

PH 0670961

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

JUN 25 1977  
JUN 16 1977SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

\*\*

HISTORIC Harrison County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

Harrison County Museum

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Public Square

CITY, TOWN

Marshall

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Texas

VICINITY OF

CODE

048

1

COUNTY

Harrison

CODE

203

**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☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☒ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

County of Harrison

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Marshall

VICINITY OF

STATE

Texas

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Harrison County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Marshall

STATE

Texas

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark &amp; Historic Sites Inventory

DATE

1965 &amp; 1972

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS

Texas Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Austin

STATE

Texas

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT  
☒ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED  
☒ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

While the Harrison County Courthouse has been converted into a museum, it still retains its architectural integrity. Built on the concept of a cruciform plan, it is an excellent example of Neo-Italian Renaissance style.

The designer of the Harrison County Courthouse, architect J. Riely Gordon, developed the cruciform plan type with offices in the arms of cross and entrances at the reentrant angles in the mid 1890s. Using variations of this plan he won, through competitions, the commissions for several Texas courthouses -- among them, the temples for Ellis County in Waxahachie (1884-1896) and Wise County in Decatur (1895-1897), both of which today continue to serve the functions of county government. Conforming to national trends in architectural style, these 1890s temples of justice were designed in Romanesque and Revival mode.

For the Harrison County Courthouse, Gordon again used the cruciform plan developed earlier, but in response to changes in taste, he employed Italian Renaissance details and incorporated larger spaces into the circulation areas. On the ground floor, entrances at the reentrant angles open into a large rotunda -- this concept of circulation was similar to that in his Romanesque courthouses, but the central space of the Harrison County temple is considerably more spacious than that in his earlier buildings.

Reminiscent of the rotunda of the Texas State Capitol (1882-1888), the central space in the Harrison County Courthouse forms a monumental point of arrival. Supported upon a drum, the dome has a coffered ceiling. The radial ribs of the coffering extend past the drum and are supported by pilasters with simple capitals which are incorporated into moldings encircling the rotunda. The lowest two rows of coffers (which are actually a part of the drum) contain stained-glass windows which transmit brilliant colors of light.

Introduced by massive newel posts, a stairway enhanced by decorative wrought iron work with Art Nouveau character and wooden railings provides communication to the second story balcony. Encircling the rotunda space, this balcony, along with the third floor balcony, is supported by decorative brackets cantilevering from the wall. Each bracket with its acanthus patterns is accented by an electric light. Dados were installed on the walls adjacent to these balconies which have floors surfaced with tiles. Windows and door transoms cased with stained and oiled wood open into the rotunda, providing for natural ventilation.

From the central circulation space were accesses to the county offices located on the ground level including tax collector, county clerk, and justice of the peace; the balcony of the second level provided access to the offices of the district judge, district clerk, and the district courtroom which was a two-story space. On the third level were additional offices for other county officials.

The structure of the courthouse consists of masonry bearing walls and iron beams. The dome also is supported by iron framing. Throughout the building the iron work is protected with lath and plaster.



# 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 1900 BUILDER/ARCHITECT J. Riely Gordon and C.G. Lancaster

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Harrison County Courthouse possesses both architectural and historical significance. It is a fine Neo-Italian Renaissance Revival structure containing a beautiful rotunda within. The site of the building has been the center of community activity for well over a century and this building served county government for over a half century.

Located adjacent to the East Texas state line, Harrison County was organized in 1839 and named for Jonas Harrison, a prominent East Texas attorney. The first permanent settlers were primarily cotton planters. Marshall became the county seat in 1842 and has continuously remained as the seat of government to the present day.

Established in 1839 and named for Chief Justice John Marshall, the town of Marshall was laid out on land originally owned by Peter Whetstone, who donated the land for the public square. The square was a two-block area centered on the two axes of streets leading to it. Thus a setting was provided wherein the courthouse terminated the vistas from the streets as the square was approached.

As a result of successful cotton farming, Marshall became a thriving community prior to the Civil War. The arrival of the railroad in 1851 contributed impetus to the development of commercial and manufacturing activities. During the Civil War, following the fall of Vicksburg, Marshall became the Confederate Capital for that section of the South lying west of the Mississippi River. The city was evidently fortified on a small scale and a powder mill was established nearby.

During the antebellum period, after Marshall had been designated the county seat, commissioners authorized the construction of log cabin for use as a courthouse. This was replaced in 1848-1849 by a cubical brick temple with hipped roof and cupola in Greek Revival style -- one of the finest antebellum courthouses to be built in Texas. Each of the four identical walls of this temple was articulated by five pilasters with capitals and bases supporting a heavy entablature. Known as the "Little Virginia Courthouse" -- after the source of the inspiration for its design -- this building was much admired, although before it was completed the local newspaper observed the need of a clock to enable Marshall society "...to give system and regularity to its movements."

In 1887, after it was concluded that the Greek Revival temple was no longer safe, county commissioners determined to build a new courthouse. The following year, bids were received on plans developed by the architectural firm of McQuick and Tozer of Dallas. After considering bids ranging from \$42,500 to \$73,450, commissioners

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Robinson, Willard B. and Todd Webb, Texas Public Buildings of the Nineteenth Century.  
 Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974.  
Fort Worth Daily Gazette, June 12, 1888, p. 2; October 7, 1888, p. 2.  
Houston Daily Post, April 6, 1888, p. 4.  
Marshall News Messenger, August 17, 1900.  
Texas Republican (Marshall), July 20, 1849, p. 2.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. one

UTM REFERENCES

A	15	37	16	35	36	10	14	65	B						
	ZONE		EASTING			NORTHING				ZONE		EASTING		NORTHING	
C									D						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is bounded by Wellington St. on the west, Bolivar St. on the east and Sam Houston St. on the north and south. This two-block rectangle is known as the Peter Whetstone Square.

