

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED **JAN 8 1980**
DATE ENTERED **SEP 4 1980**

**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

Hamilton County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Public Square

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Hamilton

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

11

STATE

Texas

VICINITY OF

CODE

048

COUNTY

Hamilton

CODE

193

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

County of Hamilton

STREET & NUMBER

Public Square

CITY, TOWN

Hamilton

VICINITY OF

STATE

Texas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk, Hamilton County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Public Square

CITY, TOWN

Hamilton

STATE

Texas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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 original design of the Hamilton County Courthouse was similar to that of many other courthouses built in the state during the 1880s. The ground floor plan was divided into office quadrants by north-south and east-west corridors extending through the building. On the second floor was a spacious courtroom.

Originally, the building was in the Second Empire style. Pavilions at each corner were crowned by Mansardic roofs with dormers. Yet another Mansardic roof surmounted the center section. Crowning the composition was a centrally positioned tower with wooden framework covered by sheet-metal skin into which Classical details had been pressed.

As was characteristic of Victorian courthouses, a variety of stonework was employed to enhance the edifice in Hamilton. Walls were quarry-faced ashlar limestone. Window openings on the ground level were spanned with Roman arches with cut-stone voussoirs; those on the second level were spanned with stilted arches.

In 1931-1932 the building was enlarged. Following plans prepared by E. M. Miles, contractor J. C. Ray and Sons changed the character of the building. Wings were added to the north and south and porticoes with triangular pediments were added to the east and west. Square towers rising above the roof lines provided a transition between the new and the old.

Additional harmony between the new and the old was developed through the exterior details. The stonework on the additions was similar to the nineteenth century work. Ashlar patterns of quarry-faced stones, along with cut-stone quoins, all provided unity. Then the Roman-arched openings with cut-stone voussoirs created an additional relationship with the older sections of the building.

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 1887 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Martin, Byrnes & Johnston

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hamilton County Courthouse possesses both architectural and historical significance. Architecturally, the original nineteenth-century building incorporated handsome details and sound construction. In the twentieth century, rather than erecting a new building as was done in many counties, Hamilton County Commissioners decided to authorize additions which were fashionable for their times, yet were quite compatible with older section--a unique composition of forms resulted. Historically, by expanding in this manner, the original courthouse was able to serve as a center of county activities for over three quarters of a century.

The nineteenth-century section of the building incorporated details that were typical of Second-Empire-styled edifices. Both Roman and segmental arches of cut stone with pronounced keystones spanned the openings. The walls were further enhanced by fine stonework, including cut stone quoins and ashlar patterns.

Significantly, in developing harmonizing designs for the addition, the architects repeated the use of Roman arches to span the openings. At the base of each tower is a tympanum that incorporated low relief figures relating to the history of the county--a trend in symbolism that appeared in other Texas courthouses built at the same time. Impressions of cowboys, Indians and livestock are among those displayed under the arches. The ashlar patterns of stonework of the original also were repeated in the additions. Then, the location of the top cut-stone stringcourse of the original four pavilions became the level of the coping in the new addition, thus creating a continuous line tying the new to the old. Below this was placed an entablature of cut stone. To further unify the entire composition on the north and south and to provide the monumental character that was so much admired in the early decades of the twentieth century, porticoes with paired columns of colossal order placed upon pedestals were incorporated into the design. Capitals were in the Ionic order, and the entablature and pediment were simply detailed. In the pediment was placed the seal of the State of Texas. Of course the removal of the Mansard roofs from the original section was necessary to allow the development of unity between the new and the old.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 8A

Hamilton County was created from parts of the surrounding counties in 1858, four years after the first permanent settlement was initiated by Robert Carter. Located in west-central Texas, it developed an economy primarily based upon agriculture. Before the Civil War the county population was less than 500 and as late as 1870 it was still under 1,000. As was characteristic of newly settled areas, the population mushroomed after the arrival of the railroads and by the turn of the century was over 13,000.

Typical of fledgling counties, the Hamilton County government was housed in make-shift quarters during the first years. In 1869 Jones Store was used for a \$2 fee. Two years later it was recorded that the school house was used for district court. During the early 1870s a "rock house" was rented; however, this building burned in 1877.

