

**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 MAR 31 1981

date entered MAY 4 1981

1. Name

historic Gates Memorial Library

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 317 Stilwell Blvd.

___ not for publication

city, town Port Arthur

___ vicinity of

congressional district 9th

state Texas

code 048

county Jefferson

code 245

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	___ agriculture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	___ private residence
___ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Library

4. Owner of Property

name Lamar University of Port Arthur

street & number 1500 Procter Street

city, town Port Arthur

___ vicinity of

state Texas

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Beaumont

state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title _____ has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes no

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 structure is a library in the Classical Revival style having half columns emerging from the walls on both sides as well as full columns across the inset loggia of its facade. The overall style is severe having few details and no pediment. The library is situated on city park land overlooking a major lake which serves as a state boundary line between Texas and Louisiana.

The overall shape of the library is slightly more rectangular than square with the longest measurement being from the front of the building to the back. The forward half of the structure is two storied while the rear portion has only one story and is slightly wider. The construction is of reinforced concrete with the exterior walls of Bedford, Indiana limestone backed with brick and hollow tiles. Six columns of limestone dominate the facade, while half-columns emerging from the walls give the same effect to both sides of the forward (original) portion of the building. The flat roof is 5 ply Texaco roofing felt laid over a foundation of concrete with a Ludowici finish of 6 inch by 8 inch quarry tiles.

The entrance to the library is approached by limestone steps that run the entire 90 foot width of the structure. The entablature is supported by six smooth limestone columns 23 feet in height and being 2 feet and 3 inches in thickness at the base. The columns' entasis is slight with capitals of the Corinthian order. The detailing of the entablature is simple. The plain frieze bears the name of the library and the dedicatory legend with a decorative tondo medallion sculpted in bas-relief at either end of the frieze on the front and two sides of the two-story portion of the building. A row of dentils is just below the cornice which consists of molding with simple, clean lines.

The portico, or stoa, is 13 feet 4 inches by 58 feet 5½ inches. Its ceiling height is 29 feet. The single front door is centered in the stoa and flanked on each side by two tall windows with small sectioned panes. The exterior framing on the door echoes the clean detailing of the building's exterior entablature. The three windows of the same style and size as those in the stoa are centered between the four half-columns on both sides of the structure.

The interior is plastered imitation limestone to match the exterior. The rooms have richly ornamented friezes and cornices with the ceiling finished to correspond to the overall style. Much of the wall space is taken by the tall windows which have detailed framing consistent with the exterior and interior Greek styling. They measure 7 feet and 8 inches by 15 feet 4 inches and have small panes in the Dutch style.

The original structure was built in 1917. In 1904 a renovation program included exterior sandblasting, new shades and floors. In 1952 the building was expanded by constructing a one-story addition attached to the sides (near the rear) and behind the original structure.

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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

No changes were made in the existing building and the addition was compatible with the **Classical** Revival styling. The expansion program provided additional space for reading rooms, work areas, and lecture and committee rooms.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Library

Specific dates 1917, 1918 **Builder/Architect** George A. Fuller: Builder
Warren and Wetmore: Architects

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Gates Memorial Library is notable as a faithful exposition of the Classical Revival style and stands alone as such in the Port Arthur area. Its large scale is reflective of its history. The library was a gift to the city of Port Arthur by Mrs. Dellora R. Gates in 1918 in honor of her husband John W. Gates, philanthropist and industrial magnate of national prominence. As a farsighted city father and benefactor, John Gates also built a Methodist church and founded and built the Port Arthur Business College.

The Gates Memorial Library is one of three building complexes built by the John W. Gates estate on city park land granted to Gates by the city of Port Arthur in the early years of the twentieth century. Having accumulated a personal fortune in wire and steel manufacturing and oil investments (he was part owner of the famous Spindletop oil well near Port Arthur which ushered in Texas' first great oil boom in 1902), Gates became the city's foremost philanthropist, founding and building the Port Arthur Business College and a Methodist church across the street from and on the same park land as the library.

