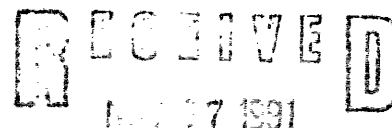


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**National Register of Historic Places  
Multiple Property Documentation Form**



**NATIONAL  
REGISTER**

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

Historic and Architectural Resources in Abilene, Texas

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

"The Railroad and Abilene's Development into a Wholesale and Distribution Center in West Texas, 1881-1939"

"Educational Efforts in Abilene, 1881-1939"

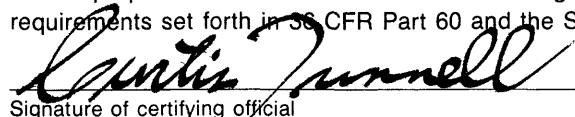
**C. Geographical Data**

1930 city limits of Abilene, Texas

☐ See continuation sheet

**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.



Signature of certifying official

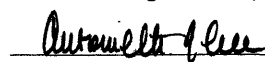


Date


State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.



Signature of the Keeper of the National Register



Date

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**E. Statement of Historic Contexts**

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Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

See text that begins with Continuation Sheet E-1 (Railroads) for a full discussion of the historic context "The Railroad and Abilen's Development into a Wholesale and Distribution Center in West Texas, 1881-1939" listed in Section B.

See text that begins with Continuation Sheet E-1 (Education) for a full discussion of the historic context "Educational Efforts in Abilene, 1881-1939" listed in Section B.

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THE RAILROAD AND ABILENE'S DEVELOPMENT INTO A WHOLESALE AND DISTRIBUTION  
CENTER IN WEST TEXAS, 1881-1939

This context will explore the railroad's contribution to and influence on Abilene's physical and economic development. Indeed, the city's founding can be traced directly to the Texas and Pacific Railway, which surveyed the townsite and sold the first lots in 1881. The Texas and Pacific Railway billed Abilene as the "Future Great City of West Texas" and regarded the community as a key element in the company's ambitious plan to create a vast shipping and commercial network in the region. This promotional campaign generated much interest in Abilene and attracted progressive and innovative entrepreneurs who recognized the city's economic potential and the many financial opportunities its growth could bring. Hotels, stores and warehouses were among the many profitable commercial concerns subsequently established and all relied heavily on the railroad. These businesses occupied buildings erected in close proximity to the tracks, reinforcing the close interrelationship between the railroad and the city's economic development. The railroad enabled several locally owned wholesale and retail firms to open branch facilities elsewhere that fostered an expansive trade territory extending from as far east as Junction, Texas, to as far west as Clovis, New Mexico. These businesses in turn pumped capital back into the local economy and allowed the town to prosper and flourish, economically surpassing other communities in the region.

Abilene's founding began with the Texas and Pacific Railway and its westward expansion of the 1870s. At that time the T&P, as it was often called, was one of a handful of companies attempting to establish transcontinental rail service. Congress awarded a charter to the T&P in 1871 and instructed the company to build its line roughly along the 32nd parallel. Work began in 1873 in east Texas and within three years the railroad reached Fort Worth. Despite such progress, the company was in dire financial condition. Overcoming this handicap, the company reorganized and work resumed, pushing the line farther and farther into West Texas (Duff and Seibt 1980:44).

Meanwhile, in newly organized Taylor County, citizens of this sparsely populated area began to speculate on the railroad's proposed route, especially after T&P officials declared their intention to establish a major stop in the area. Buffalo Gap, in east-central Taylor County and the seat of local government, was the only town of any consequence and thus was considered to be the most logical site for this stop. The March 6, 1880 issue of the Buffalo Gap News, as quoted by Naomi Kincaid, declared

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The managers of the Texas and Pacific Railway have selected Buffalo Gap as supply depot and headquarters for the engineers of this line. Already their stores and men are coming in. Straw shows which way the wind blows and if we are not badly fooled the indications are favorable for a railroad through Buffalo Gap at no distant future (Kincaid 1946:16).

This news created excitement, not only in Buffalo Gap, but elsewhere in the region as well. Ranchers and twin brothers C. W. and J. D. Merchant of nearby Callahan County became interested in the railroad's plans and tried unsuccessfully to purchase land in the community.

Despite the predictions of the Buffalo Gap newspaper, the T&P's route and supply stop had not been determined and was by no means finalized. H. C. Withers, the track and townsite locator for the T&P, quietly and without fanfare, acquired land in northeast Taylor County near present day Tye. Although unnoticed by most residents, the transaction became known to a few local men who understood its meaning and ramifications. The Merchant brothers were among those who became involved in land speculation in northern Taylor county, and they were joined by John Simpson, owner of the Hashknife Ranch, as well as grocer John T. Berry and surveyor S. L. Chalk, who later dropped out of the group. Withers, believing the railroad would choose his land for the new town, began promoting its sale before T&P made a final decision. Undaunted, the Merchant brothers and their associates enlisted the help of J. Stoddard Johnston, a prominent politician from Kentucky. Johnston was a close personal friend of John C. Brown, ex-governor of Kentucky and, at the time, receiver for the financially troubled T&P. After visiting the area, Johnston reportedly convinced T&P officials to choose the Merchant brothers, et al. site. No documented evidence can confirm the scenario, but most local historians agree that it was Johnston who ultimately succeeded in having the Merchant's property selected (Stephenson 1901; Landers 1929). The T&P and the Merchant's group signed a formal contract on December 18, 1880 and filed with the Taylor County Clerk. T&P officials allowed the Merchants and other local cattlemen to select the town's name, and they consequently chose Abilene in honor of the prominent cattle town in Kansas (Kincaid 1946:15-25).

Surveyors for the T&P laid out the original townsite which closely resembled plans of other contemporaneous railroad communities such as Ennis, Bryan, and Cuero, Texas. The tracks were, and still are to a great extent, the centerpiece of the community. They entered the city from the east and continued along a westward course, dissecting Abilene into roughly equal-sized halves. (Note: development since World War II has favored the city's southern half, which now encompasses much more territory than its northern

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counterpart). T&P surveyors established a grid street pattern that conformed to prevailing practices in town and urban planning. They laid streets either parallel to or perpendicular with the railroad. Although North and South First streets served as a buffer for the railroad right-of-way, property in close proximity to the tracks was intended for commercial use, as the long and narrow lots make evident. Similar sized lots surveyed for the 100 to 300 blocks of Pine, Walnut and Oak streets, reveal the T&P's original plan for Abilene's commercial development. The remainder of the city's blocks had twelve lots significantly wider than those along North and South First, Pine, Oak and Walnut streets. Larger "outlots," as they were called, surrounded the original 175 block town site and allowed for future growth. A copy of T&P's original town plan that the company's land department prepared, is on display at the Taylor County Clerk's office.

Promoted by T&P officials as the "Future Great City of West Texas," Abilene received considerable attention preceding its official founding. Advertisements were placed in newspapers in Dallas and other Texas cities, as well as large metropolitan centers elsewhere in the country. One such advertisement reportedly stated "The new town of Abilene is located in Taylor county and in the midst of one of the most beautiful, fertile and healthful sections of the West and is destined to become one of the most important points on the line of the Texas and Pacific Railway" (Duff and Seibt 1980:52).

The promotional campaign apparently was a resounding success, as Abilene experienced tremendous growth in a very short period of time. Many came by way of the railroad and stayed in tents and other temporary shelters. A reporter for the Dallas Herald observed just prior to the town lot auction, that "strangers have been arriving for several days. Last night's train (March 14) brought many and a special of five coaches arrived here at 4 a.m. Not less than 500 people from abroad are here" (Kincaid 1946:21, quoting the Abilene Reporter-News Fifteenth Edition).

When the T&P auctioned lots for Abilene on March 15, 1881, the event marked a turning point in regional and local history. It represented the company's ongoing and successful westward expansion, which ultimately planned to traverse mineral rich territory in the southwest United States. Abilene's founding was also part of the railroad's scheme to play a leading role in the development of this region by providing rail service to new or existing towns along its path. Such service would open new lands for settlement and would contribute to the establishment of a vast trade network in the region. The key to success, as T&P officials were keenly aware, was the railroad and it would serve as the primary means of transporting people, goods and supplies.

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For Taylor County, the auction represented the birth of one community (Abilene) and the decline and near demise of another. Prior to the arrival of the railroad, Buffalo Gap enjoyed the distinction of being the county's largest and most important community. Designated as county seat when Taylor County was organized in 1876, it became the primary center for commercial and judicial activity in the region.

When the railroad bypassed Buffalo Gap, the town's promising future dimmed rapidly and Abilene quickly became the leading community of Taylor County. Most of the storekeepers, attorneys and other residents of Buffalo Gap relocated to Abilene. This migration, combined with the influx of new people to the county, produced dramatic results. A bird's eye view of Abilene, drawn about 1882, shows at least one residence on most city blocks and commercial activity centered along the railroad.

By 1883 County Commissioners called for an election to be held on October 23, 1883 to decide if the county seat should be moved to Abilene. The results showed 905 votes for Abilene and 269 for Buffalo Gap. The Commissioner's Court formally agreed to move the county seat to Abilene during their October 30th session (Taylor County Commissioner's Court's Minutes). The T&P donated land for the new courthouse and included all of Block 31, which was consequently designated the courthouse square. (An examination of the 1881 town plot of Abilene on display at the County Clerk's office reveals that this block, unlike all others in the city, was not subdivided, which suggests that T&P officials anticipated Abilene's eventual designation as the county seat.) The Commissioners also announced that advertisements placed in the Buffalo Gap Index and the Fort Worth Gazette would solicit architectural plans and specifications for a stone courthouse. Construction costs were expressly stated not to exceed \$65,000.

Before bids were received, several Taylor County residents, presumably Buffalo Gap citizens, pleaded with the Court to keep the courthouse in Buffalo Gap. This group proposed that if the county government remained there, they would donate \$7,000 toward the construction of a new courthouse. Despite the offer, County Commissioners resumed their efforts to build a new courthouse in Abilene, complying with the election a few weeks earlier and also acknowledging that Abilene, with its railroad, was destined to be the county's largest and most important community. An unspecified number of architectural firms bid on the project, but Commissioner's Court Minutes indicate that Martin, Byrnes and Johnston was awarded the contract. This same firm designed and built the old Taylor County Courthouse and Jail (NR 1979) in Buffalo Gap a few years earlier and was also responsible for the construction of numerous

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county government buildings throughout the state, including the Hamilton County Courthouse (NR 1980) and the Palo Pinto County Jail (NR 1979).

The 1884 courthouse was a majestic 2-story building with a 3-story central tower. The building, a prominent physical landmark for many years, had a Victorian Italianate design and served the city until 1913 when it was razed to make way for a new facility.

The advent of regular train service and the city's designation as the seat of county government enabled Abilene to begin realizing its billing as the "Future Great City of West Texas." The bird's eye view of Abilene completed in about 1882 portrayed the town as a small but active community. By 1885, however, the city was large enough to have Sanborn fire insurance maps completed for the downtown area. These maps estimated the city's population to be about 3,500. At that time, a major construction boom was underway and most business establishments operated out of new wood frame buildings that prevailed throughout the downtown. Only a handful of businesses occupied masonry buildings, a trend typical for rapidly growing cities like Abilene. Milled lumber was easy to work with and could quickly provide sorely needed shelter for local citizens and businesses. Although the lumber had to be shipped by rail from timbering centers elsewhere in Texas, it was the most economical and readily available building material during Abilene's early years. Lumber yards, as a consequence, were among the most important early commercial enterprises. The Theo Heyck House in northwestern Abilene was one of the city's most impressive 19th century residences, demonstrating the importance of both the railroad and the local construction industry. According to an article in the Abilene Reporter-News (March 15, 1936), the house originally stood in Victoria, Texas, but was dismantled and shipped via the railroad to Abilene where it was reconstructed.

By 1890, Abilene was maturing as a community. Many new residences and stores were built throughout the community. Brick became an increasingly popular building material, especially for buildings erected in the downtown area. These brick buildings gave Abilene a greater sense of permanence to residents and visitors in the T&P boom town. An article in the Abilene Reporter-News, for example, commented on six new brick buildings on South First Street which "will show the city to a much better advantage to travelers passing through, besides helping us to supply the demand for better business houses" (Abilene Reporter-News April 18, 1890).

Hotels were also considered to be extremely important to the community. Another 1890 article in the Abilene Reporter-News stated that

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no sooner had it been announced that the South side was to have a \$25,000 hotel than a number of pushing go-ahead citizens of the North side organized themselves into a company, with a capital stock of \$25,000 for the construction of a first-class modern hotel on this side of town . . . (Abilene Reporter-News May 2, 1890).

The exact location of these hotels is not known; however, the article indicated not only the significance of the hotels in the local business climate but also the north-south division in Abilene. Such competition characterized subsequent development and is still felt, to a certain extent, today.

Later that year, a hotel was erected at the southwest corner of Cypress and North Second streets and possibly was the Northside hotel referred to earlier. Known as the Windsor Hotel, a rendition of the building appears in the October 10, 1890 edition of the Abilene Reporter-News. Construction of the Windsor generated great interest and enthusiasm among citizens and its official opening on November 1, 1890 was a cause for celebration. The hotel cost \$30,000 to construct and offered 43 rooms for guests. Its architect was a Mr. White (Abilene Reporter-News May 16, 1890; October 10, 1890).

Abilene's population and economy diversified during the late 19th century as many new people moved to the city and established numerous businesses and commercial enterprises. The underpinnings of the local economy, however, remained firmly based upon the railroad. One of Abilene's earliest and most significant industries involved the transportation of cattle to market which developed as an outgrowth of early ranching activities in the region during the final quarter of the 19th century.

Ranching became an important livelihood by the 1870s when the vast buffalo herds were wiped out and Indians were driven from the territory. As a consequence, Taylor and surrounding counties were ripe for settlement and cattle ranchers were among the first Anglo-Americans to move to this part of the state. They saw tremendous potential in the sprawling open ranges of the area and they soon introduced large herds from the Cross Timbers and other regions (Wilson 1983:8-9). The Merchant brothers and John Simpson, who were instrumental in Abilene's founding, were among the most successful ranchers in the region, and they envisioned Abilene, with its railroad, as an important cattle shipping center in West Texas.

Their dreams were quickly realized as the short lived but highly romanticized cattle drive era was coming to a close soon after Abilene's establishment. Cattle were driven to the new town and shipped via the



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railroad to eastern markets. By 1881 "Abilene laid claim to being the most important center in the country for shipping range cattle" (Landers 1933:70). While more research is needed to confirm this statement, Abilene was without question an important cattle shipping center in Texas. More significantly, the town became a magnet, attracting cattlemen throughout the central West Texas region because of its many amenities and bright future. James H. Parramore, Arth Sears, W. G. Swenson and George R. Davis were among the many ranchers who moved to Abilene but kept their ranch land in other parts of the state. These men were pillars in the community and contributed to Abilene's overall economic, social and cultural development. Parramore, for example, was an early benefactor to Simmons College, later Hardin-Simmons University, and Swenson, a member of the S. M. Swenson clan of Stamford, Texas, was active in the local school board as well as innumerable commercial ventures.

The railroad not only contributed to Abilene's development into a cattle shipping center, but also encouraged many ambitious entrepreneurs to relocate and establish businesses that became important, to Abilene and to much of central West Texas. These men recognized that West Texas, largely unsettled at the time, would soon be attractive for settlement and the growing population would need basic supplies and foodstuffs. Since the trade network was just developing, these men realized that they could open businesses that used the railroad to transport vital goods and sell them through wholesale operations. Perhaps the three most significant individuals to arrive during Abilene's early years were Ed S. Hughes, James M. Radford and Horace O. Wooten, each of whom founded wholesale businesses that helped make Abilene an important distribution center for much of West Texas. They also were responsible for the construction of numerous buildings in Abilene and other cities and were involved in many other commercial endeavors.

Ed S. Hughes was one of Abilene's most successful businessmen and his rise to prominence, along with that of James M. Radford and Horace O. Wooten, is representative of Abilene's overall economic, commercial and financial growth and development. A native of North Carolina and a graduate of Princeton University, Hughes came to Abilene in 1882. He originally was in the stock raising business but later borrowed money and entered the hardware business as a partner in the S. H. Leavell Store. He subsequently acquired controlling interest in the firm and renamed it, Ed S. Hughes Company. The business originally operated solely as a retail and wholesale hardware enterprise but eventually expanded to include the selling of automobiles (Studebakers) and heavy farm machinery and equipment. At its peak, the firm owned a 4-story building on Oak Street and five warehouses in Abilene. The company's trade territory extended from Fort Worth to El Paso and from the Red River line to Waco and San Antonio. Besides owning his own company, Hughes

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was president of Abilene's Farm and Merchant Bank and helped support the Abilene and Southern Railway Company, an independent operation later acquired by the T&P. By the 1920s, Hughes further diversified his business interests and became involved with several shipping concerns in the eastern United States. He was chairman of the board of the Philadelphia and Norfolk Steamship Company, president and treasurer of the Seaboard and Gulf Steamship Company, and president of the New York Canal and Great Lakes Corp. Although he maintained a residence (known as "Three Acres") in Abilene, at the corner of North First and Kirkwood streets, he spent more time in New York City and eventually changed his permanent residence to that metropolis. When Hughes died on January 13, 1939, all of Abilene mourned his death (Taylor County 1923: n.p.; Webb 1952 I:860; Abilene Reporter-News April 8, 1956).

