

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Formreceived **46** 11 1986

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections**1. Name**historic The Historic Resources of Ennis, Texas (Partial Inventory of Architectural and  
Historic Properties)

and or common

**2. Location**

street &amp; number The 1985 city limits of Ennis, Texas N/A not for publication

city, town Ennis N/A vicinity of

state Texas code 048 county Ellis code 139

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name See individual site forms

street &amp; number N/A

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of state N/A

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Ellis County Courthouse

street &amp; number Courthouse Square

city, town Waxahachie state Texas

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**title Texas Historic Sites Inventory has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate July 1985 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Texas Historical Commission

city, town Austin state Texas

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> see individual site forms
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> see individual		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> see individual site forms		site forms		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

### PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

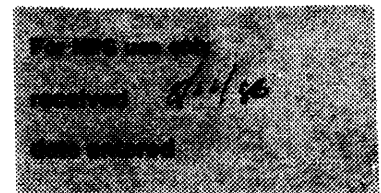
Ennis is positioned thirty-five miles southeast of Dallas in east Ellis County's rich Blackland Prairie region. Although the city has maintained its position as a regional agricultural center since its incorporation in 1873, it is the city's important ties to the railroad industry that produced its physical appearance and periods of greatest prosperity and growth. The rigid grid of streets extended north and south, producing an elongated plan that flanks the wide rail right-of-way, a developmental pattern altered only since the mid 1950s. Ennis' primary business center took shape on the narrow lots and long blocks closest to the tracks in the town's center. Residential neighborhoods spread in a symmetrical fashion, but especially to the north. Although much of the city's historic fabric has been obscured by a combination of fires, demolition, and unsympathetic alterations, a concentration of commercial and public buildings constructed in the western half of the business district remains intact. This area has been identified as the Ennis Commercial Historic District. Domestic structures built between 1890 and 1920 comprise the majority of nominated properties and they are found in greatest number in the northwest section of the city. The work of Hix McCanless, noted local designer, is well represented in the nominated properties. This multiple-resource nomination identifies and describes the remaining historic resources and provides a physical and historical context for the extant structures. Two types of sites are distinguished in the nomination text. Those sites identified as "N. R. Sites" denote properties included in this nomination. Sites identified as "Survey Sites" were documented, but because of alterations, or lack of architectural or historical importance, were not eligible for inclusion in the nomination.

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Ennis is located on the Blackland Prairie, an area known for its rich agricultural lands. Once a vast tract of native grassland, the fertile soil surrounding the city has long produced cash crops important to the local economy. As in the pre-Anglo settlement periods, creeks and draws contain stands of oaks, elm, pecan, bois d'arc and ash trees along; they experience a seasonal water flow. Only minor tributaries are located in the Ennis vicinity and drain into named creeks. Waxahachie Creek is dammed two miles southwest of the city, forming Bardwell Lake. Old Lake and Lake Clark are found in the the northwest part of the city, both built by the railroad. Runoff in east Ennis flows toward the various branches of Village Creek, to the east, until it eventually reaches the Trinity River south of Ellis County.

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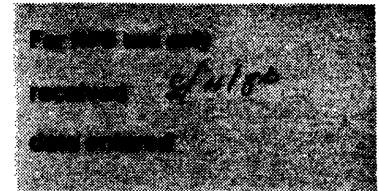
Founded twenty-one years after the organization of Ellis County, Ennis is located fifteen miles southeast of Waxahachie, the county seat. Incorporated in 1873, a few years after the railhead reached the area, the city is in many respects a creation of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad. Railroad trustees purchased land for the townsite in 1872, and in that same year hired the civil engineer Theo Kosse to plot the townsite. Kosse provided a grid plan that abutted the linear arrangement of the tracks. Long and narrow lots, intended for commercial use, were established in the center of town on either side of the tracks. The commercial center was surrounded by blocks on which residential development was to occur. These blocks were divided into ten 50-ft. by 115-ft. lots or larger 2-1/2-acre tracks. Within a few years businesses drawn by the arrival of the railroad were concentrated in an area east of the lines and north of Ennis Avenue. Early commercial buildings were likely of frame construction, although evidence of their material and form was lost in an 1875 fire that destroyed much of the original town site. Subsequent major commercial development centered in the area west of the rail lines. Construction of domestic buildings ran parallel to the tracks, both on the east and west.

Few dwellings remain to document the city's initial appearance. Settlers brought well-formed architectural traditions, which because of the availability of materials and economy of construction, were realized in frame structures. Typically the first domestic structures were either single- or two-room plans, some likely built with an integral ell. The two-room dwelling (N. R. Site No. 649) at 722 W. Madison and the Farrar House (N. R. Site No. 1065), an I house at 601 S. Main W., exemplify early building forms. Substantial numbers of Czech immigrants settled in the area in the decade following the Civil War, but any traditional dwellings that they may have constructed no longer stand.

For the two decades after its founding Ennis grew at a moderate and steady pace, its growth largely linked to the rail industry. By the early 1880s travelers to the city were accommodated in one of several hotels, none of them extant, that were built east of the tracks. The Ellis County Yearbook for 1881 recorded that some seventy-five businesses, six private schools, two flour mills, and three gins were operating throughout the city. Private banking houses provided financial services before Joseph Baldrige established the Ennis National Bank in 1883, and the two-story brick structure (N. R. Site No. 324) still stands at 110 W. Ennis Ave. The building has been through at least two remodeling campaigns, in 1896 and 1905, and has functioned as a clothing store, legal office, restaurant and retail space since the bank removed its facilities to another building in 1917.