The library was actually built by Gates' wife, Mrs. Dellora R. Gates, after her husband's death in 1911. In 1916 Mrs. Gates carried out her husband's dream for the library by pledging \$30,000 for the building and \$25,000 for books. After the Smithsonian Institute researched Port Arthur's geographical area and produced a lengthy study regarding the climate and other physical factors which would aid architects in building a lasting structure, the architectural firm of Warren and Wetmore of New York was chosen to design the library. (The firm had also designed Grand Central Station and the Biltmore and Ritz hotels.) Taking into consideration the findings of the Smithsonian study, the architects designed a building that called for massive quantities of Indiana limestone which enhanced the structure's impressive proportions and careful detailing and made it an excellent example of the Classical Revival style. George A. Fuller Contracting Company of Houston became the builder.

Construction was begun in 1916 and completed in May, 1917 at an approximate cost of \$75,000. The library and land were given to the city in 1918. The library remained city property until August 1980 when its title was transferred to Lamar University (formerly Port Arthur Business College). The university will continue to use it as a library with the Port Arthur Public Library maintaining a branch. The gallery in the library will continue to serve as the Heritage Room of the Port Arthur Historical Society and will be the permanent home of the Society's museum which will maintain items of historical interest from every decade of Port Arthur history.

9. Major Bibliographical References

American Guide Series
 Stilwell, Arther E. "I had a Hunch"
 Wendt and Kogon: "Bet a Million"
 Story of John Gates
 City clerk's office: Ordinances and Resolutions

Library Journal - June, 1918
 Interview: Lucy Steifel, Librarian
 Files, Scrapbooks, Mrs. James Carr
 correspondence, P.A. Public Library
 Jefferson Co. Courthouse, Deed Records

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property 1.72 acres

Quadrangle name Port Arthur North, Tex.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	5	4	1	0	4	6	0	3	3	0	5	5	0	0
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 Gates Memorial Library is located on 1.72 acres on Stilwell Blvd, bounded by Lakeshore Drive on the east, Stilwell blvd. on the north, Procter Street on the west and Lions' Park on the south.

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. James Carr

organization Port Arthur Historical Society

date January 6, 1981

street & number 3116 Memorial Blvd.

telephone 982-2925

city or town Port Arthur

state Texas

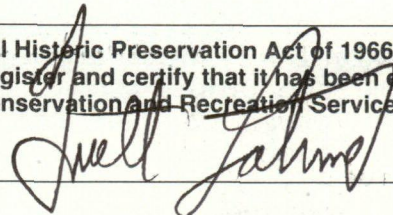
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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

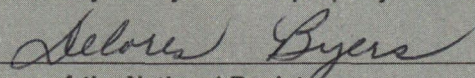


title State Historic Preservation Officer

date March 24, 1981

For HCRS use only

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

for 
 Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
 National Register

date

5/4/81

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

Property

Gates Memorial Library

81000632

DUE

4/29/81 - 5/15/81

State

K, Jefferson

Working Number

3/31/81/98

TECHNICAL

CONTROL

Photos 6

Maps 1

HISTORIAN

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up _____

Send-back _____

Entered MAY 4 1981

Federal Register Entry 2.2.82

Re-submit _____



Mrs. Delora Gates, wife of the late John W. Gates, donated to the City of Port Arthur a library building costing approximately \$75,000.00, in 1917.

from Mrs. Carl White

No. 26 TAKEN 4-28-17
Gates Library Building
Port Arthur City
W. H. McMillan Architect
GEORGE A. FULLER CO. BUILDERS

Gates Memorial Library
317 Stilwell Blvd.
Port Arthur, Jefferson County, Texas

Photo courtesy of Lamar University and Port
Arthur Historical Society, 1981. Date of
photo is 1917. Location of negative not known.

North oblique, camera facing south.

Photo 1 of 6.

MAR 31 1981

MAY 4 1981

Lamar University
1-6-81

N OB



Gates Memorial Library
317 Stilwell Blvd.
Port Arthur, Jefferson County, Texas

Photo courtesy of Lamar University and Port Arthur
Historical Society, 1981. Date of photo not
know, pre-dates construction of extension in 1952.
Location of negative not known.