James M. Radford operated a wholesale grocery business that was claimed to be "the largest wholesale grocery company west of the Mississippi River." Radford began his career in 1886 when he purchased the stock of a defunct grocery business in a bankruptcy sale. He established the J. M. Radford Grocery Company and quickly expanded operations. The Abilene facility served as company headquarters, and branch facilities were eventually opened in 23 other cities including Amarillo, Marfa and Wichita Falls, Texas, as well as Roswell and Carlsbad, New Mexico. Radford's financial success and business savvy brought a great deal of money into Abilene and he invested much of his profits back into the community. He reportedly erected 40 brick buildings in Abilene including the Radford Building (razed), the Park Building, and the J. M. Radford Grocery Building. Many were designed by David S. Castle and Company, Abilene's most prolific architectural firm. Radford's death on July 4, 1933 marked the passing of one of Abilene's most successful businessmen. His son, Omar, subsequently took over the operation (Duff and Seibt 1980:61; Abilene Reporter-News March 15, 1936; Abilene Reporter-News James M. Radford Clippings File).

Horace O. Wooten, like Radford and Hughes, operated a wholesale business headquartered in Abilene. He established the firm in 1898 and by 1906 erected a warehouse and office at the northeast corner of Walnut and North First streets. The business expanded rapidly and relied upon the railroad to transport goods to 14 branch offices. Wooten became one of Abilene's wealthiest and most successful businessmen and erected numerous buildings including the Wooten Hotel on North Third Street. Wooten died in 1947 (Cosby 1955:317).

Although Hughes, Radford and Wooten chose different paths in their business careers, all three relied heavily upon the railroad to achieve financial success. The profitable operation of their commercial endeavors as

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well as their aggressive marketing and business practices helped make Abilene a regional wholesale and distribution center in West Texas by the early 20th century. These wholesale businesses were the dominant commercial enterprises in Abilene, but other local businessmen established retail stores that also contributed to the local economy. Their stores, which obtained goods via the railroad, offered an increasingly diverse selection of merchandise to local residents, as well as to those in nearby communities. Merchants such as W. A. and George Minter, Dr. J. D. Magee, Morgan Weaver, C. E. Fulwiler and Will Stith operated businesses that enjoyed considerable success.

The city's rapid growth in the early 20th century allowed these and other men to expand their operations and also encouraged others to move to Abilene and open their own businesses. As a consequence, the downtown bustled with activity. By 1907-08 the Abilene City Directory listed 7 dry goods, 17 grocery, 11 clothing and 5 hardware stores in the city. Many more brick buildings were erected in the downtown and new houses were constructed in the city's residential neighborhoods.

One of the hottest topics of debate represented in the Abilene Reporter-News during this period was the T&P depot. Various articles described the depot's symbolic importance to the community and deplored its dilapidated condition. The frame depot served Abilene for many years but leading citizens, including those who worked for the newspaper, believed that the depot should be replaced with a grander, more opulent building; one more fitting for and representative of Abilene.

Civic leaders lobbied the T&P, and finally in 1907, the railroad announced its intentions to build a new depot. As reported in the newspaper,

The dream of the Abilene citizen that has been a nightmare for the past few years of his hope is to be realized . . . The new structure is to be one becoming the great system which is to build it and in harmony with the modern prosperous and progressive Metropolis of West Texas where it is to be located . . . It will be the best on the line between Fort Worth and El Paso . . . The sight of the old shack which has greeted the newcomer to Abilene and became an entrance for its citizens is to [be] removed (Abilene Reporter-News September 26, 1907).

Despite expectations that the T&P would construct a new depot soon after that announcement, three years passed before the railroad took action. This delay was a cause of great concern to local residents, and some of the town's leaders began lobbying for other railroad companies to come to Abilene. They

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were particularly interested in the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railroad that had extended to Brownwood by the turn of the century and was making plans to expand northwest. This effort to attract other railroads was deemed essential for Abilene's growth and survival as "railroad plans were as thick as sand in West Texas air" (Duff and Seibt 1980:183).

Frustrated with the lack of success in having other major railroads to extend their lines through Abilene and facing fierce competition from Sweetwater to the southwest where the T&P intersected with the Kansas City, Mexico and Orient (later part of the Santa Fe system) (Duff and Seibt 1980:180), Abilene's business leaders, led by Ed Hughes, began to take matters in their own hands and enlisted the help of Morgan Jones, a railroad man originally from Wales.

Jones was active in the T&P's early westward expansion and helped oversee construction to Fort Worth. He later was involved with the Fort Worth and Denver Railroad and the Wichita Valley Railroad, the latter of which extended southwest from Wichita Falls to Stamford about 35 miles north of Abilene. When some of Abilene's leading businessmen, including W. G. Swenson and Ed Hughes as well as bankers Henry James and George Paxton, organized the Abilene and Northern Railway Company, they contracted with Jones to build a line from Abilene to Stamford, the southern terminus of the Wichita Valley Railroad. By December 31, 1906, the first train entered Abilene, thus providing the city with another railroad and fulfilling Jones' contractual obligation and financial incentives. The Abilene and Northern Railway Company was eventually absorbed into the Wichita Valley System (Duff and Seibt 1980:183-185).

The success of the Abilene and Northern Railway Company convinced Jones of the feasibility of establishing another railroad, and in 1908-09, he built a line that extended to Ballinger where it connected with the Santa Fe Railroad. Jones named his new enterprise the Abilene and Southern Railway Company, and he and his family retained control of the operation until 1927, when they sold it to the T&P (Abilene Reporter-News April 8, 1956).

The Abilene and Southern Railway Company, along with the Abilene and Northern Railway Company, opened new territory for local businessmen who expanded their operations. As a consequence, Abilene experienced continued growth during the first decade of the 20th century and many changes took place that transformed Abilene from a boom town on the railroad to a prosperous and stable community with many amenities usually associated with larger and more established cities. The public school system, for example, erected new brick facilities, and Simmons College (now Hardin-Simmons University) and Childers

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Classical Institute (now Abilene Christian University) survived shaky beginnings and increased their enrollment [see "Education Efforts in Abilene, 1881-1939" within this submission for a more thorough discussion of local educational efforts]. Dr. L. W. Hollis established Abilene's first sanitarium in early 1904 and he was followed by Dr. James M. Alexander who opened another sanitarium later that year after converting the E. F. Elkins House into a health care facility (Abilene Reporter-News September 30, 1904). The Alexander Sanitarium, which later expanded into a new building, was an important landmark in the community for many years. Other changes that took place in the first decade of this century were the construction of a Carnegie Library (razed) in 1908-09, a federal building/post office (razed) in 1902, and the Weather Bureau Building (NR 1982) in 1908.

One of Abilene's most colorful innovations in the early 20th century was the advent of a streetcar line and its operation reflected the "big city" mentality of civic leaders. Like so many other contemporaneous changes, the streetcar was closely associated with and, in this case, directly linked to, the railroad. When W. G. Swenson and others founded the Abilene Street Railway Company, the proposed route of the streetcar generated much debate among local residents, but everyone agreed that the line should begin near the T&P depot, the symbolic heart of the community. The original route began about 10 feet north of the T&P tracks on Pine Street and extended northward toward Simmons College. The southern section went to old Fair Park on South Seventh Street. Mayor E. N. Kirby drove in the first spike and a local newspaper covering the event wrote that "Mr. Kirby is a good man, a good citizen, a good mayor and a good lawyer but he demonstrated . . . that as a spike driver he is a failure . . . it is not likely there will be any enormous demand for the photograph taken of him while in action . . ." (Abilene Reporter-News August 14, 1908).

Despite this somewhat inauspicious beginning, work continued, and in November 1908 the first streetcar ran down the tracks. W. G. Swenson, as president of the Abilene Street Railway Company, operated the car, but near the end of its first run, the brakes failed. Some of the passengers, which included the city's elite, safely jumped from the car. Others remained on board as the car continued past the tracks and eventually came to rest in a mud hole with no one seriously injured (Duff and Seibt 1980:153-154).

Although this and other subsequent problems were remedied, the system continued to encounter difficulties throughout its entire operation. The line was discontinued in 1931 and most of the tracks were covered with asphalt paving in more recent years.

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Abilene's streetcar line failed to have the impact its backers had hoped; nevertheless, its existence was important to the community. It was a factor in the city's physical growth as neighborhoods developed in close proximity to its path and subsequent expansion tended to radiate outward from the tracks. The streetcar reflected civic leaders' desires to continue realizing the dreams of making Abilene the "Future Great City of West Texas."

The streetcar line would not have even been contemplated if the city had not had the capacity to generate electricity. The power plant that serviced the streetcar system played a pivotal role in the history of Abilene and other parts of central West Texas. Electricity first came in 1891 when the Abilene Electric Light and Power Company began operation but citizens did not feel its true import until 1907 when a power plant was constructed at the corner of Plum and North Fourth streets. The plant met the city's increased demands for electricity until a fire destroyed the building in 1919. A new plant was subsequently built on the east side of town, near Cedar Creek and North Second Street, and it continues to serve the community.

As Abilene continued to grow during the early 20th century, some of the buildings that just a decade ago had been a great source of local pride were considered unsatisfactory for Abilene's rapidly changing image. Hotels, specifically, were singled out as inadequate and unrepresentative of Abilene, and civic leaders called for the construction of new facilities. A local booster group, called the 25,000 Club which had targeted Abilene to reach a population of 25,000 by the 1910 census (Duff and Seibt 1980:146), began an aggressive campaign for a new hotel. Excerpts from a letter sent to the 25,000 Club, but in all likelihood prepared by one of its members, and published in the Abilene Reporter-News capture prevailing sentiments. It stated,

Gentlemen, I wish to call your attention to the subject of hotel accommodations of Abilene. They are inadequate and not of the kind becoming of your city. The stranger gets a bad impression and is not in a humor to fully appreciate your progressive push along other lines. Abilene could easily be made one of the greatest Sunday points for commercial travelers in West Texas . . . These men travel over Texas and other states and their opinion--the hotel is the most important factor in the formation--is either helpful or detrimental (Abilene Reporter-News October 10, 1907).

To rectify the situation, members of the 25,000 Club called for a \$75,000 hotel that would more effectively represent Abilene.

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Almost two years passed before the kind of hotel the 25,000 Club promoted was erected. Colonel W. L. Beckman announced in February 1909 of his plans to build a new hotel which would be called the Grace Hotel in honor of his daughter (Abilene Reporter-News February 14, 1909). When the facility officially opened in September of that year, Col. Beckman declared "I think the hotel will compare favorably with any in any city in Texas of Abilene's size" (Abilene Reporter-News September 22, 1909). He also stated that "the great advantage [of the Grace Hotel] is this: tourists and Northerners spending their winters in the South will be drawn to Abilene by the accommodations of this large, handsome and well-furnished and kept hotel . . . and [it] is only a forerunner of several of the same kind Abilene [will have] in the next few years" (Abilene Reporter-News September 23, 1909).

Although Beckman's prediction that Abilene would develop into a haven for northerners during the winter months did not come true, he did accurately forecast the construction of other large hotels in the city. In 1927 the Hilton (later the Windsor) Hotel was completed and in 1930 the Wooten Hotel was constructed. These and other hotels made Abilene an important hub for businessmen throughout the region.

Despite falling far short of the desired 25,000 census tally for 1910, Abilene was a robust community with a stable and diversified economy. The 1910 census gave Abilene a population of 9,204, an increase of almost 300 percent from the previous decade.

Fewer changes and slower growth took place in the 1910s, creating concern for some citizens. Local firms such as the Radford and Wooten wholesale grocery operations continued to prosper but relatively few new businesses opened and the city's population increased only slightly by the 1920 census. A total of 10,274 people were reported as residents of Abilene.

During this period, civic leaders became increasingly active and aggressive in their efforts to bring more business to Abilene. Promotional brochures and publications touted Abilene and Taylor County as an ideal place to live and work, with virtually unlimited potential. An article that appeared in the June 28, 1914 issue of the Abilene Reporter-News, and no doubt intended for distribution far beyond the immediate vicinity, revealed this concern within the local business community. The author of the article encouraged others to come to Abilene and establish a cotton seed oil mill and other industrial, manufacturing and commercial concerns. In addition, the article provided a glimpse into existing business conditions in Abilene and looked back onto the factors that contributed to its status at that time.

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But while Abilene was yet a struggling village. . .there were those who comprehended the greatness of the unbounded acres of prairie land destined through natural conditions to be settled upon and accordingly put their goal farther enough ahead to launch out in modest--another trait of business sagacity--into a business which would increase in extent with the increase of population and business . . . Abilene country today boasts of being the greatest wholesale center in Central West Texas.

One of the most important local events of the decade involved the construction of a new county courthouse in 1913-15. The old courthouse, built three years after the T&P founded Abilene, had deteriorated to such an extent that County Commissioners requested a report to assess the integrity of the 1884 building. Addressing the Court on March 22, 1913, W. A. Riney, H. J. Bradshaw and D. A. Winter stated that ". . . we find the walls of the building and the building in general in very bad condition . . . The stresses that have slowly [destroyed] the building for years and now [show] evidence of their destructive work that is rapidly decreasing the safety of the building and which will in a short time wreck the structure" (Commissioners Court Minutes [hereafter CCM] F:593). The commissioners agreed to build a new courthouse and they hired C. A. Clayton on July 15, 1913 to raze the old building within 45 days. Bids for a new building were solicited and the plans and specifications that George Burnett of Waco prepared were selected. Contractor A. E. Rogers' bid of \$117,900 was the lowest the Court received and he was hired to construct the building (CCM F:617, 636). While the old courthouse was razed and the new one built, the Grace Hotel housed county governmental offices. County commissioners leased the first four rooms "South from the North East corner of [the Grace Hotel] facing Cypress Street" (CCM F:619). By official decree on July 16, 1913, the Grace Hotel was designated the Taylor County Courthouse (CCM F:637). It served in that capacity until the Burnett-designed facility was completed on May 12, 1915 (CCM G:192).

The lack of growth during the 1910s was no doubt frustrating to local leaders, who believed that the many improvements of the previous decade would ensure continued growth and prosperity. Abilene had three railroads, a new passenger depot, a new hotel and two colleges, but these were not enough to sustain the rate of expansion Abilene previously had experienced. Surrounding territories were being settled in greater numbers and the majority of the families who moved to the rural areas chose farming for their livelihood. They grew a variety of agricultural goods but cotton was the chief and most profitable crop. Abilene benefitted from increased cotton production, and the city boasted four gins, a compress, and a cotton seed oil mill by the end of the 1910s. Still, these operations were not enough to significantly boost the



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local economy. Although more remains to be learned about Abilene during the 1910s, two factors possibly contributed to a slowdown in the local business climate. World War I, for obvious reasons, stunted growth in Abilene and other parts of the county, although its impact was short lived and less severe than that felt during World War II. More importantly, however, the Drought of 1917-18 "drove so many [people] from farms that Taylor County actually lost population between the 1910 and 1920 census" Duff and Seibt (1980:199). The normally dry climate was harsh enough in years with average amounts of rainfall. Thus, it was no surprise that any abnormal shortage of water could have disastrous effects on the local farming community. Cotton totals, which declined dramatically, provide graphic evidence of the drought's effect. In 1916, before the drought, 26,003 bales were ginned in Taylor County. In the following year, the county's total plummeted to 7,284 bales and a year later dwindled to 2,729 bales. By 1920, in contrast, county growers yielded 44,653 bales (Texas Almanac 1925:224).

Abilene's slow growth during the 1910s disappointed civic and business leaders; however, these same individuals were no doubt pleased with the city's rapid expansion in the following decade. Abilene's population jumped from 10,274 in 1920 to 23,175 in 1930. This tremendous increase resulted in the construction of many new houses, stores and other buildings as Abilene attained still greater significance as a regional center in West Texas.

