

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received FEB 22 1983
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Morris Ranch Schoolhouse

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Morris Ranch Road

N/A not for publication

city, town Fredericksburg vicinity X vicinity of

state Texas

code 048

county Gillespie

code 171

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: VACANT

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Frances Billups

street & number 12522 Maltsburger

city, town San Antonio

N/A vicinity of

state Texas 78216

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Gillespie County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Fredericksburg

state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Texas Historical Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Cruciform in plan, with steeply pitched intersecting gable roofs, the Morris Ranch Schoolhouse is a single-story structure constructed of limestone masonry. The apparent influence of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, which swept the United States in the late 1880s, is unexpected on a rural Texas schoolhouse. The decorative character of the exterior stonework combines with simple massing to produce a dignified structure.

The Morris Ranch Schoolhouse is a single-story structure of limestone construction, whose cruciform plan is highlighted by the steeply pitched gables of the intersecting rooflines. With the entrance facade facing south, the long axis of the structure runs east-west, while the shorter north-south axis divides the building into three distinct segments: a central part and two side wings. The school rests upon a base of large ashlar blocks of limestone, while the upper walls are formed of smooth limestone blocks. Contrast to the smooth nature of the walls comes from the projecting limestone quoins at the corners of the structure, as well as from the raised beltcourses which form a heavy line under the eaves. The arched openings of the end gables are outlined with similarly projecting voussoirs. Beltcourses divide the north and south gables into three sections, and the east and west gables into two. The north-south roofline is several feet higher than that of the east-west roofline. This difference in height is furthered by the placement of a belfry directly above the point of intersection of the two rooflines. The dominant character of the center bay of the south facade is maintained by the placement of the two front entrances in the inside corners at both sides of the projecting central bay.

The two entrances are sheltered by wooden entrance porches supported by a single square column. The face of the south gable is broken, on the ground level, by a large, triple window opening based upon the Palladian motif with a tall, central panel and rounded arch. This arch is filled by a blind transom with six recessed wooden panels taking the place of panes of glass. This design also appears on the single, round, arched opening on the north gable, and judging from vintage photographs, is an original element. In both the north and south arched openings, the extradoses are outlined by heavy voussoirs. The upper sections of the north and south gables contain a single ventilator opening which is round, arched, rather tall, and narrow. This ventilator opening rises from one raised beltcourse, and its arch is outlined by yet another. It reflects the design of the larger opening below it.

The east and west gables, at ground level, contain three tall, rectangular window openings each, with a small, narrow and round arched opening in their upper sections. The treatment of the beltcourses on these gables is identical to that noted on the larger north and south gables. The fenestration of the east and west segments of the structure is identical on both the north and south facades, with two tall rectangular openings centered on the wall surface. On the north facade, the two outermost openings have been used as doorways into the toilets that were added to this side of the structure in 1949. The standard window unit used in all of the large openings on the building consists of a sash with four-over-four lights topped by a two-light transom. While all the large windows have been boarded up, a majority still preserve their original sashes.

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Item number 7

Page 1

Four stone chimnies are present. Two are set above the entrance porches on the south facade, while two more are found above the north facade, between the tall windows of the east and west wings. Except for the west wing which still retains its original wooden shingles, the roof is covered by sheet metal. The tapered base of the belfry is also covered in wooden shingles, as is its pyramidal roof. At the apex of the south gable there is a rectangular stone block with the word "schoolhous" (sic) carved above the date of construction, "1893."

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 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 1893

Builder/Architect Alfred Giles, Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Morris Ranch Schoolhouse is very unusual both architecturally and historically among surviving late Victorian country schools in Texas. To begin with, most were modest, utilitarian structures often of frame construction, while the Morris Ranch building has considerable architectural pretension. Furthermore, its architect, Alfred Giles (1853-1920) of San Antonio, was one of the most prominent Texas architects of the era 1875-1925. Giles was responsible for a number of structures in the Fredericksburg area, including the William Bierschwale residence (1888) and the Old Gillespie County Courthouse (1882), the later of which is listed on the National Register. His many distinctive masonry buildings in San Antonio and the Hill Country are highly prized. Finally, the Morris Ranch itself has an unusual history and, like the schoolhouse, defies the usual stereotypes of late 19th-century Texas as an uncivilized frontier.

