

PH0691925

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED NOV 11 1976
DATE ENTERED JUL 15 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Sutton County Courthouse
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Public Square
CITY, TOWN
Sonora
STATE
Texas
VICINITY OF
CODE
048
COUNTY
Sutton
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
21
CODE
435

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Sutton County
STREET & NUMBER
Public Square
CITY, TOWN
Sonora
STATE
Texas
VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Sutton County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
Public Square
CITY, TOWN
Sonora
STATE
Texas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Historic Sites Inventory
DATE
1971
DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
Texas Historical Commission
CITY, TOWN
Austin
STATE
Texas
_FEDERAL STATE _COUNTY _LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The brothers Oscar and F.E. Ruffini were both prominent in Texas architecture during the later part of the nineteenth century. Born in Cleveland, Ohio of immigrant parents, they received their architectural training in firms in Ohio and Indiana. In 1876, F.E. Ruffini opened an office in Austin, where two years later he was joined by his brother. Before becoming established in Austin, Oscar Ruffini worked for a time for the firm of E.E. Myers of Detroit, Michigan--the E.E. Myers architects are known for the Texas State Capitol. In 1884, Oscar moved to San Angelo.

Apart from work such as F.E. Ruffini's design for the Old Main Building for the University of Texas, the brothers were known chiefly as designers of courthouses. By the mid-1880's they had developed a full blown architectural vocabulary for the building type. Oscar Ruffini's Sutton County Courthouse (1891), and F.E. Ruffini's Blanco County Courthouse (1885) exemplify the style which appeared in a somewhat more decoratively evolved form in the Concho County Courthouse (1885). While a high central tower was usual on many nineteenth-century courthouses, the Ruffinis developed the Mansard Roof of the Second Empire Style as the dominant visual element in a composition lacking a tower. Also, in contrast to the complicated massing of recessed bays and projecting pavilions usually encountered, the Ruffini's substituted a simpler geometry of superimposed elements in the facade.

The Sutton County Courthouse, a small two-story structure of a cream-colored native stone, was built on the traditional patterns with intersecting corridors running through the center of the building. As was typical the courtroom was in the center of the second floor.

Visually, the unadorned Mansard roof with pavilions at each of the entries is a dominant element of the composition. Each elevation is broken up into receding masses, defined by cut stone quoins at the corners in contrast with the rough ashlar of the wall. The masonry is further enhanced by smooth finished segmental arches spanning the windows and by string courses between floors and at the springing point of the window arches. An elaborately bracketed cornice tops the walls. The entrance pavilions are marked by a triangular pediment above the cornice and by an arched entry flanked by carved pilasters. The exterior retains most of its original appearance and it is the only courthouse ever built in Sutton County.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1891-1893

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Oscar Ruffini

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Due to its association with a prominent West Texas architect and its style, the temple possesses considerable regional significance. Ruffini left his imprint on many Texas communities and the building is an excellent example of the Second Empire style. A beautifully detailed work, it is one of the finest examples of nineteenth-century architecture to be found on the Edwards Plateau.

Sutton County was created from Crockett County in 1887 and was named for John W. Sutton. It was organized in 1890, with Sonora as the county seat. On February 11, 1891, the Commissioners Court met to order that San Angelo architect Oscar Ruffini "prepare all necessary general and detailed drawings and specifications" for the construction of Sutton County's first Courthouse. The court further moved that "the said Ruffini be requested to superintend construction. . . ." For these services he was to receive a fee of 3.5% of the contract price of the building. On March 31, 1891, J.D. Gafford submitted low bid of \$27,706 and was awarded the contract for construction. That same day the Commissioners' Court moved that "the plot of ground known as Courthouse Square, same being 300 feet square, except amount reserved for well and water purposes be accepted." Several citizens donated the land and the court promptly appointed an attorney to accept the deed. The court received the building on July 5, 1893. Today the courthouse continues to serve its original function.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Robinson, Willard B., and Webb, Todd, Texas Public Buildings in the Nineteenth Century, Austin 1974
Sutton County Commissioners' Court Minutes, Vol I