Several factors contributed to this period of prosperity. The entire county experienced tremendous growth following the conclusion of World War I. As war-torn Europe struggled to recover from the devastation of four years of conflict and destruction, new markets were opened to the United States. manufacturers and farmers. In West Texas, the fledgling oil industry began to mushroom, which brought unprecedented wealth and prosperity to the region. Continued settlement in rural areas helped West Texas more fully realize its vast agricultural potential. And Abilene's strategic location and accessibility to the expanding railroad network were critical to continued regional economic growth.

Of all the factors that contributed to Abilene's 1920s boom, none was as important or had as far reaching effect as the rise of the oil industry. Although only small oil reserves were found in the immediate vicinity, Abilene developed into a prominent petroleum center. Abilene became a magnet for oil operators who selected the city as a base because of its strategic location, access to transportation (railroad) and many other amenities.

Oil was discovered in nearby Brown County as early as 1878 but was used primarily for medicinal purposes. Several years passed before the many uses of petroleum were recognized and by the early 20th century, numerous attempts

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were made to duplicate the success of the Lucas Oil Gusher at Spindletop near Beaumont in 1901. By 1916 local businessmen founded the Hunch Oil and Gas Company and on August 16, 1916, the company pumped Taylor County's first commercial oil. Despite the hopes of its founders, the well was unprofitable and the company folded the following year.

The first significant discovery of oil in West Texas occurred in October 1916 when a well drilled near Ranger in Eastland County produced 1,700 barrels of oil daily. The ensuing boom brought many changes to that and other communities, as speculators rushed to the region. In 1920 oil was discovered in Breckenridge in Stephens County, and West Texas soon became one of the world's largest producers of oil. This boom lasted until the 1930s when oil discoveries in East Texas sent oil prices plummeting. This boom-bust cycle in Abilene's oil industry continues to the present day (Duff and Seibt 1980:228-239).

Prosperity associated with the oil industry of the 1920s ushered in an era of great activity in Abilene. Some of the most visible representations of the oil boom were found in the central business district. High-rise hotels and office buildings were constructed that changed the city's skyline and gave Abilene a more sophisticated appearance, feel and character. Although these buildings in many ways catered to Abilene's oil industry, financing their construction came from established local sources and can also be considered an outgrowth or diversification of Abilene's importance as a railroad shipping center.

Dr. J. M. Alexander, a longtime Abilene physician and operator of the Alexander Sanitarium, began a construction boom downtown in the mid-1920s when he hired a local architect to design the 7-story Alexander Building at the northwest corner of Pine and North First streets. When it opened in 1925, the building immediately became a prominent architectural landmark in the community and could be seen for many miles (Duff and Seibt 1980:203). The building provided much needed office space for physicians, lawyers, oil operators and other professionals.

Competition arrived just three years later when the 8-story Mims Building opened at the southeast corner of Pine and North Third streets. Its owners, among the city's wealthiest and most influential citizens, were W. G. Swenson, Horace O. Wooten and George Paxton, president of Citizen's National Bank. All were prominent figures in the community long before the oil boom arrived.

Hotel accommodations were important not only to the oil industry, but also to the community as a whole. Abilene's growth and increased business

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activity of the 1920s resulted in a shortage of hotel space. The Grace remained Abilene's premier hotel but it soon was inadequate to meet changing needs. In 1924 W. E. Jones, who four years earlier had acquired the building for \$172,000, instigated a \$115,000 renovation of the building that resulted in the addition of a fourth floor. Upon completion, the Grace Hotel boasted 100 rooms (Abilene Reporter-News March 15, 1936).

Despite the Grace Hotel expansion, Abilene still experienced a shortage of hotel accommodations, and within six years, two major hotels, with a combined total of 470 rooms, were built. While both were erected only a few years apart and were designed by the same architect, David S. Castle, they were financed by distinctly different methods that symbolized two important historical forces. The Hilton Hotel was born through the efforts of several individuals, including George Paxton, W. J. Fulwiler, W. G. Swenson, John Guitar and others. These men formed the Abilene Hotel Company and raised \$250,000 through the sale of common stock (Duff and Seibt 1980:205). Conrad Hilton of nearby Cisco was hired to run the business which opened in 1927 under the name Hilton Hotel. The Wooten Hotel began operations three years later and, in contrast to the Hilton Hotel, was financed by an individual, wholesale grocer and investor Horace O. Wooten (Abilene Reporter-News March 15, 1936). These buildings were the largest and among the most important in Abilene for almost half a century.

The hotels and office buildings of the 1920s were obvious physical landmarks in the community but another equally important yet far less opulent building was also built in Abilene in this decade; this building was the new power plant for West Texas Utilities [WTU] Company. When company officials made a formal announcement of its construction in November 1919, the story made headline news in the local newspaper. "New \$700,000 Plant Will Be Erected in Abilene Soon," the Abilene Reporter-News declared in its November 5, 1919 edition. The utility company chose a site on the east side of town near Cedar Creek and the Wichita Valley Railway. This location was desirable because "a spur from the Wichita Valley will furnish adequate shipping facilities." The plant was built to furnish electricity, not only to Abilene, but also for Stamford, Merkel, Hamlin, Anson and Cisco (Abilene Reporter-News November 5, 1919). When the complex was completed in 1920, Abilene had enhanced its position as the region's most significant city.

Abilene's municipal government undertook several building projects during the 1920s, including the paving of the city's busiest streets. A municipal auditorium was built in 1927 on Fair Park grounds in the southwest part of the city. A new fire station was built at 402 Cedar and another at 441 Butternut; substations were also erected at 1902 South Eleventh and at 1601 Orange streets (Abilene Reporter-News March 15, 1936). These facilities

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provided adequate fire protection for the many new homes and neighborhoods built and developed during Abilene's boom of the 1920s.

Individual craftsmen, carpenters and lumber companies built most of the residential buildings, but the town's wealthiest citizens hired one of the two prominent architectural firms based in Abilene. David S. Castle and Company was the most prolific and many of the firm's original drawings are in the possession of Tittle, Luther and Loving, a present day architecture firm. Nichols and Campbell were chief competitors of Castle's, and while they apparently received far fewer commissions, they designed several important buildings in Abilene, including the Minter House at 340 Beech and the Administration Building on the 1929 campus of Abilene Christian University. Although the two firms often competed with one another, they did collaborate on the 1931 Taylor County Jail at the northwest corner of Pecan and South Fourth streets.

Other factors that contributed to Abilene's growth of the 1920s include the founding of McMurry College in 1923, Simmons College becoming Simmons University in 1925 and Abilene Christian College, formerly Childers Classical Institute, moving to new grounds on the east side of town. The West Texas Baptist Sanitarium, later known as Hendrick Memorial Hospital, opened in 1924 and, along with the Alexander Sanitarium, helped make Abilene an important medical center in West Texas.

Despite these many successes, Abilene did experience at least one major disappointment. As early as 1917, the State Legislature hoped to establish a West Texas A. & M. College but the idea was dropped before any serious attempts were made to implement the project. The plan was resurrected in 1923 and 37 communities, including Abilene, sought to obtain the institution, then being called Texas Technological College. Each of the cities touted themselves as the ideal site but many residents of Abilene were convinced that theirs was the best. Already the city boasted three private colleges and the addition of a state supported college would make Abilene the undisputed educational center for a vast region in the state. Although presenting an attractive and appealing package, Abilene was not selected and Lubbock was chosen instead.

The Great Depression of the 1930s brought Abilene's previous period of growth and prosperity to a dramatic halt, and relatively little new construction took place. The largest and most significant building projects involved the expenditure of public monies that pumped federal dollars into the community. Ground was broken for a new Post Office and Federal Building on March 22, 1935. It was built for a construction cost was \$267,500 and was completed the following year. Another federally funded project was the

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raising of the T&P's railroad grade and the construction of underpasses to aid the flow of vehicular traffic on Abilene's increasingly automobile congested streets. The Austin Bridge Company of Dallas undertook the project, which cost \$288,750. Other federal monies, channeled through the Works Project Administration, were spent on school improvements. The most significant was the construction of a new school for local black children (Abilene Reporter-News March 15, 1936). The school was later severely altered and eventually vacated by the school district. The building presently houses Abilene's Head Start Program.

With the 1930s proving to be a period of little growth, the price of locally produced goods dropped in value. The resulting loss in consumer spending power hurt retailers and many businesses closed. Some firms, such as the wholesale grocery operations, survived but their sales did not expand as quickly as had been hoped or projected. The town's population increased slightly in the 10 year period. In 1930, the census bureau reported 23,175 residents in Abilene, while a decade later 26,612 citizens were tallied.

The end of the Great Depression in the late 1930s and early 1940s, as well as the advent of World War II, marked a turning point in Abilene's history. The railroad, which had prevailed as the single most influential factor in the city's growth, began to wane in importance as Abilene and the rest of the nation embraced the automobile in the post-World War II era. To compensate, Abilene's economy turned increasingly to oil, bringing huge profits in boom periods and the potential for comparable losses during declines in oil prices. The railroad tracks are still a prominent physical landmark but their limited use is symbolic of their reduced significance in the community.

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EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS IN ABILENE, 1881-1939

Throughout most of its history, Abilene has been an important center for education in the vast regions of West Texas. The city presently boasts three institutions of higher learning: Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene Christian University and McMurry College, whose influence and significance extend far beyond the city limits of Abilene. All are church supported and were founded before 1939. With a combined enrollment of more than 8,000, these institutions enable Abilene to claim one of, if not the, highest student per capita ratios in West Texas. These institutions and the local school district have contributed to the city's social and cultural environment and have been an important factor in the city's physical growth and development. Abilene's colleges and universities have been the subject of numerous histories, books, articles and other publications. These references (Richardson 1964; Morris and Leach 1953) should be consulted for a more complete history of each institution. The public school system, however, has not been researched in great depth and this submission will discuss the subject in more detail.

Public Schools

Although Abilene is best known in educational circles for its private, church affiliated colleges, the city's public school system has supervised and instructed local youths since the town's founding in 1881. Education was considered such a high priority that one of the town founders, J. Stoddard Johnston, set aside property for a school at the northwest corner of North Third and Cedar streets when the town was established (Duff and Seibt 1980:157). Classes initially were held in a tent but later convened in a 2-room frame building erected on the aforementioned site in 1883. The city's growth soon required the establishment of another school on Abilene's south side by 1885. That same year the Taylor County Judge, who earlier had assumed responsibility for the school's operation, transferred these duties to the city. Colonel J.H. Cole, a native of Sherman, Texas, and a confederate veteran, was subsequently selected as the first superintendent of schools and, during his four year tenure, greatly enhanced the development of public education in Abilene (Roberson 1951:46-48). His primary contributions included accommodating increased student enrollment, hiring several new instructors and expanding school curricula and classes. His papers are available at the Barker Texas History Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

The city's first permanent educational facility, conceived by Colonel Cole, was a 2-story brick high school that stood near the southwest corner of South First and Peach streets. Built for \$10,000, the school opened on January 6, 1890 and generated great pride among the townspeople (Roberson 1951:48-49).

Although local school officials intended to use the building exclusively as a high school, continued population growth and increased student enrollment forced elementary classes to be held in the high school building. As a consequence, the school board decided to build a new elementary school on the city's north side, and on July 18, 1891 property near the southeast corner of Orange and North Eighth streets was secured and selected as the site for the new school. Another elementary school was built on the city's south side, near the southeast corner of South Ninth and Chestnut streets. Both

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facilities, named appropriately the North and South Ward schools, were frame buildings that served the community until 1902 when 3-story brick schools were built on their respective sites.

To ease classroom crowding, local school officials decided to build a new high school in 1909 while John H. Burnett was superintendent. It was erected one block south of the old high school that was subsequently razed. The new building was a magnificent edifice with Georgian Revival detailing and was an architectural gem in the community.

In 1917 Roland D. Green replaced J.L. Brooks as superintendent of local schools and his appointment marked the beginning of a pivotal era in Abilene's public educational program. During his 20 year tenure, ending with his death in 1937, Green successfully dealt with numerous problems the school district encountered. His contributions are many but his legacy is best remembered by the system's aggressive building program of the 1920s, which relieved pressures that rapid growth created. Green worked with the school board and garnered support for the construction of nine new school buildings, all but one of which local architect David S. Castle designed. Green contributed to an overall improvement in the quality of education curricula for the schools and added vocational, shop and home economics classes (Roberson 1951:53).

Green's first building project included the replacement of the 1902 ward schools and the small frame school in the College Heights development of north Abilene. The architect, contractor and legal agreement involving the construction of these buildings are not specifically referenced in school board minutes. However, David S. Castle presented plans for the new school buildings at a June 6, 1921 meeting of the Board and, therefore, is believed to be their designer.

Funding for the construction of the schools reached a critical phase by early 1922. The City of Abilene, which still retained some control over the school system, was short \$25,000, according to Mayor Dallas Scarbrough at the board's February 16 meeting. W. G. Swenson, a member of the board and a prominent businessman and banker in the community, successfully arranged for a loan and construction resumed. Work was completed by the fall session when the old ward schools subsequently were demolished. The facility that replaced the Old North Ward School was named the Lamar School while the South Ward School became the Travis School. The Old College Heights School was moved to the east side of town and used as the city's only educational facility for blacks (Abilene School Board Minutes Vol. II:7, 21, 29, 33).

In 1923 school officials decided to build a new high school near the site of the 1890 facility. David S. Castle was retained as architect, and the Walsh and Barney Company was hired as general contractor. Before the building's completion, fire gutted the 1909 high school, forcing principal L.E. Dudley and other school officials to use the new building before its completion. This decision delayed construction efforts and work continued at a slower than anticipated pace. The board formally accepted the new high school on April 11, 1924 (Abilene School Board Minutes Vol. II:63, 79).

The fire caused much damage to the old high school but reports by two local architectural firms concluded that it was salvageable. They recommended

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that the building be renovated and subsequently used to replace the dilapidated Central Ward School that stood nearby. The board hired Nichols and Campbell, one of the firms that assessed the building's structural integrity, to supervise renovation efforts. Work was completed during the 1924-25 school session and the Old Central Ward School was demolished during the Christmas holidays (Abilene School Board Minutes Vol. II:93, 95, 99).

In the waning days of the 1924-25 school year, Superintendent Green presented a status report on all the district's schools. He listed all facilities and the number of teachers for each, including the High School-25 teachers, Central Ward School-22 teachers, Travis School-12 teachers, Lamar School-9 teachers, College Heights-6 teachers, Colored School-4 teachers (R. B. Black, principal). Green also recommended that an auditorium and a new wing be added to the high school and that two new ward schools, each with 10 rooms, be built. The board concurred and hired David S. Castle to design the buildings (Abilene School Board Minutes Vol. II:111-112).

The new ward schools were named Valley View and Alta Vista (Abilene School Board Minutes Vol. II:117). Local newspapers monitored their construction and an interview with Superintendent Green, published on January 1, 1926, described ongoing construction efforts. Of greater significance, however, the article addressed important issues concerning the administration of local schools. Green stated,

The two new buildings will relieve our present congestion. We want to work out a plan whereby we can keep all primary students, including students up to the fourth or fifth grades, from having to cross the railroad to go to school. There are lots of students on the north side that have to cross it now and we want to avoid that in the future if it is possible (Abilene Reporter-News January 1, 1926).

The congestion that Green referred to was the district's greatest dilemma of the 1920s and the school board found itself in an almost constant battle to meet increased demands for more teachers and classroom space. The school board acknowledged the problem as early as 1924, forming a committee to make tentative plans for a building program. Two years later, members of the local chapter of the Lion's Club, a men's business and social organization, studied past enrollment patterns and concluded that "based upon the average increase in attendance for the past four years, the City should provide . . . one ten-room building per year . . ." for the next five years (Abilene School Board Minutes Vol. II:139).

This recommendation served as the basis for the district's building program for the remainder of the 1920s although its scope was somewhat less ambitious than originally planned. Two new schools, Locust and Fair Park, were built in 1927 and 1929, respectively. They were constructed in what was the city's far south and southwest neighborhoods and fulfilled basic needs in areas that were experiencing rapid development. Three existing schools, College Heights, Travis and the High School, were enlarged in those same years. All of these projects, save one, were awarded to David S. Castle. His competitor, Nichols and Campbell, served as architect of the Locust School.



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The rate of growth declined during the 1930s as the local economy cooled down from the frenzied pace of the previous decade. For the school district, it was a time for consolidation, allowing school officials an opportunity to redirect their priorities and to less hurriedly plan for future needs. Better facilities for the black students became an important concern and the district's only major building project of the 1930s was the construction of a modern brick school in the city's only predominantly black neighborhood. It is interesting to note, however, that funding for the school's construction came by way of the federal government and the Works Progress Administration (Abilene Reporter-News March 15, 1936.)