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The decision by the Houston & Texas Central to move its divisional headquarters and roundhouse to Ennis in 1891 provided real impetus for development, and most remaining architectural fabric dates from the thirty-year period that followed. The division yard and a large brick shop building (N. R. Site No. 1019) remain in use. Approximately ten years ago the roundhouse was demolished, but its machinery is intact and functioning. In order to attract the facilities to Ennis, and furnish water to both the city and rail facilities, the city agreed to construct a lake, just north of the townsite, eventually known as Old Lake (Survey Site No. 785) to distinguish it from the 1896 New Lake (Survey Site No. 1285). James A. Mulkey was among those who profited from the expanding economy and population increase when he opened Mulkey's Highland Addition on the town's southeast side in 1897 and Mulkey's Westside Addition in 1900. The Aldridge Addition (1875) and the W. A. Mulkey Addition (1876) preceeded Mulkey's interests by more than twenty years. Land brokers reacted quickly to the railroad's announced move, creating the Edwards Addition (1891) and the Tharp Addition (1894) to the east of the newly constructed roundhouse, and the Tower Hill Addition (1892) to the west of the complex. S. M. Smith platted his thirty-seven block subdivision to the east of the rail tracks in 1891. Other early development centered on the city's east side included the Anderson Addition (1894) and the A. H. Rowe Addition (1898).

Fires in 1875 and 1907 and unsympathetic remodelings have weakened the architectural integrity of the commercial district, but the original grid plan, a number of surviving late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century buildings, and the strong orientation to the train tracks remain to document the city's features during its most significant period of growth. By the turn of the century the city's business community thrived, with some sixty-five to seventy concerns in operation. Period photographs captured the sight of an attractive city with a densely built, largely brick commercial district.

The several railroad officials who took residence in the city were joined by increasing numbers of the professional class who prospered in the wake of city development. The numbers and types of services multiplied as businessmen opened furniture, jewelry and feed stores, banks and groceries in the railroad community. They were joined by restaurateurs, physicians, insurance salesmen, and undertakers who advertised in the city paper and opened their businesses along the city's main thoroughfares. Shoppers traveled from outlying communities on the interurban lines. The Matthews brothers, Pearl and Will, expanded their McKinney, Texas business interest when Pearl opened the Ennis branch of the Matthew Brothers Department Store in the first years of the twentieth century. Pearl originally operated from 105 W. Ennis Ave., but in 1905, he moved to a recently completed two-story brick structure (N. R. Site No. 351) built for John Rowe and designed by Hix McCanless.

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Early worshipers met in private homes and commercial space proffered by merchants, but major denominations soon took advantage of the land donated by the railroad or purchased parcels on which to construct their churches. The Methodist Episcopal Church South, First Baptist Church, St. John's Catholic Church, Tabernacle Baptist Church, and Christian Church all exhibited a Gothic influence, with spires capping the entry tower or paired towers that flanked the main elevation. None of these structures survive.

The Ennis school system was organized in 1882 and erected frame public schools in each of the city's four wards. Known as the College, the Third Ward school was the largest of the facilities. This two-story school was covered by a hipped roof, while a bell tower indicated the entry bay. The Ennis Junior High School building (N. R. Site No. 758) in the 500 block of N. Gaines now occupies the site of the Third Ward school; none of the city's nineteenth-century educational buildings stand. Young black students attended class in the Fourth Ward school, which had been replaced on an adjacent site by 1927 with the brick Ennis Colored School (Survey Site No. 1283). This structure now is occupied by the offices of the Ennis Independent School District. Originally constructed as the city's high school in 1916, the junior high school is a brick, two-story structure raised on a high basement, handsomely rendered in the Jacobethan Revival style by the regionally prominent firm of Sanguinet and Staats.

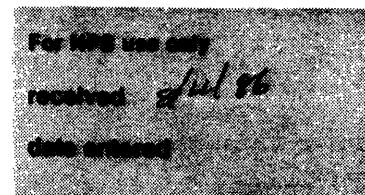
The railroad continued to demonstrate its commitment to the city by financing the construction of a hospital (razed) between 1901 and 1907, and by funding a joint venture with the city to open the Y.M.C.A. Building (razed) in 1901. Housing a library/reading room, bowling alleys, game rooms, and an auditorium - and known as the Railroad Y.M.C.A. - it was for many years the social and cultural center of Ennis. The structure later provided office space for the Southern Pacific Railroad, which absorbed the Houston & Texas Central.

Concurrent to the expansion of rail services, local cotton production was increasing, placing Ennis at the center of a large cotton-growing area. By the turn of the century at least two cotton compresses were in operation, nearby gins processed the thousands of locally produced bales, and city grocers augmented their incomes by acting as cotton brokers. The 1885 Ennis Cotton Compress (N. R. Site No. 622) still stands in the 100 block of E. Lampasas, as does the large brick and metal Ennis Cotton Oil Company (N. R. Site No. 1166) complex which was in operation by 1896.

The L-plan in its one- and two-story versions and modified forms is the state's most common late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century vernacular plan type, and the form found extensive expression in Ennis. Well-executed

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and intact L-plan houses are located at 806 S. Dallas (N. R. Site No. 1013), 106 E. Denton (N. R. Site No. 164), and 510 W. Brown (N. R. Site No. 373). The house (N. R. Site No. 412) at 509 W. Brown St. is a later example that illustrates the integration of the modified L-plan form and bungalow details.

