consulting Historian

ORGANIZATION: Houston County Historical Commission

DATE: November 20, 2009

STREET & NUMBER: 401 East Goliad Avenue

TELEPHONE: (936) 544-3255, ext. 238

CITY OR TOWN: Crockett

STATE: Texas

ZIP CODE: 75835

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (see continuation sheet Map-22 through Map-29)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-33 through Photo-41)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS (see continuation sheets Figure-30 through Figure-32)

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Houston County (Honorable Lonnie Hunt, County Judge)

STREET & NUMBER: 401 East Goliad Avenue, P. O. Box 370

TELEPHONE: (936) 544-3255, ext. 221

CITY OR TOWN: Crockett

STATE: Texas

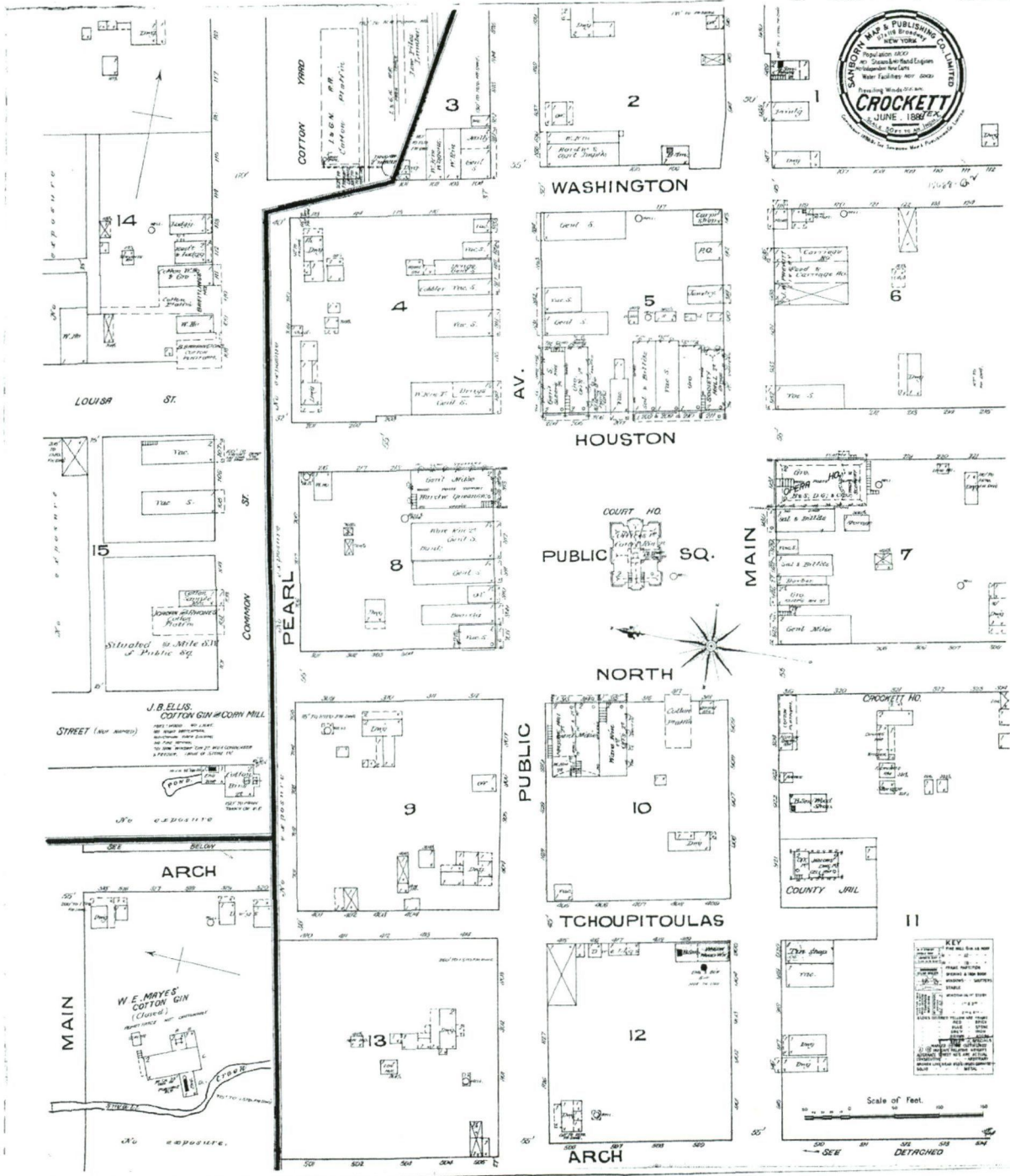
ZIP CODE: 75835

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas



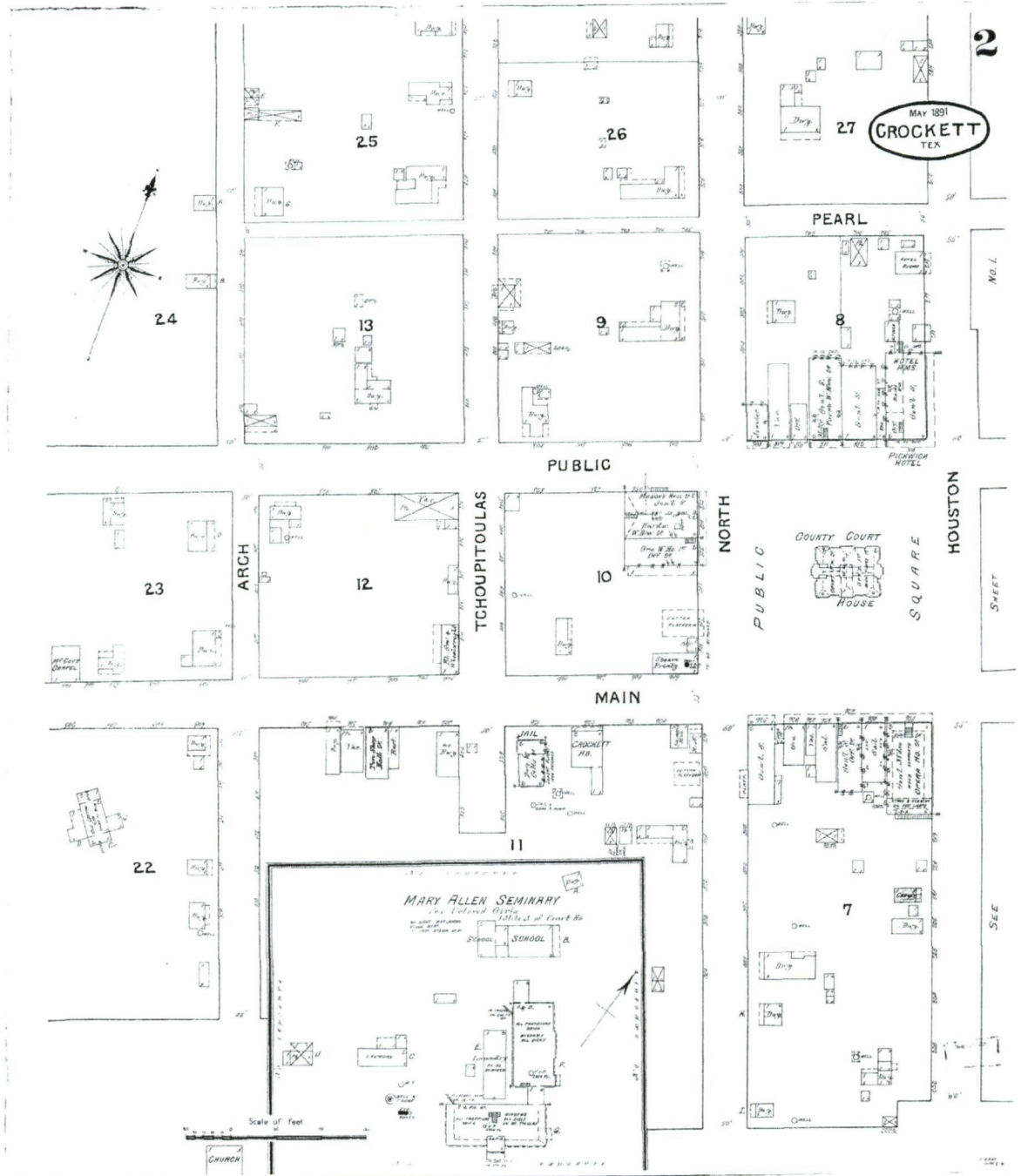
Map 2. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Crockett, Houston County, Texas, June 1885

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas



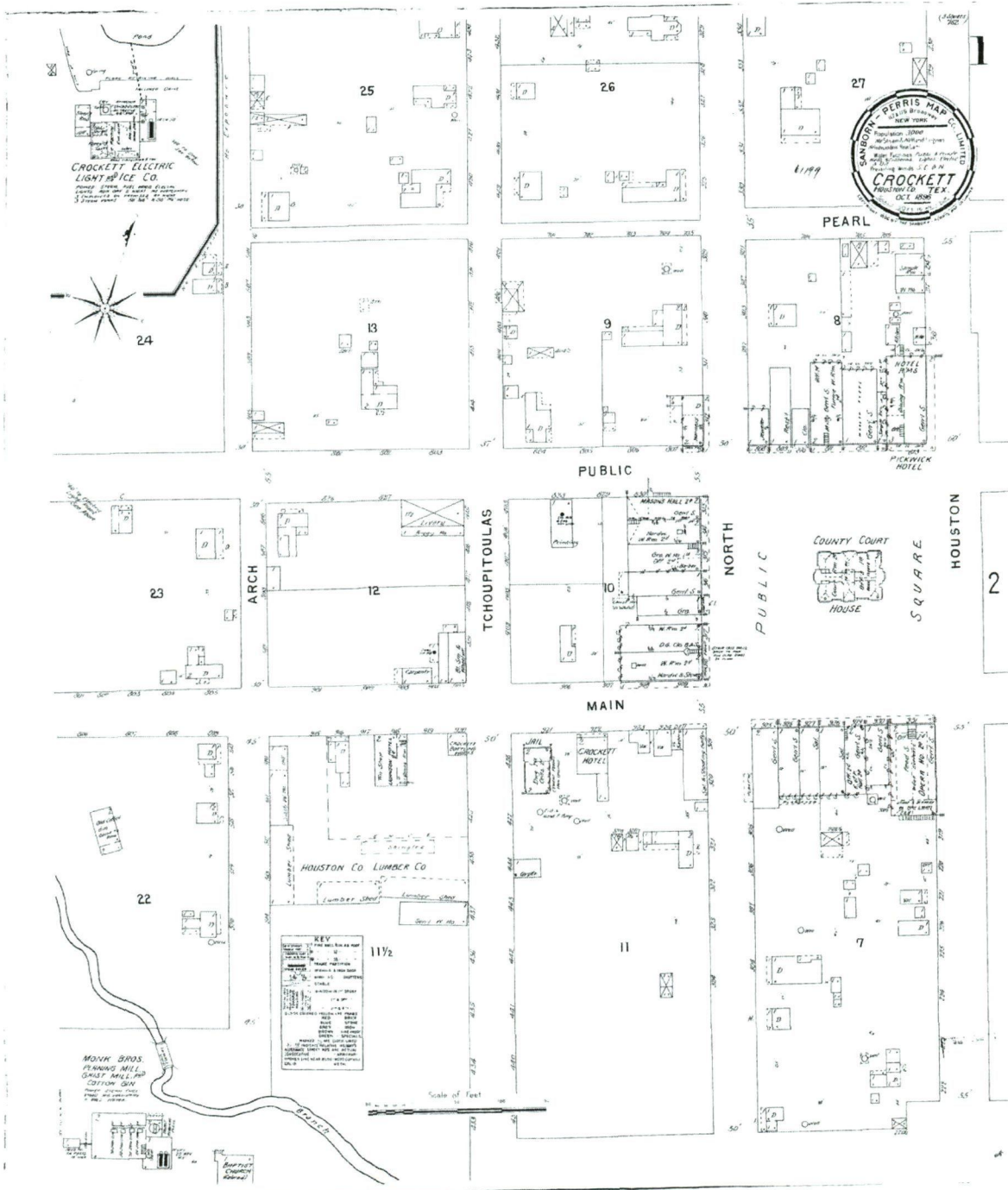
Map 3. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Crockett, Houston County, Texas, May 1891