The new school was very important to Abilene's black community and represented an important triumph in efforts to improve educational opportunities for black youths. This struggle began soon after the town's founding. As early as 1885, 15 black students attended local schools. A separate school for blacks opened five years later and its establishment reflected the segregated policies that prevailed until the mid-20th century. The first school for blacks was a small frame building that included all grades. J. L. Allen served as teacher (Roberson 1951:50). This building was used until its replacement with the old College Heights School that was moved in 1921.

Although an improvement over the previous facility, this building was still largely inadequate and conditions remained crowded until the construction of the WPA funded school in 1936. This building served the black community until recent years when local schools were integrated. It is presently used for the local Headstart Program.

WPA monies of the 1930s were also used to fund improvements to other schools in the community including Locust, Travis, Fair Park, Valley View, Alta Vista, Lamar and the High School.

Hardin-Simmons University

By the late 1880s, citizens of Abilene desired to establish an institution for higher learning in their community. In 1888 Judge Henry Sayles approached Reverend G.W. Smith, the pastor of the local Baptist church, and proposed that the Baptists initiate the necessary action. Such prominent Baptist laymen as James H. Parramore, Clabe Merchant, K.K. Legett and Will Young discussed this new prospect, and by 1890, a committee Pastor Smith organized, Attorney Legett and J.S. Williams presented the college proposal to the Sweetwater Baptist Association. Although the president of Baylor University, Dr. R.C. Burleson, opposed the idea of another Baptist college in Texas, the Association approved the request and appointed a committee with the necessary powers to complete the proposition.

The committee accepted an offer of land in Abilene from Otto W. Steffens and Associates. The agreement consisted of a 16 acre plot north of Abilene's original town site, as well as cash contributions totaling \$10,000. K.K. Legett drafted a charter for the school to be named Abilene Baptist College and trustees were appointed, subject to the Sweetwater Baptist Association's approval.

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The cornerstone of the first building of the college was laid on July 4, 1891, and the building was completed in February 1892. Although the city expressed tremendous enthusiasm for the new college, funds for the necessary equipment and staff trickled in slowly. Dr. James B. Simmons, a New York Baptist minister, gave generously to the school, and on behalf of his support, the trustees renamed the institution Simmons College. The foundation agreement between the school and the minister emphasized that the college would be Christian in its teaching and nature but would allow students from different creeds and beliefs the opportunity to enroll.

The first session opened in September 1892 with 90 pupils. Rev. W.C. Friley served as president of the new institution. Simmons College offered classes for elementary and high school students as well as work at the college level. Although many citizens questioned the quality of teaching, everyone boasted of the town's academic accomplishment.

During the presidency of Dr. G.O. Thatcher, successor to Rev. Friley, the college made substantial progress. Courses in literature, music, art and elocution were available. Dr. O.C. Pope was president from 1898 to 1901 and was replaced by Rev. J.C. Hairfield who served until 1902. Under the presidency of Dr. Oscar H. Cooper (1902-1909), a prominent educator of the day, Simmons College added three years to the course of study and offered bachelor of arts degrees. His administration added four new buildings to the campus.

Under Jefferson Davis Sandefer, president from 1909 to 1940, Simmons College experienced growth and development as never before. The student body increased, the plant enlarged and a significant endowment was established. In May 1925, the trustees amended the charter and the college became known as "Simmons University . . . with power to confer degrees . . . to a university of the first class." Once attaining university status in 1925, the school offered master of arts degrees. By the fall of 1927, Simmons University was admitted into the Southern Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges and the American Association of Colleges.

The school also influenced the city's physical development as its location on the northern outskirts of town encouraged the development of new neighborhoods and the construction of new houses between the school and the original town site. College Heights Subdivision is one of several additions surveyed and platted near the institution.

With the Great Depression of the 1930s, Simmons University struggled financially. In the spring of 1934, philanthropists Mr. and Mrs. John G. Hardin of oil rich Burkburnett, made significant contributions to the university. School trustees subsequently voted to change the name of the school to Hardin-Simmons University in recognition of the Hardins' generosity.

As the college grew steadily, it received nationwide academic attention. The university developed into a campus of 40 acres with 12 buildings, including two gymnasiums, a swimming pool, and a president's home. Judge Crane of Sweetwater donated funds to increase the library facility. Friends of the university enlarged the endowment to a sum of \$1.3 million by 1949.

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By September 1949, 25,000 students had enrolled for credit at Hardin-Simmons University and over 4,000 degrees had been conferred. About 75 percent of these students lived within a 100 mile radius of Abilene, but the university also included students from some 20 other states.

Dr. W.R. White succeeded to the presidency on the death of Dr. Sandefer in 1940. Since then, the school has been headed by Dr. Rupert Richardson (1943-53), Dr. Evan Allard Reiff (1953-62), Dr. James H. Landes (1963-66), Dr. Elwin L. Skiles (1966-77) and, since 1977, Dr. Jesse C. Fletcher.

Abilene Christian College

At the turn of the 20th century, A.B. Barret, a Tennessee Church of Christ preacher, dreamed of establishing an institution for higher learning in a West Texas town. As he preached and taught at Southwestern Christian College at Denton, Texas, he decided to start a college for young people to receive religious instruction according to the Church of Christ faith and to be trained in academic fields. After visiting with some leaders of the Church of Christ in Abilene, Ballinger and San Angelo, Barret decided to locate the school in Abilene.

Barret arrived in Abilene on December 23, 1905. After receiving the approval of the local Church of Christ in the summer of 1906, Barret, W.H. Free and others began to draft the charter for the new school. Attorney J.M. Wagstaff filed the charter with the county clerk on September 10, 1906, and the trustees, A.F. McDonald, W.H. Free, T.G. Moore, J.S. Manly and J.P. Sharp, adopted it in November.

Colonel J.W. Childers conveyed his house and five acre tract to Barret at a price substantially below market value. In return, the school became known as the Childers Classical Institute and the home doubled as Barret's residence and a dormitory. After securing enough financial support from West Texas communities, Barret contracted an \$8,000 building to house classrooms that were completed by September 11, 1906 when the college held its opening assembly. A.B. Barret served as the first president and his college classmate, Charles H. Roberson, acted as secretary/treasurer. Childers Classical Institute defined its aims in the first catalog: "This school is destined to give boys and girls such mental and moral training as will fit them for duties of life. We believe that the true need of education is the development of character and of the intellect, and not the memorization of facts."

On opening day, 25 students enrolled in the elementary and high school curriculum even though the course of study extended through two years of college work. During the first session, approximately 92 students enrolled. The initial faculty members were Aileen Cotten (Mrs. T.P. Davidson), Evelyn Carrol, James F. Cox, Edwin F. Hoover, Mamie Rattan and Lucretia Creath.

In 1908 A.B. Barret resigned to become president of Southwestern Christian College in Denton, Texas. H.C. Darden succeeded him, followed by R.L. Whiteside and James F. Cox. With the frequent changes of presidency, the school made little progress until 1912 when Jesse P. Sewell became president, serving for the next twelve years. By this time, the school was known as "Abilene Christian College" even though the name never officially changed

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until 1920. In 1914, it earned junior college accreditation and on September 23, 1919, it attained four year standard senior college accreditation. As the enrollment enlarged to 700, twelve more buildings were constructed on the campus.

Batsell B. Baxter replaced Sewell as president in 1924 and served in that capacity until 1932. Baxter oversaw dramatic changes for the school, as increased enrollment exerted new pressures upon school administrators. The original campus near North First and Kirkwood streets became crowded following Sewell's aggressive building campaign. As a consequence, school leaders deemed it necessary to seek more room--either by expanding onto adjoining property or moving to an entirely new campus altogether.

These early expansion efforts were largely unnoticed or considered insignificant by local civic leaders. However, when the school was approached by other communities that offered both land and financial incentives for the college's relocation, Abilene's business leaders responded and presented the school with a large cash offer. The college's leaders accepted and subsequently purchased a large tract of land east of the original town site, near the old headquarters of the Hashknife Ranch.

The purchase of this property presented school officials a variety of options. Since the new campus would use only a small portion of the land, they decided to survey remaining sections and divide this land into lots and blocks. Sales of these lots would generate revenues for the school and thus ensure financial stability. The plan was ambitious and appeared to satisfy the college's constant struggle for financial security. The scheme possibly would have worked except the stock market crash of 1929 and the ensuing years of depressed economic conditions thwarted the plan.

James F. Cox returned as president in 1932, serving until 1941. During his term, Abilene Christian College suffered from the effects of the Depression, increasing its debt to \$300,000. The unsuccessful real estate scheme depleted the college of much needed funds; however, J.E. McKinzie, Hollis Manly, J.S. Arledge, J.C. Reese and other members of the board of trustees contacted philanthropists Mr. and Mrs. John G. Hardin of Burkburnett, Texas, who subsequently awarded a gift of \$160,000 to the school. Thus cleared of its debt, the college looked toward the future for expansion and growth.

In 1941, Don H. Morris, vice president, was promoted to the presidency advancing the school in size and curricula. In 1944 the college added an agricultural department with a 25 acre experimental farm offering a full degree in agriculture, one of the few denominational colleges to offer this type of training. Students received the bachelor of arts and the bachelor of science degrees in 20 fields of study and Abilene Christian College conferred all teaching certificates law permitted.

In 1969 Cox turned the presidency over to Dr. John Stevens who increased the enrollment and led efforts to change the institution's name to Abilene Christian University. The school is presently undertaking a large building program that dramatically changed the physical character of the campus.

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McMurry College

The initial idea of McMurry College is credited to Dr. J.W. Hunt who in 1914 was appointed to pastor the new St. Paul Methodist Church in Abilene. By 1916, he served as president of the struggling Methodist college at nearby Stamford, Texas, improving the school's financial condition drastically. A fire destroyed the main building in 1918 forcing Dr. Hunt to transfer back to St. Paul's. Nevertheless, his two years at the school convinced him that Abilene should establish a Methodist college.

At first, Dr. Hunt lacked the town's support but he subsequently garnered backing from local businessmen of all denominations. In addition, he secured the support of Bishop W. F. McMurry, presiding bishop of the Methodist conference.

When the Northwest Texas Methodists conference met in 1920, Dr. Hunt discussed his proposal at the session. The members of the Conference voted to establish a college. Abilene was chosen because local citizens pledged to raise \$300,000, donate a 40 acre campus, give perpetual free water rights for the campus and extend the street car line to the campus. Furthermore, the college was named McMurry College after Bishop McMurry. The Methodist board elected Dr. Hunt as president and appointed 39 trustees to serve on the board, although not all held to the Methodist denomination. Horace O. Wooten acted as the first president of the board, Henry James as vice president, and W.J. Fulwiler as secretary/treasurer.

Construction began in April of 1922 on the administration building and dormitories for men and women, and from its very beginning, McMurry College ranked as a Class A junior college in all aspects. The college's first session occurred on September 20, 1923 with 191 students studying in the high school and college departments. It operated as a junior college for its first three years. The institution gained accreditation as a senior college in 1925 when the trustees conferred the bachelor of arts degree. The first seniors graduated in 1926. McMurry continued to meet the requirements of the State Department of Education, the General Education Board of the church, and the Association of Texas Colleges that classified the school as a first class school for the year 1924-25. By 1930, the bachelor of science degree was offered and the master of education in 1951.

Dr. Hunt served McMurry as president until his death in 1934. Dr. O.P. Clark acted as interim president briefly before Dr. C.Q. Smith was named to the post. Dr. Smith increased the enrollment, renovated each building on campus, and guided the college through the financially uncertain years of the 1930s. With Dr. Smith's resignation in 1935, Rev. T. W. Bradham was appointed president but he served for only three years. Dr. Frank L. Turner was his successor.

The modern campus developed under Dr. Harold G. Cooke, president from 1943 to 1958. In 1946 the college housed the records of the four earlier Methodist colleges: Stamford College (1907-18), Clarendon College (1899-1927), Seth Ward College (1910-16) of Plainview, Texas and Western College of Artesia, New Mexico. During the same year, McMurry College offered 11 departments of study and obtained affiliation with the Association of American Colleges. The statement of purpose of McMurry College from 1935 still holds

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true today: "McMurry College is maintained for the purpose of providing for the undergraduate student a Christian atmosphere where he may obtain a liberal or specialized education. The course of study is adopted to afford training for culture and discipline through instruction, harmonious development, and the formation of sound character."

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**F. Associated Property Types**

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**I. Name of Property Type** See text that begins with Continuation Sheet F-1 (Railroads) for a full discussion of the property types associated with the historic context about railroads.

**II. Description**

See text that begins with Continuation Sheet F-1 (Education) for a full discussion of the property types associated with the historic context about education.

**III. Significance**

See Continuation Sheet F-1 (Railroads) or F-1 (Education)

**IV. Registration Requirements**

See Continuation Sheet F-1 (Railroads) or F-1 (Education)

☒ See continuation sheet

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☒ See continuation sheet for additional property types

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### G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

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Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

See text that begins with Continuation Sheet G-1 for a Summary of the Identification and Evaluation Methods used in developing this multiple property listing.

☒ See continuation sheet

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### H. Major Bibliographical References

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See text that begins with Continuation Sheet H-1 for a complete listing of the Major Bibliographical References used in developing this multiple property listing.

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- ☒ State historic preservation office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency

- ☒ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other

Specify repository: Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas  
City of Abilene and Abilene Preservation League, Abilene, Texas

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### I. Form Prepared By

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organization	<u>Hardy-Heck-Moore</u>
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city or town	<u>Austin</u>
date	<u>June, 1989; July, 1990</u>
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state	<u>Texas</u>
zip code	<u>78705</u>



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COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Description

The property type, Commercial Buildings, includes a diverse collection of buildings with varying forms, materials, construction techniques and architectural ornamentation. Extant examples include stores, office buildings, theaters, banks, warehouses and service stations. A total of 267 Commercial Buildings were included in the 1988-89 historic resources survey. This figure represents approximately five percent of the total number of identified historic properties. Without question, the vast majority of these commercial buildings were built in the 1920s, when Abilene experienced tremendous economic growth and prosperity.

Despite their many differences, these buildings share many associative qualities that distinguish them from others in the city and justify their grouping under a single property type. First and foremost, they housed businesses involved in the buying, selling or trading of goods and services, all of which helped make Abilene one of West Texas' most important retail and commercial centers. Some local businesses serviced markets that stretched far beyond the city limits of Abilene and thus are historically significant for much of West Texas and eastern New Mexico. In addition, these buildings are directly associated with the city's most dynamic businessmen who were prominent in Abilene's political, social, educational and cultural circles. Commercial Buildings are also closely linked to the railroad, because virtually all businesses relied heavily on rail service as a means to transport goods to or from their respective buildings. As a consequence, most economic activity occurred in close proximity to the railroad and Commercial Buildings were erected nearby. Much of this development was anticipated and deliberately planned. The original townsite included narrow, deep lots that fronted onto North First, South First and Pine streets, which are adjacent to or intersect with the railroad. These streets still represent the heart of Abilene's commercial center. Economic growth during the early and mid-20th century resulted in the expansion of commercial development along adjoining thoroughfares, such as Cedar, Cypress, Walnut, Oak and Butternut streets, but nonetheless remained within a short distance of the railroad.

Besides their many associative qualities, Commercial Buildings in Abilene share numerous physical attributes. Most of these buildings have a rectangular plan, providing the most efficient yet flexible use of interior space, and are likely to feature masonry construction with brick load bearing walls. Several extant buildings of the 1920s and 1930s utilize reinforced concrete structural systems. Frame buildings with wood siding or stuccoed finish are also seen locally but are less common. Abilene's Commercial Buildings range in size from one to 14 stories but are rarely over two stories

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in height. Most Commercial Buildings abut sidewalks on the front and often share common walls with adjoining buildings (especially among those that house retail businesses), which creates a highly concentrated environment. Canopies and awnings typically extend from the top portion of the first floor over the sidewalks, protecting patrons from adverse weather conditions.

Architectural detailing and ornamentation can vary greatly, depending on the building's age, use and function. Owners of retail establishments, for example, often consider the exterior of their stores as a means to attract attention and typically have rich architectural details applied to their storefronts. Warehouses, on the other hand, are used primarily for storage and distribution purposes and tend to have little noteworthy architectural ornamentation. Of course, exceptions exist, especially among those that housed Abilene's most successful wholesale businesses that sometimes display outstanding craftsmanship and architectural detailing.

Much of the city's historic commercial architecture was built during the boom of the 1920s and can be found within territory roughly bounded by Treadaway Boulevard, North Sixth, Hickory, Elm, and South Fifth streets. This area encompassed the central portion of the original town and remained equally accessible from all points in the city until rapid development and suburban sprawl greatly changed Abilene's physical size during the last three decades. Numerous other Commercial Buildings stand along major arteries such as Butternut, North and South First, and Grape streets, just beyond the core or city center. Isolated Commercial Buildings are found throughout the city's residential neighborhoods.