In the late nineteenth century, domestic architecture was subject to changing stylistic preferences, spacial needs and, social organization. The effects on vernacular structures are evident as L-plan houses permuted into modified L-plans, U- and T-plan dwellings, then were embellished with an array of Victorian jigsawed and turned trim. The house (N. R. Site No. 889) at 1007 N. McKinney is an exceptionally fine example of the U-plan type, and local selection of the T-plan is evident in the dwellings (N. R. Site Nos. 394 and 1106) at 708 E. Brown and 500 N. Main East.

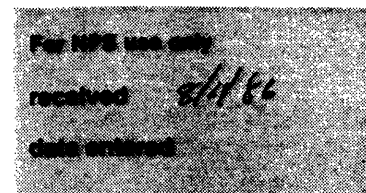
The I-house, the most common house type of the Upland South for almost two centuries, was built with less frequency in the Lowland South and Southwest. The dwellings (N. R. Site Nos. 151 and 774) at 616 W. Denton and 708 N. Gaines are local expressions of this form.

Local architect Hix McCanless provided designs for many of the city's notable domestic, institutional, and commercial structures. Several of his most important buildings, including the imposing, crenelated first Knights of Pythias building, no longer stand. Significant extant structures include his 1910 Knights of Pythias building (N. R. Site No. 953), the house (N. R. Site No. 117) McCanless built for himself at 402 W. Tyler, and the 1902 Telfair House (N. R. Site No. 808) at 209 N. Preston. Like many architects of his time McCanless acted as something of an artist, recombining architectural elements from various styles and periods. City plat records reveal that he was also involved in surveying and platting several additions between 1913 and 1925, as both a civil engineer and later as the city engineer.

By the late nineteenth century the city had several lumberyards contracting for construction, including the J. D. Burr Company which operated until 1976, and was therefore no longer dependent on earlier links to East Texas and western Louisiana timber supplies. Successful businesses financed the construction of fine dwellings built in the areas west and south of the business district. Original city lots were generous and the parcel surrounding the dwelling was usually of sufficient size to accommodate a few livestock, a chicken house, or perhaps a garden or orchards. Historic photographs reveal that large, graceful, late Victorian and Neoclassical Revival dwellings, many surrounded by cast-iron or picket fences, filled the city at the turn of the century, although the majority of these structures have burned or disappeared during local renewal projects. Many of these striking dwellings are large traditional buildings, usually L-plan structures embellished by commonly

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employed stylistic details that were easily obtained from local lumberyards. Victorian versions, such as the house (N. R. Site No. 373) at 510 W. Brown, were marked by turned porch supports, balusters and spindles, and jigsawn bargeboards. The house (N. R. Site No. 797) at 807 N. Preston is an example of their Neoclassical Revival counterpart, easily identified by one-story classically influenced columns, or in some instances, two-story columns and dominant porticos. H. P. Barkley, yardmaster and conductor for the Houston & Texas Central, hired builder B. F. Sargeant in 1892 to construct his two-story frame dwelling (N. R. Site No. 947) at 709 N. Dallas St. Physician J. C. Loggins contracted with the J. D. Burr Lumber Company to build his 1898 dwelling (Survey Site No. 1266) at 110 N. Elm St., perhaps incorporating an 1872 house into the new structure. John S. Telfair, a conductor for the Houston & Texas Central, hired the most important architect in town, Hix McCanless, to design his house in 1902. Pearl Matthews hired building contractor A. Babb to erect his house (N. R. Site No. 854) in 1908 at 307 N. Sherman St. Only a few Georgian Revival dwellings were built in Ennis, and the house (N. R. Site No. 804) at 605 N. Preston is the best remaining example.

Bungalows are the twentieth-century building form that remain in greatest numbers. Between 1900 and 1920 the local population increased by 2000, and the bungalow - popularized in trade publications, women's magazines and periodicals concerned specifically with the building type - was recommended for its economy of scale and construction, picturesque appearance, and harmony with the surrounding landscape. The houses (N. R. Site Nos. 761 and 806) at 201 N. Gaines and 403 N. Preston illustrate the variety of details available to bungalow builders who rendered the form in one- and two-story versions. Simple builder's bungalows dominate, although the Novy House (N. R. Site No. 723) at 401 N. Clay, and the dwellings (N. R. Site Nos. 258 and 829) at 607 W. Baylor and 701 N. Preston, are examples of the more elaborate versions of this popular form that are found locally in significant numbers. Marked by exposed rafter ends, horizontal massing, and multiple rooflines, most bungalows were built by local lumber yards. Hix McCanless built at least two bungalows (N. R. Site Nos. 153 and 969) at 606 Denton and 501 S. Dallas. The later is an especially interesting synthesis of bungalow form and Neoclassical detail.

From 1930 to 1960 the city's population increased by less than 1000, and little building took place. Architectural change during the last fifty years has taken the form of remodeling or demolition. This trend has been reversed within the last five years, largely due to the efforts of the City of Ennis, the Main Street Project, and the Ennis Historical Society. Selected structures in both the commercial and residential areas have been sympathetically rehabilitated, and new construction is occurring, largely in outlying areas. The 1980 population of Ennis was 12,110.

