

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 HCRS use only

received SEP 16 1980

date entered NOV 12 1980

1. Name

historic Austin County Jail

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 36 S. Bell Street _____ not for publication

city, town Bellville _____ vicinity of congressional district 10

state Texas code 048 county Austin code 015

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 | Public Acquisition | 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 Austin County

street & number

city, town Bellville _____ vicinity of state Texas

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Austin County Courthouse

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Bellville _____ state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date 1976 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Texas Historical Commission

city, town Austin _____ state Texas

7. Description

| | | | |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input 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

Located just one block south of the courthouse square on Lot 6 of Block F in the original survey plat for Bellville, the Austin County Jail remains in use today, a bold statement of Romanesque Revival architecture, constructed in 1896. Rising three stories, the structure embodies a cruciform plan with a fourth floor tower projecting from the axial intersection. A rusticated ashlar base of limestone supports walls of dark red, hard-burned brick accented with subtle brick delineations and also contrasting limestone.

First floor windows are topped with prominent Richardsonian arches while the second and third floor windows are aligned vertically, separated with a heavy block of pitch-faced limestone and topped with a segmental arch of rough stone. Cell windows are covered with simple grills. A heavy string course of limestone separates the first floor from the upper floors. Each facade of the tower is pierced with three windows which rise from a limestone string course and feature flat arches above. Cylindrical bartizans with conical roofs project well above the facades at the corners of each wing and the tower. Between the bartizans, the parapet walls are fashioned into battlements with a single chimney rising from the end wall of each wing. A hipped roof covers each wing while the tower is topped with a pyramidal roof crowned by an ornament.

Porches marked by arched passageways flank the east or front projecting facade. The southern porch opens into the jailkeepers living quarters while the northern porch opens into the jail office. The second and third floors house the detention cells and the fourth floor was originally designed as a gallows for hanging.

Since its completion, the structure has served continuously as the Austin County Jail. While the living quarters have been modernized in recent years, the jail facilities and exterior appearance remain intact.

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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | |

Specific dates 1896

Builder/Architect F. B. and W. S. Hull, Dallas

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Fortress-like in appearance, the Austin County Jail in Bellville, fashioned in the Romanesque Revival style, clearly suggests the use it has served for more than 80 years. Castellated facades such as those of this building were popular for important public buildings of the late 19th century as a symbol of strength and endurance. Built on land originally granted to settlers in Stephen F. Austin's "Old 300" group, the structure is the second facility to serve this county which was one of the earliest areas of Anglo settlement in Texas.

Austin County, named in honor of Stephen F. Austin, was established in 1836. Originally the county seat was located at San Felipe, but on December 23, 1846 a majority of the residents voted to move the seat to Bellville. In March, 1848 this settlement, named after pioneer Texan Thomas Bell, was officially surveyed and platted and became the government seat.

Lot 6 of Block F was selected as the site for a county jail which was constructed by a Captain Reed. This land had been granted to John Nichols on October 20, 1832 by the Mexican Government. Nichols over the next several years sold portions of his original grant to James and Thomas Bell. In March of 1846, Austin County purchased a total of 145 1/2 acres of land from the Bells for a sum of \$2.00.

By February of 1896 the Austin County Commissioners declared the original jail "...unsafe and unfit and inadequate..." for the criminal confinement needs of the county and voted on the 14th of that month to advertise for bids and erect a new jail. Written proposals were requested in the "Galveston Daily News" for a new facility to cost between \$17,000 and \$23,000. The Commissioners' Court opened two bids on March 19, 1896; one from the Pauly Jail Building Company of St. Louis for \$19,970, the other from the Diebold Safe and Lock Company of Canton, Ohio for \$19,840.10. The building was constructed by F. B. and W. S. Hull Builders of Dallas, acting as the general contractors for the Pauly Jail Building Company. While no architect is credited with the design of the jail, it is interesting to note that this building is virtually identical in plan, materials, and details to the Milan County Jail built in 1893 in Cameron by the Pauly Company.

Though simple in plan, the dark walls of solid masonry, accented with contrasting rusticated limestone and subtle brick corbelling address the late 19th century popularity of Romanesque Revival architecture while a medieval influence is reflected in the bartizans and battlement. A hanging gallows was housed on the fourth floor in the projecting tower although it was used only once. One Gus Davis was hanged for the murder of Herman Schlunz on March 14, 1901 at 2:14 PM. The jail has continued to house prisoners of the county through the years and today serves as the living quarters for the Chief Deputy Sheriff.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Dinkins, Julia Lange, The Early History of Austin County, Master's Thesis, Southwest Texas State Teachers College, 1940, pp. 8, 49-50.

Austin County Deed Records, Book 88, pp. 283-5.

(see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property less than one

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Bellville, Texas

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

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| Zone | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

Block F, Lot 6, original town survey

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 Mrs. B. T. Noviskie; Linda C. Flory

organization Bellville Historical Society;
Texas Historical Commission

date September 4, 1980

street & number 36 S. Bell Street;
P. O. Box 12276

telephone 713-865-3325
512-475-3094

city or town Bellville; Austin

state Texas

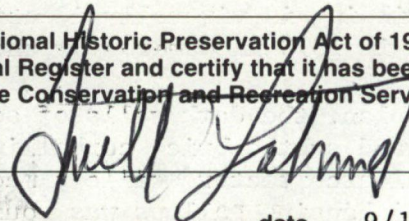
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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



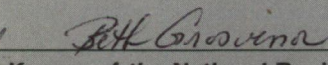
title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 9/15/80

For HCRS use only

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

date 11/12/80


Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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

For HCRS use only

received **SEP 16 1980**

date entered **NOV 12 1980**

Continuation sheet 1

Item number 9

Page 1

Austin County Deed Records, Book C, pp 317-18.