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas



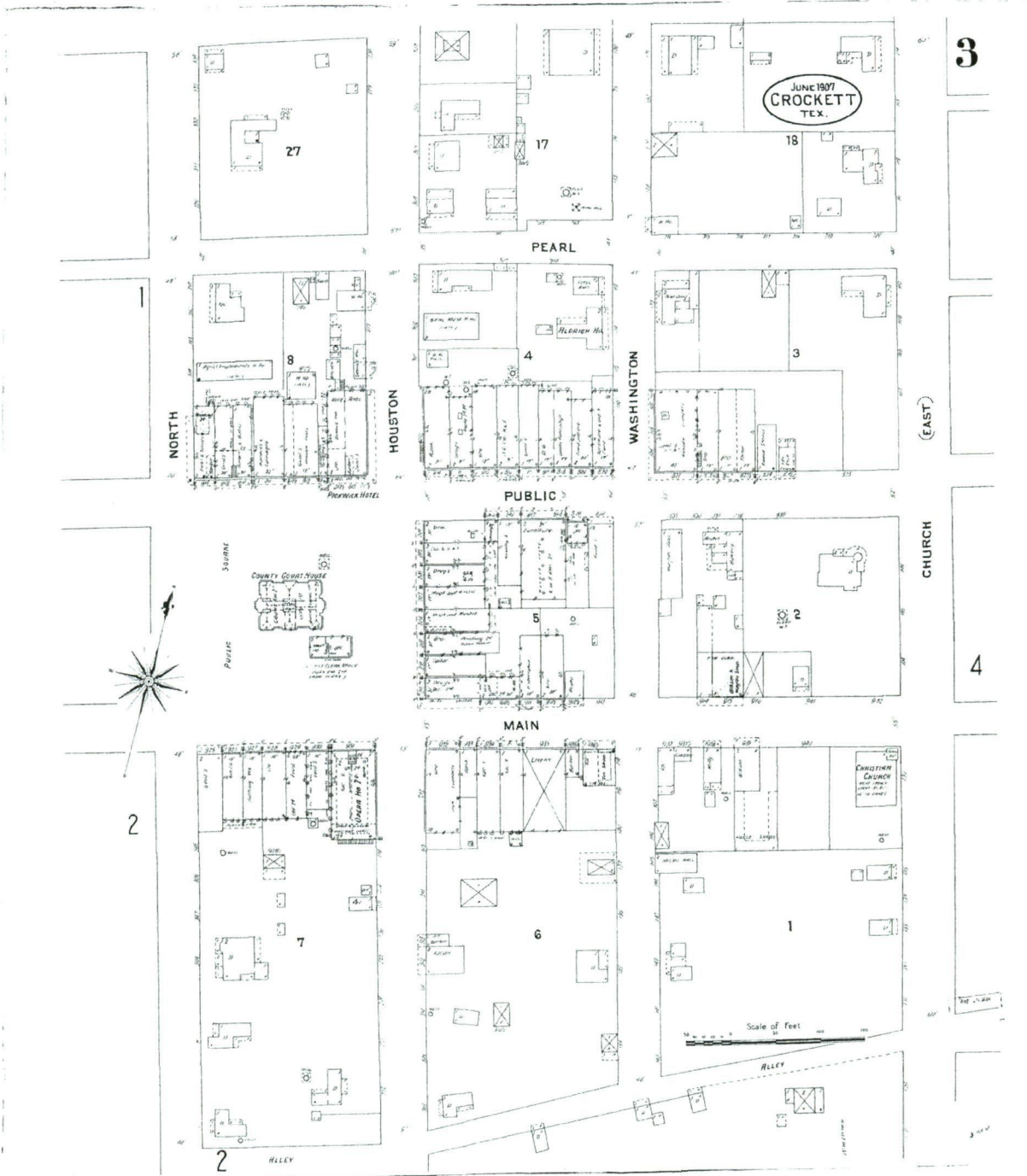
Map 4. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Crockett, Houston County, Texas, October 1896

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas

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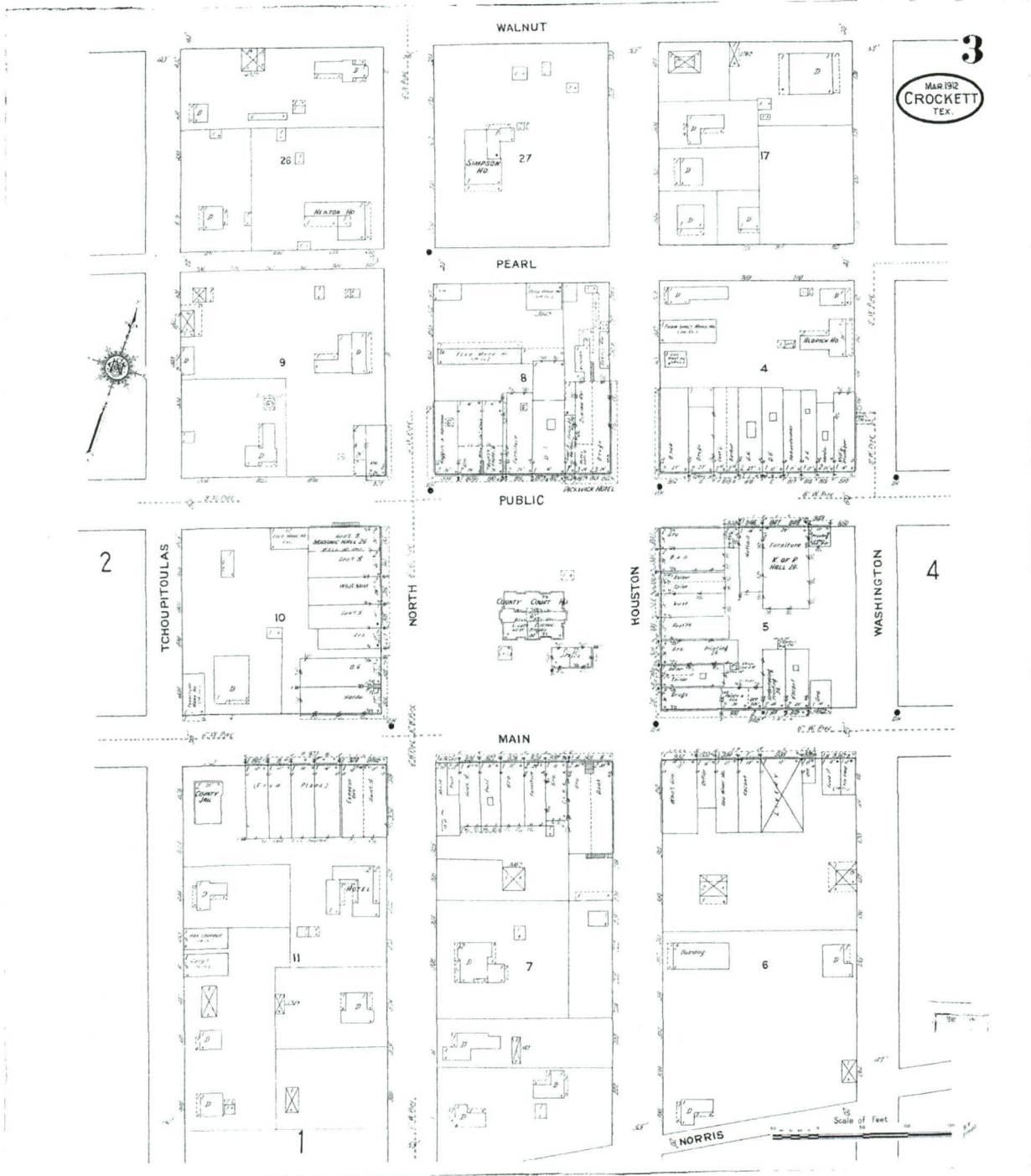
Map 6. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Crockett, Houston County, Texas, June 1907

