

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCERS use only  
received 4 SEP 1979  
date entered NOV 7 1979

**1. Name**

historic Edwards County Courthouse and Jail

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number Public Square \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Rocksprings \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of congressional district 21

state Texas code 048 county Edwards code 137

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<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 County of Edwards

street & number Public Square

city, town Rocksprings \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Texas

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the County Clerk, Edwards County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Rocksprings \_\_\_\_\_ state Texas

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Recorded Texas Historic Landmark has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes  no

date 1973 \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state  county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Texas Historical Commission

city, town Austin \_\_\_\_\_ state Texas

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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**

Displaying an eclectic style often associated with Victorian architecture of the late 1800s, the Edwards County Courthouse in Rocksprings is a dignified and durable structure which, 90 years after its original construction, still represents well its civic function.

Built in 1891 of coursed native limestone, the straightforeward architectural quality of the courthouse owes much to its emphasis on simple structural design, rather than elaborate detail. Decorative quoins, rugged voussoired arches over each entry door, and an unadorned string course beneath the hip roof's cornice line all function as an integral part of the symmetrically proportioned facades. Wooden two-over-two windows, possibly the originals, have been regularly disposed about the courthouse, and embellished with simple sills and lintels.

The focal points of the structure are its north and south elevation pavilions. Edging the gables of these are the courthouse's only elaborate ornamentation, raking cornices of smooth stone cut into intricately foliated designs. Set into the arched entry doors of each pavilion are simply fashioned, wooden fanlight transoms.

The interior plan is square with offices on the ground level and the courtroom located on the second floor. A single corridor running north and south provides access to the ground level rooms, while a centrally located stair on the east side of this hall furnishes access to the second floor courtroom.

With several exceptions the Edwards County Courthouse has retained most of its 1891 appearance. Some restoration work was done following fire damage in 1898, and a tornado in 1927 necessitated a new roof, the old one having been torn off. As it is known that the gable roofs were once mansardic, it is possible that the original roof was also of this style.

Adjacent to the courthouse and built in 1895, the two-story Edwards County Jail is similar in design to the courthouse. Constructed of the same coursed limestone, it is partially topped by a hip roof with an additional pyramidal roof covering its southeast corner, accented by a finial. A string course and two rows of dentils of diminishing size also embellish this southeast portion of the jail. The barred window and wooden framed door openings utilize the same lintel and sill arrangement as the courthouse.

# 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			

Courthouse 1891

**Specific dates** Jail 1895 **Builder/Architect** Ben Davey and Bruno Schott

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

For almost 90 years since its construction in 1891, the Edwards County Courthouse in Rocksprings has been in use as its community's center of government, and continues to serve the area in this capacity. The first public building to be erected in Rocksprings, its rough cut masonry style, utilizing the state's native limestone, is characteristic of Edwards County's rugged landscape. The handsomely designed quality of the courthouse's stonework is best appreciated on the gables of its north and south facades, where it displays an ornate quality more commonly found on the more elaborate Romanesque Revival structures of the day. Currently in fine condition, the Edwards County Courthouse has been continually repaired and maintained throughout its many years of use.

Rocksprings had only been a year old when a county election designated it the permanent county seat in 1891. Edwards County had been organized in 1883, but prior to this election, several other towns in the vicinity had held this distinction temporarily, Leakey being the last. The final election to determine the permanent site was a hotly contested one between the towns competing for the honor, and it was said that armed men, anticipating trouble and prepared to fight if necessary, were needed to accompany the wagon carrying county records from Leakey to their new depository in Rocksprings.

Until the new courthouse was constructed official county business was transacted at a local town store, but in June of 1891 plans and specifications were advertised for a new two-story courthouse. This contract was let to Ben Davey and Bruno Schott of Kerrville for \$18,000. Four years later they would also be awarded the contract to build the present jail for \$4,780, replacing a temporary structure which had been moved from Leakey earlier.

Since its original construction the courthouse has survived two potential disasters. An 1898 fire necessitated some restoration work, done by Davey and Schott according to their original building plans. The structure also miraculously withstood a devastating tornado in 1927, which killed 70 citizens and destroyed much of Rocksprings, but the solidly built courthouse sustained only roof damage.

One of the most notable local residents to practice law in the Edwards County Courthouse was the Honorable Claud H. Gilmer, who also made considerable contributions to the state as well. He began his political career as a practicing attorney and county judge in 1924, and went on to distinguish himself as speaker of the house of representatives of the state legislature from 1943 to 1948. Though he chose not to run again his continuing political influence made him known as "The Balance Wheel of the 50th Legislature, and he has since been named to serve on several local and state education, election and conservation boards.

In 1973 the former legislator was chosen as the main speaker at the ceremony in Rocksprings commemorating its courthouse as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Walter Prescott Webb (ed.). The Handbook of Texas (Austin: The Texas Historical Association, 1952), Vol. I, p. 548.  
 Edwards County Commissioners' Court Minutes, Office of the County Clerk, Edwards County Courthouse, Vols. 2,3.

