

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JUN 7 1982
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Lynn County Courthouse

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Public Square N/A not for publication

city, town Tahoka N/A vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state Texas 79373 code 48 county Lynn code 305

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	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input 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 Lynn County

street & number Lynn County Courthouse

city, town Tahoka N/A vicinity of state Texas 79373

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lynn County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Tahoka state Texas 79373

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

South Plains Association of Governments
title Historical Site Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records South Plains Association of Governments, 1709 26th Street

city, town Lubbock state Texas 79411

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 <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Lynn County Courthouse, built in 1916, is an outstanding example of the type of public architecture that appeared on the South Plains during the region's formative years. The three-story reinforced concrete structure was built to serve the county as both courthouse and jail. The red brick veneered building is the centerpiece of the small city of Tahoka because of its location on the courthouse square, its large size, and its Neo-Classical style.

Architect W.M. Rice submitted the final drawings for the Lynn County Courthouse to the county's Commissioner's Court in December 1915. The structure was to be a "three story building with a basement, the basement being the modern above ground style. The plan was replete with office rooms, vaults...with a magnificent courtroom." It was to serve as county offices, courts, and jail. Construction commenced in 1916, and the new courthouse opened in December 1916. The building, which was considered a very modern and up-to-date public facility when it was first occupied, has changed very little in the 66 years since its construction.

The Neo-Classical style building's dark red brick facade is applied over reinforced concrete. Light colored stone detailing provides contrast with the brick. The building is shaped symmetrically with identical facades opposite one another.

The courthouse rises from a raised basement with a concrete sill and brick walls which create a rusticated banded effect. A stone string course forms continuous sills for the first floor windows and divides the middle portion of the building from the basement. The windows in the basement have stone flat arches with keystones, and are the only windows with any ornamentation.

The middle section of the building features the four colossal porticos with Ionic columns. The north and south porticos are most imposing. They are obviously intended to be the main entrances to the building, as a wide flight of concrete steps leads up to the first floor doors, which are guarded by four Ionic columns. The east and west facades are slightly less ornamented, with only two columns and stairs leading down into the basement level. Iron balconies project from the second floor on these facades. The fluted stone Ionic columns found on each facade have an ornate capital with enriched volutes and egg and dart ornamentation. The columns support projecting porticos which have both egg and dart and dentil molding on the inside ceiling. The building is surrounded by an Ionic entablature consisting of a stone architrave with multiple fascias, brick frieze with stone sign panels and paterae, dentil molding and a projecting stone cornice. This entablature separates the middle and upper portions of the building. Pilaster strips with stone bases and capitals mark the four porticos and each corner of the structure from the first floor sill to the second floor entablature.

Above the cornice is the attic story, which extends to the edge of the portico on the north and south facades. The east and west porticos are flat roofed with a crenelated parapet. The attic story is topped with a stone cornice and crenelated parapet. All parapets have stone caps. Near the top of each facade is an ornate stone medallion centered with the letter "L" for Lynn County.

The windows on all floors were originally 1/1 double hung wooden units. Each was set in a simple surround with stone sill and no lintel except on the slightly ornamented basement windows. The original doors, which are still in use on the east and west facades, were wooden with three-quarter beveled glass panels. They were surrounded with sidelights and transom.

The courthouse exterior has changed little since it was put into service in 1916. In the early 1970's, the original wooden windows were replaced with 2/2 aluminum windows. These metal units are of a different color than the original windows. However, they are of the same size and shape as the originals, and no structural changes were made to the building in their alteration. In 1976, the entrance doors on the north and south facades

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

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

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

were replaced with modern aluminum and plate glass doors.

The interior of the courthouse reflects the exterior shape of the building. The hallways on the first floor form a cross from each of the four entrances. The first floor originally housed county offices and a small courtroom, which has been converted to the county tax office. The basement is still used as the mechanical and storage area of the courthouse, and houses the original steam heating system, which is still in use. The first and second floors have ceramic tile floors and plaster walls with marble wainscotting. The second floor accomodates judicial offices, jury room, and the main courtroom. This level has plaster walls and wooden floors. The main courtroom has been modernized with a dropped ceiling screening the third floor balcony. However, the main features of the courtroom remain intact above and below this ceiling. A marble staircase leads from the second to the third floor, which was intended for use as jury dormitory and jail. This floor is essentially original, as the jail was moved to a separate building on the square in the 1960's and juries were not sequestered in the courthouse after women gained the right to serve. The floor is completely closed off and unused.