## 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates	see individual site forms	Builder/Architect	see individual site forms
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### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The town of Ennis is situated in the Blackland Prairie region of north-central Texas, approximately ten miles west of the Trinity River. Founded by the Houston and Texas Central Railroad in 1872, the city's early appearance, physical growth, and economic well-being were inextricably linked to the railroad. Ennis thrived by the turn of the century, serving the region as a commercial center, much of it agriculturally related because of the city's central location in an area of large-scale cotton production. The city also became an important trade and social center for a sizable number of Czechs who took up cotton farming in eastern Ellis County in the 1870s and 1880s. Because of a strong and diversified economy, the town experienced its period of greatest physical expansion and population growth between 1890 and 1920. Almost all of the structures encompassed by this nomination document the physical appearance and historical events associated with this thirty-year interval. Largely due to fires and renewal projects, Ennis has lost a significant percentage of its original architectural and historical fabric. This nomination represents only a small portion of the rich resources once contained within the city's boundaries. A total of forty-four individual sites and one historic district are being nominated.

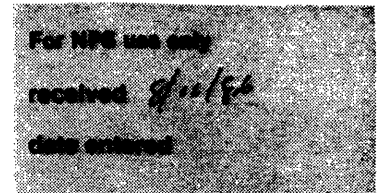
#### Early History

Ellis County was formed in 1849 from parts of Navarro and Robertson counties during a period of rapid population expansion following the state's admission to the Union. Early settlers were involved in grain production and scattered in small communities throughout the county, a pattern still in evidence. The formation of towns all over the state was hastened by the arrival of rail lines, and such was the case in Ellis County. The building corps of the Houston and Texas Central Railroad reached the future site of Ennis in 1871, and the town was incorporated two years later under the Town and Village Act. W. G. Veale, a right-of-way agent for the railroad, contracted to survey the land. The original townsite was comprised of the David Rose survey of 300 acres and the Bundy survey of 347 acres. Theo Kosse, a civil engineer, surveyed and mapped the grid-plan townsite in August 1872. Paris and Clay streets formed the nominal east and west boundaries of the original townsite, while Madison and Moore streets enclosed the north and south ends.



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The town was named for an official of the H. & T.C. Railroad, Col. Cornelius Ennis. Originally from Bellevue, New Jersey, Ennis came to Texas in 1838, making his reputation as a successful businessman involved in cotton exporting and merchandising, and as mayor of Houston from 1856 to 1857. He was one of the founders of the Great Northern Railroad, and during his tenure with the Houston and Texas Central Ennis served as general superintendent, comptroller, and financial agent.

Railroads, Agriculture, and Commerce

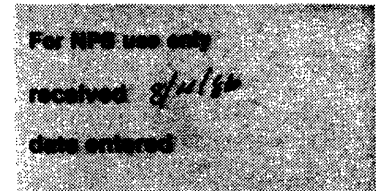
The Houston and Texas Central, which had begun building railroads in Texas by 1856, was one of six railroad companies operating in Texas before 1878 (Lorentz, 1935: 81). The line on which Ennis was founded ran from Houston to Red River City, five miles north of Denison, by way of Corsicana and Dallas. At Denison it connected to the Missouri, Kansas and Texas, completing the first through line from Texas to St. Louis. When the Houston & Texas Central was planning the line, Waxahachie, county seat of Ellis County, was the largest town in that part of North Texas along the intended route. Waxahachie was invited to offer the railroad a "bonus" for serving the town, but declined and was bypassed.

The line's competitive position was hurt by a change in the gauge of its rails at Corsicana, from a five-foot six-inch gauge south of Corsicana to a four-foot eight-inch gauge to the north. The narrower gauge matched that of northern railroads, but necessitated that all freight and passengers change cars in Corsicana until the gauge was standardized in 1878. Though it bought and extended several smaller rail lines, the Houston & Texas Central was often beset by legal and financial difficulties, and in 1885 it was forced into a receivership. In 1889 its holdings became a part of the Houston and Texas Railroad, which was owned by Southern Pacific, though it continued to be known as the Houston and Texas Central.

City business and political leaders, including Joseph Baldrige, Mark Latimer, Pete Freeman and Leon Cerf, were diligent in their efforts to convince railroad officials to relocate the company's northern divisional headquarters, round house, and machine shops to Ennis. A local committee was successful in securing the \$25,000 and ninety acres of land requested by the Houston and Texas Central as a bonus, and in 1891 Ennis was made divisional headquarters for the line. At that time the roundhouse and machine shops were moved from Corsicana and rebuilt on a site north of town. One large brick shop and the roundhouse machinery (N. R. Site No. 1019) remain in use. The company placed its original freight and passenger depots on either side of the tracks just

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north of Ennis Avenue, with the passenger depot to the east. Two buildings (N. R. Site Nos. 305 and 1074) originally used by the railroad and the Wells Fargo building (N. R. Site No. 1075) still stand on the site. All are within the Ennis Commercial Historic District.

In addition to providing employment for many and a stable financial underpinning for Ennis, the Houston & Texas Central created something of a company town by its involvement with many of the city's religious and public institutions. The company donated land to any group who wanted to build a church, and the offer was accepted by several denominations. The railroad contributed sixty percent of the \$7000 cost of erecting a Y.M.C.A. building, with the remainder financed by the citizens. Located on the north side of Baylor at Main, the Y.M.C.A. opened in 1901 and served as an important community facility. The company also provided for the construction of a hospital (razed), located at Kaufman and Gilmer, which served the town until a municipal hospital (razed) designed by local architect Hix McCanless was erected in 1924 at Lampasas and Chatfield.