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas



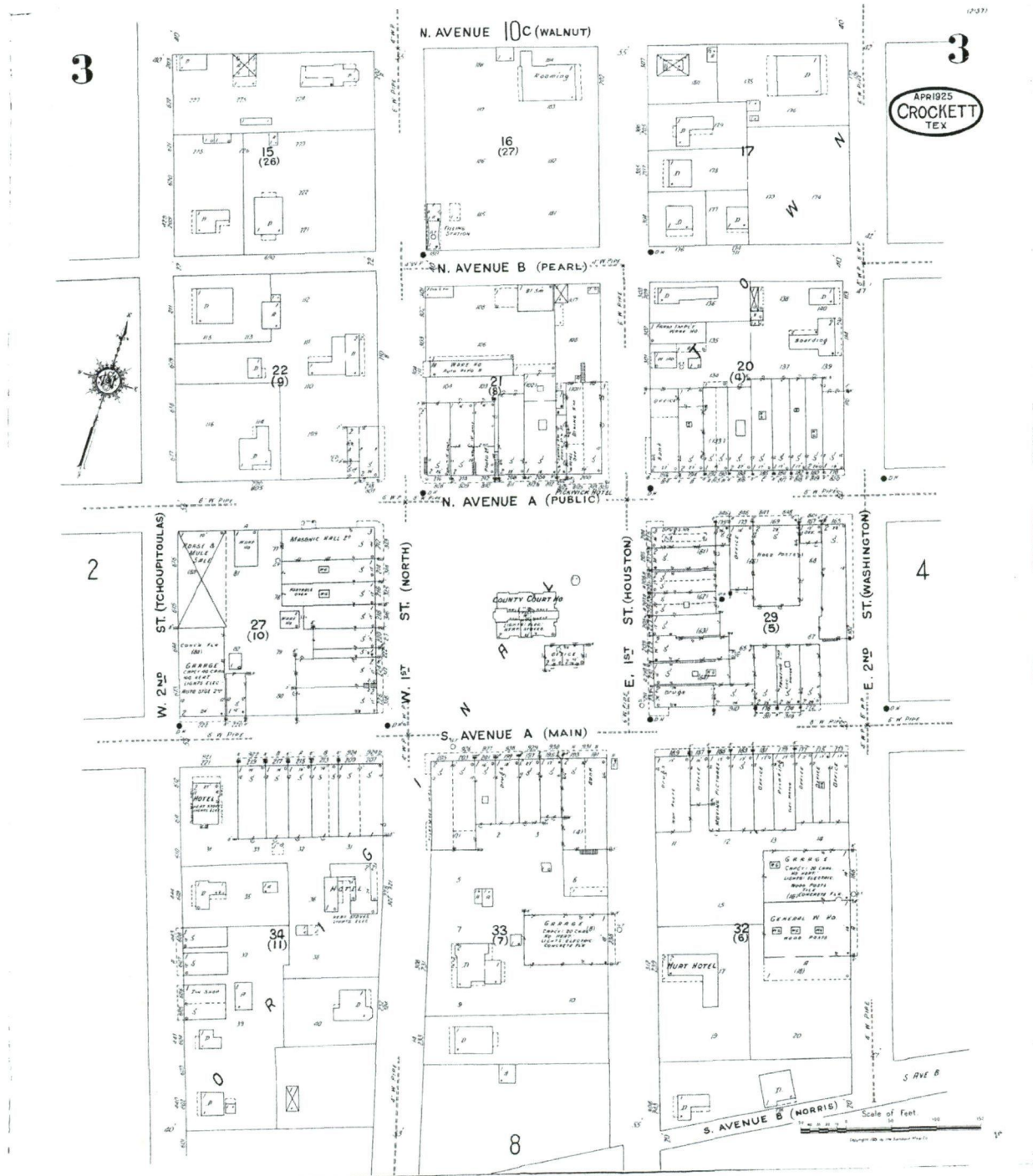
Map 7. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Crockett, Houston County, Texas, May 1912