Shortly thereafter, the plans and proposal of contractors Martin, Moodie and Johnston were accepted for a new \$12,000 temple of justice built in the center of the public square. It was completed in less than a year. However, in 1886 misfortune struck again and this courthouse also burned. Fortunately a fireproof record vault with double walls of bricks and a brick barrel vault overhead protected some of the records.

After an election determined that the seat of justice should remain in Hamilton--rather than "J. D. Hunt's location or Pigtown"--plans submitted by contractors Martin, Byrnes and Johnston were accepted. Bids were solicited through advertisement in the Dallas Morning News and the contract to build the new \$60,000 temple was awarded to Lovell, Hood and McLeod of Brownwood, Texas. Final payment on the building was made in February, 1887. It had been built in nine months.

The interior incorporated fireproof construction. The second floor was supported on corrugated iron arches over which was placed concrete.

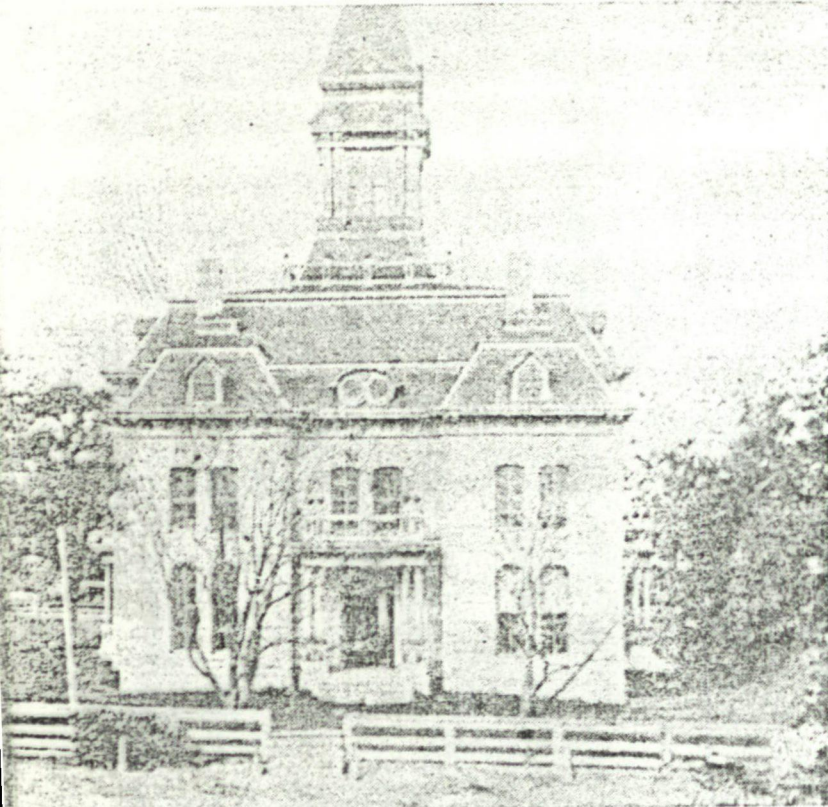
Through additions and remodelings the courthouse has been expanded and updated. Today it continues to serve the needs of county government. Throughout its history the courthouse, with the surrounding commercial buildings, has been a center of many types of functions, including social, legal, justice and commercial activities. Local residents affectionately associate the monumental building with the history of the development of the county.

ANNUAL CELEBRATION

JAN

8 1980

HAMILTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE



1
9
5
8

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE COURTHOUSE WAS TAKEN IN 1887

Federal Officials and
public trust and service.
It is to continue to
American must be based

He must have law enforcement that will protect him and make
the area in which he lives safe for himself and his family.

Early in the history of our County it became evident that
these things are the essentials of a community.

and for those under
abilities for his children.
and social contacts,

The chief objectives of your County Officials and County,
State and Federal Agencies and Employees is to serve you efficient-
ly and fairly and at the least cost of the taxpayer's money - - - To
this end we pledge our best efforts.

from *Parade of Progress*
Hamilton Co.

1858-1958
celebrated at Ed.