The Morris Ranch Schoolhouse is a fine example of the quality of stonework produced by the German craftsmen in the Fredericksburg area in the 19th century. Stylistically, however, the structure clearly reflects the mainstream of American architecture in the 1880s and 1890s, in its use of Romanesque Revival detailing. The distinguished appearance of this building, with its heavy stone walls, stands in distinct contrast to the characteristic frame schoolhouses of late 19th-century Texas. The pretensions of the structure indicate a considerable expenditure of funds on the part of the Morris family and a strong interest in the education of the children of the ranch staff.

Alfred Giles, the architect for the schoolhouse, was very prominent in Central Texas, especially in San Antonio. Giles, an Englishman by birth, immigrated to the United States and settled in San Antonio in 1873. Giles' practice flourished, and he was responsible for the design of such notable San Antonio residences as those for Edward Steves and Carl Groos. Giles also received several commissions for the design of county courthouses, including the extant courthouses for Wilson, Kendall and Webb counties. Giles' finest surviving courthouse, that for Gillespie County, is located in Fredericksburg, approximately 13 miles northeast of the Morris Ranch.

While it was part of the Morris Ranch, the school property belonged to Morris Ranch Consolidated Common School District No. 40 until 1962, when the school was annexed into the Fredericksburg Independent School District. Education was very important to the Morris family and to their ranching families as well. The Morris family opened their personal library to the children attending the school, and the school building also served other purposes. Church services were held each Sunday, and various pastors officiated. The building was the home of educational, religious, cultural and community activities until 1975. The property from which the Morris Ranch was later partitioned was part of a 23,040-acre land scrip issued by Sam Houston to William Bryan in 1836. Title to the property was later transferred to J.R. and R. Leavitt, partners in a New York mercantile firm. When the Leavitt firm went

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bankrupt, Francis Morris of New York and Maryland purchased the land for 24¢ an acre on February 18, 1856. In 1859 Morris sold off 6,400 acres to Peter Hayden. The remaining 16,640 acres remained in the Morris family until 1921.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the history of the ranch began in the late 1880s, when John A. Morris began to devote his energies to the establishment of one of the country's finest thoroughbred horse farms. Adjacent to the ranch house, Morris built a two-story hotel to accommodate guests, which was destroyed by a tornado in the 1950s. The training area contained the most impressive group of buildings, including two 400 ft.-long training barns, living quarters for the jockeys, and a race track complete with a judges' stand. Unfortunately, apparently none of these structures has survived, with the huge barns being broken up for building lumber during World War II. From the late 1880s to 1902, the ranch functioned as a breeding and training grounds for some of America's best thoroughbred race horses. The top foals from the 200 mares kept on the ranch were sent to Morris stables in the eastern U.S. and England. Max Hirsch, who began his career as a jockey on the ranch, later became famous as a horse trainer, and three of his horses went on to win the Kentucky Derby.

The antiracing laws of the late 1890s destroyed the racehorse market, and the Morris family quit the business of breeding thoroughbred horses. The ranch was then used for farming and ranching activities, producing cotton and grain until World War II. The ranch was placed on the market in 1920 when the Morris family decided they could get a greater return from their capital in New York investments. The first sale took place in 1921, and until 1931 the last 9,034 acres were managed by a member of the Morris family. At that time the school was deeded to the county and the remaining property was sold to a corporation of Fredericksburg men called "the Morris Ranch Land Company." The land was partitioned among the stockholders of the company. Today the original Morris Ranch property, including the schoolhouse, is divided among many private owners.

It should be noted that the 9.05-acre site surrounding the schoolhouse has been a separate parcel since 1931, and the structure has stood on this smaller acreage for much of its existence. With the partition of the original ranch, virtually all of the extensive improvements originally made for horse breeding and training have been destroyed, leaving the schoolhouse as the main, tangible reminder of the ranch's history.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Jutson, Mary Carolyn Hollers. Alfred Giles: An English Architect in Texas and Mexico.
Trinity University Press: San Antonio, Texas; 1972.
Gillespie County Deed Records

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 9 Acres

Quadrangle name Morris Ranch, Texas

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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