East oblique, camera facing west.

Photo 2 of 6.

MAR 31 1981

4 1981

Lamar University
1-6-81

E. ok



WATKINS STUDIO

2329 THOMAS BLVD. PH. 982-3666

PORT ARTHUR, TEXAS 77640

Gates Memorial Library
317 Stilwell Blvd.
Port Arthur, Jefferson County, Texas

Photo courtesy of Port Arthur Historical Society,
1980. Photo taken by and negative owned by
Watkins Studio, Port Arthur.

Northeast facade, camera facing southwest.

Photo 3 of 6.

MAR 31 1981

MAY 4 1981

NE Fac



Gates Memorial Library
317 Stilwell Blvd.
Port Arthur, Jefferson County, Texas

Photo courtesy of Lamar University, 1981.
Negative on file at Lamar University.

North oblique, camera facing south.

Photo 4 of 6.

MAR 31 1981 MAY 4 1981

N ob



Gates Memorial Library
317 Stilwell Blvd.
Port Arthur, Jefferson County, Texas

Photo courtesy of Lamar University, 1981.
Negative on file at Lamar University.

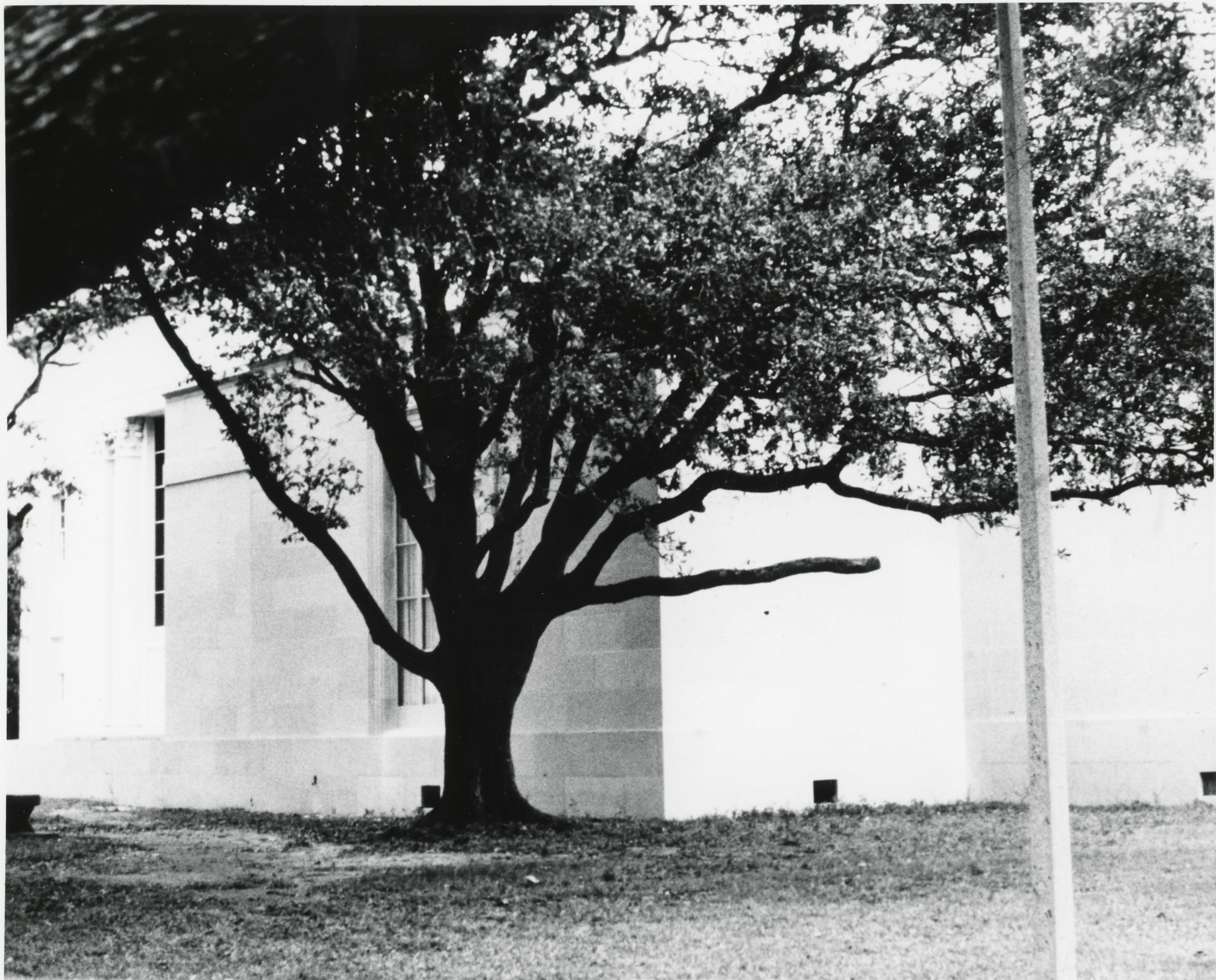
North oblique, camera facing south.