# 10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property approx. one  
 Quadrangle name Rocksprings, Texas

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	4	3	8	3	5	2	0	3	3	2	0	9	8	8
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H 

Zone				Easting				Northing						

## Verbal boundary description and justification

The courthouse is situated on the southwest corner of a square bounded on the north by State Highway 377, on the south by Main Street, on the east by Austin Street, and on the west by Sweeten Street. The jail is located on the northeast corner of the public square.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Willard B. Robinson ; Amy Jo Hofner- Research Assistant

organization Texas Tech University ; Texas Historical Commission date June, 1978

street & number Box 4499 ; 108 W. 16 telephone (806) 742-2464 ; (512) 475-3094

city or town Lubbock ; Austin state Texas

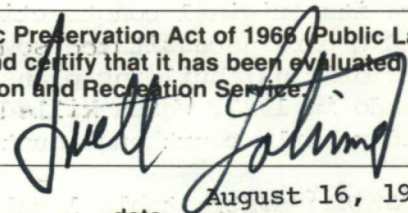
# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title State Historic Preservation Officer

date August 16, 1979

For HCRS use only

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

date 11-7-79

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: Beth Crovener

date 11/7/79

Chief of Registration

79002932

Property Edwards County Courthouse + Jail

State TX (Edwards) Working Number 9-4-79 2080

**TECHNICAL**

**CONTROL**

Photos 3

Maps 1

*Handsome courthouse + jail, built of native limestone + both built by the same company. Have served civic needs of the county since 1891 + 1885*

**HISTORIAN**

*accept  
B. Grovona  
11/7/79*

**ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN**

**ARCHEOLOGIST**

**OTHER**

**HAER**

Inventory \_\_\_\_\_  
Review \_\_\_\_\_

**REVIEW UNIT CHIEF**

*accept  
B. Grovona  
11/7/79*

**BRANCH CHIEF**

**KEEPER**

National Register Write-up \_\_\_\_\_  
Federal Register Entry 12.4.79

Send-back \_\_\_\_\_  
Re-submit \_\_\_\_\_

Entered NOV 7 1979



Edwards County Courthouse  
Public Square  
Rock Springs, Edward County, Texas

Will Robinson            1977  
negative filed at Texas Historical Comm.

East Elevation

Photo #183

4 SEP 1979

NOV 7 1979 <sup>POC</sup>





Edwards County Courthouse  
Public Square  
Rocksprings, Edwards County, Texas

Will Robinson 1977  
negative filed at Texas Historical Comm.

