

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic The Historic Resources of Cuero, Texas (Partial Inventory of Architectural and
Historic Properties)

and/or common

2. Location

street & number The 1986 city limits of Cuero, Texas

N/A not for publication

city, town Cuero

N/A vicinity of

state Texas

code 048

county DeWitt

code 123

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name See individual site forms

street & number N/A

city, town N/A

N/A vicinity of

state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. DeWitt County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Cuero

state Texas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Texas Historic Sites Inventory

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1986

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Texas Historical Commission

city, town Austin

state Texas

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Cuero is well known for its many historic residences and commercial buildings, and this document nominates 48 individual properties and three historic districts to the National Register. Much of the town's unique physical character can be traced to its close ties with the 19th century port of Indianola. Although Cuero was not founded until 1872, many of the extant 19th-century residences in the city exhibit strong Greek Revival characteristics. This unusual feature resulted from the close ties residents of Cuero had with the old city of Indianola, a community on the Texas Gulf Coast that thrived during the third quarter of the 19th century. After hurricanes struck that city in 1875 and again in 1886, the town was abandoned and many of its citizens relocated to Cuero. A significant number either moved their houses in sections or dismantled them altogether and reassembled them in Cuero. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, Cuero experienced its greatest period of prosperity, and the town's extant historic resources reflect that growth. In particular, the central business district includes several outstanding examples of Romanesque Revival and Neoclassical-influence structures, many of which were designed by a renowned architect from Victoria, Jules Leffland. Because this area retains its historic character to a remarkable degree, the downtown is being nominated to the National Register at a state level of significance. The downtown obviously experienced a sudden transformation around the turn of the century, and new neighborhoods were also developed at that time. The most significant concentration of historic dwellings is found along Terrell, Reuss and Indianola streets and is nominated as a historic district at a state level of significance. New houses were built not only for Cuero's elite but also for individuals with more modest incomes. While many of the structures being nominated are the most outstanding examples of high-styled architecture, a large number of the properties included in this nomination are representative examples of common vernacular house types. Therefore, this documentation includes a cross-section of the town's historic resources. Because the present submission was the follow-up phase of a comprehensive historic resource survey of the city, site numbers assigned during the survey effort are used. Individual properties being nominated are noted as "N.R. Sites." Structures within any of the historic districts are identified by their site number, which is then followed by the district in which the building is located. Properties identified as "Survey Sites" were documented during the survey effort, but because of alterations, or lack of architectural or historic importance, were not eligible for inclusion in the nomination.

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Physical Growth of the City

Cuero is located in the Coastal Prairies of the Texas Gulf Coastal Plains region. This section of the state features a terrain that is generally flat, covered with prairie grasses and spotted with large oak trees. Cuero is situated a few miles north of the Guadalupe River.

Gustav Schleicher, surveyor for the Gulf, Western Texas and Pacific Railroad (now part of the Southern Pacific system) laid out the original town site immediately north of the railroad's east-west right of way. Encompassing approximately 390 acres, this town plan is set at a 30 degree angle that is counterclockwise from a due north-south orientation and features a grid pattern of blocks and lots, with broad thoroughfares. Esplanade and Broadway streets, which divide the original town into roughly equal-sized quadrants, are wider than all others and obviously were intended as the city's major arteries. While blocks within the city's core (between Gonzales and Hunt streets) measure 125-by-125 feet, the majority are 125-by-400 feet. A courthouse square stands three blocks north of the tracks, somewhat removed from the town's commercial center. Town lots are rectangular in shape with the long ends running north-south. Narrow alleys extend through most blocks, and the majority of the town's buildings face onto streets that run east-west. Although the town plan was implemented in 1872, several live oak trees that stand in the streets were spared, as clearly shown in an 1881 bird's-eye map of the city, and have survived subsequent development and street paving.

Soon after the town's founding, an area known as the Morgantown Addition was established. The Cuero Land and Immigration Company, the group responsible for the development of the original town site, conveyed land for this addition to the Gulf, Western Texas and Pacific Railroad. The subdivision was subsequently named for Charles P. Morgan, president of the Gulf, Western Texas and Pacific, but early deed records make reference to this land as the Railroad Addition. The area maintained the grid pattern and orientation of the original town site; however, its blocks are more inconsistent in size than those north of the tracks. Morgan Avenue bisects the 26-block addition and serves as the primary thoroughfare. The Centennial Addition, presumably laid out in 1876 -- its exact founding date does not appear in early plat maps on file at the courthouse -- stands directly west of the Morgantown Addition. It, too, uses a grid pattern and follows the same orientation as that of the original town site.

