# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
## INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

### 1. NAME

- **HISTORIC**: Bosque County Courthouse

### 2. LOCATION

- **STREET & NUMBER**: Public Square
- **CITY, TOWN**: Meridian
- **STATE**: Texas

### 3. CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>PRESENT USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>DISTRICT</em></td>
<td>X PUBLIC</td>
<td>X OCCUPIED</td>
<td><em>AGRICULTURE</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X BUILDING(S)</td>
<td>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>MUSEUM</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>STRUCTURE</em></td>
<td><em>PRIVATE</em></td>
<td><em>UNOCCUPIED</em></td>
<td><em>COMMERCIAL</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>SITE</em></td>
<td><em>UNOCCUPIED</em></td>
<td><em>WORK IN PROGRESS</em></td>
<td><em>PARK</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>OBJECT</em></td>
<td><em>BOTH</em></td>
<td><em>WORK IN PROGRESS</em></td>
<td><em>EDUCATIONAL</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IN PROCESS</td>
<td>ACCESSIBLE</td>
<td><em>ENTERTAINMENT</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BEING CONSIDERED</td>
<td>YES: RESTRICTED</td>
<td><em>REligIOUS</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>YES: UNRESTRICTED</td>
<td><em>GOVERNMENT</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NO</td>
<td><em>INDUSTRIAL</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>TRANSPORTATION</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>_OTHER:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

- **NAME**: Bosque County
- **STREET & NUMBER**: Public Square
- **CITY, TOWN**: Meridian
- **STATE**: Texas

### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.</th>
<th>County Clerk's Office, Bosque County Courthouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STREET &amp; NUMBER</strong>:</td>
<td>Public Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CITY, TOWN</strong>:</td>
<td>Meridian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STATE</strong>:</td>
<td>Texas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- **TITLE**: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark & Historic Sites Inventory
- **DATE**: 1965 & 1970
- **DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS**: Texas Historical Commission
- **CITY, TOWN**: Austin
- **STATE**: Texas
The Bosque County Courthouse is located in the center of the public square of a town laid out in 1854 and a county created also in 1854. Located near the geographical center of the county (named after the Spanish term meaning woods), the town (named after a nearby stream) was platted by George B. Erath.

The present courthouse was the fourth in the county. The first, a one-room cabin with walls of vertical pickets and hand-riven oak weatherboards, erected in 1854 on a lot north of the public square, served until 1860; the second courthouse, a three-room frame building, burned in 1871; the third, a two-story stone structure, forty six feet square and erected in 1875, served until some county residents determined that a new modern edifice was needed.

Constructed in 1886-1887, the fourth courthouse was controversial since many residents believed that a proposed $60,000 edifice would bankrupt the county. Reportedly, the intensity of disagreement between the "courthouse party" and the "anti-courthouse party" reached riot intensity at the time the 1875 edifice was to be razed. However, peace prevailed but today this dispute over construction is reflected on the cornerstone, where the names of the county judge and only two of the four county commissioners appear.

Although the courthouse was centered on the square, requiring the usual entrance on each of the four sides, the plan, 83 feet by 85 feet 6 inches overall, differed slightly from some of the courthouses built in surrounding counties. On the south, west, and north sides, the doors are centered but on the east, where the dominant tower was located, the entrance was shifted off-center to allow a ground-floor courtroom to be centered under the symmetrically positioned tower. Also on the ground floor were located the offices of tax collector, county judge, county attorney, and county treasurer.

On the second floor were the district courtroom, offices for district judge, district clerk, and others. The courtroom extended the length of the building on an east-west axis and was entered at the sides from stair
landings on the north and south— an efficient arrangement for circulation. The judge's bench was located over the ground-floor courtroom in the projecting mass forming the base of the tower.

The courthouse was built of beautiful white limestone obtained from a quarry near Meridian. Specifications called for the footings of the exterior walls to be five feet in width and made of stone. These along with the foundation wall up to the level of the watertable were to be set with Portland cement mortar; above the watertable lime mortar was used throughout. The wall from grade line to the watertable was battered three inches and was constructed of pitch-faced ashlar. Above this level fine cut stone was used for the exterior walls. Hard limestone was employed for the steps and door sills.

The interior was finished in straightforward fashion, with walls plastered and painted white. "White pine" was specified for doors, door frames, and window sashes; "Texas pine" was specified for the window frames. The courtroom ceiling was stamped galvanized iron; the floors were finished with concrete; and the stairs were fabricated from cast iron manufactured by J.E. Bolles, Detroit, Michigan. Glass was to be "Saint Louis best plate."