The courthouse is located on an irregularly shaped piece of land in the center of Tahoka. The courthouse square, which was the original town square, was originally 300 by 350 feet. It is bounded by Avenue J on the west, South Second on the south, Avenue H on the east, and South First on the north. Main Street dead ends in front of the north facade of the courthouse, casuing it to be perceived as the main entrance. When Highway 9, later old U.S. 87, was extended through Tahoka in the early 1930's, Main Street was extended across the northwest corner of the square to join Avenue J. This provided a direct route through town that was the principal north-south route thourgh the Plains until U.S. 87 was realigned in the 1960's.

This location is the legal center of the Original Town of Tahoka, and has neither block nor lot numbers. The lots which border the courthouse square are clearly designed as commercial lots, as they are only deep enough for one building. All buildings on these lots are oriented toward Main Street or the Courthouse, which because of its location, size and ornamentation is the focal point of the town.

A two-story brick jail was constructed in the 1960's near the southeast corner of the courthouse square.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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 1916 **Builder/Architect** A.Z. Rodgers, Builder/W.M. Rice, Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Lynn County Courthouse, built in 1916, is Lynn County's first permanent courthouse and a major historical and architectural landmark in the county. In its location on the courthouse square, it is the major building in the small city of Tahoka, the county seat. The courthouse is one of the older surviving courthouses on the Texas South Plains. As a part of a group of twentieth century courthouses in the Panhandle-Plains area, the Lynn County courthouse is symbolic of the settlement and expansion of the region in the early twentieth century.

In 1903, the residents of Lynn County voted to organize a county government. Tahoka became the county seat, and a square, two story wood frame courthouse was built on the town square. By 1916, Tahoka's substantial growth convinced the townspeople to incorporate the twelve year old city. At the same time, county residents decided the county needed a larger and more permanent courthouse and an adequate jail facility. In July 1915, a bond election was held to authorize \$100,000 in county bonds to build a new county complex.

Even before the bond election was held, Lynn County Commissioners talked to interested architects. After the bonds were approved, W. M. Rice, of Amarillo, was selected as architect and A. Z. Rodgers, of Henrietta, was chosen as contractor. Rice was later the contractor for the 1921 Freestone County Courthouse, at Fairfield, which is almost identical to the Lynn County Courthouse. However the design of the Freestone Courthouse is attributed to W.R. Kaufman of Amarillo. Rice was also the architect for the 1916 W. A. Bacon house in Lubbock. Rice is probably responsible for a number of buildings in the Panhandle and South Plains region, though no systematic study of his work has been undertaken.

In December 1915, the final plans for the building were approved. Construction began in May 1916. In December 1916 the completed courthouse opened for business. The new structure contained all the modern conveniences of the day, including electric lights, water closets, steam heat and a septic tank.

Since its construction, the courthouse has been the focal point of both the City of Tahoka and Lynn County. The three story structure is the largest non-agricultural building in Lynn County. From its position on the courthouse square in the center of the Original Town of Tahoka, the courthouse dwarfs the surrounding one and two story commercial structures. It is visible from all directions on the flat Texas plains. The courthouse is a major historical and architectural landmark for both Tahoka and Lynn County.

The Lynn County Courthouse is an excellent example of public architecture as interpreted on the South Plains in the early twentieth century. The courthouse is almost identical to the Freestone County Courthouse (1921), for which Rice served as contractor, and the Dallam County Courthouse (1922). Many other courthouses from this period incorporated elements of the same Classical Revival or Neo-Classical style found in the Lynn County Courthouse. The Lynn County Courthouse is part of a larger group of twentieth century courthouses found in the Panhandle-South Plains area. Those in Hale (1910), King (1913), Crosby (1914), Dickens (1893), Bailey (1925), and Hockley (1927) Counties are still in use. These twentieth century courthouses are symbolic of the settlement and expansion of the Panhandle-South Plains Region in the early twentieth century.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property Less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Tahoka

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

UMT References

A

1	4	2	3	9	2	9	0	3	6	7	2	8	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

See continuation sheet

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Donald R. Abbe and Sally Still Abbe

organization Phoebe K. Warner Study Club

date March 24, 1982

street & number Box 1477

telephone (806) 998-4602

city or town Tahoka

state Texas 79373

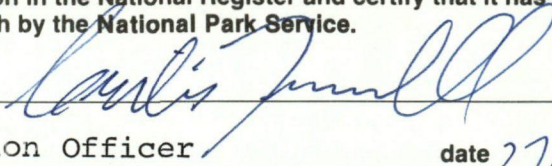
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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 State Historic Preservation Officer

date 27 May 1982

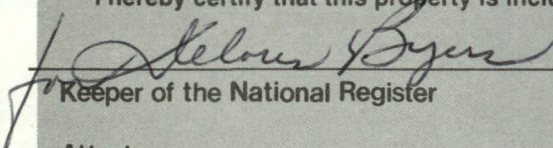
For NPS use only

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

Entered in the
National Register

date

7/8/82


Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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

For NPS use only

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date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

Abbe, Donald R. "A History of Lynn County." Unpublished M.A. thesis, Texas Tech University, 1974.