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

Willard B. Robinson, Professor of Architecture

2/15/76

ORGANIZATION

Division of Architecture-Texas Tech University

DATE

806/742-2464

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 4499

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Lubbock

STATE

Texas

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE X

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

Truett Latimer, State Historic Preserv. Ofcr.

DATE

03/08/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

8/16/77

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

8.15.77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



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1977

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From the exterior, the courthouse is a monumental work with fine Classical details. The composition rises above a base of pink quarry-faced granite similar to that used in the State Capitol. At this level window openings are spanned with granite lintels. Above this granite base and its cut-stone watertable, the walls are of buff colored brick of local manufacture detailed to create the scale of the stone architecture of the Renaissance. At the window openings, which are spanned by Roman arches, recessed courses of bricks angle into the voussoirs creating shadow lines representing rusticated stone construction. On this level, at the reentrant angles, the entrances are emphasized by cream colored stone arcades on a quarter circular plan. Consistent with the treatment of the ground-story brick walls, this stone work is strongly rusticated.

The masses contained within the upper two stories are treated as the dominant compositional units of the courthouse. Divided from the lower level by a wide cut-stone stringcourse with graceful moldings, these walls are articulated by two-story pilasters with terra cotta capitals and bases in Ionic order. Deeply recessed into the walls, window openings are spanned with lintels.

The curved walls above the southeast and southwest entrances express the two-story district courtroom. Emphasizing the second-story windows into this space are wide architraves with dentils surmounted by scroll pediments with anthemions.

Above the northeast and northwest entrances are balconies with roofs supported by coupled columns. A balustrade appropriately terminates these features.

Three tetrastyle porticos with column shafts of polished gray granite, and bases and capitals in Ionic Order project from the east, west and north ends of the courthouse; on the south a triangular roof pediment is supported only by pilasters. Interestingly, these porticos do not form entrance spaces as was common in Renaissance architecture -- they serve as porches which were accessible only from the second story interiors. Access is through three doors with rectangular transoms surmounted by architraves and pediments similar to those above the second-story windows. From the center third-story windows under the porticos are small cantilevered balconies supported on decorative brackets projecting from the openings between the scrolls of the center door pediments.

The courthouse walls are terminated at the roof by an entablature and balustrade fabricated from painted galvanized iron -- typical of much turn-of-the-century work; the pediments are also of this material. Then likenesses of eagles crown the apexes of the roof pediments.



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Rising gracefully above all this is the dome with its supporting drum in octagonal form, which contrasts with the interior circular shape. Covered with bronze plate the dome is accented by four clocks each of which is flanked by pilasters supporting an entablature and a scroll pediment. At the apex of the dome supported on a lantern is a statue of the goddess of justice with scales in hand.

The drum displays details that are consistent with the other parts of the building. Supporting lintels spanning the openings in the drum on each of the eight sides are three polished granite columns with Ionic capitals and bases of terra cotta. At the salient angles of the drum are brick piers with bases and capitals. A sheet metal entablature with balustrade rises above the columns and piers and at each of the corners are posed eagles -- favorite features borrowed from Roman architecture of antiquity. Lattice windows provide natural light into the rotunda.

Changes in the exterior of the building have been made skillfully to preserve original details. In 1924 and 1927 respectively, additions were made to the east and west wings. At that time the porticos were moved out and the needed additional space was enclosed behind them. Other modifications include the enclosure of the entrances and the balconies with windows on both the northeast and northwest. The original window sashes have also been replaced with metal units. Nonetheless, the Harrison County Courthouse survives as one of the outstanding turn-of-the-century governmental buildings in Texas.





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awarded the contract to James Higgins of Marshall for \$47,000 -- Higgins also bought the old courthouse for \$375. This new temple was built from St. Louis pressed brick with sandstone trim, and featured Italianate details and a tower rising 175 feet. After serving the county for nearly 11 years, it was destroyed by a fire started when a spark from a tinner's firepot ignited birds' nests under the courthouse eaves. The Salamander Fire Department attempted to save the structure but adversity struck: a hose cart upset on the driver, there was no coal for the engine pumper, the courthouse cistern had little water in it. However, fireproof vaults protected county records.

Later that year the issuance of bonds was authorized and within a short time architects J. Riely Gordon of San Antonio and Dallas, and C. G. Lancaster of Marshall were commissioned to design a new courthouse -- Gordon provided the design while Lancaster did the contracting supervision. The contractor for the new structure was Sonnefield and Emmins, prominent Texas builders. Completion of the courthouse in 1900 was celebrated with a banquet and festive ceremonies. The local newspaper reported, "Our new courthouse is a thing of beauty and will be a joy forever."

Additions changed the form of the courthouse but not the character. In 1924 and 1927 additions were made to the east and west according to the designs of C. G. Lancaster.

In 1964 a new brick courthouse was completed across the street from the southwest corner of the public square. The 1900 courthouse is preserved to house offices of governmental agencies and the county museum. Its merit certainly warrants continued preservation.





HARRISON COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
PUBLIC SQUARE — MARSHALL, TEXAS  
UTM REFERENCES:  
15 / 371635 / 3601465



