Subsequent expansion was rather piecemeal, and with few exceptions, new additions were small in area. Growth took place primarily to the north, south and west, with very little development to the east. Most 19th-century additions maintained the orientation of the original town, but by the turn

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of the century, surveyors laid out streets in a due north-south and east-west direction. One of these was the Cuero Heights Addition, at the city's northern end. Its original plat map on file at the DeWitt County Courthouse depicts a landscaped plaza near the subdivision's center. Although this public space was set aside, the plaza was never developed as originally intended. It remains an open public space with few improvements. In all likelihood the plaza, as depicted on the subdivision map, was simply a marketing tool to help sell the land.

Cuero has remained a remarkably stable community since World War II and relatively little land development has occurred since that time. Most of the growth of recent years has taken place almost exclusively in the city's northwest and northeast quadrants, beyond the historic developments.

Land-use Patterns

Because Cuero's existence can be traced to the establishment of rail service, much of the city's land use and settlement patterns has been influenced by the railroad. Cuero's commercial district has always been centered on Main and Esplanade streets, just north of the Southern Pacific Railroad. This area's development resulted from its close proximity and easy access to the railroad, as well as its strategic location near the city's heart. An 1881 bird's-eye map of Cuero, completed less than a decade after the town's establishment, depicts a concentration of commercial buildings along the 100 and 200 blocks of both E. Main and N. Esplanade streets. Since then, the downtown has grown to include parts of W. Main, N. Gonzales, E. Church, and E. Courthouse streets. The greatest density of development occurs along a T-shaped area that encompasses the 100 to 200 blocks of both E. and W. Main streets and the 100 to 300 blocks of N. Esplanade Street. Comprising much of the Cuero Commercial Historic District, which is nominated to the National Register as part of this multiple-resource submission, this area features an almost continuous row of commercial buildings, with few interruptions.

Recent commercial development has centered along U.S. Highway 87, which enters Cuero from Victoria on E. Broadway Street and turns northward, joining U.S. Highway 183, at N. Esplanade Street. Fast-food restaurants, gasoline stations, convenient stores, and small shopping centers stand on the sites of many domestic structures that once lined these broad thoroughfares, especially along Esplanade Street. A few historic dwellings, such as the Brumley House (Survey Site 943), have been rehabilitated into offices, retail stores, or restaurants. The city's other commercial node extends along S. Esplanade Street (U.S. Highway 183) and was developed during the middle of the 20th century.

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Almost without exception, local industries and wholesale businesses that rely on easy access to cheap and reliable transportation have located near the railroad tracks. The main line, the old Gulf, Western Texas and Pacific Railroad, extends through the middle of the community and intersects the north-south running San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad, built in 1878 (also later a part of the S.P. system), at the western end of town. Most of the town's early industrial enterprises located immediately south of the Gulf, Western Texas and Pacific tracks in the Morgantown Addition. Some, such as the old Buchel Mill (Survey Site No. 537), still remain. The town's larger and more significant manufacturing operations, such as the textile mill (Survey Site No. 394), the old cotton oil mill (Survey Site No. 821), and the cotton compress (razed), were built in the west end of town, along the spurs of the railroads. The town's first building-material businesses, the H.J. Huck Lumber Co. and the William Westhoff Lumber Yard, originally operated just south of the tracks in the Morgantown Addition. Although both are no longer in operation, the old facilities of the Huck (later called the Cuero) Lumber Co. have been incorporated into the Gulf Wood Products plant, founded in the 1950s and encompassing blocks 9 and 19 of the Morgantown Addition. The Cuero Cotton Gin (N. R. Site No. 464) has operated from the 500 block of E. Main, just north of the railroad tracks, since 1917. The Breeden-Runge Wholesale Grocery Co. Building (N.R. Site No. 848) and the Moore and Meissner Wholesale Grocery Co. Building (Survey Site No. 849) stand near the textile mill in the 100 and 200 blocks of N. Frederick William.