Other rail companies contributed to the city's economic well-being and demographic expansion. The Texas Midland Railroad began as a fifty-two mile line between Garrett and Roberts, which was built in 1894 as the Northwest Division of the Texas Central. That same year it was extended from Garrett to Ennis and from Roberts to Greenville, and by 1896 it was completed to Paris. The railroad company offered sleeping-car service and a cafe car, with connections for through sleeping-car service to St. Louis. By 1901 the Houston and Texas Central and Texas Midland shared the Union Passenger Depot on E. Knox, while Texas Midland's freight depot was at E. Ennis and Breckinridge, next to the company's siding on Breckinridge. Southern Pacific bought the line in 1928, and the company continued to be an important major employer in Ennis. In 1935 the local payroll included nearly 500 persons.

In 1914 the Southern Traction Company completed a line of the interurban railway system which passed through Ennis en route from Dallas to Waco. The interurban railway network provided passenger service between urban centers in Texas from 1900 until the 1940s. The most extensive service was provided in Central and North Texas, with fewer lines connecting towns in South and West Texas. Most lines were electric railways, with a few operating gasoline motor cars.

Ennis lay between Corsicana and Dallas on the Southern Traction Company's electric railway. Sanborn Insurance maps reveal that by 1915 the interurban station (razed) was on the west side of N. Dallas between Knox and Baylor, but a new station (N. R. Site No. 999) was built on the southeast corner of N. Dallas and N. Baylor in 1923. Service was discontinued by mid-century.

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During the period of incipient rail development Ennis, was also involved in the cattle industry-and the city was linked by cattle trails to East Texas and Louisiana. Those same trails - over which thousands of longhorn cattle were driven east to meet northern trails to the Kansas and Missouri markets - also connected the city to Jefferson, Texas and Shreveport, Louisiana, early suppliers of timber and milled lumber. Local trader James Mulkey became a wealthy man through his involvement with the cattle business, and he later made another fortune dealing in real estate. Mulkey thus provides an example of the changing nature of regional commerce as the cattle industry diminished in significance to be replaced by speculative capitalistic ventures, largely fueled by the prosperity and opportunity generated by the railroad.

The history of the railroads is closely tied to the growth of the cotton industry, and for nearly sixty years the two factors operated in tandem to provide for the town's economic well-being. Transportation of cotton was the major source of revenue for the railroads, and large-scale cultivation of cotton was profitable only if it reached distant markets. During the 1870s the development of rail connections to St. Louis made that city an important shipping point for cotton from North and East Texas en route to the East and to Europe. The amount of cotton received in St. Louis increased from 36,421 bales in 1872 to 324,284 in 1880, most of it grown in North and East Texas (Boehm, 1975: 14).

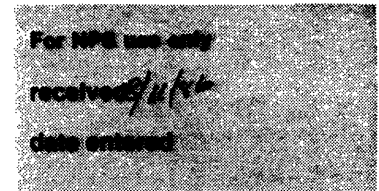
Between 1866 and 1878, cotton production in Texas quadrupled, from 245,000 to 1,105,000 bales. In post-Civil War Texas, the area of greatest production shifted from southeast Texas to the the Blackland Prairie region, a strip of land running roughly north-south from the Red River to central Texas. The arrival of rail service made it physically possible and economically viable to invest in substantial cotton production. Within a few decades the Blackland area dominated the state in cotton production (Boehm, 1975: 21). By this time Ellis County was producing over 50,000 bales annually, with the Ennis market handling 15,000 to 20,000 bales in a good crop year.

In 1885 the large Ennis Cotton Compress (N. R. Site No. 622) began operation with a capacity of 700 bales per day. The rail tracks were ringed by a number of cotton gins and warehouses, cotton yards and platforms, and flour and grist mills. By 1896 the Ennis Cotton Oil Company (N. R. Site No. 1166) complex had opened.

A. H. Rowe moved to Ennis in 1875 and opened a cotton gin and planing mill. The cotton gin, on N. McKinney between Knox and Baylor, was the first of four he would own by 1890. He sold the planing mill but was involved in contracting and building in the business district.

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Ennis provided facilities for the processing, storage and transport of cotton and grains to markets in Dallas and Houston, as well as more distant destinations such as St. Louis and New Orleans. The number of gins and warehouses increased slowly through the first quarter of the twentieth century as additional facilities for storing and processing cotton, cottonseed, and cotton by-products appeared. Between 1909 and 1915 the City Mills opened a frame mill (razed) for processing flour, wheat, and corn. The operation expanded in 1917 when concrete grain elevators (Survey Site No. 357) were constructed.

Because of the capital it generated, and the population expansion and need for services created in its wake, the Houston & Texas Central was instrumental in the growth of the local mercantile community. A promotional brochure of 1881 identifies numerous grocery, dry goods, and clothing and drug stores. Hardware and farm implement stores, blacksmiths and wagon shops, lumberyards, mills and gins, harness and saddle shops, and brick yards all were advertised. Four carpenters and builders and two painters are listed, and the services of shoemakers, a barber, a photographer, a milliner, and a dressmaker were also available. Nine physicians and five lawyers had opened offices in Ennis, as had three real estate agents.

Banking services had been available in the city for nearly a decade when Joseph Baldrige built the Ennis National Bank (N. R. Site No. 324) at 110 W. Ennis. Baldrige, a prominent businessman, was directly involved in attracting the railroad shops and roundhouse to Ennis, and became the owner of the Ennis Cotton Compress in 1896. A second bank, the Peoples' National Bank, opened in 1886.

By the late nineteenth century a number of lumberyards had opened in Ennis, a situation repeated in towns throughout the state as rail service provided a cheap and dependable source of lumber and growing populations provided the demand for supplies. Accordingly, Ennis was no longer dependent on lumber supplies from East Texas and western Louisiana.