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas



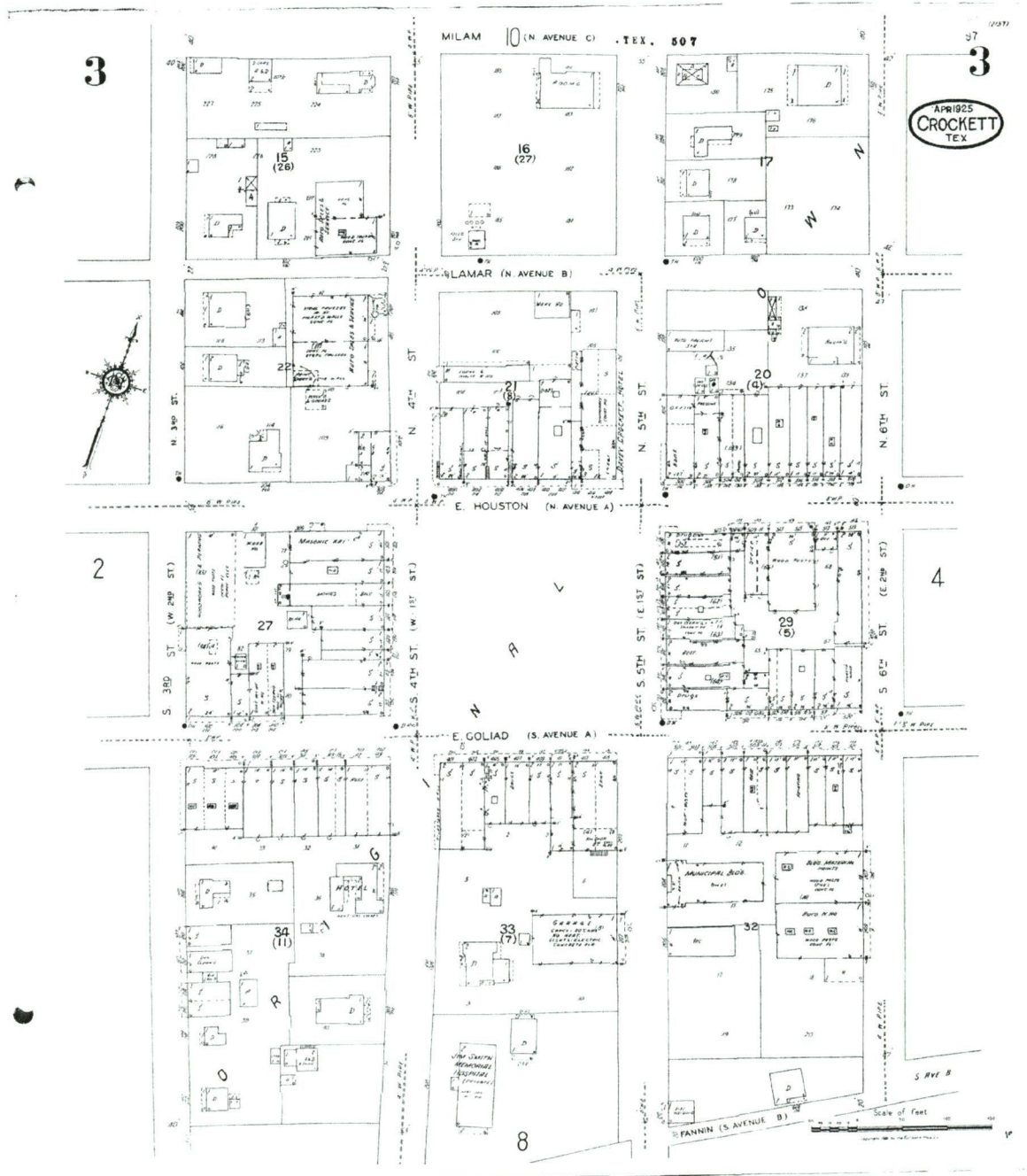
Map 8. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Crockett, Houston County, Texas, April 1925

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas



Map 9. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Crockett, Houston County, Texas, October 1938
The site has been cleared for the impending construction of the fifth Houston County Courthouse.

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas



Figure 1. The fourth Houston County Courthouse, W.C. Dodson, Architect, 1883.

Taken from the northwest, the top photo, dated 1909, shows the public square in its context. The lower photo (no date) shows the jail building.

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas



Figure 2. The fourth Houston County Courthouse, with the well house in foreground of lower photograph (no date).

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas

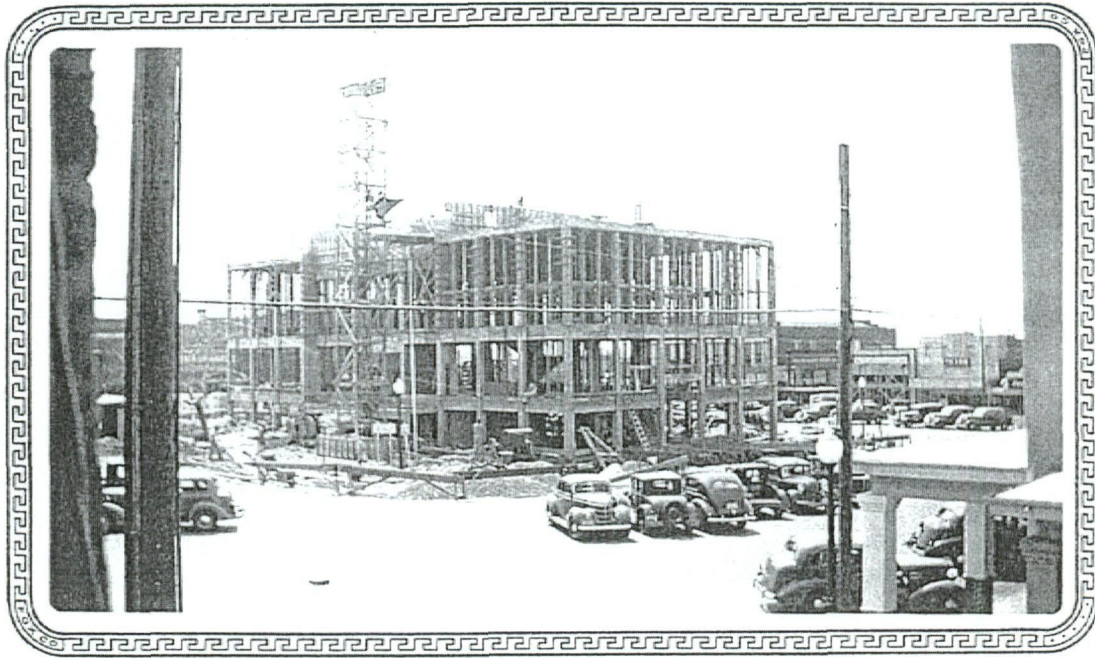


Figure 3. The fifth Houston County Courthouse, Blum E. Hester, Architect, completed 1939.

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas



Photo 1. Current exterior details. Note the very close fit of the building on the public square. A minor entrance, above.

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas



Photo 2. Current exterior details. A major entrance, left, features curved glass sidelights and metal spandrel panels of an incised grid of squares. The grand staircase features fluted balusters and urns for plantings.

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Houston County Courthouse
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Photo 3. Current exterior details. Entry to the ground floor offices is under the grand staircases at the two major entrances.

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Houston County Courthouse
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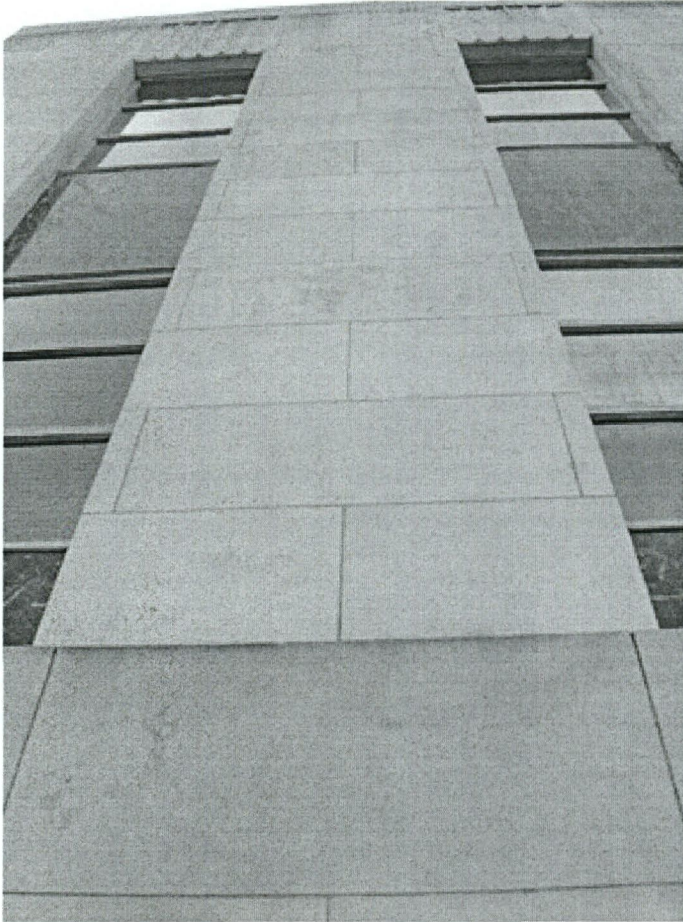