The DeWitt County Courthouse, the city's most imposing physical landmark, is situated two blocks east of Esplanade street and three blocks north of Main Street, just beyond the city's commercial center. This arrangement is somewhat unusual for Texas, as most courthouses throughout the state stand in the heart of the county seat's business district and serve as a focal point of commercial and retail activity. Bryan and Calvert, which, like Cuero, were founded and established by railroads, also have courthouse squares a few blocks from the railroad and the central business district. While each of these cities was designated as the seat of government of their respective counties a few years after their founding, research has failed to confirm or deny that the placement of the courthouse square away from the central business district was deliberate or an afterthought. Nonetheless, Cuero's courthouse square, despite its proximity to downtown, remains within a mostly residential area. The courthouse was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971. The county jail, built about 1960 on the site of the old Romanesque Revival-styled prison facility, stands on a block immediately north of the courthouse.

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Other governmental buildings are situated within a few blocks of the courthouse and on the fringes of the central business district. The Old Post Office (Site No. 397 - a contributing member of the Cuero Commercial Historic District) was built in 1915 in the 200 block of E. Church Street. During the 1960s, the Postal Service moved its local operations to a new facility in the 300 block of E. Main Street, leaving the old building for other federal agencies. Municipal offices, including city hall, the library and the fire station, stand in the 200 block of E. Main Street.

Cuero's original park is situated immediately east of city hall, and its central location provides easy access to all citizens. Much of its grounds has been absorbed into the municipal governmental complex, however. A replica of the old bandstand stands in the park and serves, as did its predecessors, as the focal point of activity. The Cuero Municipal Park, established in the 1930s, stands at the city's eastern edge and encompasses approximately 72.3 acres. Cuero's only other large open space is the Hillside Cemetery, which was set aside as part of the original town plan. This cemetery, the city's largest, includes about 45 acres and is situated west of the 800 to 1000 blocks of N. Valley Street.

Well-preserved neighborhoods abound throughout the remainder of the city and include residences, churches, schools and a scattering of commercial buildings. The type, age and condition of these structures reveal much about local settlement patterns. Cuero's oldest neighborhoods are found in the original town site, as well as in the Morgantown and Centennial additions. Relatively few modern buildings have been erected in these areas.

The more prestigious housing of the late 19th and early 20th centuries stands in the northern part of town, especially along Terrell, Reuss, Indianola, and Prairie streets. Otherwise, more modest dwellings prevail, including vernacular plan types, such as L-plan and center-passage dwellings, and some of the city's finest examples of bungalow architecture. During the early 20th century, 25 small dwellings were built for textile mill workers near the southwestern corner of the original town site. Unfortunately, only three of these structures (Site Nos. 356, 358 and 828) remain. Most were razed when a multi-block complex of low-income housing was built in the 1970s in an area that extends from the textile mill to the central business district. Prior to racial integration in the 1960s, schools for white children were built in the northeast quadrant of the original town, although these schools are now fully integrated. The old white high school (N. R. Site No. 179), built in 1928, remains abandoned in the 400 block of E. Sarah Street, replaced by a new facility that stands on the outskirts of town. Most of the city's oldest churches also stand in the original town site and are clustered in an area just beyond the central business district.

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The Morgantown Addition, particularly in those blocks east of Esplanade, features the city's greatest and most cohesive concentration of pre-1900 dwellings, although many have been altered over the years. Research of tax abstracts and census records reveal that a large number of German immigrants, many who lived previously in Indianola, settled in this part of town. While some post-1900 structures have been built as infill, this area retains, to a remarkable degree, a 19th-century character. Many of the dwellings originally stood in Indianola, but were rebuilt in Cuero during the 1870s and 1880s. As a result, the houses in this part of town appear to be older than the community itself.

Blacks traditionally have lived in the western section of the Morgantown Addition and throughout the Centennial and other additions in the southwest quadrant of town. Although two large complexes of modern, low-income, public housing stand in these neighborhoods, most dwellings date to the late 19th and early 20th centuries and include shotgun, two-room and other modest vernacular dwellings. The oldest houses, as could be expected, are found in those areas closest to the central business district. The majority of churches with black congregations also stand in the Centennial Addition and the west end of the Morgantown Addition. The town's black children attended the Daule School (Survey Site No. 762) until the 1960s. Vocational education classes are now held in this facility.

Cuero's Mexican-American population has grown significantly during the 20th century. The founding of Our Lady of the Guadalupe Catholic Church in 1925 indicates that the earliest concentrations of Hispanics were found in the far western end of town. Most of the dwellings in these neighborhoods are modest bungalows with little significant architectural detailing.