Owners of Commercial Buildings in Abilene (and elsewhere in the United States) have to deal with pressures and problems that are rarely felt in other parts of the city, and these conditions profoundly impact the overall upkeep and integrity of local historic commercial properties. While many survive, especially in the central business district, other Commercial Buildings have been razed to make way for new buildings or to allow the site to be used as a parking lot. Few blocks in downtown Abilene still claim uninterrupted rows of historic Commercial Buildings, in contrast to the pre-World War II era when such a condition was the rule rather than the exception. Moreover, these same owners often operated shops and stores out of the buildings and, in order to survive in a competitive business environment, have to be sensitive to changing tastes and trends in the merchandise and services that they offered. The need to remain contemporary, fashionable and up to date frequently extended into perceptions regarding the aesthetics and appearance of Commercial Buildings. As a result, periodic remodeling, renovation and "modernization" became common practice, especially after World War II when the automobile, suburban expansion and the subsequent advent of shopping malls led

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to a severe decline in the economic health of the downtown. In response, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s, many local store owners upgraded their business houses; such projects often were not particularly sensitive to historic architectural elements. Common alterations include the application of non-historic exterior finishes (stucco, aluminum), the removal of historic fabric, and the enclosing or replacement of original window and door openings. When the oil boom of the 1970s pumped substantial amounts of money into the local economy, owners of many Commercial Buildings renovated their respective buildings to help "improve" the overall appearance and to demonstrate their increased wealth. The installation of tinted fixed glass windows was a typical change made during this period.

Because the property type, Commercial Buildings, is a such broad category and includes a wide variety of buildings, subtypes have been identified to better understand the many kinds of buildings that fall within this classification. Such categories enable a more in depth analysis to evaluate the relative significance of similar properties. Distinguishing features include use, physical features, stylistic influences and detailing, geographic patterns and periods in which the buildings were erected. Subtypes of Commercial Buildings presented in this submission are Retail Stores, Warehouses, Hotels, Depots and Service Stations. All fit within the broadly defined Commercial Buildings property type, but have attributes that are unique unto themselves.

A description of the physical characteristics as well as a discussion of the historical and architectural significance of each identified subtype follows. Registration Requirements for Commercial Buildings as a property type concludes this section of the nomination. The Registration Requirements describe specific conditions that must be met for an example of any subtype of Commercial Buildings to be nominated to the National Register.

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS: Retail Stores  
Description

Retail stores are, without question, the most common subtype of Abilene's Commercial Buildings. The vast majority are concentrated in the city's central business district, although others, such as neighborhood grocery stores, are found in other sections of the city. As the name connotes, retail stores house businesses that sell goods or provide services in buildings erected solely or primarily for these reasons. This subtype includes dry goods, grocery, clothing, hardware, department and other stores that offer merchandise directly to the consumer.

Abilene's retail stores, as a whole, display a wide variety of stylistic detailing, features and influences but few can be considered as examples of

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"high style" or "academic" architecture. As a consequence, Richard Longstreth's typology provides an effective way to analyze and evaluate the myriad of forms and types of retail stores in the city. Most are either 1- or 2-part commercial blocks, as defined by Longstreth in The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture (1987). One-part Commercial Buildings are 1-story buildings whose fronts include only a single component. Two-part buildings, which are more common, are multi-story buildings with a clearly delineated demarcation between the ground and upper floors. Often the ground level is used for retail purposes and upper floors are used for offices, storage, or living quarters.

Abilene's retail stores have many physical attributes that distinguish them from other local subtypes. Virtually all are rectangular in plan and conform to the size of the lot or lots on which they stand. Retail stores in the downtown are usually row buildings sharing common or party walls. A few retail stores stand as detached, free standing buildings. Some were built that way; others, however, formerly were row buildings but adjoining buildings were razed and replaced with parking lots or newer free standing commercial buildings. The row of floor joist holes or gaps along newly exposed wall surfaces indicates that these historic buildings previously shared party walls.

Most local retail stores are 1- or 2-story buildings with brick load bearing walls, but a small number of buildings are three or four stories in height. The roofs are almost always flat and have tar and gravel as roofing materials. Retail stores have double or single door entrances as well as large fixed windows on the ground floor to display goods and merchandise. A row of transoms above the window and door openings is a common feature of 1-story buildings. Multi-story buildings have regularly spaced windows in the upper floors and these windows typically are double hung with wood sashes.

Exterior stylistic detailing is almost always limited to walls that face the street. Thus, the front elevation of a building in the middle of a block is the only wall that has distinctive architectural detailing. Buildings occupying corner lots, on the other hand, typically have noteworthy ornamentation on both front and side elevations with street exposures. Stylistic detailing is either applied to the exterior surfaces or incorporated into the overall structural design. Detailing is most evident in parapets, window or door treatments, or in the walls. Although features associated with several different architectural expressions are seen on local retail stores, the most common stylistic influences are Classical Revival, Renaissance Revival, Gothic Revival and, to a lesser extent, Spanish Colonial Revival styles.

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Few of Abilene's retail stores remain unaltered since the time of their original construction and such a trend is common throughout Texas and the rest of the country. The very nature of retail businesses requires store owners to be sensitive to evolving tastes among consumers. This desire to stock modern and fashionable goods often spilled over into attitudes about the buildings in which the retail businesses operated. The installation of new windows or doors, or the application of false fronts often was regarded as a way to appear up to date. At the very least, these alterations changed the appearance of retail stores causing consumers and potential customers to take note and, as the store owners hoped, would generate more business. Many of these alterations are severe and compromise the architectural integrity of historic retail stores. The application of stucco or the removal of original windows and doors represents major alterations that in many cases are reversible.

Significance

Retail stores can be eligible for the National Register under Criteria A, B or C. They are representative of Abilene's development into an important retail center in the region (Criterion A) and attracted people from smaller communities throughout central West Texas. Retail stores were an integral part of the city's economy and generated tremendous revenue for store owners who often invested much of their profits back into the community.

Retail stores are also associated with individuals who attained great wealth and prominence from their commercial operations. These men and women became leaders in the community and many served in elected positions on the city council and/or the school board. Several gave liberally to the three private colleges in the city and others contributed to Abilene's physical development. They planned and financed new additions and subdivisions to the city and they also erected other buildings, such as hotels and office buildings, that are prominent landmarks today. As a consequence, retail stores can be eligible under Criterion B.

Retail stores can have architectural significance (Criterion C) and can be noteworthy examples of a particular style, type or form. Since none of Abilene's earliest retail stores survive in an unaltered state, the buildings most likely to be nominated to the National Register for their architectural merits are those built in the 20th century. David S. Castle and Company, the city's most successful architect, designed many of these buildings, and noteworthy examples of his work could be eligible for the National Register under Criterion C.

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COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS: Warehouses

Description

Warehouses comprise another property type closely associated with railroads and Abilene's development into a regional commercial and distribution center. Warehouses are low, sprawling buildings, usually one or two stories in height, that encompass several, if not all, lots in a city block. Because of fire hazards, they are usually constructed with brick or reinforced concrete, although some are frame buildings with wood siding or metal clad exteriors. Flat roofs are common, especially on brick warehouses, but gable roofs can be found on some metal clad buildings. Individual companies and businesses use warehouses to store merchandise. In contrast to retail stores where merchandise is displayed for consumers and a limited inventory is maintained, warehouses are not intended for customers and clients and, therefore, tend to be utilitarian and straight forward in their design. In isolated instances, these buildings have noteworthy architectural detailing and ornamentation. Warehouses typically have small, subdued entrances that are a more functional and less overt architectural features. Awnings and canopies are rarely, if ever, used except on the front entrance. Double hung and casement windows are most common and are small when compared to the display windows and transoms of other types of Commercial Buildings such as retail stores. Railroad tracks are frequently found nearby, extending to warehouse loading docks on secondary elevations. Large, broad openings allow quantities of goods to be brought into or out of the building. Interiors are vast and spacious with limited office space. Detailing, likewise, is limited because of the practical use of these buildings.

Warehouses are closely associated with the railroad and enabled merchants and business to stock raw and finished goods prior to or after rail shipment. These buildings stand in close proximity to the railroad and are serviced by the main line or a secondary spur. Warehouses typically occupy strategic corners that are readily accessible by both the railroad and city streets. Warehouses, especially those of the pre-World War II period, are concentrated near the city's downtown area, ensuring easy access to the local commercial and retail center. Warehouses in Abilene are primarily in the eastern section of the original townsite, an area that extends from North Eighth Street to South Fifth Street.

Because these buildings are rarely used to attract business, warehouses are less likely to have experienced purely aesthetic "facelift remodeling" that retail stores more typically experience. Alterations and additions are completed to make the building more usable with little regard for maintaining the architectural integrity of these buildings. Likely alterations include completely or partially enclosing windows and secondary entrances to protect

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stored goods from the elements or to further safeguard the building and its contents from fire, theft and other hazards.

Significance

Warehouses can be eligible for the National Register under Criteria A, B or C. They are closely linked with the railroad and Abilene's development into the primary commercial and shipping center in central West Texas and, therefore, are important to broad patterns in the history of a large section of the state. Warehouses enable wholesale, manufacturing and retail businesses to store their goods before or after rail shipment and, as a consequence, are an integral component in the local and regional economy. Some of the warehouses in Abilene housed commercial and wholesale ventures that were tremendously successful and served as the base of operations for enterprises that opened branch facilities in cities throughout West Texas. These businesses utilized the railroad since it provided cheap transportation to many previously isolated communities and expanded the trade market.

Warehouses are also associated with many influential business leaders in the community and provided an economic base for these individuals to take prominent roles in Abilene's development. The wealth that these entrepreneurs acquired from their business allowed them to make significant contributions to the city's physical, economic and cultural development. For example, one of Abilene's most successful wholesale merchants erected a 16-story hotel building that remains a prominent physical and architectural landmark in the community. Another was a prominent political leader, serving at various times throughout his civic career on the city council and the school board. Some gave liberally to one of the three colleges founded in Abilene during the late 19th and early 20th century and helped ensure their continued and successful operation. Still others became involved in real estate development, especially during Abilene's boom of the 1920s.

Aesthetic considerations generally were of lesser importance to the owners of warehouses, which tended to be relatively utilitarian and straight forward in design. Nonetheless, these buildings sometimes display outstanding architectural ornamentation and craftsmanship and can be eligible for the National Register under Criterion C. Prominent architects, such as local designer David S. Castle, were hired to build some of the warehouses that would reflect the success and prosperity of the businesses that occupied them. Warehouses with architectural significance are likely to have ornate masonry work in the parapet and window and door detailing, especially on those elevations that faced city streets.

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## COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS: Depots and Railroad-related Structures

Description

Perhaps the most obvious subtype associated with the railroad in Abilene includes depots that the railroads built and maintained. These buildings share many physical characteristics that distinguish them from other subtypes of Commercial Buildings. Depots, both for passengers and freight, are free standing, detached buildings of frame or brick construction and are both parallel and proximate to the railroad tracks. Typically they are found in the heart of the city's downtown along the railroad right-of-way. Depots usually have elongated rectangular plans. Loading docks and/or boarding platforms are common features and provide a means for the loading and unloading of passengers and freight. Extended roof overhangs are another typical element and presumably afforded protection from natural elements. Because only three railroad lines serviced the town, few depots were ever built, as their specialized use created limited demand for their construction. None of Abilene's earliest depots survive; however, their physical appearance is discernible from historic photographs that show box-shaped buildings with expansive gable roofs and board and batten walls. Their replacements are significantly more ornate and have noteworthy details and craftsmanship. Passenger depots, in particular, are likely to have more pretentious, high style, architectural features. The overall size and scale of a depot appear directly related to the amount of traffic, both passenger and freight, to and from the community. Larger cities have grander, more opulent depots.

Interior ornamentation varies greatly, depending on the size, scale and use of the buildings. Passenger depots typically have a large lobby that includes most of the interior floor space. Ticket booths and offices are set to one side. Restaurants, shops and other commercial endeavors often occupy a portion of these buildings. Freight depots, on the other hand, lack significant interior detailing because of their utilitarian function. Offices are common; however, most floor space is reserved for storage purposes to aid in the shipping and receiving of goods and other freight.

Also associated with depots may be infrastructure such as automobile and pedestrian underpasses, retaining walls, and other related structures.

Significance

Depots and railroad-related structures can be significant for listing in the National Register under Criterion A, because of their direct association with the railroads that played a critical role, not only in the town's founding and subsequent development, but also in the settlement of a vast region of West Texas. In both symbolic and physical terms, they represented a link between the railroad and the community. Moreover, they were an integral



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step in the successful operation of the railroad, allowing both passengers and shippers of freight accessibility to rail transportation.

Besides their obvious historical associations, depots and railroad-related structures may have noteworthy architectural detailing and features that can make them eligible under Criterion C. They often are a noteworthy architectural specimens and display outstanding craftsmanship, details and ornamentation. Passenger depots can be among the most architecturally significant buildings in a railroad community such as Abilene and often reflect a desire to make a strong, favorable, first impression on visitors. For example, a finely crafted and ornate passenger depot, or lack thereof, could have a profound influence on the way newcomers, potential clients or investors perceived a town.

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS: Hotels

Description

Hotels comprise yet another sub-grouping of the Commercial Building property type. While sharing many physical characteristics typically associated with retail stores and similar buildings, hotels possess distinctive architectural features that distinguish them from other Commercial Buildings in the city. Because they catered primarily to visitors who arrived by railroad, hotels are relatively close to the tracks and to the depots. Perhaps the most significant aspect of hotels is their specialized use and function which proved critical in design and construction considerations. The first floor, for example, is reserved almost exclusively for retail or office purposes and likely has large display windows and rich architectural ornamentation to draw attention to pedestrian traffic. Upper floors, on the other hand, include rooms that serve as temporary residences, and exterior surfaces typically feature regularly spaced windows with varying amounts of ornamentation and trim, depending on street exposure.

As is true for other subtypes of Commercial Buildings in Abilene, Longstreth's typology provides a useful guide in analyzing and evaluating local hotels. The most common examples are 1- or 2-part commercial blocks or stacked 2- or 3-part vertical blocks (Longstreth 1987). Nevertheless, all local hotels are multi-story buildings and range from two to 14 stories in height. Age is a critical factor in the scale of the hotels. Older hotels are smaller, usually only two or three stories. More recent ones, however, are likely to be larger and grander, as exemplified by the 16-story Wooten Hotel and the 10-story Hilton Hotel.

Age appears to be a critical factor in the type of structural system used for local hotels. Older ones, built between the 1890s and 1920s, have

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load bearing brick walls. Larger buildings of the late 1920s and 1930s utilize steel frame or reinforced concrete construction with a brick veneer.

Abilene's hotels have either a rectangular or a U-shaped plan and typically occupy corner lots with two, ornately detailed, exterior elevations. Hotels are among the most outstanding architectural landmarks in the city and noteworthy architectural detailing is generally seen at the base, usually on the ground and mezzanine floors, where a grand entrance, canopy and rich ornamentation are common. Trim around windows in the upper floors is often decorated with some type of applied architectural detailing. The top floor frequently has a richly ornamented parapet or cornice, especially on larger, more opulent hotels.

The most noteworthy detailing, however, is seen inside the lobby, ballroom and other public rooms. Interior spaces in these areas are likely to be spacious and grand.

## Significance

Hotels can be significant for their historical associations, as well as their architectural merits, and they can be eligible for the National Register under Criteria A, B or C. Hotels are closely associated with Abilene's development into an important retail and distribution center in West Texas (Criterion A). During the late 19th century, when citizens strived for the town to realize its early billing as the "Future Great City of West Texas," the lack of quality hotels was regarded as a major problem. Local newspapers heralded the announcement of the construction of a 3-story brick hotel, the original Windsor, as an important progressive step for all of Abilene. The opening of this and other subsequent hotels generated community enthusiasm and excitement. Hotels are also associated with many past social and cultural celebrations and functions.

Locally important individuals (Criterion B) built and financed Abilene's hotels which stands as testimony of their considerable significance and prominence in the community. In almost every case, these individuals attained their wealth from some other type of business or commercial venture but the local hotel market offered tremendous financial rewards.

Because they important as centers for social, business and cultural activities, hotels were often imposing physical landmarks, decorated with rich architectural detailing and ornamentation. As a consequence, they can be eligible for the National Register under Criterion C. They may represent an important commission of a local architect; this is true for the Hilton and Wooten hotels, which David S. Castle and Company designed. Hotels often

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display outstanding architectural detailing and are among the most noteworthy examples of high style or academic architecture in the community.