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	4
---	---

3	4	2	4	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	3	8	3	1	5	0
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B

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

It is located on the Public Square near US 277 and Ranch 1691

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Willard B. Robinson, Professor of Architecture

S. Elizabeth Sasser-Research Associate

8/24/76

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Division of Architecture-Texas Tech University

806/742-2430

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

P.O. Box 4499

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Lubbock

Texas

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

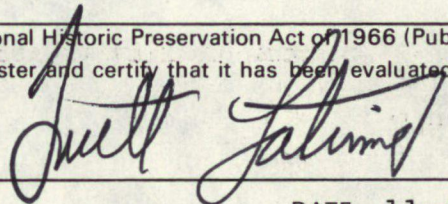
NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

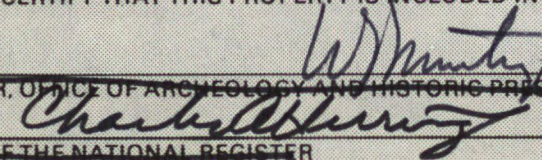


TITLE Texas State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 11-4-76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST: 

DATE 7/10/77
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
DATE 6.8.77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Property Sutton County Courthouse

Sutton

State Iex.

Working Number 11.11.76.4535

TECHNICAL

Photos 3

Maps 1

CONTROL

OK pl
11.12.76

HISTORIAN

ACCEPT
Livengood
17 N 76

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Accept
M. Hutz
3-30-77

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Accept
Colz
4-5-77

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

Hung
68.77

National Register Write-up _____

Send-back _____

Entered JUL 15 1977

Federal Register Entry 9.6.77

Re-submit _____

INT:2106-74



Sutton County Courthouse
Sonora, Texas

NOV 11 1976

Texas Historical Commission, June 1971
Texas Historical Commission

East elevation
Photo #1 of 3

JUL 15 1977

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Sutton County Courthouse
Sonora, Texas

NOV 11 1976

Texas Historical Commission, June 1971
Texas Historical Commission

North elevation
Photo #2 of 3

JUL 15 1977

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



NOV 11 1976

Sutton County Courthouse
Sonora, Texas

Texas Historical Commission, June 1971
Texas Historical Commission

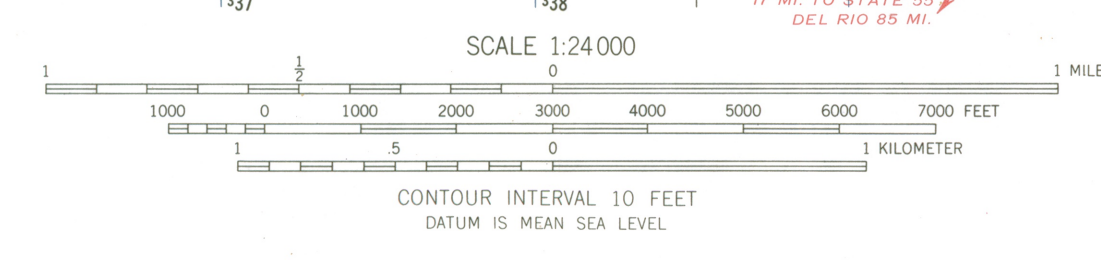
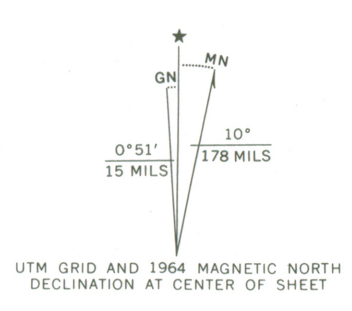
South elevation, June 1971
Photo #3 063

JUL 15 1977

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1963. Field checked 1964.
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 14, shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines
Areas covered by dashed light blue pattern are subject to controlled inundation



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

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

RECEIVED JUL 15 1977
 NOV 11 1976
 NATIONAL REGISTER
 3000-312

SONORA, TEX.
 N3030-W10037.5/7.5
 1964
 AMS 5845 II SW - SERIES V882

SUTTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE
 PUBLIC SQUARE
 SONORA, TEXAS
 UTM REFERENCE:
 14 / 342400 / 3383150