Identified Historic Resources

Cuero boasts a remarkably high number of pre-1936 properties, many of which were built during the late 19th century. Residential structures comprise about 85 percent of the city's remaining 1,175 historic properties. Vernacular dwellings are most common, but examples of popular and more-stylish, academic architectural forms are also found. Of the remaining 15 percent, commercial structures are most prevalent, but other nonresidential building types include churches, schools, industrial, and manufacturing facilities, warehouses and government buildings.

By comparing population figures to the type, number and construction date of extant historic resources, it can be seen that Cuero experienced its most rapid development during the late 19th century. Much of this growth resulted from the relocation of Indianola citizens who survived the

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disasterous hurricanes that struck that coastal city in 1875 and 1886. When moving to Cuero, these individuals frequently dismantled or salvaged their homes and rebuilt them in Cuero. Historic photographs, which date to the 1880s, show Indianola structures that closely resemble a large number of local properties. While examples are found throughout the city, most stand in the Morgantown Addition and in the southern half of the original town site.

Vernacular Dwellings

The vast majority of domestic structures identified in the historic resource survey of Cuero were built without the assistance of an architect and are classified as vernacular dwellings. Houses within this category utilize traditional building techniques or forms, are closely linked to a particular geographic region, or are associated with a specific culture or ethnic group. They are frequently thought to be "common" buildings, as their appearance is less pretentious than that of contemporaneous, high-styled residences designed by architects. Owned and occupied by less affluent individuals, vernacular dwellings can be regarded as traditional or folk architecture and often represent the only legacy of a group of people that played a significant, but frequently overlooked, role in local history. A careful analysis of vernacular domestic structures can reveal much about the heritage of their builders, and their ability to adapt to prevailing conditions and utilize available building materials in the area.

Despite the tendency to categorize structures by their stylistic detailing, vernacular dwellings are best understood by studying their plans, because the arrangement of rooms and the use of interior spaces were the overriding concerns of builders and home owners. Architectural historians and cultural geographers have found that certain plan types remained popular for many years and in some cases for several centuries. In addition, the form and construction materials are important features to examine. Of secondary importance, is the type or style of applied architectural detailing. Such decoration can indicate the approximate age of the structure or reveal an individual's wealth or social status. Porch detailing is a particularly important architectural feature and often distinguishes a specific style or period of construction.

The center-passage dwelling is the dominant plan type of Cuero's early settlement period. This vernacular house form features a rectangular plan with a hallway or passage that extends through the middle of the structure. Equal-sized rooms flank both sides of the hallway. Residences in this category are either one or two rooms deep, although the former are found more often. Rear ells, either original attachments or later additions,

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often extend from these dwellings. Two-story, center-passage residences, somewhat rare in Cuero, are popularly known as I houses among architectural historians and cultural geographers. Fred Kniffen, Henry Glassie and others have identified this plan type as one of the nation's most common vernacular house forms, and its origins have been traced to the Mid-Atlantic and Upland South regions as early as the 18th century. The I house remained popular throughout much of the country into the first decades of this century.

Center-passage dwellings are particularly well suited for Texas weather, as the hallway, with doors at both ends, could easily be used as a cooling breezeway. Exterior chimneys are placed at one or both ends of the side-gabled structure to allow heat generated from the fireplace to radiate outward, rather than be trapped inside. Despite this seemingly logical adaptation to prevailing climatic conditions, chimney placement is more reflective of the cultural traditions of its builders.

While the aforementioned characteristics are typical of all center-passage dwellings, detailing can vary greatly depending on the date of construction and the financial status of the original owner. Most of Cuero's earliest houses display elements that are associated with Greek Revival architecture, a style that was popular throughout Texas during the second and third quarters of the 19th century. Typically, these structures have symmetrical facades with classically inspired trim and porch detailing. Although Cuero was founded in 1872 and many of its historic residences were built in the 1880s, the city boasts a remarkably high number of center-passage dwellings with Greek Revival detailing. Virtually all of these structures originally stood in Indianola but were moved to Cuero after the storms of 1875 and 1886.

Perhaps the most noticeable architectural element is the porch. The majority of Cuero's earliest center-passage dwellings have inset porches within the side-gabled roofs, a common feature among houses of the mid- to late-19th century throughout the upper coastal regions of Texas. Door and window treatment typically reflects architectural trends that were popular during a particular time period. For example, transom and sidelights with pedimented architraves are common doorway details of Cuero's earlier center-passage dwellings.