Photo 4. Current details. Steel windows and exterior marble spandrels.

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Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas

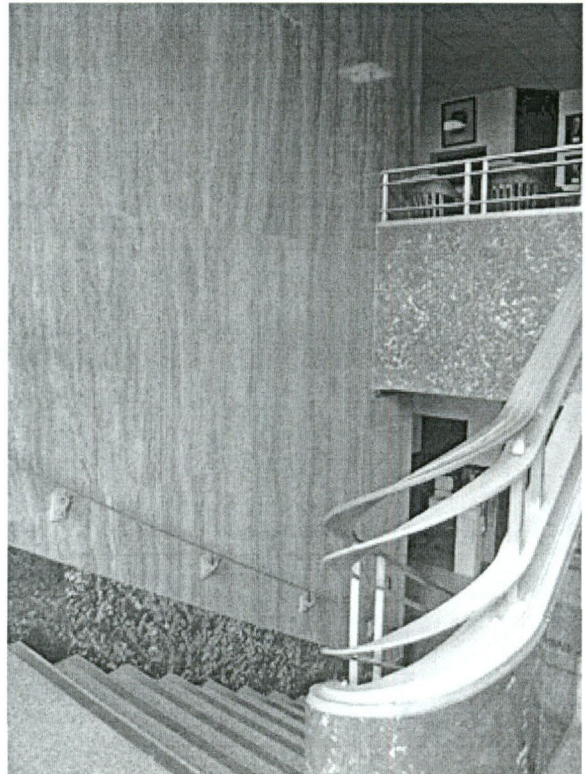


Photo 5. Current interior details. Stairwell finishes and terrazzo star at first floor center.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section PHOTO Page 38

Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas

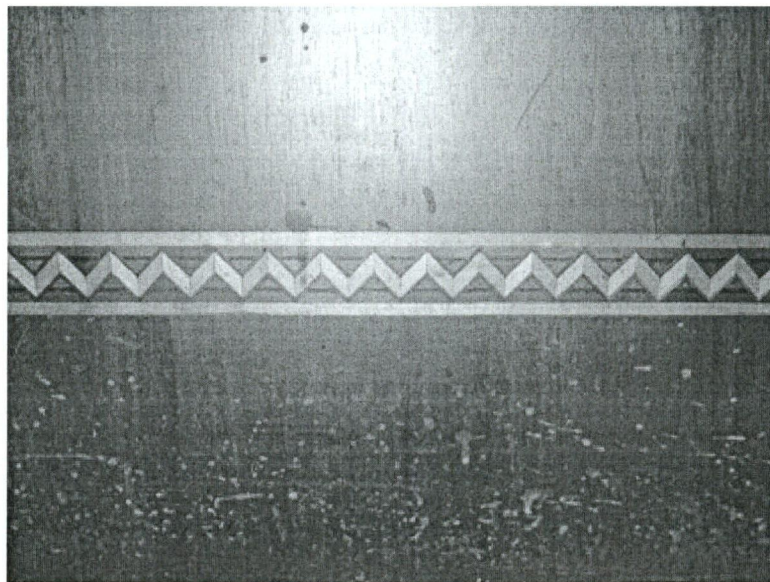
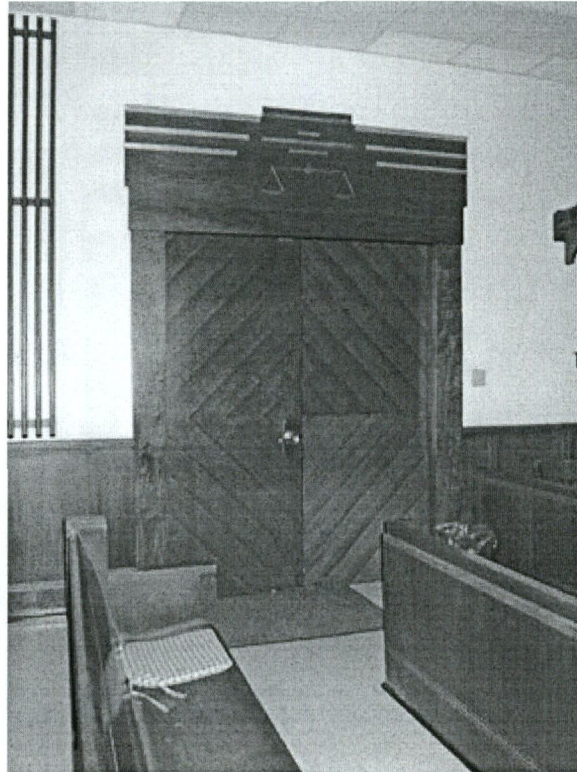


Photo 6. Current interior details. Inlaid wood finishes, including the scales of justice above the courtroom door and geomertic zig-zag pattern as floor border

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section PHOTO Page 39

Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas



Photo 7. Current interior details. Moderne zig-zag aluminum screens at hallways transoms and sidelights, terrazzo floors, and marble wall coverings, including fluted pilasters and wainscoting on second floor.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section PHOTO Page 40

Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas

PHOTO LOG

Name of Property:	Houston County Courthouse
City:	Crockett
County:	Houston County
State:	TX
Date of Photographs:	February 2010
Location of original digital files:	105 W. 16th Street, Austin, TX 78701
Number of photographs:	12

TX_HoustonCounty_HoustonCountyCourthouse_0001.tif
Southeast façade, camera facing northwest
Sherwood Bradshaw, photographer

TX_HoustonCounty_HoustonCountyCourthouse_0002.tif
East façade, camera facing west
Sherwood Bradshaw, photographer