B

Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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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 Sue Ann Pemberton, AIA

organization

date May 1, 1982

street & number 212 W. Magnolia

telephone (512) 732-4174

city or town San Antonio

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

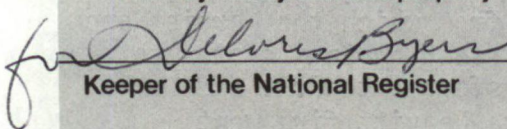


title State Historical Preservation Officer

date 14 Feb. 1983

For NPS use only

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


Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 3/29/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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Verbal description

Being 9.05 acres of land situated in Gillespie County, Texas, being part of Survey No. 75, patented to J. W. & R. Leavitt, assignees, by Patent No. 340, Volume 1, dated February 4, 1846, Abstract No. 409, and is described by metes and bounds as follows, to wit:

Beginning at a steel bar set in the Morris Ranch-Tibydale Road for the Southeast corner of the Morris Ranch Cemetery and the Southwest corner of that tract of land that was conveyed to the County Board of School Trustees of Gillespie County, Texas, by John A. Morris by deed dated August 8, 1931, recorded in Volume 43, Pages 367-368 of the Deed Records of Gillespie County, Texas, for the Southwest corner of this tract of land;

Thence North 1 deg. 30' West 724.4 feet to a steel bar set in fence line for corner;

Thence with fence, North 12 deg. 51' East 52.0 feet to a steel bar set at fence corner post for the Northwest corner of this tract of land;

Thence with fence, South 78 deg. 07' East 508.2 feet to a steel bar set in fence for the Northeast corner of this tract of land;

Thence South 1 deg. 29' West 836.1 feet to a steel bar set in the Morris Ranch-Tivydale Road for the Southeast corner of this tract of land;

Thence with said road, North 70 deg. 31' West 496.7 feet to the place of beginning.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Morris Ranch Schoolhouse
Gillespie County
TEXAS

Working No. FEB 22 1983
Fed. Reg. Date: 2-7-84
Date Due: 3/24/83 - 4/8/83
Action: ACCEPT 3/24/83
 RETURN
 REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

Entered in the
National Register

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

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"/> unezposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