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS: Service Stations

Description

Abilene boasts a large number of historic service stations; most are in or near the central business district at the intersections of the busiest streets. As with other Commercial Buildings, they originally housed businesses that offered goods and services and initially resembled retail stores in form, scale and materials. With time, however, the unique and specialized needs of service station owners and attendants encouraged innovative design solutions and the emergence of a new and different type of commercial building.

The oldest extant service stations in Abilene can be classified as derivations or subtypes of retail stores and are typically 2-story brick buildings. Possible factors that influenced or contributed to this common construction technique include the lack of historical and architectural precedents for this property type. Service stations represented an entirely new concept as a building form and initial perceptions that filling stations, as they were called, did not acknowledge that these buildings would eventually have to provide other types of automobile-related retail operations to survive financially. As a consequence, local architects, contractors and builders relied on well established design concepts and erected buildings that resembled conventional Commercial Buildings. The most striking difference, however, occurred on the ground floor, where a large service bay was set within the building. The service bay, always placed nearest the street corner, enabled motorists to enter from either of the two intersecting thoroughfares and thus was the first architectural solution that dealt with the specific needs of service station owners. Such bays typically had pressed metal ceiling tiles and a row of pumps from which gasoline was sold. Large fixed glass windows within the enclosed portion of the first floor provided opportunities for automobile-related goods, such as tires and batteries, to be displayed.

With time, however, Abilene's service stations evolved into an increasingly distinct building form. By the late 1920s and early 1930s, new service stations typically were small 1-story buildings with limited retail and office space. Frame construction became increasingly popular and by the mid-1930s was the preferred method of construction. Garages and repair areas became more prominent, if for no other reason than the rest of the building was reduced in size and scale. Garages were placed to one side of the office. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of "new" service stations in the late 1920s and early 1930s was the open service bay. It provided shade and

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protection for both customers and attendants at the station and covered the gasoline pumps. This overall form with a small office and an open service bay extension remained popular into the post-World War II era.

Several factors contributed to this trend. Station owners and operators discovered that gasoline sales alone were more profitable than initially believed, which reduced needs for retail space. Greater concerns for health--the semi-enclosed bays of the earliest service stations did not provide particularly good ventilation--led to the open service bays. Perhaps most significantly, the expanded role of gasoline refiners and distributors at the retail level resulted in more innovative, although increasingly standardized, designs. Service stations began to be perceived as a marketing tool and uniform building designs could be used to promote a particular company.

Detailing on these service stations varied greatly as a whole, although those built for a particular oil company tended to be more uniform in overall design, form and ornamentation. The Spanish Colonial Revival style exerted perhaps the strongest influence on the aesthetics and architectural detailing of Abilene's service stations of the late 1920s and 1930s. Stuccoed exteriors, flat roofs, and red tile decoration were common architectural elements linked closely with the style. Some stations displayed features generally associated with bungalow architecture, including exposed rafter ends and low pitched gabled or hipped roofs. Other local service stations borrowed from Georgian Revival or Moderne styles.

Although a large number of the "early" and "new" service stations survive, many are no longer used in their original capacity. Changes in the petroleum industry and in consumer practices since 1973 caused oil companies and others in the business to rethink the concept of service stations. Older, pre-1973 stations were replaced, remodeled, sold or left unoccupied. Because they offered ample space for parking, vacated service stations attracted many retail businesses that remodeled, in varying degrees, the buildings. The most common physical change was the removal of gasoline pumps. Other changes included the "permanent" enclosure of the open bay end of the garage/repair area.

Service stations typically occupy lots at the city's busiest and most active thoroughfares. Such lots were crucial to the profitable operations of service stations because it gave them high visibility and exposure to two streets. These same factors, however, contribute to the increasing threat of the extinction of historic service stations. Some have been demolished and replaced because the valuable properties on which they sat were prime locations for redevelopment.

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Significance

Service stations' significance stems principally from associations with broad trends and patterns in history. They are representative of a fundamental change in society as Americans embraced the automobile which brought about the decline in the importance of the railroad. This "love affair" with the car, social historians have written, not only changed the pace of society, but also the built environment. Service stations are one of the first and most visible manifestations of the automobile era and are often overlooked as important historic resources.

Local service stations provide a vivid illustration of the shift from vernacular to popular architecture that has been pervasive in 20th century American society, and can be eligible for the National Register under Criterion C. Local residents designed, built, and owned Abilene's first service stations. By the late 1920s, however, local input and control began to wane as oil companies increasingly dictated the form and appearance of service stations built in Abilene.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the National Register, a commercial building must be at least 50 years old and retain enough of its architectural integrity to evoke its date of construction or period of significance. A commercial building should maintain its original facade and/or fenestration, as well as its exterior finish. Superficial and easily reversible changes, such as the covering of transoms or the removal of signs, are less important than major remodeling or additions that can severely alter a building's historic character. Physical changes completed more than 50 years ago sometimes are important in their own right and can represent the architectural evolution of a building over time. An example might be a frame building constructed in the 1910s but altered in the 1930s with the application of a brick veneer to the front. If essentially unchanged since that time, such an alteration may not necessarily be intrusive to the building's integrity and could be regarded as an architecturally significant feature.

Commercial Buildings can be eligible for the National Register under Criteria A, B or C. Those being considered for designation under Criterion C must be virtually unaltered and retain their historic integrity to a high degree. They can be outstanding examples of a particular style or type, or display noteworthy craftsmanship or detailing. If important or distinguishing architectural elements are changed, modified or removed, the building cannot be considered for National Register designation under Criterion C.

Commercial Buildings with strong historical associations should retain enough of their integrity to be recognizable to their period of significance.

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For example, a warehouse that was the headquarters of a company that played a vital role in the economic development of a community need not be unaltered but should appear much as it did when the company used the building. Most but not all of the building's architectural fabric should survive in a relatively intact state. Commercial Buildings can possess architectural significance if they maintain their integrity and most important physical features.

RESIDENCES

Description

Residences comprise Abilene's most common property type and include single family dwellings, duplexes, and other domestic buildings. Approximately 90 percent of the buildings recorded in the 1988-89 historic resource survey of the city are residences erected between 1881 and 1945. This period spans a time that is particularly important in American history, as Abilene and the rest of the nation experienced an explosion of ideas regarding residential architectural design. Unlike previous eras, architectural styles and preferences were subject to change at a pace that was much faster than ever before which, combined with rapid population growth and increased economic prosperity, resulted in the construction of a myriad of residential architectural forms.

Such a pattern characterizes pre-1945 Abilene, and a variety of styles and forms can be found throughout the city. Examples and trends are described in more detail following these introductory paragraphs. Generally speaking, however, the city's residential architecture can be divided into two periods. Those that are older, built before World War I, typically reflect Victorian architectural traditions, with strong vertical lines, steeply pitched roofs and varying degrees of elaborate exterior detailing, finishes and materials. Residential buildings erected between the two world wars, on the other hand, often have low pitched roofs, wide expansive porches and a strong horizontal emphasis. Detailing is more subdued than that associated with Victorian traditions but still can demonstrate noteworthy craftsmanship. Of course, such generalizations simplify the diversity of styles and forms of residences built in both periods.

Despite their many differences, Abilene's domestic buildings, as a whole, display many common physical traits that distinguish them from other property types. The vast majority are detached, free standing buildings set back from the sidewalk and street, in sharp contrast to commercial buildings of downtown. Yards surrounding residences are used for landscaping purposes and provide opportunities for owners to plant trees, shrubbery, gardens and

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other vegetation to satisfy their personal tastes. One- and 2-story residences are most common, although a handful of 2 1/2- and 3-story examples can be found. Wood frame dwellings are dominant and have wood siding, stucco or brick veneer exterior finishes. Many of Abilene's grander, stylized houses have load bearing walls with brick or hollow tile. During the 1930s and 1940s, ashlar cut stone became a popular building material, especially on smaller, more modest buildings. Architectural elements such as porch, door and window trim frequently demonstrate noteworthy workmanship and display detailing that reveals stylistic influences. In fact, these features often are determining factors in classifying local residences as examples of a particular subtype. Roofs on domestic buildings, unlike those that are flat and obscured by parapets on commercial and institutional buildings such as schools, churches and halls, are prominent and distinctive elements and often are indicative of a specific architectural style or form.

Most local residences have some type of outbuilding nearby. Unlike dwellings in surrounding rural landscapes that typically have numerous ancillary buildings such as barns, sheds, and coops, those in the city generally have only a single outbuilding. Wood frame garages are most common and often are minor, relatively insignificant buildings with little or no noteworthy architectural features. Several of Abilene's grander dwellings have garages with detailing and materials similar to that of main houses. Many of these same garages have second floor apartments for domestic helpers or for renters, thus providing a secondary source of income.

The condition of Abilene's historic dwellings varies greatly, depending on the wealth and resources of each respective owner and, to a lesser extent, on the city's economic health and prosperity. Owners of domestic buildings generally experience less pressure to modernize than those who, for example, own commercial buildings. Unlike the latter, who often used their buildings as a means of advertising their businesses, the former group made changes and alterations primarily for personal reasons rather than economic necessities. Houses in lower income neighborhoods, northeast and southeast of downtown, are more likely to be altered and in poor state of repair because aesthetic considerations were secondary and less significant when basic family needs had to be met. Areas in close proximity to the downtown or along secondary commercial arteries, such as North and South First, Hickory and Pine streets, often have succumbed to developmental concerns and are more likely to have parking lots or new buildings placed on sites that historic dwellings previously occupied. Zoning and urban planning efforts, however, have generally been successful in preserving neighborhoods in older parts of the city. Booms in the local economy during the 1920s, 1940s, and 1970s dramatically increased the number of razed or relocated historic residences that new buildings subsequently replaced. Conversely, recessions of the 1960s

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and 1980s saw fewer houses demolished although a greater number were vacated or remodeled.

While assessing Abilene's historic residential architecture, many broad trends and patterns were observed in the types and extent of alterations to historic houses. The prevailing dry climate helped preserve many wood porches, and aluminum siding is not as common as in more humid areas closer to the Gulf Coast. The installation of clear storm windows is popular; however, they often are placed over original wood sash windows, thus maintaining important historic fabric. The wood sash windows in other dwellings have been replaced with aluminum or other metal sash windows. Based upon observations of historic photographs, the roofs on most of Abilene's houses originally had wood shingles but asphalt or composition shingling is most common.

More than any other local property type, residences display the greatest range of stylistic influences. This diversity warrants the establishment of subtypes to better understand architectural trends and noteworthy examples of the many styles and forms seen in Abilene. These subtypes allow for a more effective method of evaluating, nominating and justifying historic residences for listing in the National Register. The subtypes shed light on Abilene's overall property and physical development. Moreover, they demonstrate the skill and diversity of local builders, contractors and architects and also show how these individuals interpreted prevailing architectural forms and traditions to satisfy local tastes and preferences. The subtypes defined in this submission are Bungalows, Prairie School-influenced houses, Vernacular houses, Tudor Revival houses and other forms and types. Two subtypes, Bungalows and Prairie School-influenced houses, are the most common in Abilene. As a consequence, they best define the city's historic residential character and are the most significant.

The subtypes listed above should not be considered the final word on Abilene's historic residential architecture. As more information is uncovered and architectural historians further refine their knowledge and typology of domestic buildings, revisions should be made.

Each of the subtypes are identified and described in greater detail. These discussions are limited only to Descriptions, as required by the National Park Service. The Significance and Registration sections of Residences are presented after discussions of each subtype.

## RESIDENCES: Bungalows

Description

More than any other architectural expression, the bungalow characterizes Abilene's historic housing stock, and examples abound in virtually every



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section of pre-1930 Abilene. This house form dates as early as 1917 and remained popular until the outbreak of World War II, an era that spans the city's most substantial period of growth and physical development. As a consequence, countless variations exist that reflect the distinguishing traits of a particular builder, contractor or architect, or the personal preferences of individual home owners.

Abilene's earliest bungalows differ substantially from later versions and typically are larger and more substantial in size and scale, utilize a wider range of construction materials and display a higher level of craftsmanship. Despite these differences, however, all bungalows have many physical features that distinguish them from other domestic architectural styles or types.

Perhaps the most distinctive element of a bungalow is its horizontal massing and form. The roof, regardless of its type or shape, has a low pitch with extended eaves that makes the house appear lower and closer to the ground, thus reinforcing the building's horizontal emphasis. The eaves almost always have exposed rafter ends; triangular brackets and decorative beams are common in gable ends.

The bungalow typically is a 1- or 1 1/2-story building, although 2-story versions are not uncommon locally. Wood frame construction is preferred, with horizontal wood siding or brick veneer applied as exterior sheathing materials.

Regardless of its size or exterior finish, the bungalow has a porch that displays details identifying a house as an example of this subtype of Residences. Indeed, the porch provides a way to classify the many variants of bungalows (McAlester and McAlester 1986:452-463) and are described in more detail later in this section. Nevertheless, a bungalow porch extends across a portion of or the entire breadth of the front. The porch has squared columns, usually of wood but sometimes of brick, that are tapered and typically rest on pedestals. Stoops leading to the porch and main entrance are common, especially on earlier versions that often have cast stone urns placed on stoops and pedestals as decorative elements. The porch is large and expansive and provides a comfortable transition into the interior. The primary entrance, set within the porch, usually is a single doorway that is broad in its overall proportions. The door often has decorative elements that are suggestive of craftsman traditions such as a small narrow horizontal bar with triangular dentil-like supports beneath a row of lights in the door.

Windows on a bungalow typically are double hung with wood sashes. The upper sash sometimes has a row of vertical mullions, a detail often repeated

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in screens placed over the windows. A few of the earlier bungalows have front windows arranged in a tripartite configuration with a squared, fixed, central window and narrow double hung windows on each side. Occasionally a fixed transom with small squared lights extends over this tripartite window arrangement or the fixed central window.

Although a wide variety of bungalows are found in all residential sections of Abilene, this popular domestic form can be divided into three subgroups: front gable, side gable, and cross gable bungalows. Front gable bungalows are the most common and, as the name implies, include buildings with gable roofs that face the front. Some have a secondary gable, of a pitch similar to that of the main roof, that includes the porch area. Others have a single gable roof with the porch set partially within the gable. Cross gable bungalows have gables that intersect at right angles, while side gable bungalows are those that have gable roofs that open on side elevations.

Most bungalows have some type of outbuilding located behind the residence. Because bungalows were built in the automobile era, garages are the most common ancillary building, and display varying degrees of architectural detailing and features. Some are large buildings with ornamentation similar to that of the main house and often have a second floor apartment. Such examples are more likely to be found adjacent to older bungalows. Other garages, however, are small and simply detailed and are used only to provide protection for cars.

**RESIDENCES: Prairie School-influenced Houses**  
Description

Prairie School-influenced houses are another common subtype of Residences in Abilene and are distinguished by their low pitched roofs and strong horizontal lines. These buildings were built primarily for Abilene's elite and were popular during the 1920s and early 1930s. Because the city's wealthiest and most prominent citizens occupied them, Prairie School-influenced houses are among the largest and most pretentious domestic buildings in Abilene. They are not as common as bungalows but are important in defining Abilene's architectural character and historic housing stock.

As their name implies, Prairie School-influenced houses display elements associated with, but are not pure examples of, Prairie School architecture. They lack the attention to detail, craftsmanship and overall quality of design typical of high style examples. However, they have the strong horizontal emphasis, expansive porches, broad eaves and low lying roofs associated with the Prairie School style. Many of Abilene's Prairie School-influenced houses could be considered as examples of the American Foursquare but the latter is

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considered a derivation of the Prairie School style (McAlester and McAlester 1986:444).

A typical Prairie School-influenced house in Abilene is 2-stories with a brick faced exterior and a wood frame or a hollow tile structural system. The house's form is box like with a low pitched hipped roof and wide extended eaves. The facade rarely is symmetrical but often appears balanced with no setbacks or projections except for the porch. An off center dormer with a low pitched hipped roof is another common element.

As is true for other domestic buildings in Abilene, the porch on a Prairie School-influenced house is a prominent architectural feature and displays some of the most noteworthy detailing and craftsmanship. The typical Prairie School-influenced house has a 1-story porch with large columns that are squared and constructed of brick. Many of these supports have small tapered caps that visually lighten or suspend the massive and strong horizontal emphasis of the porch roof. The porch extends across the entire front and usually continues beyond the house's central massing to make a porte cochere.

Although wall surfaces on a typical Prairie School-influenced house are straight forward in design, detailing in and around windows and doors is often rich and varied. The main entrance, for example, usually includes a single door and sidelights. The door will often appear to be somewhat short and squatty because of its broad proportions. The door and sidelights typically have glazing with beveled and leaded glass. Windows that are double hung may have similar glazing in the upper sashes and are often paired and have cast stone sills and lintels.