Austin County Deed Records, Book 4, pp. 436-37.

Austin County Commissioners' Court Minutes, Book K, pp. 135-36.

Haskew, Carrie Patterson, Historical Records of Austin and Walker Counties.

Property Austin County Jail
State Tx, Austin Working Number 9.16.80. 2296

DUE 11.16.80
80 00 4074

TECHNICAL

CONTROL

Photos 2
Maps 1

(with attend, and)

19th C. jail - second jail in one of state's earliest Anglo settlements. Still used as a jail. Nice Romanesque Revival bldg, too, although architecture has not been well justified in ~~the~~ #8.

HISTORIAN

*accept
Grosvonts
11/12/80*

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____
Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up _____ Send-back _____
Federal Register Entry 2-2-82 Re-submit _____

Entered NOV 12 1980



NO
PARKING
ANY
TIME

Austin County Jail
36 S. Bell Street
Bellville, Austin County, Texas
Photo: Photographer Unknown, Photo courtesy of
Bellville Historical Society, 4/23/79
Southeast Oblique, camera facing northwest
Photo # 1 of 2

SEP 16 1980

NOV 12 1980





Austin County Jail
36 S. Bell Street
Bellville, Austin County, Texas
Photo: Photographer Unknown, Photo courtesy of
Bellville Historical Society, 4/23/79
Northeast Oblique, camera facing southwest
Photo # 2 of 2

SEP 16 1980

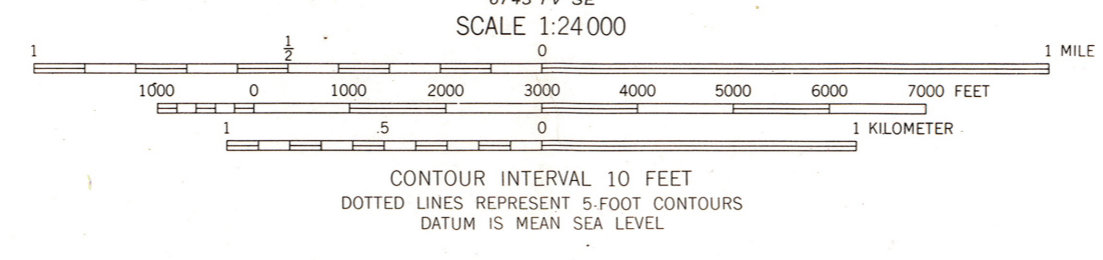
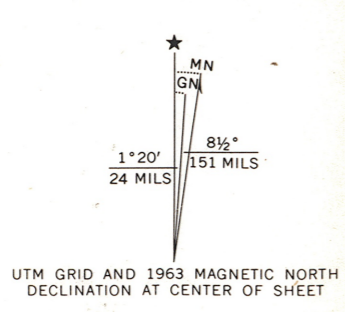
NOV 12 1980





AUSTIN COUNTY JAIL
36 S. BELL STREET
BELLVILLE, AUSTIN COUNTY, TEXAS
UTM REFERENCE: 14T64700/3316139

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1962. Field checked 1963
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum 10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system, south central zone 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 14, shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

| | |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Heavy-duty | Light-duty |
| Medium-duty | Unimproved dirt |
| 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



BELLVILLE, TEX.
N2952.5-W9615.7.5
1963
AMS 6743 IV NE-SERIES V882

2996-434

NOV 12 1980



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

TO: Beth Grosvenor DATE: 9/9/80

FROM: Lissot Anderson

I know these photos are fuzzy,
and have been trying to get
them replaced. As you can see,
the trees are in the way now.
Can you go ahead and start
processing it while the leaves are
falling? Then I'll get new, sharp,
treeless photos to you as soon as
possible. The fuzziness isn't hiding
anything like hideous alterations.

Thanks, *LA*

I plan to attend the seminar in: Galveston, May 17-18 Lubbock, August 2-3
Austin, June 21-22 San Antonio, October 18-19
Beaumont, July 19-20 Fort Worth, November 15-16

Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____ Age _____

Mailing address _____

_____ Phone _____

Name of your organization or museum _____

Main activities of your organization _____

Experience in grant writing _____

Please write a paragraph on the capabilities and experience of each applicant, and why this workshop will benefit the applicant and the organization.

Refunds will be available up to 48 hours before each workshop

| | |
|------------------------------------------|-------------|
| THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES | |
| DATE RECEIVED | SEP 15 1980 |
| INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE (ATTACHED) | |
| INFORMATIVE MATERIAL SENT | |
| TELEPHONE CALL (ATTACHED) | |
| DATE AC. IN TAKEN | |
| INITIALS | |

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE TEXAS

Date Entered NOV 12 1980

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Location</u> |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Burnett, Burk, Building | Fort Worth Tarrant County |
| Austin County Jail | Bellville Austin County |
| Milroy, John, House | Houston Harris County |

Also Notified

Honorable John G. Tower
Honorable Lloyd Bentsen
Honorable James C. Wright, Jr.
Honorable J. J. (Jake) Pickle
Honorable Mickey Leland

State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. Truett Latimer
Executive Director
Texas State Historic Commission
Post Office Box 12276, Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

NR Byers/lbg 11/19/80
For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.