Northeast Oblique

4 SEP 1979

Photo # 293

NOV

DEC  
7 1979

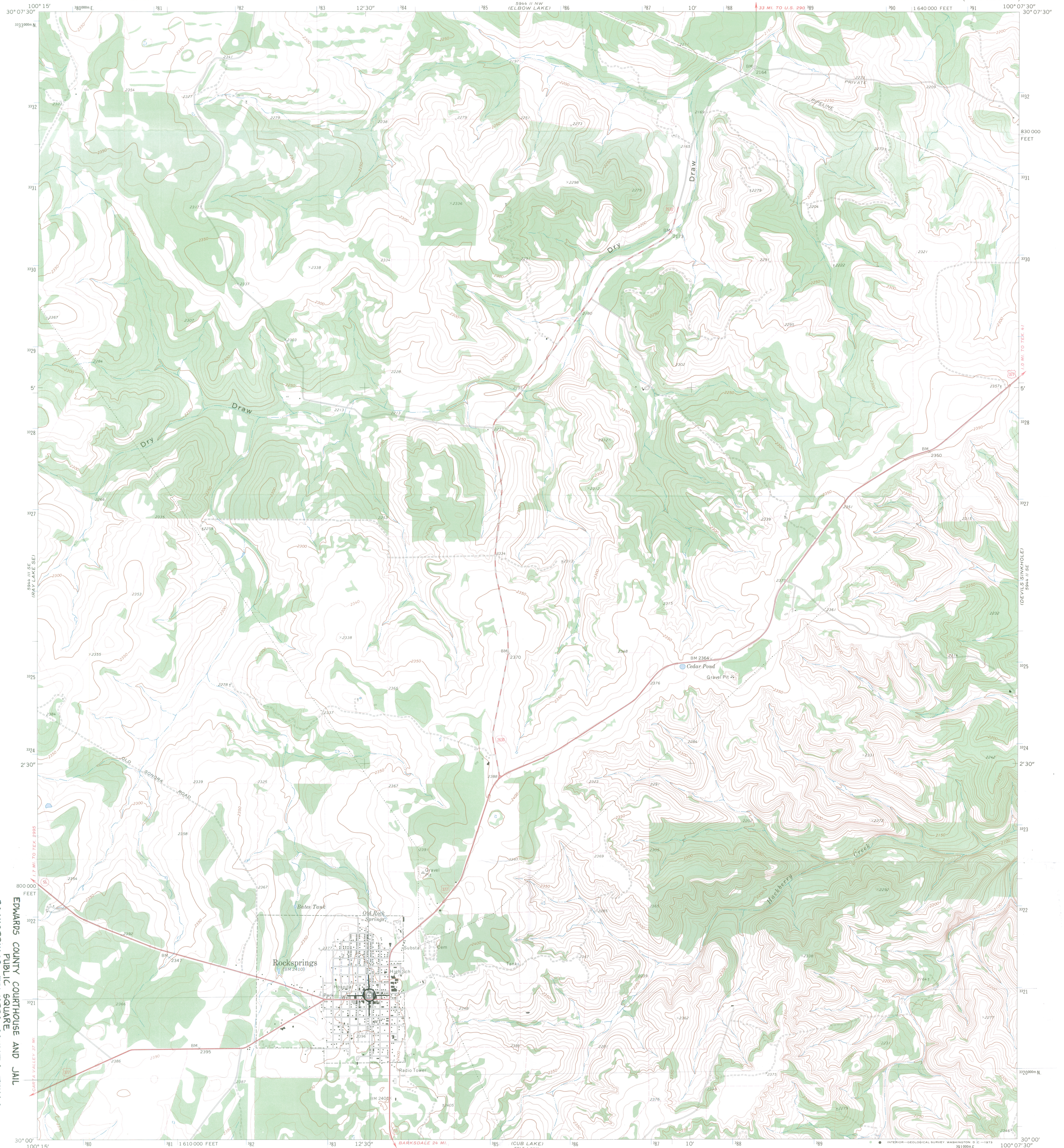


Edwards County Courthouse and Jail  
Public Square  
Rocksprings, Edwards County, Texas  
Photo by Will Robinson, 1977  
South elevation of Jail.  
Photo #3 *8/3*

4 SEP 1979

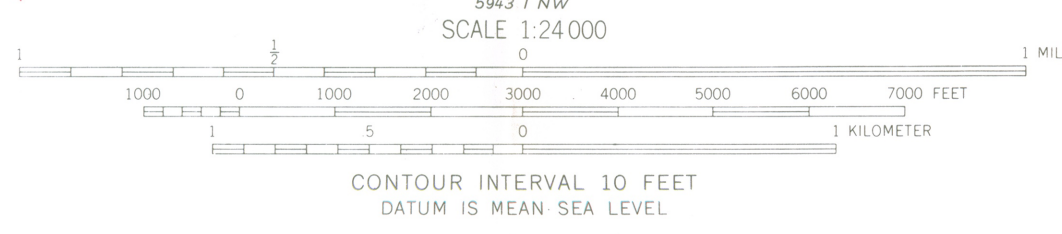
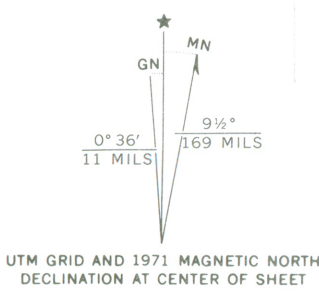
NOV

*DOE*  
7 1979



EDWARDS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL  
PUBLIC SQUARE  
ROCKSPRINGS, EDWARDS COUNTY, TEXAS  
UTM REFERENCE: 14 / 383520 / 3320988

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and USCGS  
Photography by photogrammetric methods from aerial  
photographs taken 1970. Field checked 1971  
Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Texas  
coordinate system, south central zone (Lambert conformal conic)  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 14, shown in blue. 1927 North American datum  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	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

ROCKSPRINGS, TEX.  
N3000—W10007.5/7.5  
1971  
AMS 5944 II SW—SERIES V882

3000-112

JAN 2 1974

NOV 7 1979

RECEIVED  
4 SEP 1973  
NATIONAL REGISTER

13

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

TEXAS

STATE

Date Entered NOV 7 1979

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Whitaker House	Texarkana Bowie County
Stinson, John R., House (Gaines, Belle Fry, House)	Marshall Harrison County
Turner, James, House	Marshall Harrison County
Railroad Produce Depot	Georgetown Williamson County
Droemer Brickyard Site	Giddings vicinity Lee County
First National Bank Building	Meridian Bosque County
Edwards County Courthouse and Jail	Rocksprings Edwards County
Tinaja De Las Palmas Battle Site	Sierra Blanca vicinity Hudspeth County
Floydada Country Club Site	Floydada vicinity Floyd County

Also Notified

Honorable Lloyd Bentsen

Honorable John G. Tower  
Honorable Sam B. Hall, Jr.  
Honorable J. J. (Jake) Pickle  
Honorable James M. Leath  
Honorable Thomas G. Loeffler  
Honorable Richard C. White  
Honorable Charles W. Stenholm

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

NR Byers/bjr 11/8/79

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.