Above the walls rose the roofs which were composed in picturesque massings. Over the corner pavilions were hipped roofs connected by mansard roofs, all covered with metallic shingles in diamond patterns. Flat sections of roof were covered with tin with standing seams and the tower was clad with stamped galvanized iron components. A cast-iron cresting decorated the ridges of the roofs.

In 1935, supported by funds from the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, alterations were made to the courthouse and an addition was made to the west side. The tower was removed along with the hipped roofs over the corner pavilions and the mansard roofs were replaced with walls. Roy E. Lane was the architect and O. K. Johnson the contractor for these alterations.
The building possesses considerable architectural merit due to its association with a prominent West Texas architect, its stylistic character, and the technology incorporated into it. Moreover, throughout its history the building has remained the most prominent structure in the county. Early in 1886 the Commissioners' Court of Bosque County announced that on February 23 they would examine plans for a new courthouse. The following day, J. J. Kane of Fort Worth, Texas, was appointed architect and awarded a commission of 5% of the construction cost--Kane designed numerous structures in West Texas including a Catholic Church, Fort Worth, a monumental stone edifice, and he served as the president of the Texas Association of Architects in 1888.

As was often the case during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, stylistic features intended to produce picturesqueness, yet dignity of expression were incorporated into the courthouse. Roman arches rising above slender engaged columns, and heavy rusticated pilasters reflect the Renaissance Revival style. On the ground story the arches have pronounced keystones while on the top story the arches have gracefully molded archivolts. Also consistent with the classical style, a well defined base formed the beginning of the wall composition and a bold galvanized-iron cornice formed the termination. Handsome rosettes carved from stone accent the pilasters and ornamental stone details terminate the wall below the cornice. The tower, however, had Gothic details, including small turrets on the corners. Other elements not associated with style but rather with the expression of purpose included the statue of justice, stamped from copper, and star motifs.

The structure also incorporated noteworthy technology in a relatively isolated location. Aspiring to develop fireproof construction, J. J. Kane utilized iron
**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

- **ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY**: 2 acres
- **UTM REFERENCES**
  - Lat. 31° 55' 22"
  - Long. 97° 39' 45"
  - (only map available)

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The courthouse is located in the public square at the intersection of state highway 22 and state highway 144.

**STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

**STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE**

Texas State Historic Preservation Officer

**DATE**: 11-4-76

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

**CHIEF**

**DATE**: 4/15/77

**DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

**ATTEST**

**DATE**: 3/25/77

**KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER**
and concrete floor systems. The ground floor consisted of a rough four-inch Portland cement concrete slab placed over a fill of broken stone, sand, and waste material; then a coat of Portland cement concrete was placed and "blocked off in nine-inch squares." The second and third floors were supported by iron I beams which supported corrugated iron arches over which was placed concrete, blocked into squares.
Property: Bosque County Courthouse
State: Texas
Working Number: 11.23.76.4624

TECHNICAL
Photos: 3
Maps: 7

CONTROL
OK: 11-29-76

HISTORIAN
Accept

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN
Extensive alterations in 1935

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER
Inventory
Review

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF
Accept

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up: 5-3-77
Send-back: Re-submit
Federal Register Entry: 5-3-77
Entered: APR 13 1977

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service WASO No. 7
PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Bosque County Courthouse
Meridian, Texas

Texas Historical Commission, July 1970
Texas Historical Commission

East elevation
Photo #1 of 3

NOV 23 1976

DEE APR 13 1977
PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Bosque County Courthouse
Meridian, Texas

Texas Historical Commission, July 1970
Texas Historical Commission

Southeast oblique
Photo #2 of 3

NOV 23 1976

OJE APR 13 1977
PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Bosque County Courthouse
Meridian, Texas

Texas Historical Commission, July 1970
Texas Historical Commission

Detail of window ornament
Photo #3 Y 3

NOV 23 1976

DOE APR 13 1977
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Howle Site</td>
<td>Quitman vicinity Wood County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yandell Site</td>
<td>Emory vicinity Rains County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilbert Site</td>
<td>Emory vicinity Rains County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosque County Courthouse</td>
<td>Meridian Bosque County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hart, Meredith, House</td>
<td>Rio Vista vicinity Johnson County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turner, Joe E. House</td>
<td>Itasca vicinity Hill County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadler Site</td>
<td>Alba vicinity Wood County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koons Site</td>
<td>Emory vicinity Rains County</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also Notified

| Hon. John G. Tower
Hon. Lloyd M. Bentsen
Hon. Sam B. Hall, Jr.
Hon. Ray Roberts
Hon. W. R. Poage
Hon. Olin E. Teague | State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. Truett Latimer
Executive Director
Texas Historical Commission
P. O. Box 12275, Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