Vada Williams, County Clerk

Hamilton Herald News

Mrs. Vivian H. Blair

COUNTY HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENT

E. R. Lawrence

COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AGENT

A. J. Spence, Jr.

SUPERVISOR, FARMERS HOME ADMINISTRATION

Property Hamilton County Courthouse

State IA Working Number 11.7.78.4505

TECHNICAL

Photos 2
Maps 1

CONTROL

pl
OK 11.5.78

Although first paragraph does some summary, it remains inadequate--given the degree of change suffered by the building. Need justification for the 1931 structure that we would be listing.

HISTORIAN

Shufy
12-12-78
Return

Architectural significance is established in a vague way. Building embodies characteristics of design + construction which reflect both late 19th century and early 1930s techniques.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Scye 12/12/78

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____
Review _____

see return sheet for particular problems. 12-14-78
Shufy

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

cannot sign until Dec 27 12/14/78
Return Lebovich

lacks adequate #8 and discussion of present 1930's altered bldg.

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up _____ Send-back _____ Entered _____
Federal Register Entry _____ Re-submit 1.8.80

The attached National Register Inventory-Nomination form is being returned to your office for clarification of the information indicated below. PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WHEN THE NOMINATION IS RESUBMITTED.

7 Description: _____

8 Statement of Significance: Please review the requests for information on other courthouses. Given the extensive changes suffered by the building, the Statement of Significance must make a precise case for the architectural and historical value of the building that now appears there - and support that summary with information that goes beyond the county's early history. Please expand on the (over)

9 Bibliography: _____

10 Geographical Data -- Acreage: _____

UTM Reference(s): _____

Verbal Boundary Description: _____

12 Certification: _____

Photographic Coverage: please provide photo of bldg before 1930's alterations.

Map Coverage: _____

Other: _____

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to Marcella Sherfy

on the National Register staff, telephone 202-343-6401

Thank you for your attention to the above items.

Bill Lebovich SL
Chief, Branch of Registration

Date: 12/21/78

#8 (continued) :

meaning of "characteristic nineteenth-century detailing" and the characterization of "design features typical of [20th century] time." Present-day architectural significance in part consists of the compatibility of the 1931-32 alteration with the original structure. This idea is expressed in the Description and might also be incorporated into Part 8.

Property Hamilton County Courthouse

Ind Control
80004125

State Tx (Hamilton)

Working Number 11.7.78.4505

TECHNICAL

CONTROL

Photos 2

Maps 1

Although they have skirted the question of historical significance for the 20th C. courthouse, relying instead on inherent value of a courthouse to a county's political life, they have done a good job of discussing architectural evolution and continuity. It just barely misses 50 yrs. This still could be better, but I think we can accept.

HISTORIAN

accept
Grosvenor
8/29/80

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

accept
Grosvenor
8/29/80

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up _____

Send-back _____

Entered SEP 4 1980

Federal Register Entry 2.3.81

Re-submit _____

INT:2106-74



Hamilton County Courthouse
Public Square
Hamilton, Hamilton County, Texas

Will Robinson 1977
negative filed at Texas Historical Comm.

East Elevation

NOV 7 1978

SEP 4 1980



HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL

BOYS TRACK MEET
AT BROWNWOOD
SATURDAY

Hamilton County Courthouse
Public Square
Hamilton, Hamilton County, Texas

Will Robinson 1977
negative filed at Texas Historical Comm.

Northwest Oblique

SEP 2 1980

NOV 7 1978

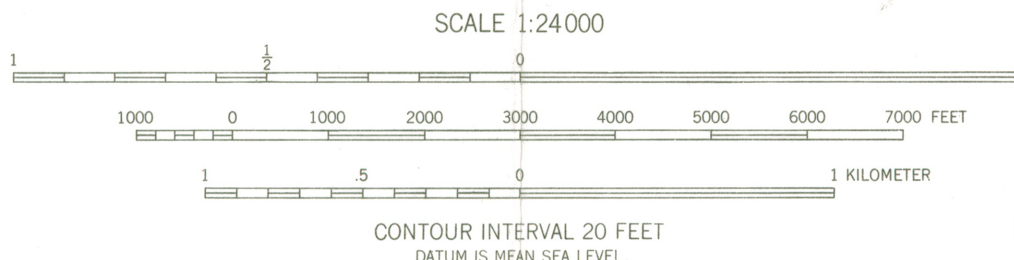
SEP 4 1980



HAMILTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE
PUBLIC SQUARE
HAMILTON HAMILTON COUNTY TEXAS
LONG: 96° 07' 25" ; LAT: 31° 42' 15"