The S. Q. Carey Lumberyard at Knox Street, and the M. T. Jones Lumberyard at Crockett Street, are shown on the 1884 Sanborn map, both located adjacent to the railroad tracks. The M. T. Jones concern had a large mill in Houston that in 1901 advertised a capacity of 300,000 board feet per day and seven yards around the state. By 1896 the Ennis Lumber Company had taken over the former site of M. T. Jones, while A. Gilmer had the Carey yard. Three more yards had opened by 1896, including the J. D. Burr Lumber Company, which operated until 1976. None of these businesses have survived.

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Two planing mills were in operation at different times prior to 1890, but did not remain for long. In 1885 W. B. Davenport was operating a planing mill, sash and door factory on McKinney between W. Knox and W. Ennis. The abundance of lumberyards and the dearth of planing mills indicates that milled lumber was readily available. The proximity of the railroad suggests that house kits were also available, and they may have been a common source of vernacular dwellings for the town.

Lumberyards were responsible for the majority of area construction, but when professional design services were necessary many city residents called upon the well-known local architect Hix McCanless. McCanless was born in Tennessee in 1868, and as a young boy moved to Ennis just as the rail lines arrived. He received his professional training at Texas A&M College and returned to Ennis at the turn of the century, advertising his practice in the local newspaper. City plat records reveal that McCanless was also involved in surveying and platting several additions between 1913 and 1925, as both a civil engineer and later as the city engineer. In his capacity as city engineer McCanless was responsible for the brick paved streets in the business district.

Extant residences designed by McCanless include the Dr. Clark House at 510 N. Preston (Site No. 834), the Telfair Residence at 209 N. Preston (N. R. Site No. 953), the Thomas House at 506 W. Denton (Site No. 156), the Matthews-Templeton House at 606 W. Denton (N. R. Site No. 153), and the McCanless House at 402 W. Tyler (N. R. Site No. 117).

His commercial structures include the 1904 John Rowe Building at 101-105 S. Dallas (N. R. Site No. 351), the Moore Building at 101 N. Main W. (N. R. Site No. 1047), the Knights of Pythias Building at 215 N. Dallas (N. R. Site No. 953), the Alexander Building at 200 W. Ennis (N. R. Site No. 321), and the Allen Building at 204-206 W. Ennis (N. R. Site No. 320). He also designed the Masonic Lodge (N. R. Site No. 955), City Hall Building (N. R. Site No. 420), the Alamo School (razed), the rectory of the old Catholic church on Preston (razed), and the Ennis National Bank (N. R. Site No. 322) occupied from 1917-1922 on the corner of W. Ennis Avenue and N. Dallas.

Demographics

Prior to the arrival of the rail line the area was sparsely populated, with only twenty-four settlers, most of them farmers, documented. Providing evidence of the impact of the rail line, the population of Ellis County nearly tripled in the decade between 1870 and 1880, from 7514 to 21,294. Settlers migrated from the Upper South (especially Tennessee), the Lower South, other

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parts of Texas, and Europe. The 1880 census listed a population of 1351, with merchant and farmer cited as the most common occupation. After the Houston and Texas Central selected Ennis as its Divisional Headquarters in 1891, the city's population more than doubled in the next nine years following 1890.

Beginning in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, a small number of German and Hungarian immigrants and a significant number of Czechs settled in Ellis County. Most Czech immigrants were involved in the cultivation of cotton and choose to settle in eastern Ellis County in the sandy-loam area, which did not require clearing. The land was more expensive but could be put into production faster than the more fertile Blackland prairie which was heavily timbered. Other Czechs settled in Ennis opening grocery stores, a saddle and harness shop, a saloon, a bottling works, the Henry Maresh Photography Studio, and the Hanus Cotton Gin (Valek, 1983: 50-53).

The Czech culture in Ennis remains most visible and distinct in their religious institutions. The Czech Moravian Church was organized in 1901, and the church built in 1910. A Bohemian Catholic Mission Church appears on the 1915 Sanborn Map, along with three other Catholic churches. Also in 1901, the Czech members of St. Joseph's R. C. Church split off and started St. John Nepomucene. In 1938 St. John's erected a new sanctuary (Survey Site No. 1200) on S. Paris that is distinguished by its ornate stencilling and interior painting.

Ennis has had a sizeable black community, comprising over a quarter of the town's population in the Federal Census for 1910 and for 1920. In the 1910 Census, the vast majority of blacks listed Texas as their place of birth, and most were employed as laborers or servants. Blacks established themselves in neighborhoods in the northeaster and western sections of town and early twentieth-century Sanborn maps reveal that black businessmen were operating a drugstore and restaurant in the city's commercial district.

The city also had a small Jewish community. Merchants such as Pete Freeman and the Cerf brothers were active in the successful efforts to attract the division headquarters, machine shops and roundhouse to Ennis, as well as in local government and civic affairs. William Jolesch settled in Ennis in 1875 and operated a dry goods store (N. R. Site No. 1048) for many years. His son Ike was a well-known businessman and banker whose house at 504 W. Knox (N. R. Site No. 274) still stands. Edmond Raphael served as President of the First National Bank of Ennis and built the finely executed Neoclassical Revival style house (N. R. Site No. 316) at 500 W. Ennis.