Most Prairie School-influenced houses have a 1- or 2-story garage apartment to the back of their respective lots. These outbuildings typically display detailing similar to that seen on the main house and are important buildings in their own right.

RESIDENCES: Vernacular Houses

Description

The subtype Vernacular Houses includes a wide variety of domestic buildings in Abilene. Generally, they are modest in size, scale and ornamentation, especially when compared to other local buildings with high style or academic architectural features. Most vernacular residences are 1-story frame buildings with some type of horizontal wood siding. Weatherboard is particularly common. Many of these dwellings utilize traditional plans and forms, and are often described as examples of folk architecture. The vast majority stand in Abilene's older neighborhoods and are limited, to a great

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extent, to territory within the original town site or early additions and subdivisions. Unlike high style residences which are the homes of Abilene's elite, individuals and families of more modest means occupy vernacular houses. As a consequence, vernacular buildings are subject to different kinds of pressures and are less likely to be found in a completely unaltered condition. These buildings typically are changed in varying degrees over a long period of time, depending on the resources of their owners. Often, vernacular houses are enlarged to meet the needs of growing families, in contrast to wealthier families which are more likely to build completely new residences. Other common changes to vernacular houses include the installation of new porches, the replacement of original doors and windows, and the application of synthetic siding over original exterior finishes.

Stylistic detailing often is a useful tool in determining the estimated date of construction of a vernacular residence; however, such a method fails to provide an effective system for evaluating and grouping the many kinds of vernacular buildings in Abilene. The plan and overall form of the house, on the other hand, are significantly more useful. The major subgroups of local vernacular houses are L-plan, modified L-plan, shotgun and 2-room houses, and each has its own distinctive traits and physical attributes.

L-plan houses were built locally from the 1880s until about 1910. As the name suggests, this vernacular house form has a plan that is shaped like the letter "L." A front wing (the base of the "L") projects from the core or main body of the house and typically has a front facing gable roof. A pent roof is a common element in the front gable end of many local examples. The main section of the house is parallel to the street in its orientation and has a side gable roof. A porch extends across the front of this section and terminates at the front projecting wing. The porch typically has wood floors and three bays with turned wood supports. The L-plan house is common throughout Texas and most have jigsaw ornamentation, such as brackets, on the porch. Few local examples have such detailing and instead have smaller amounts of decorative elements.

The modified L-plan house somewhat resembles the L-plan house. Both have a front projecting wing and were built roughly during the same period of time. However, they are a distinct subgroup of vernacular residences. The most striking differences of the modified L-plan house are the longer and deeper plan and the hipped or pyramidal roof. The core of the house is box like in form with a square-shaped plan. A larger steeply pitched roof caps this section. Small gable roofed wings extend from the front and also on a side elevation. These wings give the building an asymmetrical form.

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The porch wraps around the front to the side wing and typically has turned wood or Doric-like supports. The main entrance opens from the center of the core which suggests that the house has a central hallway that extends the depth of the house. The entrance is usually a single door and often has a large oval light with beveled glass. Sidelights and a transom typically frame the doors. The modified L-plan house has double hung windows that are broader in proportion than those on other vernacular buildings, such as L-plan houses.

The shotgun is one of the most distinctive vernacular house forms in Abilene. It was popular locally from the 1910s through the 1930s. Most are in the eastern half of the original townsite, in the northeast quadrant within Abilene's predominantly black neighborhoods. The shotgun has a rectangular plan and is one room wide and two to four rooms deep. Its orientation, therefore, is perpendicular to the street. A typical shotgun in Abilene has a front facing gable roof and board and batten walls. A shed roof porch is common and it provides protection for the single door front entrance. Windows typically are double hung with wood sashes and 1/1 or 4/4 lights.

The 2-room house is yet another common vernacular house form in Abilene. Like the shotgun, it is small in size and has a rectangular plan. However, its orientation is parallel to and not perpendicular to the street. This house form is two rooms wide and one room deep and has a side gable roof. The porch typically has a shed roof and extends the entire front elevation. A 2-room house can have a 3- or 4-bay front. A 3-bay version has a central single door and windows in the outer bays. The other version, on the other hand, has two single doorways in the inner bays.

## RESIDENCES: Tudor Revival Houses

Description

Tudor Revival houses are another common house form in Abilene that gained popularity during the late 1920s and 1930s when the community experienced tremendous growth and prosperity. As a consequence, numerous examples still stand. Most are in later (1925-1940) additions to the city, especially in neighborhoods southwest of the original townsite. Because they were built in large numbers, Tudor Revival houses in Abilene display great diversity in size, scale and level of craftsmanship. Nevertheless, they share many common physical attributes that enable them to be grouped as a separate subtype of Residences.

Tudor Revival houses are derived from Tudor architecture of England and represent a romantic interpretation of this old English building tradition. The most distinctive characteristic of a Tudor Revival house is its steeply pitched roof. In most cases, the roof has cross gables, although the side rather than the front gable caps the building's core. Decorative half

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timbered gable ends on the front and sides are common on similarly styled buildings throughout Texas and the rest of the United States but are not typical to the Abilene version. The walls are usually brick veneer, covering the wood frame construction. A small number incorporate petrified wood or stone elements in the brick walls. Stucco or ashlar stone is sometimes used as an exterior finish.

The typical Tudor Revival house has a finely crafted chimney that often is placed prominently on the front elevation and has multiple shafts and patterned brickwork. The porch and front entrance are secondary architectural features, unlike those on bungalows or on Prairie School-influenced houses, and typically have round archways. Cast stone trim is sometimes used as a decorative treatment around door and window openings. Double hung or casement windows are common but regardless of the type, small window panes are almost always used.

As is true for other more high style residential architectural forms, Tudor Revival houses are more likely to have important outbuildings nearby. Two-story garage apartments are common, typically display detailing similar to or suggestive of that seen on the main house.

RESIDENCES: Other Forms and Types  
Description

The vast majority of Abilene's historic residential buildings fall within four principal subtypes (Bungalows, Prairie School-influenced Houses, Vernacular Houses and Tudor Revival Houses); however, others in the city do not. These houses exhibit any of a number of stylistic influences and they comprise a very small percentage of identified historic houses that makes it difficult to justify the development of separate subtypes for each of the many other architectural forms. Nevertheless, several are noteworthy examples of other architectural styles or forms and should not be overlooked.

The Spanish Colonial Revival style enjoyed a degree of popularity in Abilene during the 1920s and 1930s. A house with this stylistic influence is either a 1- or 2-story building with a low pitched gable roof. The most distinctive features include red tiled work on the roof, stucco exterior veneer and round arched openings.

Classical Revival houses date to the early 20th century and typically are in older neighborhoods. These houses borrow heavily from Greek and Roman architectural precedents. The typical Classical Revival house in Abilene is a 1 1/2- or 2-story frame building with 1- or 2-story portico on the front. Classically inspired columns with Ionic, Corinthian or Composite capitals are common. Entablatures with molded cornices and dentils are also typical. The

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front entrance is a prominent architectural element and includes a single or double doorway with sidelights and transoms. Beveled glazing is often used.

## Significance

Residences can be significant for their historical associations as well as for their architectural merits; therefore, they can be eligible for the National Register under Criteria A, B or C. Residences with historical significance can be indicative of broad trends in local history (Criterion A) and can be representative of periods of growth in the local economy. For example, as Abilene consolidated its position as a wholesale and distribution center in the region, many people moved to the city including wholesalers, retailers, clerks, laborers and even cattlemen and oil operators. The prosperity that followed resulted in the construction of many new houses and the development of new neighborhoods that expanded the city's physical area.

Residences can also be associated with individuals who were important in local history (Criterion B). In this case, these people should be directly involved with Abilene's wholesale and distribution economy. An example would be the residence of an individual who owned and operated a wholesale business that made important contributions to the local economy. Residences with these kinds of associations take on even greater significance if the buildings in which their commercial enterprises operated are no longer stand. These residences, therefore, are the sole surviving physical link to these individuals.

Many residences are noteworthy for their architectural significance (Criterion C) and can be outstanding examples of domestic architectural design or craftsmanship. Prominent local architect David S. Castle and his firm designed homes for many of Abilene's wealthiest and most successful citizens, and these buildings often are architectural landmarks in the community. Residences can also be significant because they are good, relatively unaltered examples of a common house form or type.

## REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Residential properties can be considered for nomination to the National Register if they are at least 50 years old and retain a significant amount of their architectural integrity. They should be recognizable to their period of significance which, in most cases, is the date of construction. To be listed in the National Register, a residential building must meet at least one of the four National Register Criteria for Evaluation.

Many of Abilene's historic dwellings are nominated under Criterion C as noteworthy examples of an architectural style, type or method of construction. Physical integrity is a key element in evaluating properties in this category,

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and a building's exterior detailing should appear almost exactly as it did when originally constructed. While it is inevitable that architectural fabric deteriorates over time, restoration, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts should be sensitive to a dwelling's historic character and should utilize shapes, forms and materials that are indistinguishable from original detailing. The installation of historically inappropriate elements can detract from a building's integrity and, therefore, make it ineligible for the National Register. Common alterations that can compromise a building's integrity include the replacement of wood sash windows with modern metal sash windows, the installation of wrought iron supports and/or a concrete porch floor, or the application of vinyl, asbestos or aluminum siding over original wood siding. The removal and non-replacement of architecturally significant details can also compromise a dwelling's historic integrity and is seen most dramatically on Vernacular Houses and Bungalows.

Properties nominated under Criterion A or B are those with strong historical associations, including direct links with important trends and events in the past and associations with individuals who have been historically significant. It is important, however, to establish the relative significance of these historical factors and how they are associated with nominated properties. For example, a building cannot be nominated merely because it was the residence of an important and influential individual in Abilene's business community. A strong argument must describe his or her accomplishments and how that person contributed to local history. Also, that person must have used such a property when significance was achieved and/or be the residence most closely associated with that individual. The dwelling need not be a particularly noteworthy example of an architectural style or must it retain its architectural integrity to the degree a property being nominated under Criterion C must achieve. However, it must retain enough of its integrity to be recognizable to its period of significance.

Outbuildings of residential properties often exhibit noteworthy architectural features and, therefore, can possess architectural significance. Typical local examples include those outbuildings associated with Prairie School-influenced houses and bungalows that display detailing similar to the main property. To be classified as a contributing element, an outbuilding must be an important component on a property and retain much of its original or historic fabric. The building must be substantial enough in size and scale to be perceived as a separate building independent of the main house. The most common examples are the 2-story garage/apartments behind many Prairie School-influenced houses. Alterations less than 50 years old, such as the installation of modern garage doors or the replacement of wood sash windows, can have a negative effect on the outbuilding's overall integrity and may warrant its classification as a Noncontributing element, especially if the



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main house is not as severely altered. Outbuildings that are less than 50 years old lack historic integrity and are classified as Noncontributing.

## CHURCHES

### Description

Organized religious groups build Churches that are intended for use as places of worship. Churches are in all sections of the city, but are most common along major streets and arteries that extend through residential neighborhoods. Although the most recently published telephone book lists more than 120 church groups, only a small number of historic churches survive and are inventoried in the 1988-89 historic resources survey of Abilene.

This property type includes a diverse collection of buildings. Most, however, are relatively large in size and scale, especially when compared to single family residences that typically surround churches. The majority occupy corner lots, and such a pattern, along with their larger scale, makes them prominent physical landmarks in the community. Churches in Abilene display a broad range of detailing; however, architectural ornamentation and stylistic influences provide the most effective means of grouping and evaluating the many kinds of Churches in Abilene.

The style that exerted the most profound influence on the design of local Churches is the Gothic Revival, popular from the 1920s through the 1950s. A distinctive feature of this style is the bell tower at one of the front corners. The tower, the tallest element of the church, rises above the roof that covers the main sanctuary and typically has pointed or ogee arched openings. The main entrance usually is at the base of the tower. Battlements and crenelation are common decorative features and typically are of light colored cast stone or terra cotta that contrasts with the dark colored brick walls. Other details associated with the Gothic Revival style included lancet stained glass windows and decorative, nonstructural buttresses.

Other historic Churches in Abilene display details and characteristics suggestive of Classical Revival architecture. This style, in contrast to the Gothic Revival, is more symmetrical in composition. Pedimented porticos with free standing or attached columns or pilasters are common. Entrances are usually centrally located on the front. Window openings are rectangular and often have flat arched lintels with keystones.

The Gothic and Classical Revival styles are the most common type of high style detailing seen on local Churches but the majority identified in the historic resources survey are vernacular buildings with little or no academic

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stylistic features. Buildings in this subgroup typically have simple rectangular plans and front facing gable roofs. Frame construction is preferred, and stucco, stone or brick veneers are used as the exterior finish. Windows are fixed or double hung, and stained or art glass lights are common.

Significance

Churches, as a property type, are associated with the historic context, the "Railroad and Abilene's Development into a Regional Wholesale and Distribution Center, 1881-1939," and they are an integral part of the city's historical development. Officials for the Texas and Pacific Railroad designated certain lots for Churches when Abilene was originally surveyed in 1881, providing evidence for this argument. These designations demonstrate that town founders recognized the supportive role of Churches in local society, as Churches fulfilled religious, spiritual and social needs of citizens who came to Abilene and contributed to its growth and prosperity.

Although they are important social and cultural landmarks in the city, Churches are most likely to be eligible for listing in the National Register for their architectural significance (Criterion C). They may be an outstanding example of a style or type, display noteworthy craftsmanship, or represent the work of an important architect or designer.

Vernacular Churches are likely to be smaller than high style Churches, which typically have large congregations and thus greater financial resources available for building purposes. This trend is common not only in Abilene, but also in virtually every other similarly sized community in Texas, because church facilities are often regarded as symbols of the congregations that use them. Groups whose members include the town's wealthiest and most prosperous citizens often erected more majestic and stylish Churches.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Churches are nominated to the National Register primarily for their architectural merits (Criterion C) and they often display noteworthy stylistic detailing and features. To be eligible, a church must be 50 years or older and retain its original exterior finish and distinguishing architectural ornamentation. Exterior facades covered with non-historic materials or the removal of important details can have a profound negative impact on the building's historic appearance. Doors and windows should be originals and not replacements, although the installation of non-historic stained glass windows rarely detracts from a church's historic character. Tinted glass lights, on the other hand, can compromise the building's integrity, especially if the property is being considered for individual nomination. Clear protective lights can be placed over stained glass windows without compromising the building's integrity. Ideally, a church should be unaltered with no

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additions; however, if a recent building program has resulted in the construction of, for example, a new education wing, the addition should be unobtrusive and not a dominant element of the property. The addition must be compatible and not have a great impact on the church's historic character; thus, the building's overall integrity is maintained.

A church can be nominated to the National Register for its historical associations (Criterion A or B) but is not considered for such distinction if its historical significance is derived from the fact that it represents the congregation of a particular denomination or its members included locally significant and influential citizens. A strong argument must be made to demonstrate how the church played an important role in Abilene's development into a regional wholesale and distribution center. For a church being nominated solely for its historical associations, architectural integrity remains an important consideration but is not as critical as those being nominated under Criterion C. Nevertheless, the building should still be recognizable to the time it achieved its historical significance.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Description

Although few in number, Public Buildings, as a property type, include some of Abilene's largest and most important structures. Their distinctive physical traits and, more importantly, their associative qualities distinguish them from other property types in the community. The kinds of structures that fall into this category include courthouses, jails, post offices, government office buildings, fire stations, libraries and municipal auditoriums. All were erected with public monies and were intended for local, state or federal governmental groups and agencies.

A Public Building in Abilene typically is grand in scale, especially when compared to nearby non-public structures, and almost always is two or more stories in height. A building in this category occupies a prominent and highly visible site and usually stands at a street corner or encompasses most, if not all, of a city block. Masonry exteriors are quite common and are typically of brick that is either a veneer or load bearing. Most Public Buildings are in the city's central business district; fire stations, on the other hand, are in mixed or predominately residential areas.

Architectural ornamentation and stylistic detailing can vary greatly, depending on the intended use and period of construction. Because a Public Building is an important symbol to the entire community, such a structure typically is more stylish and is designed by an architect. The style that is

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used reflects fashionable and widely accepted trends in public architecture. The 1913-15 Taylor County Courthouse, for example, was built in an era when the Classical Revival style was popular throughout the nation. This style was a fitting and appropriate symbol because both the architectural style and the philosophical concepts behind the laws interpreted within were based upon Greek and Roman ideals. During the 1930s, when Abilene and the rest of the nation experienced a period of uncertainty and society and the role of government changed dramatically, a new architectural expression (Art Deco) gained popularity and was used frequently on large scale projects such as a governmental building. This style, modern and unprecedented, was representative of a hope for better times in the future. The 1931 jail in Abilene displays Art Deco detailing.