TX_HoustonCounty_HoustonCountyCourthouse_0003.tif
North façade, camera facing south
Sherwood Bradshaw, photographer

TX_HoustonCounty_HoustonCountyCourthouse_0004.tif
West façade, camera facing east
Sherwood Bradshaw, photographer

TX_HoustonCounty_HoustonCountyCourthouse_0005.tif
Southwest façade, camera facing northeast
Sherwood Bradshaw, photographer

TX_HoustonCounty_HoustonCountyCourthouse_0006.tif
South façade, camera facing north
Sherwood Bradshaw, photographer

TX_HoustonCounty_HoustonCountyCourthouse_0007.tif
East façade, camera facing west
Sherwood Bradshaw, photographer

TX_HoustonCounty_HoustonCountyCourthouse_0008.tif
Hallway, first floor, camera facing south
Sherwood Bradshaw, photographer

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section PHOTO Page 41

Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas

TX_HoustonCounty_HoustonCountyCourthouse_0009.tif
Hallway, lower level, typical door and hardware, camera facing east
Sherwood Bradshaw, photographer

TX_HoustonCounty_HoustonCountyCourthouse_0010.tif
Second floor, District Courtroom, Judge's bench area, wood inlay on perimeter walls, camera facing west
Charles Goode, photographer

TX_HoustonCounty_HoustonCountyCourthouse_0011.tif
Second floor, District Courtroom, Judge's bench, camera facing northwest
Charles Goode, photographer

TX_HoustonCounty_HoustonCountyCourthouse_0012.tif
Staircase and lobby, camera facing east
Charles Goode, photographer

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Houston County Courthouse

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Houston

DATE RECEIVED: 3/26/10 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/26/10
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/11/10 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/10/10
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 10000248

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 5-10-10 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

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

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



HOUSTON COUNTY COURT HOUSE

HOUSTON COUNTY TX

1 OF 12



HOUSTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

HOUSTON COUNTY TX

2 OF 12



HOUSTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

HOUSTON COUNTY TX

3 OF 12



HOUSTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE
HOUSTON COUNTY TX

4 OF 12



HOUSTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

HOUSTON COUNTY TX

5 OF 12



HOUSTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

HOUSTON COUNTY TX

6 OF 12

HOUSTON COUNTY
COURT HOUSE



HOUSTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

HOUSTON COUNTY TX

7 OF 12



AED
AMERICAN
HEALTHCARE
CORPORATION

HOUSTON COUNTY
COURTHOUSE RENOVATION
PROJECT
SCHEDULE
2000

1
9
7
6
HOUSTON CO
COURTHOUSE REN
J. B. LIVELY, COUNTY
COMMISSIONER
JOAN MUESS
PACAN HUFF, CLERK
THOMAS S. WARRIETT JR. AS
COURT REPORTER
W. H. SPRUELL, CLERK

HOUSTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

HOUSTON COUNTY TX

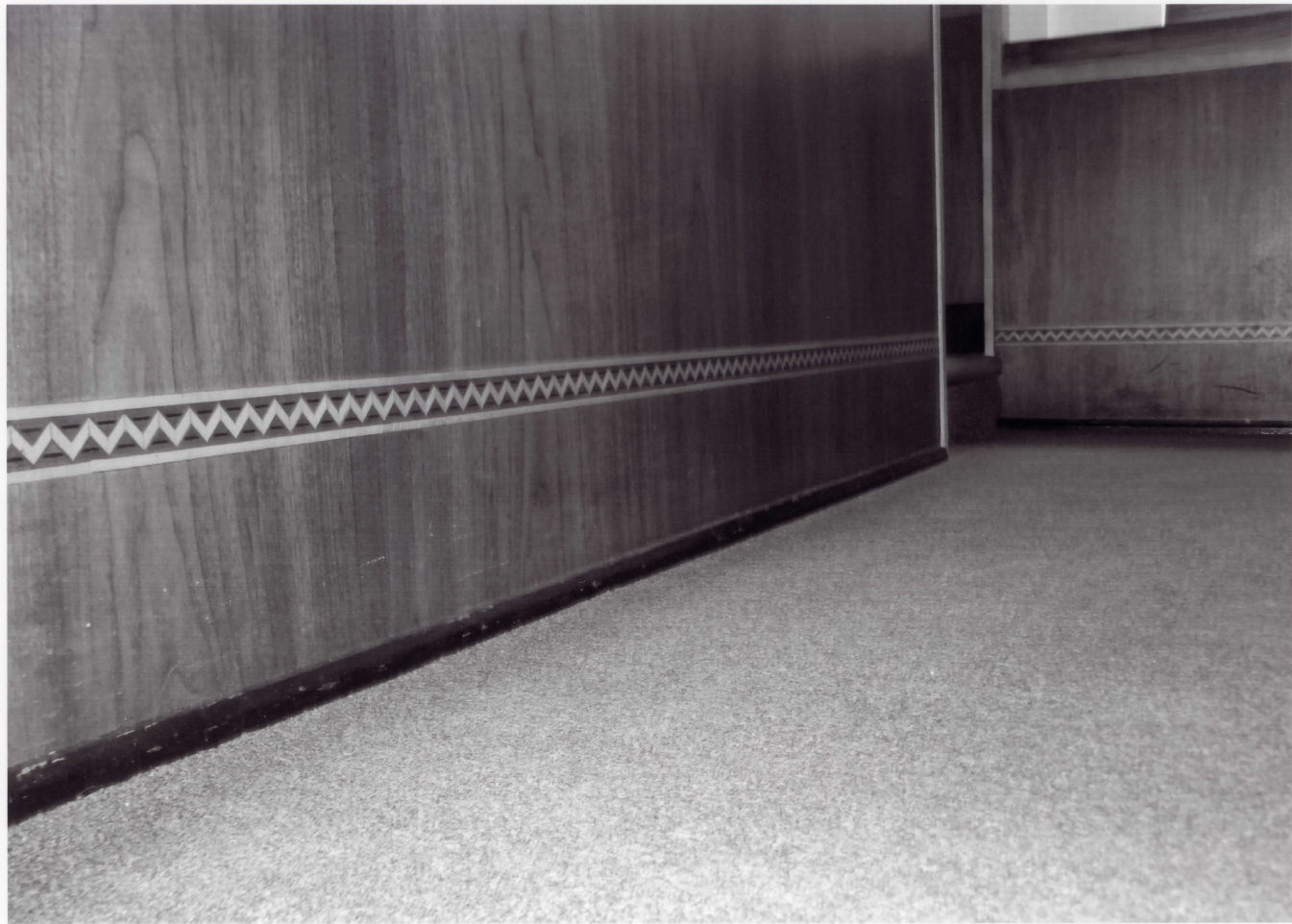
8 OF 12



HOUSTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

HOUSTON COUNTY TX

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HOUSTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE
HOUSTON COUNTY TX
10 OF 12



HOUSTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE
HOUSTON COUNTY TX

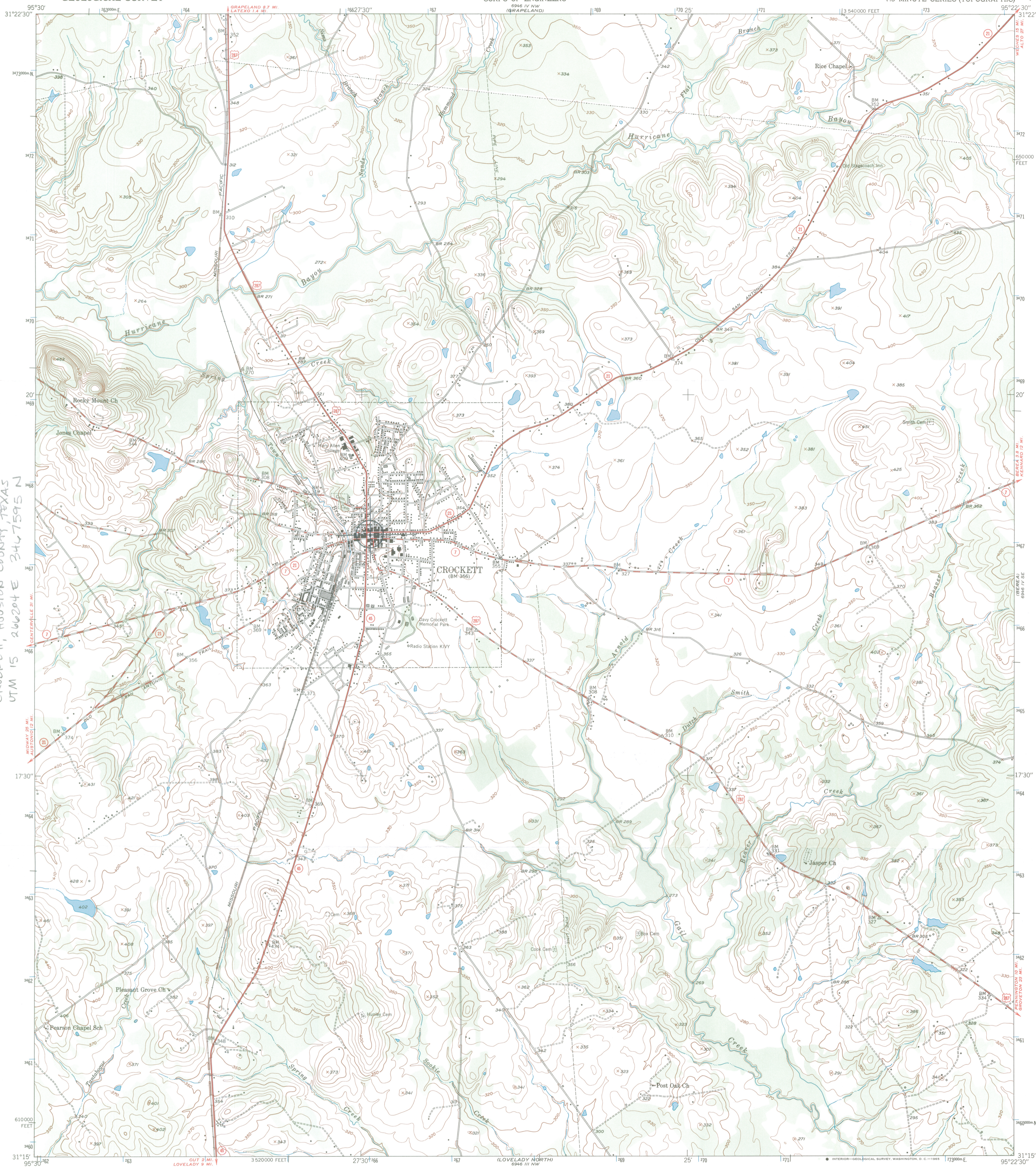
11 OF 12



HOUSTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

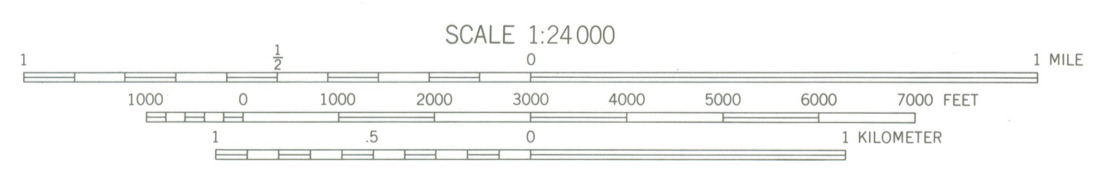
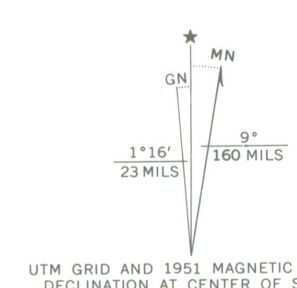
HOUSTON COUNTY TX

12 OF 12



HOUSTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE
CROCKETT, HOUSTON COUNTY TEXAS
UTM 15 266204 E 3467595 N

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Culture and drainage in part compiled from
aerial photographs taken 1947
Topography by plane-table methods 1949-1950
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,
central zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 15, shown in blue



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

HARD-SURFACE ALL WEATHER ROADS	DRY WEATHER ROADS
Heavy-duty — 4 LANE 18 LANE	Improved dirt —
Medium-duty — 4 LANE 18 LANE	Unimproved dirt —
Loose-surface, graded, or narrow hard-surface	
U. S. Route	State Route



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225 OR WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

3195-132

CROCKETT, TEX.
N3115-W9522.5/7.5
1950
AMS 6946 IV SW-SERIES V882



MEMORANDUM

TO: Linda McClelland
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Rachel Leibowitz, Historian
Texas Historical Commission

RE: Houston County Courthouse
Crockett, Houston County, Texas

DATE: March 15, 2010

The following materials are submitted regarding [address]:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Original National Register of Historic Places form
	Resubmitted nomination
	Multiple Property nomination form
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Photographs
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	USGS maps
	Correspondence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other: Archival-quality CD with digital images

COMMENTS:

- SHPO requests substantive review
- The enclosed owner objections (do) (do not) constitute a majority of property owners
- Other:

