**Form 10-300 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries – complete applicable sections)

### 1. NAME

**COMMON:**

Hill County Courthouse

**AND/OR HISTORIC:**


---

### 2. LOCATION

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

Courthouse Square

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Hillsboro

**STATE:**

Texas

**CODE:**

048

**COUNTY:**

Hill

**CODE:**

217

---

### 3. CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC</th>
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<tbody>
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**PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate):**

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Entertainment
- Government
- Industrial
- Military
- Museum
- Park
- Private Residence
- Religious
- Scientific
- Transportation
- Other (Specify)

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### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

**OWNER'S NAME:**

Hill County

**STREET AND NUMBER:**


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### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:**

Hill County Courthouse

**STREET AND NUMBER:**


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### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

**TITLE OF SURVEY:**

Texas State Historical Survey

**DATE OF SURVEY:**

1964

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:**

Texas State Historical Survey Committee

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

108 W. 15th Street

**CITY OR TOWN:**

Austin

**STATE:**

Texas

**CODE:**

048

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(See continuation sheet #1)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
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<tr>
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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>716480043</td>
<td>06/17/71</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Historic American Buildings Survey
No date Federal
Library of Congress
Washington DC 08
A Texas version of the Second-Empire style, the Hillsboro courthouse is the tallest building in the county and can be seen for miles when approaching the county seat from any direction. It is placed in the center of a typical Texas courthouse square with landscaped lawn and trees.

The courthouse is three stories tall with a basement and attics. A tall central tower extends the total height of the building to seven stories. The exterior walls are of ivory colored rusticated limestone with banded dressed limestone pilasters edging all projecting corners, banded dressed limestone columns and bases, and dressed limestone trim around the windows, doors, and cornice.

The plan is symmetrical and basically square. There are four identical five-bay facades; each with end pavilions and central three-story raised portico. The roof treatment varies. The main body of the roof is hipped. The end pavilions are terminated with pyramidal mansard roofs truncated by decks with molded caps, the front part of each roof is brought down at the outside corner to correspond to the projection of the pavilion on the facade, giving the corner of the mansard roof a re-entrant angle. A small gable projects up beyond the cornice at the center of each pavilion and a dormer window is placed immediately above this in the mansard roof. Additional dormers face in toward the body of the building making a total of four at each corner. The central porticos have gable roofs and the prominent central tower is shingled and has a convex mansard roof with two windows per side and a projecting cornice above at the first level, straight sided second level with central louvered arched opening flanked by two smaller openings, all with hood-molds, and convex roof again at the top level with flat deck and four clock faces with heavily molded curved dripstones. There are two large chimneys.

The porticos have very tall one-story engaged banded and dressed stone bases with rusticated stone defining the two pilasters of each base. These support three-story free-standing banded columns with modified Corinthian capitals. The pediment has attenuated brackets beneath a wide cornice and a large deep arch springing above the columns. The wide entablature above the columns is repeated on the remainder of the building with Victorian brackets and belt-courses.

The openings are varied. Those of the first floor are arched with large keystones and filled (or blind) panels above the lintels of the one-over-one light double-hung sash type windows. The second and third story windows are divided with carved limestone panels. The third story windows, like those

(See continuation sheet #2)
of the first story, have arched openings with the arches filled above the lintels. The windows in the porticos repeat this scheme, but are very slender and tall with an arch pattern and huge keystone uniting the group above the third story. Three louvered openings mark an attic story in each pavilion.

There is a cast-iron balcony above the door. Four pilasters frame the doors, each with fanciful capitals and large brackets. Low-relief patterns are carved in these brackets and in the entablature they support. A high-relief belt course extends around the building at the top of the first story, made up of a pattern of flowers and leaves.

The interior of the building has been altered. The exterior was renovated in 1970.
**Hill County** was created from part of Navarro County in 1853 and named for George Washington Hill. The citizens were authorized to vote for a site for the county seat which would be named "Hillsborough", and chose a centrally located site. The first courthouse of elm logs was built in 1854 and served until 1856. The second, more substantial, courthouse was a two-story brick building which burned down in 1872. In 1874 a third courthouse, again a two-story brick building, was built for $15,000 and served until the present structure was erected.