_____. Historical Sites Inventory Update. South Plain Association of Governments, 1978.

Crites, Mary. "Lynn County Courthouse." Unpublished manuscript, submitted as class project for History of Texas Architecture at Texas Tech University.

Brown, P.D. "Four Courthouses in 75 Years," in History of Freestone County. Fairfield: Freestone County Historical Commission, 1978.

Welch, June Rayfield and Nance, J. Larry. The Texas Courthouse. Dallas: G.L.A. Press, 1971.

Lynn County Commissioner's Court Minutes. Tahoka, Texas.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 1

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the northeast corner Avenue J and South Second, north approximately 75 feet, then northeast approximately 280 feet to South First, then east approximately 200 feet to Avenue H, then south approximately 160 feet to a line parallel with the south wall of the courthouse, then west approximately 110 feet, then south approximately 90 feet to South Second, then west approximately 240 feet to Avenue J.

This boundary encompasses the existing courthouse square with the exception of the area on which the 1960's jail stands.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

EVALUATION / RETURN SHEET

82604513
Working No. 6/7/82-1683

Fed. Reg. Date: 2.1.83

Date Due: 7/8/82 - 7/22/82

Action: ACCEPT 7/8/82

RETURN

REJECT

Entered in the
National Register

Lynn County Courthouse,
Lynn County,
TEXAS,

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Federal Agency: _____

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____

Reviewer _____

Discipline _____

Date _____

see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: technical corrections cited below
 substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input 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

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

- _____ summary paragraph
- _____ completeness
- _____ clarity
- _____ applicable criteria
- _____ justification of areas checked
- _____ relating significance to the resource
- _____ context
- _____ relationship of integrity to significance
- _____ justification of exception
- _____ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UMT References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

Title _____ date _____

13. Other

- _____ Maps
- _____ Photographs
- _____ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: 202 272-3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



Lynn County Courthouse
Lynn County, Texas, located in
Tahoka Texas
Don Abbe-photographer
View-to the southeast
Date-November 5, 1981

Negatives in the possession of Don Abbe
Photo # 1 of 7



Lynn County Courthouse
Tahoka, Texas
Photo by Don Abbe
December, 1981
View-East North East

Negatives in the possession of Don Abbe
Photo # 2 of 7



Lynn County / Courthouse
Tahoka, Texas
Photo by Don Abbe
December, 1981
View looking North

Negatives in the possession of Don Abbe
Photo # 3 of 7



Lynn County Courthouse
Tahoka, Texas
Photo by Don Abbe
December, 1981
View looking West North West

Negatives in the possession of Don Abbe
photo # 4 of 7



Lynn County Courthouse

Tahoka, Texas

Photo by Don Abbe

December, 1981

View looking West South West

Negatives in the possession of Don Abbe

Photo # 5 of 7



Lynn County Courthouse
Tahoka, Texas
Photo by Don Abbe
December, 1981
View- detail of capital