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Social Life

Public social life was centered in the town's saloons, restaurants, the opera house, and hotels. But the activities sponsored by fraternal and literary organizations, women's clubs, churches, and the Y.M.C.A. involved far wider participation. By 1915 citizens could spend the evening in one of the city's two "moving picture" theaters. The Masons organized early in the town's history and a Masonic Lodge is shown on every set of Sanborn maps. Their present, severely altered facility (N. R. Site No. 955) was designed by Hix McCanless. Area Czechs also formed a number of fraternal and social organizations, some of which continue to meet, such as the S.P.J.S.T. (Czech Benevolent Society of Texas) and the SOKOL, an organization which emphasizes physical fitness and the preservation of Czech culture.

Public Services

Ennis built its first public school building in 1884, but by 1881 had at least one private school, the West Hill Academy. By 1907 Ennis had four ward schools, including a high school and a black school. The First Ward school was on the southwest corner of Paris and Lampasas, the Second Ward at 800 W. Lampasas, the Third Ward school or high school in the 500 block of N. Gaines, and the Fourth Ward school was on Martin Luther King St. (formerly Gilmer Street) between Ripley and Paris. None of the buildings stand. The well-known Ft. Worth firm of Sanguinet and Staats designed the city's high school (N. R. Site No. 758), now used as a junior high facility, in 1916. In the late nineteenth century, Sanguinet had supervised construction of the Ellis County Courthouse (listed in the National Register, 1975) in Waxahachie, and the firm was later known for their handsome high-rise office buildings constructed in the state's urban centers during the first decades of the twentieth century.

Electricity and water were originally provided by the Ennis Water and Light Company, a syndicate financed by interests in Ennis, Dallas, and St. Louis. For nearly two decades after its founding Ennis had only wells for its water supply, as indicated on the 1885 Sanborn map which shows from one to four wells on each block. The three cotton gins and grist mills had their own reservoirs. In 1891 the first of two large, public reservoirs was built, a forty-three acre lake now called Old Lake (N. R. Site No. 785) at what was then the north end of town. It was connected to two hydrants in the residential part of Ennis and one in the commercial district. The lake was constructed to fulfill a condition of the contract between the city and the Houston and Texas Central, in which the rail company agreed to relocate its divisional headquarters, roundhouse, and machine shops to Ennis in 1891. The city built the lake to furnish a water supply to rail facilities.

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By 1896 a second lake, New Lake (Survey Site No. 1285), had been constructed, as well as a water system consisting of a hundred-foot standpipe for pressure to thirty-four hydrants. By 1909 a water tank with a capacity of 84,000 gallons was added to the system.

Post-1920 Development

Ennis settled into a period of stability from 1920 to 1950, as the population remained between 7000 and 8000. Agriculture continued as the major local industry, while the influence of the railroads diminished when Southern Pacific closed its division yard. By mid century many previously prominent industries, such as the cotton oil mill, had phased out their services and had been replaced by new, specialized industries. Because of the small population growth and slow pace of the economy, the city changed little physically until the 1950s, when an influx of new commuter residents arrived. The completion of Interstate Highway 45 just east of Ennis made the commute to downtown Dallas an easy thirty-minute drive. The small-town ambience, the reduced cost of living, and the affordable stock of old houses attracted newcomers to Ennis. Recognizing the economic and aesthetic potential of the city's remaining historic structures, citizens organized the Ennis Heritage Society in 1981. The City supported local preservation efforts by participating in the Main Street Program and initiating the city-wide survey of historic resources in 1984-85.

While not as diversified as in its peak years, the Ennis Commercial Historic District has experienced a renewal largely due to efforts of the Main Street Program. The commercial district has remained intact as the dominant local shopping and business center, since competing suburban centers have yet to develop in Ennis.



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of nominated property** See individual site forms

Quadrangle name Ennis East, Texas

Quadrangle scale 1:24000


**UTM References** Ennis West, Texas

1:24000

See individual site forms

**A** See individual site forms

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**8**   
Zone Easting Northing

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**D**

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G

**H**                                                      

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See individual site forms

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
-------	-----	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
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**11. Form Prepared By**

**name/title** HARDY•HECK•MOORE, INC. (Peter Maxson - Texas Historical Commission)

HARDY·HECK·MOORE, INC. for the

**date** July 1985

**street & number** H·H·M, INC. - PO Box 13392

**telephone** (512)-459-4464

**city or town** Austin

**state** Texas

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

**The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:**

(#1019) (remainder)

       national        X   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** State Historic Preservation Officer

date 8 Aug. 1986

**For NPS use only**

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

date

**Keeper of the National Register**

**Attest:**

**date**

### Chief of Registration

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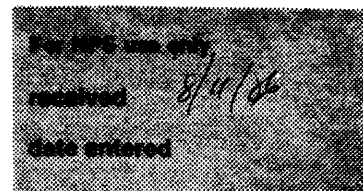
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Thematic Group

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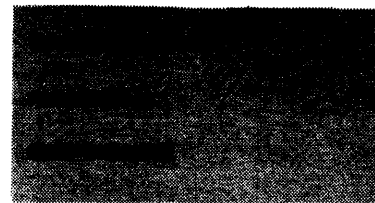
Name Ennis Multiple Resource Area  
State Ellis County, TEXAS