JUL 15 1977

3000-312

42

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE TEXAS

Date Entered JUL 15 1977

Name

Location

Sutton County Courthouse

Sonora
Sutton County

Also Notified

Hon. John G. Tower

Hon. Lloyd M. Bentsen

Hon. Robert C. Krueger

Regional Director, Southwest Region

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. Truett Latimer
Executive Director
Texas Historical Commission
P. O. Box 12276, Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

880 Mott 7/26/77

NR Data Sheet

DATE: 17N76
Reviewer INITIALS: [Signature]
NR DOE JUL 15 1977

NAME AS IT APPEARS IN FEDERAL REGISTER: Sutton County Courthouse

OTHER NAMES:

LOCATION:

STREET & NUMBER Public Square
CITY, TOWN Sonora CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 21st
STATE Texas 048 VICINITY OF COUNTY code
Sutton 435

OWNER OF PROPERTY: (Circle) PRIVATE STATE LOCAL GOV'T MUNICIPAL COUNTY OTHER

ADMINISTRATOR (underline) FEDERAL (AGENCY NAME):
NPS REGION: (CIRCLE) N. ATLANTIC MID ATLANTIC SOUTHEAST MIDWEST
SOUTHWEST ROCKY MOUNTAIN WEST PACIFIC NORTHWEST

FEATURES:

INTERIOR Substantially intact-1
X unknown - 4
- not applicable - 7
EXTERIOR Substantially intact-2
X unknown - 5
- not applicable - 8
ENVIRONS Substantially intact-3
X unknown - 6
- Not applicable - 9

CONDITION - EXCELLENT
X GOOD
- FAIR
- DETERIORATED
- RUINS
- UNEXPOSED
- Unexcavated
UNALTERED
X ALTERED
- Reconstructed
- Excavated
ORIGINAL SITE
X MOVED
- Unknown

ACCESS - Yes-restricted Yes-unrestricted No access Unknown

historic district? YES NO

WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? YES NO

WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? YES NO

ADAPTIVE USE: YES NO Saved? YES NO

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

SIGNIFICANCE:

- ARCHAEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
- ARCHAEOLOGY-HISTORIC
- AGRICULTURE
- X ARCHITECTURE
- ART
- COMMERCE
- COMMUNICATIONS
- CONSERVATION
- ECONOMICS
- EDUCATION
- ENGINEERING
- EXPLORATION
- INDUSTRY
- INVENTION
- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
- LAW/Gov't/politics
- LITERATURE
- MILITARY
- MUSIC
- PHILOSOPHY
- X POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
- RELIGION
- SCIENCE
- SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER (SPECIFY)
- entertainment
- health
- recreation
- settlement
- socio/cultural
- urban & commun planning

Claims

"first" YES NO "oldest" YES NO "only" YES NO
courthouse EVER built in Sutton Co.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: 2ND EMPIRE

architect/m.builder: Oscar Ruffini

engineer:

landscape/garden designer:

artist/artisan:

interior decorator:

builder/contractor: J. D. Gafford

ETHNIC GROUP:

NAMES: personal

(label role & appropriate date)

events

institutional

DATES: DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (Specific date or 1/4 of century): 1891-93

DATE(S) OF "MAJOR" ALTERATIONS:

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DATE(S):

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

OTHER SCHOOL FEDERAL AGENCY:

ACREAGE: (to nearest tenth of an acre) 2

COMMENTS: (include architectural information here)

STONE, 2 1/2 STORIES, RECTANGULAR CROSS-SHAPED, MAWZARD, CENTER ENTRANCE PAVILIONS WITH PEDIMENT AND TRUNCATED PENTAGONAL ROOF, QUOINS, BRACKETED CORNICE SEGMENTAL ARCHES

SIGNIFICANCE: (maximum two sentences)

The Sutton County Courthouse is significant for its good design and detail, the work of a prominent West Texas architect - Oscar Ruffini who w/ his brother designed numerous courthouses; in continuous use since its construction