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

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

Average of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

USGS Reference _____

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 _____

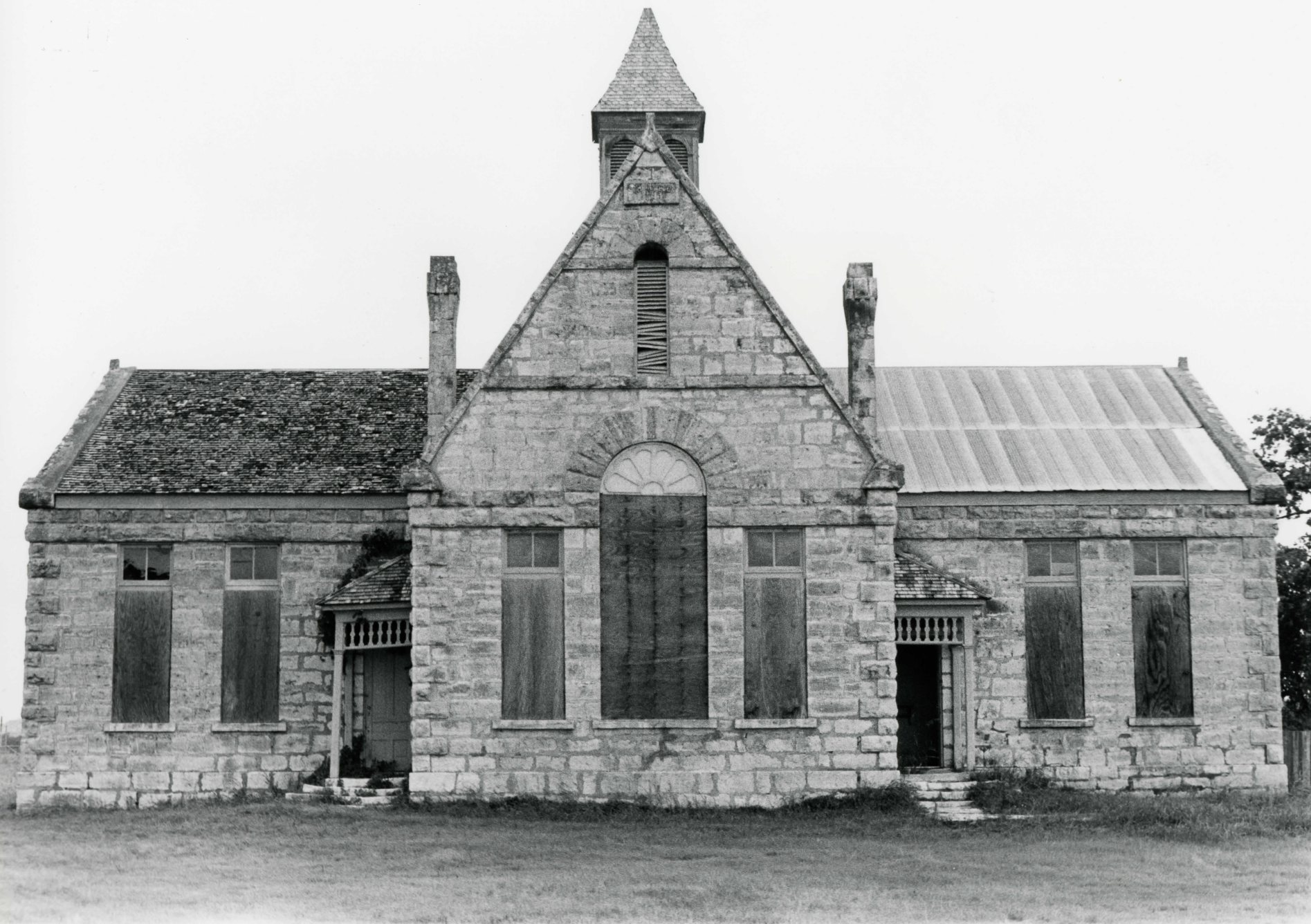
13. Other

- 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



Morris Ranch Schoolhouse
Morris Ranch Road, Gillespie County, Texas
Photo: Mark Wolf, August 1981
Neg. on file, Mark Wolf, 1138 E. Commerce St.,
San Antonio, Texas 78205
View of south (front) elevation, looking north
Photo 1 of 5



Morris Ranch Schoolhouse
Morris Ranch Road, Gillespie County, Texas
Photo: Mark Wolf, August 1981
Neg. on file, Mark Wolf, 1138 E. Commerce St.,
San Antonio, Texas 78205
View of southwest corner of school, looking
northeast
Photo 2 of 5



Morris Ranch Schoolhouse
Morris Ranch Road, Gillespie County, Texas
Photo: Mark Wolf, August 1981
Neg. on file, Mark Wolf, 1138 E. Commerce St.,
San Antonio, Texas 78205
View of north elevation, looking south
Photo 3 of 5