In 1889, when the present courthouse was planned, the location of the county seat was contested, but the final vote on November 6th gave Hillsboro 2611 votes to Woodbury's 1287. After the election the contract for the present courthouse was let on December 19, 1889, to Lovell, Miller, and Hood of Brownsville for $83,000. The old courthouse was sold at auction on December 21 of that year for the sum of $120, and during the construction of the new building county offices were mainly in the Ewell Hotel.

Records indicate that the contractors sustained a loss of $4,714.22 over the contract price. (Approximately 50% of the total cost of construction related to the quarrying, transportation, carving, and placing the limestone rocks which form the exterior face of the building.) County officials along with the citizens of Hill County donated more than enough to repay the contractor's loss.

The architect of the Hill County Courthouse was W. C. Dodson, listed as a Waco architect in the 1885 roster of Texas architects. Dodson also designed the Hood County Courthouse at Granbury in 1890, a courthouse that is almost identical to that of Parker County at Weatherford which was built in 1885 and was probably designed by Dodson. All three of the courthouses are of a Texas version of the French Second Empire style, all have identical central towers, and are otherwise very closely related. The Hillsboro and Weatherford county courthouses are eye-catchers and photographs of them have been fre-

(See continuation sheet #?)
8. (cont'd)

Quently included in nationally distributed articles and books on Texas or on Texas architecture.

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark -
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Texas State Historical Survey Committee marker files.

The Hillsboro Mirror, Nov. 13, 1953, June 18, 1930.


Lyons, Russell. "Everything's Up-to-date in Texas...but Me", Harpers, May, 1961. (See continuation sheet #1)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

<table>
<thead>
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<td>97° 07' 47&quot;</td>
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APPORXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Wayne Bell, Project Director
Roxanne Williamson, Architectural Historian

Texas State Historical Survey Committee

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National [ ] State [ ] Local [ ]

Name: [Signature]

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: March 16, 1971

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: June 21, 1971

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date: April 30, 1971
<table>
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Hil County Courthouse
71000 939

And another W.C. Dodson Texas County Courthouse!

Ok 4/16/71
Ok 4/20/71
Ok 4/16/71
Ok 4/26/71

Ok 4/29/71
Ok 6-21

Date: 8/3/71

Received MAR 13 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER
6/21/71
NPS Number 71.6.48.0043

Title: Hill County Court House

Loc. Hill Co., Texas

View from the SE

TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL SURVEY COMMITTEE

P. O. Box 1226, Capitol Station

Austin, Texas 78711
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>AND/OR HISTORIC:</td>
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<td>STREET AND NUMBER:</td>
<td>Courthouse Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITY OR TOWN:</td>
<td>Hillsboro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATE:</td>
<td>Texas</td>
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<td>CODE:</td>
<td>048</td>
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<td>July 16, 1970</td>
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<tr>
<td>DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.</td>
<td>View from the southeast</td>
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NPS Number 71.6.48.0043
Title: Hill County Courthouse
Loc. Hill Co., Texas
1 of 4 identical facades
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM  

(TYPE all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)  

1. NAME  
COMMON:  
Hill County Courthouse  
AND/OR HISTORIC:  

2. LOCATION  
STREET AND NUMBER:  
Courthouse Square  
CITY OR TOWN:  
Hillsboro  
STATE:  
Texas  
CODE  
048  
COUNTY:  
Hill  
CODE  
217  

3. PHOTO REFERENCE  
PHOTO CREDIT:  
Texas State Historical Survey Committee  
DATE OF PHOTO:  
July 16, 1970  
NEGATIVE FILED AT:  
Texas State Historical Survey Committee  
108 W. 15th Street, Austin, Texas 78711  

4. IDENTIFICATION  
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.  

One of the four identical facades
Title: Hill Country Courthouse

Loc.: Hill Co., Texas

Detail of one of the four identical main entrances
**1. NAME**

COMMON: Hill County Courthouse

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: Courthouse Square

CITY OR TOWN: Hillsboro

STATE: Texas

CODE: 048

COUNTY: Hill

CODE: 217

**3. PHOTO REFERENCE**

PHOTO CREDIT: Texas State Historical Survey Committee

DATE OF PHOTO: July 16, 1970

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Texas State Historical Survey Committee

108 W. 15th Street, Austin, Texas 78711

**4. IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Detail of one of the four identical main entrances.
Hill County Courthouse