Photo 5 of 6.

MAR 31 1981

MAY 4 1981

Not



Gates Memorial Library
317 Stilwell Blvd.
Port Arthur, Jefferson County, Texas

Photo courtesy of Lamar University, 1981.
Negative on file at Lamar University.

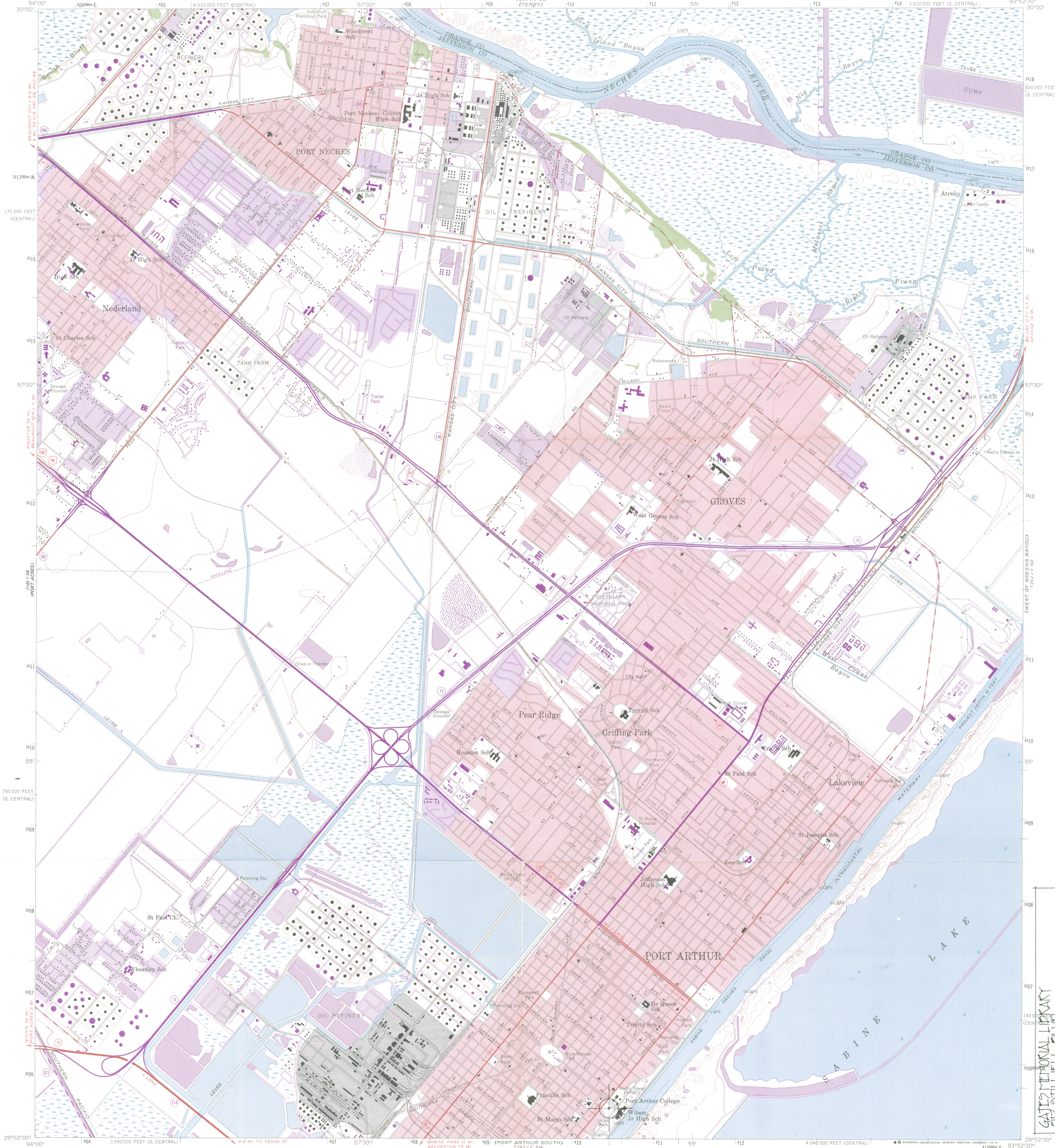
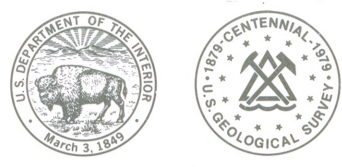
Southwest facade, camera facing north, showing
1952 extension.