Negatives in the possession of Don Abbe
Photo # 6 of 7



LYNN COUNTY COURTHOUSE

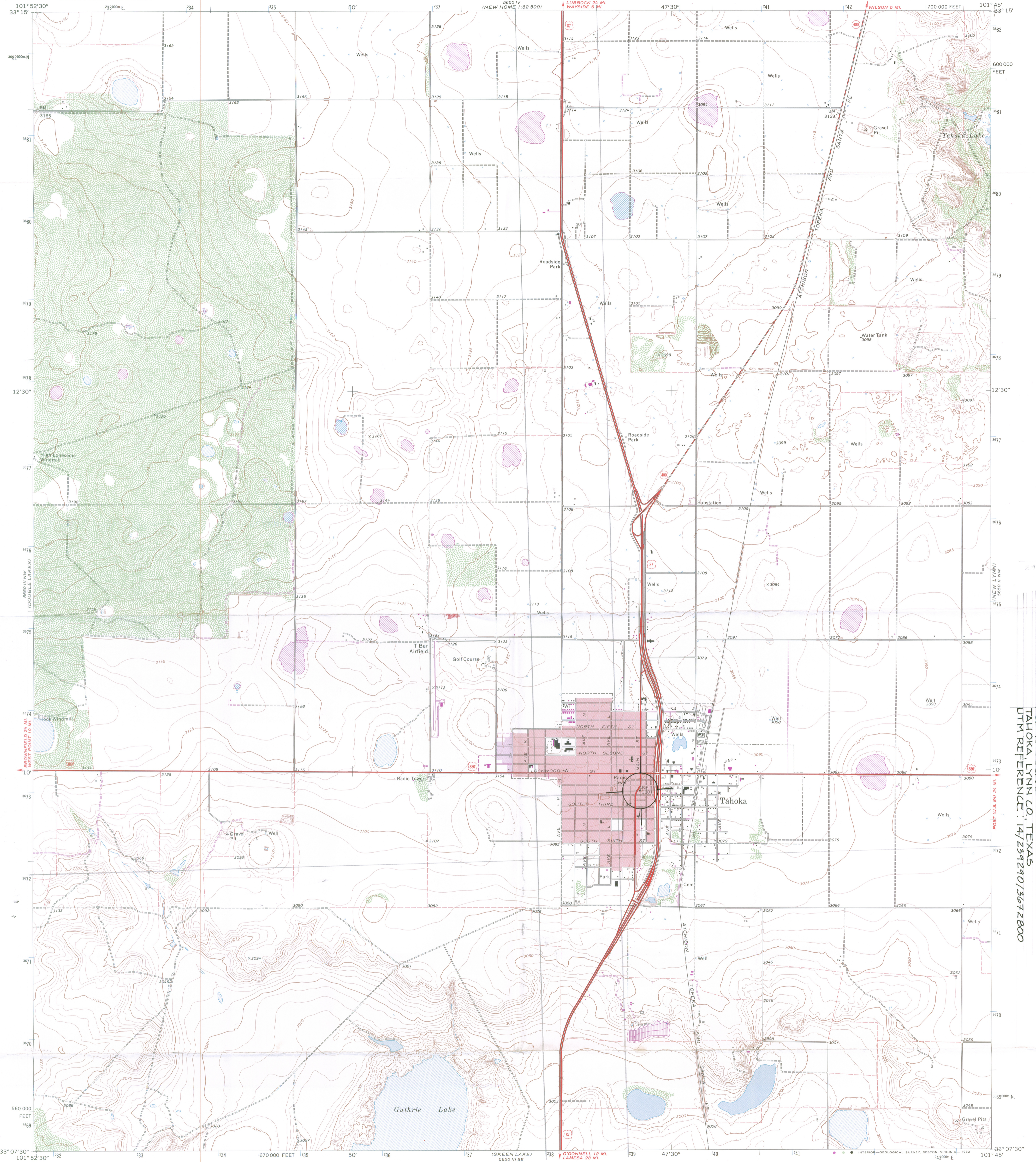
Tahoka, Texas

Date: 1937

Photographer: Unknown

View: Northeast from corner Ave. J
and South 1st. Tahoka Barbeque, 1937.

Negatives in the possession of Don Abbe
Photo # 7 of 7



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1968. Field checked 1969

Polycyclic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Texas coordinate system, north central zone 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 14, shown in blue. 1927 North American Datum To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 7 meters south and 40 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

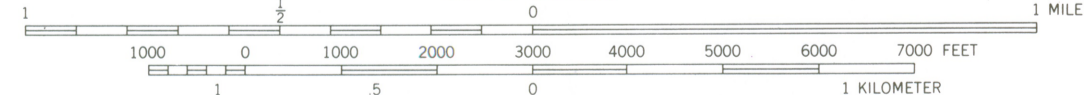
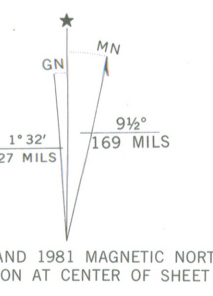
Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines

Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled from aerial photographs taken 1979 and other sources

This information not field checked Map edited 1981

Purple tint indicates extension of urban area



CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

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



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, all weather, hard surface	Light duty road, all weather, improved surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface	Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
U. S. Route	State Route

TAHOKA, TEX.
N3307.5-W10145/7.5

1969
PHOTOREVISED 1981
DMA 5650 III NE-SERIES V882

3301-224

LYNN COUNTY COURTHOUSE
PUBLIC SQUARE
TAHOKA, LYNN CO., TEXAS
UTM REFERENCE: 14/2392290/3672800