Coner R-5

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- |  |                    |        |                             |
|--|--------------------|--------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Allen, I.R., House                    | Substantive Review | Keeper | Patrick Andrews 9/25/86     |
|  |                    | Attest | Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86 |
| 2. Atwood, E.K., House                   |                    | Keeper | Delores Byers 9/25/86       |
|  |                    | Attest |                             |
| 3. Barkley-Floyd House                   |                    | Keeper | Patrick Andrews 9/25/86     |
|  |                    | Attest | Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86 |
| 4. Barrington House                      |                    | Keeper | Delores Byers 9/25/86       |
|  |                    | Attest |                             |
| 5. Boren, E.T., House                    | Substantive Review | Keeper | Patrick Andrews 9/25/86     |
|  |                    | Attest | Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86 |
| 6. Dunkerly, G.G., House                 |                    | Keeper | Delores Byers 9/25/86       |
|  |                    | Attest |                             |
| 7. Ennis Commercial<br>Historic District |                    | Keeper | Patrick Andrews 9/25/86     |
|  |                    | Attest | Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86 |
| 8. Ennis Cotton Compress                 |                    | Keeper | Delores Byers 9/25/86       |
|  |                    | Attest |                             |
| 9. Ennis Cotton Oil Company              | Substantive Review | Keeper | RETURN 9/25/86 R-5          |
|  |                    | Attest |                             |
| 10. Ennis High School                    |                    | Keeper | Delores Byers 9/25/86       |
|  |                    | Attest |                             |

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State Ellis County, TEXAS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

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|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 11. Fain House                     | <del>Substantive Review</del> Keeper                  | <u>Patrick Andrews 9/25/86</u>     |
|                                    | Attest  | <u>Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86</u> |
| 12. Farrar House                   | Entered in the<br>National Register <u>for</u> Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 9/25/86</u>       |
|                                    | Attest  |                                    |
| 13. Gillespie Farm                 | <del>Substantive Review</del> Keeper                  | <u>Return 9/25/86 RWA S</u>        |
|                                    | Attest  |                                    |
| 14. House at 106 East Denton       | Entered in the<br>National Register <u>for</u> Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 9/25/86</u>       |
|                                    | Attest  |                                    |
| 15. House at 404 East<br>Crockett  | <del>Substantive Review</del> Keeper                  | <u>Patrick Andrews 9/25/86</u>     |
|                                    | Attest  | <u>Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86</u> |
| 16. House at 500 North<br>Main, E. | Entered in the<br>National Register <u>for</u> Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 9/25/86</u>       |
|                                    | Attest  |                                    |
| 17. House at 508 North<br>Dallas   | <del>Substantive Review</del> Keeper                  | <u>Patrick Andrews 9/25/86</u>     |
|                                    | Attest  | <u>Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86</u> |
| 18. House at 509 West Brown        | Entered in the<br>National Register <u>for</u> Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 9/25/86</u>       |
|                                    | Attest  |                                    |
| 19. House at 708 East Brown        | <del>Substantive Review</del> Keeper                  | <u>Patrick Andrews 9/25/86</u>     |
|                                    | Attest  | <u>Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86</u> |
| 20. House at 722 West Madison      | Entered in the<br>National Register <u>for</u> Keeper | <u>Delores Byers 9/25/86</u>       |
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21. House at 802 East  
Ennis

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Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86

22. House at 806 South Dallas

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National Register Keeper

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Shelous Byers 9/25/86

23. House at 807 North  
Preston

~~Substantive Review~~ Keeper

Attest

Patrick Andrews 9/25/86

Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86

24. House at 810 North Preston

~~Substantive Review~~ Keeper

Attest

Shelous Byers 9/25/86

25. H & TC Railroad Division  
Yard Shop

~~Substantive Review~~ Keeper

Attest

Patrick Andrews 9/25/86

Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86

26. Jolesch House

Entered in the  
National Register Keeper

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Shelous Byers 9/25/86

27. Matthews--Atwood House

~~Substantive Review~~ Keeper

Attest

Patrick Andrews 9/25/86

Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86

28. Matthews--Templeton  
House

~~Substantive Review~~ Keeper

Attest

Shelous Byers 9/25/86

29. McCanless--Williams  
House

~~Substantive Review~~ Keeper

Attest

Patrick Andrews 9/25/86

Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86

124 30. Meredith--McDowal House

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Shelous Byers 9/25/86

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Date/Signature

31. Moorhead, J.B., House

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Keeper

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32. Moore, House

Entered in the  
National Register

~~for~~ Keeper

Melvin Byers 9/25/86

Attest

33. Morton House

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~~for~~ Keeper

Patrick Andrews 9/25/86

Attest

34. Neal House

Entered in the  
National Register

~~for~~ Keeper

Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86  
Melvin Byers 9/25/86

Attest

35. Novy, Joe, House

~~Substantive Review~~

~~for~~ Keeper

Patrick Andrews 9/25/86

Attest

36. Old City Mills

Entered in the  
National Register

~~for~~ Keeper

Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86  
Melvin Byers 9/25/86

Attest

37. Raphael House

~~Substantive Review~~

~~for~~ Keeper

Patrick Andrews 9/25/86

Attest

38. Ransom House

Entered in the  
National Register

~~for~~ Keeper

Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86  
Melvin Byers 9/25/86

Attest

39. Sanderson, James S.,  
House

~~Substantive Review~~

~~for~~ Keeper

Patrick Andrews 9/25/86

Attest

126 40. Sharp House

Entered in the  
National Register

~~for~~ Keeper

Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86  
Melvin Byers 9/25/86

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41. Story, Jesse and Mary,  
House

~~Substantive Review~~ Keeper

Patrick Andrus 9/25/86

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Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86

42. Telfair House

Entered in the  
National Register

~~Substantive Review~~ Keeper

Shelton Byers 9/25/86

Attest

43. Weatherford House

~~Substantive Review~~ Keeper

Patrick Andrus 9/25/86

Attest

Bruce J. Noble, Jr. 9/23/86

44. Weakley, John M., House

Entered in the  
National Register

~~Substantive Review~~ Keeper

Shelton Byers 9/25/86

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