Courthouse Square

Hillsboro

Texas

048

Hill

217

United States Department of the Interior Geological Survey

1:24000

1965, 1966

Texas Map Reference #3297-112

Hillsboro west, Texas
NATIONAL REGISTER PROPERTY - TEXAS 048

Hill County Courthouse, Hill County, 217

Geographical data, Item 10, Form 10-300 is given as:

Latitude 32° 00' 41"  Longitude 97° 07' 47"

Please **CHANGE** this to correctly read:

Latitude 32° 00' 40"  Longitude 97° 07' 47"

A new, correctly marked map is being enclosed. Please DESTROY the old map and replace it with this one. Thank you.
Dear Senator Bentsen:

We are pleased to inform you that the historic properties listed on the enclosure have been nominated by the State Liaison Officer appointed by the Governor for the implementation of the National Historic Preservation Program in Texas and have been entered into the National Register of Historic Places. Senator John G. Tower and the appropriate Representatives have also been provided with this information. By copy of this letter, the State Liaison Officer, Mr. Truett Latimer, Executive Director, Texas State Historical Survey Committee, Post Office Box 12276, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas 78711, has likewise been notified. A leaflet explaining the National Register is enclosed.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

Director

Enclosures

Entered in the National Register  JUN 21 1971

cc:  Mr. Truett Latimer, Executive Director, Texas State Historical Survey Committee, Post Office Box 12276, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas 78711

Also notified:  United States Senate  House of Representatives

Hon. John G. Tower  Hon. John Young

Hon. J. J. (Jake) Pickle  Hon. Omer Parleeon

Hon. George H. Mahon  Hon. John Dowdy
Properties added to the National Register of Historic Places

TEXAS

T. H. Mathis House
Levi Rockshelter
Paint Rock Indian Pictograph Site
Lubbock Lake Site
Old Nacogdoches University Building
Westerman Mound

Hill County Courthouse
Ezekiel Cullen House
"Liendo"
Lampasas County Courthouse
Parker County Courthouse

Aransas County, Rockport, Texas
Travis County, Austin, Texas
Concho County, Paint Rock, Texas
Lubbock County, Lubbock, Texas
Nacogdoches County, Nacogdoches, Texas
Houston County, Kennard, Texas
Hill County, Hillsboro, Texas
San Augustine County, San Augustine, Texas
Waller County, Hempstead, Texas
Lampasas County, Lampasas, Texas
Parker County, Weatherford, Texas
Mr. Truett Latimer  
Executive Director  
Texas State Historical Survey Committee  
Post Office Box 12276  
Capitol Station  
Austin, Texas 78711  

Dear Mr. Latimer,

We are pleased to inform you that the historic properties listed on the enclosure have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Senators John C. Tower and Lloyd Bentsen and the appropriate Representatives are being informed. A leaflet explaining the National Register is enclosed for each of the property owners. Please withhold any publicity on this until you have received a carbon copy of the Congressional correspondence.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Director

Enclosures

Entered in the National Register JAN 21 1971

cc:

HR 6/10/71 PDHerrick:naf  BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR
Properties added to the National Register of Historic Places

TEXAS

T. H. Mathis House  Aransas County,
Levi Rockshelter  Rockport, Texas
Paint Rock Indian Pictograph Site  Travis County,
Lubbock Lake Site  Austin, Texas
Old Nacogdoches University Building  Concho County,
Westerman Mound  Paint Rock, Texas

Hill County Courthouse  Lubbock County,
Ezekiel Cullen House  Lubbock, Texas
"Liendo"  Nacogdoches County,
Lampasas County Courthouse  Nacogdoches, Texas
Parker County Courthouse  Houston County,

Hill County,  Kennard, Texas
San Augustine County,
San Augustine, Texas
Waller County,
Hempstead, Texas
Lampasas County,
Lampasas, Texas
Parker County,
Weatherford, Texas
January 4, 1972

Dr. Robert J. Mullen  
Chief, Bureau of Registration  
National Register  
801 19th Street, N. W.  
Washington, D. C. 20006

Dear Bob:

Under separate cover we are forwarding corrections for the National Register submissions which were rechecked here in our office and found to be in error. I trust that this means of correction will not confuse the issue.

There may possibly still be errors but to date these are the only ones we have discovered. If you will notify us of any errors of which you are aware we will be glad to treat the submissions similarly.

Sincerely,

Truett Latimer  
State Liaison Officer

By:  

M. Wayne Bell, AIA  
Project Director