Regional Director, Southwest Region

[Signature] 880 Mott 4/19/77
20. FEDERAL AGENCY TO RECEIVE REQUEST (Name, City, State, ZIP code)

State Historic Preservation Office
Austin, Texas 78711

21. REMARKS ADDED

No responses attached

22. SIGNATURE

Truett Latimer, State Historic Preservation Officer

23. CERTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE

Truett Latimer, State Historic Preservation Officer

24. AGENCY NAME

Department of the Interior

25. APPLICATION RECEIVED

1978 12 19

26. ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT

HCRS

27. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Grants Admin. Div.

28. FEDERAL APPLICATION IDENTIFICATION

SAI TX 080111016

29. ADDRESS

Washington, D.C. 20240

30. FEDERAL GRANT IDENTIFICATION

48-09439

31. ACTION TAKEN

a. AWARDED

b. REJECTED

c. RETURNED FOR AMENDMENT

d. DEFERRED

e. WITHDRAWN

32. FUNDING

a. FEDERAL $15,000.00

b. APPLICANT $15,000.00

c. STATE

d. LOCAL

e. OTHER $30,000.00

t. TOTAL $30,000.00

33. CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Name and telephone number)

Stephen D. Newman
202-343-4941

34. FEDERAL AGENCY A-95 ACTION

35. REMARKS ADDED

No responses attached

36. ENDING DATE

19 80 09 30

37. REMARKS

same as #35

STATEMENT FORM 424 Pack 1 (10-75)

Prescribed by OMB, Federal Management Circular 34-7

Standards Form 424 Page 1 (10-75)
NAME AS IT APPEARS IN FEDERAL REGISTER: Bosque County Courthouse

LOCATION:
STREET & NUMBER: Public Square
CITY, TOWN: Meridian
STATE: Texas
VICINITY OF: 48

OWNER OF PROPERTY: (Circle) PRIVATE STATE LOCAL GOVT MUNICIPAL COUNTY OTHER
ADMINISTRATOR (underline): NPS REGION: (CIRCLE) N. ATLANTIC MID ATLANTIC SOUTHEAST MIDWEST

FEATURES:
INTERIOR: Substantially intact-1 Substantially intact-2 Substantially intact-3 unknown - 4 unknown - 5 unknown - 6 unknown - 8 not applicable - 7
EXTERIOR: Interior, exterior, environs not intact-0
CONDITION: XEXCELLENT DETERIORATED UNALTERED ORIGINAL SITE
GOOD ALTERED MOVED
FAIR UNEXPOSED RECONSTRUCTED Unknown

ACCESS: Yes-restricted Yes-unrestricted No access Unknown Within national register historic district?

WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? YES NO
WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? YES NO

ADAPTIVE USE: YES NO Saved?

FUNCTION(S): (use vocabulary words) then- COURTHOUSE

now- 

SIGNIFICANCE:

Claims "first" YES NO "oldest" YES NO "only" YES NO
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:

architect/m.builder: J. J. Kane
landscape/garden designer: Y. E. Lane
interior decorator: 

ETHNIC GROUP:

NAMES: personal 
(label role & appropriate date)
events 
institutional 

DATES: DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (Specific date or 1/4 of century): 1886-1887
DATE(S) OF "MAJOR" ALTERATIONS: 1935
HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DATE(S):

SOURCE: (OF NOMINATION) PRIVATE STATE LOCAL GOV'T MUNICIPAL COUNTY 
OTHER FEDERAL AGENCY:

ACREAGE: (to nearest tenth of an acre) 2

COMMENTS: (include architectural information here)

3 story limestone structure nearly square in plan. Facades are characterized by arched openings, generous use of quoins, and elaborate cornice. Mansard roofs and clock tower were removed in 1935

SIGNIFICANCE: (maximum two sentences)

Bosque County Courthouse, still the most prominent structure in the county, has been the seat of local government for 90 years. It's construction involved a significant innovation in fireproof construction.