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography from aerial photographs by ER-55 plotter
Aerial photographs taken 1955. Field check 1956
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,
central zone
Red tint indicates areas in which only
landmark buildings are shown

TRUE NORTH
MAGNETIC NORTH
APPROXIMATE MEAN
DECLINATION, 1956



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

RECEIVED
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NATIONAL REGISTER

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER 2, COLORADO OR WASHINGTON 25, D.C.
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

HAMILTON EAST, TEX.
NE/4 HAMILTON 15' QUADRANGLE
N3137.5—W9800/7.5

3198 414

1956

SEP 4 1960

54

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE TEXAS

Date Entered SEP 4 1980

Name

Location

Hamilton County Courthouse

Hamilton
Hamilton County

Dickens County Courthouse and Jail

Dickens
Dickens County

Also Notified

Honorable John G. Tower
Honorable Lloyd Bentsen
Honorable James M. Leath
Honorable Jack E. Hightower

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

NR

Byers/mjd 9/19/80

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

NATIONAL REGISTER DATA SHEET

① NAME as it appears on federal register: Hamilton County Courthouse
 ② OTHER NAMES:
 ③ date of entry:
 ④ county code: 193

⑤ LOCATION street & number: Public Sq. city / town: Hamilton vicinity of: state: TX county: Hamilton
 ⑥ NPS REGION: S Central

⑦ OWNER PRIVATE STATE MUNICIPAL COUNTY MULTIPLE FEDERAL (agency name)
 ⑧ ADMINISTRATOR:
 ⑨ EXISTING SURVEYS HABS HAER NHL ⑩ FUNDED? YES NO ⑪ CONGRESS. DISTRICT: 11 ⑫ SOURCE of NOMINATION STATE FEDERAL

⑬ WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? YES, NAME NO ⑭ WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? YES, NAME NO ⑮ ACREAGE: LOCAL PRIVATE ORGANIZATION

⑯ CONDITION deteriorated altered original site excellent ruins unaltered moved good unexposed reconstructed unknown fair unexcavated excavated
 ⑰ FEATURES: INTERIOR SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-1 NOT INTACT-0 UNKNOWN-4 NOT APPLICABLE-7 EXTERIOR SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-2 NOT INTACT-0 UNKNOWN-5 NOT APPLICABLE-8 ENVIRONS SUBSTANTIALLY INTACT-3 NOT INTACT-0 UNKNOWN-6 NOT APPLICABLE-9

⑱ ACCESS YES-Restricted YES-Unrestricted No Access Unknown ⑲ ADAPTIVE USE YES NO ⑳ SAVED? YES ㉑ IS PROPERTY A HISTORIC DISTRICT? yes no

㉒ AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: ARCHAEOLOGY-prehistoric-2 COMMERCE-6 ARCHITECTURE-4 ART-5 ENGINEERING-11 ENTERTAINMENT-26 CONSERVATION-8 ECONOMICS-9 EDUCATION-10 LANDSCAPE ARCH.-15 LAW-16 LITERATURE-17 MILITARY-18 MUSIC-19 PHILOSOPHY-20 POLITICS/GOVT.-21 RELIGION-22 SCIENCE-23 SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN-24 SOCIAL/CULTURAL-30 TRANSPORTATION-25 RECREATION-28 SETTLEMENT-29 URBAN PLANNING-31 OTHER (SPECIFY)
 ㉓ CLAIMS: explain 'first' 'oldest' 'only'

㉔ functions WHEN HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT: CURRENTLY: ㉕ dates of initial construction: major alterations: historic events: ㉖ ETHNIC GROUP ASSOCIATION

㉗ architectural style(s): ㉘ architect: ㉙ master builder: ㉚ engineer:

㉛ landscape architect / garden designer: ㉜ interior decorator: ㉝ artist: ㉞ artisan: ㉟ builder/contractor:

㊱ NAMES give role & date PERSONAL: EVENTS: INSTITUTIONAL:

㊲ NATIONAL REGISTER WRITE-UP