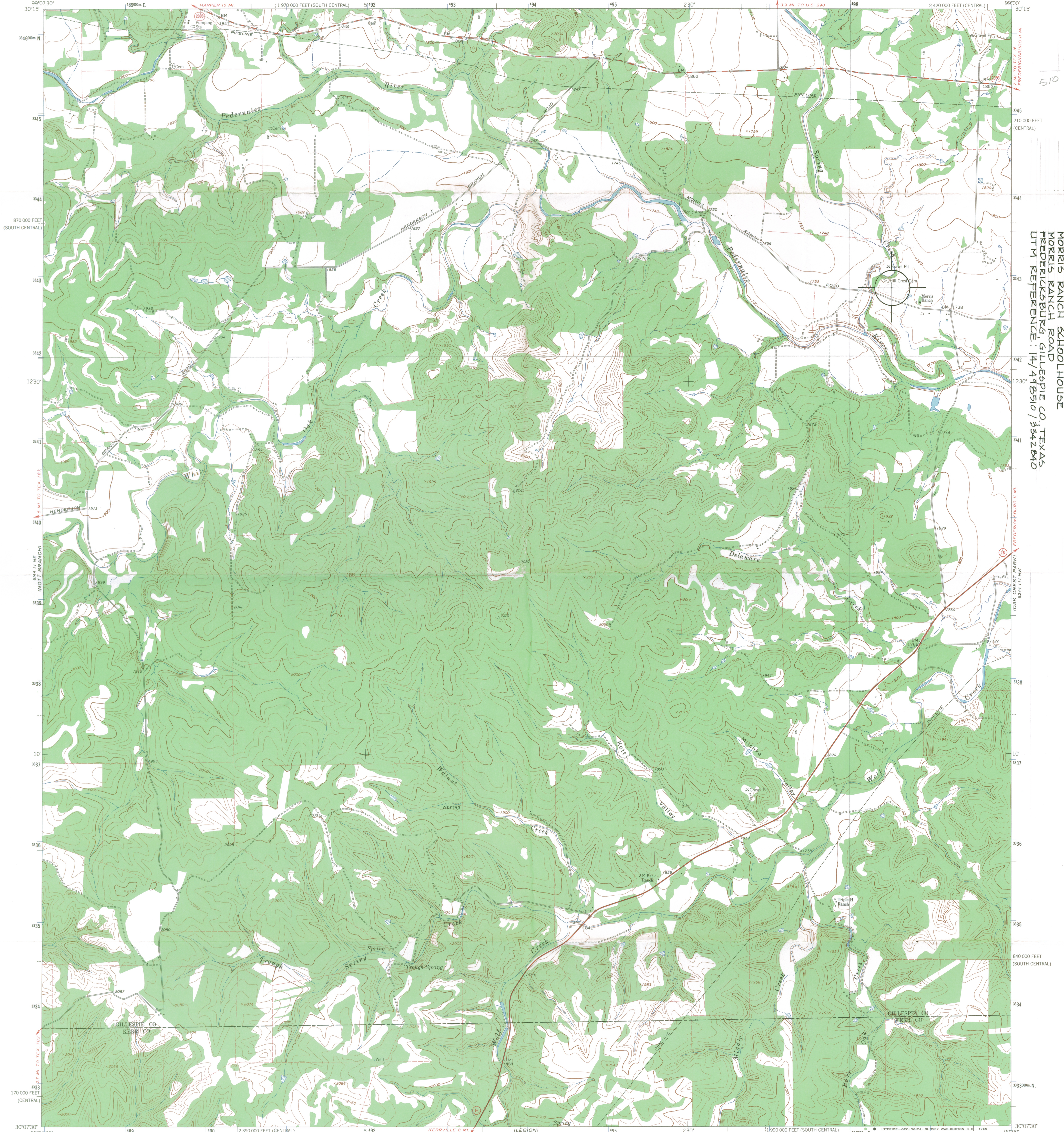


Morris Ranch Schoolhouse
Morris Ranch Road, Gillespie County, Texas
Photo: Mark Wolf, August 1981
Neg. on file, Mark Wolf, 1138 E. Commerce St.,
San Antonio, Texas 78205
View of west elevation, looking east
Photo 4 of 5



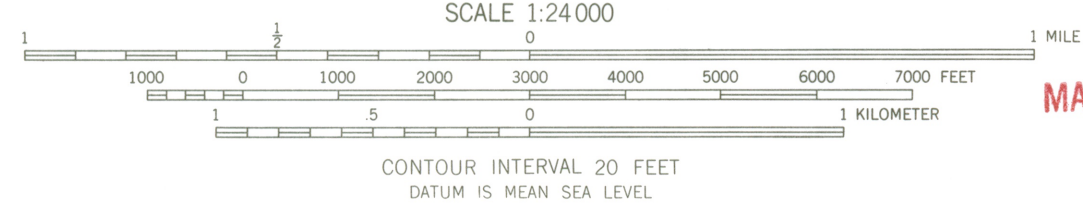
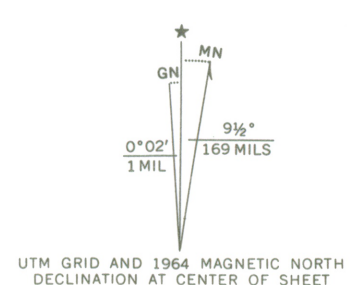
Morris Ranch Schoolhouse
Morris Ranch Road, Gillespie County, Texas
Photo: Mark Wolf, August 1981
Neg. on file, Mark Wolf, 1138 E. Commerce St.,
San Antonio, Texas 78205
View of interior, looking south
Photo 5 of 5

Morris Ranch School



MORRIS RANCH SCHOOLHOUSE
MORRIS RANCH ROAD
FREDERICKSBURG, GILLESPIE CO., TEXAS
UTM REFERENCE: 14/498510/342840

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1963. Field checked 1964
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 14, shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines



MAP PHOTOINSPECTED

1979
No major culture or drainage
changes observed



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

3099-114

MORRIS RANCH, TEX.
N3007.5-W9900/7.5

1964
AMS 6144 11 NE-SERIES V882