Significance

Public Buildings can have historical and architectural significance and can be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A or C. They are grouped under the historic context "The Railroad and Abilene's Development into a Wholesale and Distribution Center in West Texas, 1881-1939" because their construction is attributed to the establishment of rail service to the community and the resulting growth that the railroad brought. The decision to move the county seat to Abilene, for example, is directly linked to the railroad, as county residents expressed their desire for the seat of government to be near the railroad. The fact that the Texas and Pacific Railway Company donated land for use as the courthouse square further reinforces the interrelationship between the railroad and the county government. Other Public Buildings were constructed as Abilene developed into one of West Texas' largest and most important cities. Fire stations were built in new neighborhoods that were established in the 1920s.

Besides their historical associations, Public Buildings can be important architectural landmarks in the community. They often display high style architectural ornamentation and can be outstanding examples of a certain style. And they often exhibit noteworthy craftsmanship and design qualities.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Public Buildings can be representative of broad patterns in local history (Criterion A) but they must be directly associated with Abilene's development into a regional wholesale and distribution center. The county courthouse, for example, was erected in Abilene because the railroad went through the city and bypassed Buffalo Gap, the original county seat. It is highly unlikely that county commissioners would have decided to move the county seat if Abilene did not have a railroad. Public Buildings can also be significant and considered for National Register distinction if a locally

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important historical event took place in such a structure. However, that event must be related to the historic context.

Theoretically, Public Buildings can be associated with an important individual (Criterion B) if that person attained historical significance in connection with a Public Building. Such an occurrence is not likely because a Public Building by definition is associated with the community at large and not necessarily with an individual. A single or group of persons may have led efforts to have a Public Building erected but funds for its construction was publicly financed and its intended purpose was geared toward large groups.

Because Public Buildings often were, and are, important symbols to the community, they typically are prominent architectural landmarks and thus are usually considered for National Register distinction under Criterion C. They may represent important commissions of an architect whose career benefitted greatly from the design of the structure. Architectural significance can also be achieved by the structure being an outstanding example of a style or type. In order to eligible under this criterion, integrity is a crucial factor and the building must retain most of its architectural features. Historic fabric must be maintained, and additions and alterations cannot detract from the structure's overall historic character.

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## EDUCATIONAL BUILDINGS

### Description

Historic Educational Buildings, unlike Commercial Buildings or Residences, is a local property type that includes a relatively small number of buildings that are architectural, historical and cultural landmarks in Abilene that help define the city's claim as an education center in West Texas. The property type is named Educational Buildings rather than Schools because of its broader definition. Educational Buildings include classrooms, administration buildings, gymnasiums, dormitories and other buildings erected for and maintained by public and private institutions of learning. Campuses, which are planned groupings of education related facilities, also fall within this property type and include buildings as well as landscaping features.

Educational Buildings stand as isolated buildings in neighborhoods throughout the city or are grouped on the grounds of the local colleges. As a whole, however, they exhibit many common physical attributes. A typical example is relatively large in scale and ranges from one to three stories in height. The plan is either rectangular or U-shaped or, as is true for the Administration Building at Abilene Christian University, conforms to a Palladian-like arrangement with a central block and side wings and pavilions. A brick exterior finish is most common and is either structural, i.e., load bearing, or a veneer that covers steel or concrete frame construction.

Renaissance Revival detailing typically adorns local educational buildings, which date from the 1920s to the 1940s. This style draws inspiration from classical architectural traditions and some can even be categorized as illustrations of the Classical Revival style. Nevertheless, most local examples have tripartite massing with a raised basement at the ground level and a parapet with an entablature, cornice and dentils as a crown. The mid-section often has pilasters that divide exterior bays. With classically inspired capitals--Ionic, Corinthian or Composite--these pilasters extend the height of the mid-section and visually support the entablature and cornice. They also enhance the building's overall verticality. Other surface ornamentation that displays Renaissance or Classical Revival inspired detailing includes quoin-like masonry work along the corners, flat arches with keystones above window openings, and terra cotta or cast stone decorative elements, such as cartouches and modillions, that are applied onto the exterior.

Some local examples of Renaissance Revival styled Educational Buildings have pedimented porticos to mark the primary entrance; others, however, are more subdued. Windows typically are double hung, although the public school district has installed metal panels to cover such openings on many of their facilities.

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Although the Renaissance Revival style is the most common architectural expression seen on local educational buildings, it is by no means the only one. Several, particularly those the public school district erected, display detailing associated with the Late Gothic Revival style. A building with this type of ornamentation has pointed or ogee arch openings, the most distinctive characteristic of this style. Buttresses are another common feature and they emphasize the building's verticality. Cast stone or terra cotta trim is used around window and door openings.

Educational buildings that date to the late 1930s and early 1940s typically display an Art Deco influence in massing and detailing. Such buildings have metal sash windows, and stylized ornamentation that is based on geometrical shapes and patterns. Local examples are not high style versions of Art Deco architecture, but exhibit some features characteristic of the style.

## Significance

Educational Buildings can have historical and architectural significance and can be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A, B or C. They are the most direct physical link to Abilene's development into a major educational center in West Texas. For the three private colleges and universities of Abilene, Educational Buildings housed administrative offices, classrooms, dormitories and other facilities and enabled these institutions to function as quasi-independent communities within the town.

Educational Buildings associated with the public school system are indicative of local efforts to educate the children of Abilene. These buildings, most of which were erected in the 1920s and 1930s, reflect the city's growth and prosperity between the two world wars. The occurrence and location of public schools reflect patterns and trends in the city's growth and physical development. The type of facilities provided for local Blacks and Hispanics indicates priorities shown toward minorities in Abilene. Public schools also document local support for the educational program of the district. The passage of several bond packages during the 1920s and 1930s, for example, reflects Abilene's commitment to education.

Although Educational Buildings typically are important in broad trends in local history, they may also be significant for their association with an individual who was influential in local education efforts. Perhaps the best illustration involves the philanthropic efforts of a person who contributed a large sum of money for the construction of a building.

Besides their historical associations, Educational Buildings are among the city's most architecturally significant buildings and often represent the commissions of prominent local architects, designers, contractors and builders. Educational Buildings are functional in that they provide classroom or office space, but are also important symbols of the groups and institutions that erected them. As a consequence, Educational Buildings typically display noteworthy ornamentation and are among the city's best examples of high style architecture. Promotional booklets published to encourage Abilene's growth always include photographs and statements about the public schools and the city's private colleges.

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## REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Educational Buildings can be considered for the National Register under Criterion A if a strong argument can be made to demonstrate how a particular educational building is representative of broad trends or patterns in local educational efforts. For example, the building could be the only intact building surviving on the original campus of a college that has subsequently moved to new grounds. Although integrity is an important concern, the building may be altered and no longer has to be used for educational purposes. It must, however, appear much as it did when it achieved historical significance, i.e., when it was used for education related functions.

Educational Buildings can also be associated with individuals significant in local educational efforts (Criterion B) although such occurrences are not common. An example could be a wealthy citizen who made a large donation to a college for the construction of a classroom, dormitory or some other educational facility or a well recognized faculty member. As is true for those buildings associated with broad historical patterns, those nominated under Criterion B do not have to be unaltered but they must retain enough integrity to be recognizable to their period of significance. Distinguishing architectural features must be intact, as the removal of such elements can compromise historic integrity.

Educational Buildings can also be considered for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as noteworthy examples of an architectural style or type. They can also display outstanding craftsmanship or design qualities, or represent the work of an important architect. To be eligible for the National Register under this criterion, the building must retain its integrity to a very high degree. The removal of important architectural features--a classically inspired cornice, for example--or the replacement of historic fabric with incompatible modern materials can detract from the building's overall historic character and can keep a building from being listed under Criterion C. Common alterations that can detract from a building's integrity include the removal of original doors and windows and the installation of aluminum frame replacements.

## RESIDENCES

### Description

Residences is a property type that includes domestic buildings and are found in most sections of the city. They constitute the single largest property type in Abilene; however, four principal subtypes are identified: Bungalows, Prairie School-influenced, Vernacular and Tudor Revival houses. A fifth category, Other Residences, includes dwellings that cannot be categorized in the four other subtypes.

The property type, Residences, is discussed in much greater detail in association with the historic context, "The Railroad and Abilene's Development into a Regional Wholesale and Distribution Center, 1881-1939."

### Significance

Although Educational Buildings have the strongest, most direct and most obvious associations with local educational efforts, Residences are also linked to this historic context and they can be eligible for the National Register under Criterion B. They can be the home of a citizen who made



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important contributions to education, such as the president of one of the colleges, a professor distinguished in his or her field of study, or superintendent of the local public school system.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Residential properties nominated under Criterion A or B under this historic context are those with strong historical associations to local educational efforts. It is important, however, to establish the relative significance of these historical factors and how they are associated with nominated properties. For example, a building cannot be nominated because it merely was the residence of an important and influential individual in Abilene's public school system. A strong argument must be made to describe his or her accomplishments and how they contributed to the local history. Also, such a property must have been used by that person when significance was achieved and/or be the residence most closely associated with that individual. The dwelling need not be a particularly noteworthy example of an architectural style but must retain enough of its integrity to be recognizable to its period of significance.

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### SURVEY AND EVALUATION METHODS

#### Previous Survey Results

Prior to instigating any fieldwork, the Project Director examined earlier survey results on file with the Texas Historic Sites Inventory in the National Register Programs Department of the Texas Historical Commission. This determined the types of resources that were previously identified, the amount of historical and architectural documentation obtained on these properties, and the areas that have a dense concentration of historic resources. Ellen Beasley's 1979 survey was the most extensive and significant undertaking to date. Results of a 1987 survey by the City of Abilene Planning Department and the Abilene Preservation League, which involved a comprehensive building-by-building inventory of the Sayles Boulevard area, were also scrutinized. Other records in the Texas Historic Sites Inventory included documentation of various individual buildings that Texas Historical Commission staff prepared during the 1970s. In addition to inspecting these survey records, the Project Director examined relevant National Register and state marker files at the Texas Historical Commission.

#### Field Investigations

After reviewing previous survey efforts, the Project Director began field investigations by obtaining a series of zoning/land use maps from the City of Abilene's Planning Department. These maps were used to delineate project boundaries. The Project Director then undertook a systematic street-by-street examination of the project area, using the maps to plot the location of each identified historic resource. All buildings, structures, and objects, regardless of architectural or historical integrity, that appeared to have been built before 1945 were summarily included in the inventory. The decision to be inclusive was based upon the Project Director's knowledge of architectural styles, forms, and trends and the periods in which they were popular. The types of properties included were extant, non-archeological resources such as dwellings, commercial buildings and institutional buildings (like schools and churches), as well as cemeteries, viaducts and bridges.

As each historic resource was identified, the address, property type, factual or estimated date of construction, and tentative preservation priority rating were recorded and subsequently incorporated into an inventory. The address of each property was generally available from a curbside view of the building; in instances when an address was not indicated on the building or was not visible from the curbside, city zoning maps, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps, or current city directories were examined to obtain the address information. Property type identifies the building by its original function and this intended capacity was recorded. In most cases, the buildings are still in their original capacity. Some exceptions exist, for example, a c. 1925 residence that was recently converted into an office or retail store was recorded as a dwelling. Although the factual date for some buildings was obtained from corner or dedication stones, the Project Director estimated the construction dates for the majority of identified properties based upon original architectural fabric and detailing. The preliminary preservation priority rating reflects a "first impression" of a building's present architectural significance and integrity and its potential association with locally important events, individuals, or trends. Preference was given to older (pre-1925) buildings and those with unusual or unique architectural features. Properties in the "high" category are considered the most significant while those in the "medium" and "low" ratings are considered of lesser importance based upon the limited documentation gathered during the overview phase.

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Because the project area encompassed such a large territory, the Project Director grouped historic properties according to their location relative to the tracks of the Texas and Pacific Railroad. Such a decision was desirable due to the considerable number of sites to be inventoried and was an obvious way to organize the survey data. Moreover, the railroad tracks historically have been an intra-city barrier, effectively dividing Abilene into roughly equal-sized halves. City streets, with few exceptions, run parallel to or perpendicular to the railroad tracks. Only a handful of streets, such as Treadaway, Mockingbird and Willis, cross the tracks and stretch into both the north and south halves of the city.

Because the overview was completed during the fall when leaves, bushes and other vegetation obscured important architectural ornamentation, no photographs were taken. In the winter, however, a 35millimeter black and white negative and a color slide were taken of each "high" and the more significant "medium" priority sites. The roll and frame numbers of each photograph were recorded, cross referenced with street addresses, and incorporated into the inventory.

## Research Efforts

The research phase, which followed completion of the overview, was one of the most critical steps in the project, providing vital historical information on selected properties. Because of budgetary restraints, research was limited to "high" and the more significant "medium" priority sites, totaling 608. The latter category includes properties that are moderately to severely altered but were believed to possibly possess some historical significance, or were identified in more general research investigations as the residence or place of business of a locally important individual, enterprise, or historical event. All materials and data generated during this phase of the project were recorded on Research Data Sheets, copies are filed at the Abilene Preservation League.

The Project Director began investigating at the Taylor County Appraisal District Office where the legal description, current owner (or taxpayer), and mailing address of the selected properties were recorded. A questionnaire that solicited important historical information was subsequently prepared and sent to each of the identified property owners. A total of 608 questionnaires were mailed and 158 (about 26 percent) were completed and returned. These materials are stored at the offices of the Abilene Preservation League and incorporated into that organization's permanent file system.

The Project Director obtained additional historical information from a variety of sources. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps proved a particularly useful source of information, and maps from 1952 (at the Abilene Preservation League), 1929, 1919, 1915, 1908, 1902, 1896 and 1885 (at the Barker Texas History Center) were examined. The building "footprint" (a diagram of a property's exterior shape) and a brief description of the building and the map number that it appears on were recorded on the Research Data Sheet. Such a step was critical in uncovering changes of addresses and street names that might otherwise be difficult to determine. The physical history of each building was traced back in time until its approximate date of construction was resolved (e.g. the building's location was a vacant lot or another building stood on the lot).

Following completion of Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map research, the Project Director examined city directories to determine past occupants of these buildings. City directories published about the same time as the Sanborn maps verified the existence of a building and compensated for any address changes. City directories for 1939-1940, 1934-1935, 1929, 1925, 1921, 1915 and 1907-1908 were reviewed and the occupants of each property recorded on the Research Data Sheet.

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## Preservation Priority Evaluation

As the fieldwork and research phases were completed, each property was reviewed and assigned a final preservation priority rating based upon the current architectural integrity and known historical associations. This evaluation should not be considered a static designation, but can and should be changed to reflect the evolving status of properties. Documented sites were evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

**427 HIGH PRIORITY PROPERTIES** - Contributes significantly to local history or broader historical patterns; is an outstanding, unique, or good representative example of architecture, engineering, or crafted design; is a good example of a common local building form, architectural style, or plan-type and retains a significant portion of its original character and contextual integrity; is a very significant modern or recent landmark; meets, in some cases, criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places or as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark.

**1,168 MEDIUM PRIORITY PROPERTIES** - Contributes moderately to local history or broader historical patterns, but alterations or deterioration have diminished the resources's integrity; is a typical example of architecture, engineering or crafted design; is a typical example of a common local building form, architectural style, or type; is a modern or recent landmark

**4,735 LOW PRIORITY PROPERTIES** - Typifies a more recent common local building form, architectural style, or plan-type, with no identified historical associations; is a moderate to severely altered or deteriorated resource that exemplifies a distinctive building type or architectural style, or that has only minor historical significance.

**6,330 TOTAL NUMBER OF PROPERTIES IDENTIFIED.**

**4,800 ESTIMATED ACREAGE OF AREA INCLUDED IN SURVEY.**

Once preservation priority ratings were finalized, based upon known historical and architectural data, all "high" priority sites were considered for designation to the National Register. Each site was evaluated with respect to the two developed historic contexts and their respective property types to determine relative significance. Each property was scrutinized to determine its historical associations and architectural noteworthiness. Since more than 50 properties appeared to be eligible, the Project Director selected sites to ensure that a representative cross section of historic resources would be included in the first phase of Abilene's Multiple Property Nomination process. Therefore, several smaller vernacular buildings were included because they represented a large group of properties that are often overlooked and not fully appreciated.

It is important to realize that the purpose of completing a Multiple Property Nomination is to provide the framework for nominating more properties to the National Register of Historic Places. With the completion of this document, more Abilene properties should be nominated to the National Register, especially if more historical data is gathered and/or successful restoration projects re-establish architectural integrity.

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