Photo 6 of 6.

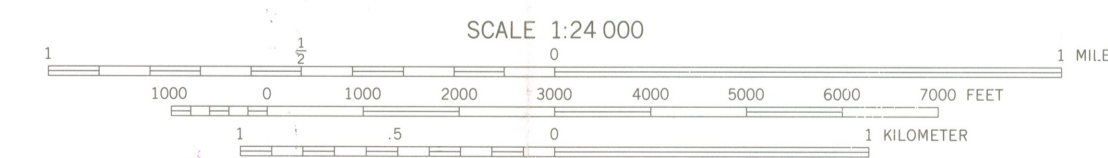
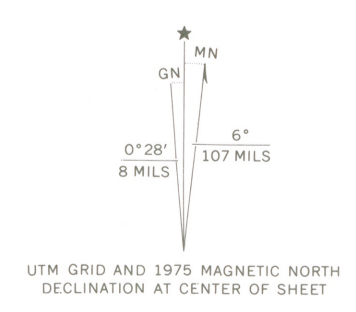
MAR 31 1981

MAY 4 1981

SW fac
facing N



Mapped by the Army Map Service
Revised, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and TVA
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1942. Topography by plane-table surveys 1943
Culture revised by the Geological Survey from aerial photographs
taken 1956. Field check 1957
Hydrography compiled from USC&GS charts 517 (1956) and 533 (1955)
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Texas coordinate system,
central and south central zones
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 15, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only
landmark buildings are shown
Revision shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1970 and 1975. This information not field checked
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



SCALE 1:24 000
CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET-DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS LESS THAN 1/2 FOOT
THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
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
MAR 31 1981
NATIONAL REGISTER

PORT ARTHUR NORTH, TEX.
NW/4 PORT ARTHUR 15' QUADRANGLE
N 2952.5 - W 9352.5 / 7.5

1957
PHOTOREVISED 1970 AND 1975
DMA 7243 1V NW-SERIES 1882

2993-333
MAY 4 1981

GATES MEMORIAL PARK
2727 TILLIUM BLVD
PORT ARTHUR, JEFFERSON COUNTY, TEXAS
LITL REF: 17/410160/22079500

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE **TEXAS**

Date Entered **MAY 4 1981**

Name

Location

Gates Memorial Library

Port Arthur
Jefferson County

Webb County Courthouse

Laredo
Webb County

Number 4 Hook and Ladder Company

Dallas
Dallas County

Also Notified

Honorable Lloyd M. Bentsen

Honorable John G. Tower
Honorable Jack Brooks
Honorable Abraham Kazen, Jr.
Honorable James A. Mattox
South Central Region, HCRS

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

NR

Eady/bjr/5/6/81

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