While the dwellings at 311 and 402 S. Hunt (Survey Site No. 1125 and N.R. Site No. 1110, respectively) are similar in plan, the detailing on each illustrates how this house form can vary in exterior appearance. The dwelling at 311 S. Hunt is a modest structure with box porch supports. In contrast, the residence at 402 S. Hunt features a finely crafted cornice with eave returns that suggests a stylistic influence of Greek Revival architecture.

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One-story center-passage dwellings are most common in Cuero, but a few I houses are also found. Perhaps the least-altered example stands at 1002 Stockdale (N.R. Site No. 1074). Others include the Heaton-Breeden House and the Alexander Hamilton, Sr. House (Site Nos. 915 and 942, respectively - Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District).

Other common domestic structures include L-plan houses and their variants, which were built locally from the 1880s to the 1910s. Examples are scattered all over town, as infill in the older sections, or as the dominant architectural form in turn-of-the-century additions to the city. L-plan dwellings were the most popular late 19th-century house type of not only Cuero but also of much of the state.

As its name connotes, the L-plan residence features a floor plan that is shaped like the letter "L." While a great deal still remains to be learned about the evolution of this important vernacular form, some dwellings, such as the Lindemann House (Survey Site No. 1059) and the two-story residence at 205 W. Heaton (Survey Site No. 740) are among the earliest local examples of L-plan dwellings and shed light onto the early history of this plan type. These houses seem to demonstrate the transition from the center-passage house form to later, more-common versions of the L-plan. Just as the center-passage dwelling satisfied mid-19th century desires for order and symmetry, the L-plan with its asymmetrical massing fulfilled the prevailing tastes and attitudes of those who lived during the Victorian era.

Single-story dwellings are most common; however, one-and-a-half- and two-story variants are also found. The first L-plan houses, such as the Lindemann House, utilize a side-gabled roof. Later versions, however, are capped with intersecting gables, such as the Hilliard-Williams House at 401 W. Broadway (Survey Site 296). The primary entrance, protected by a shed- or hip-roofed porch, is located at the main body of the house, near the forward projecting wing. Later versions of the L-plan house have an additional front entry on the side wall of the front wing. L-plan dwellings typically have double-hung, wood-sash windows with two-over-two or one-over-one lights, although older houses have six-over-six- or four-over-four-light windows. The amount of ornamentation varies greatly depending on the period of construction, as well as local economic conditions and architectural tastes that prevailed when the dwelling was built. The earliest L-plan houses display modest Greek Revival detailing, such as pedimented door and window architraves and chamfered porch supports. Later residences, especially those erected during the late 19th century, are more ornate and exhibit detailing, such as jigsawn porch brackets, spindled porch friezes and gable-end bargeboards, often associated with the Queen Anne style.

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Dwellings of this period frequently have angled corners with brackets and pendants attached to the soffits. By the early 20th century, however, architectural tastes and preferences became more subdued. L-plan houses built in the late 1900s and early 1910s displayed features typical of the classical revival style, as exemplified by the dwellings at 1101 N. Gonzales and 306 N. Hunt (Survey Site No. 1017 and N.R. Site No. 1102, respectively). Both were built in 1912.

A common variant has a steeply pitched hipped roof that extends over the house's main body and gable roofs that cover the projecting ells. These structures became popular during the late 1890s and were built into the first decade of the 20th century. They usually are one or one-and-a-half stories in height. One of the best local examples is the Thompson House (N.R. Site No. 1081).

T-plan dwellings, another variation of the L-plan, can also be found locally, although in limited numbers. As its name suggests, its floor plan is shaped like the letter "T", but its orientation differs from that of an L-plan dwelling with a rear ell addition. With the former, the central projecting wing is flanked on either side with a lateral ell, thereby giving the house a symmetrical composition. In addition, T-plan houses typically have wraparound porch that extend on all sides of the front projecting wing. The L-plan with rear ell, on the other hand, retains its irregularly massed facade, and the rear wing is not visible from the front. The outstanding local example of a T-plan dwelling is the Bell House (N.R. Site No. 137).

While center-passage and L-plan houses are the most common vernacular house forms, they are by no means the only ones. The two-room house includes paired rooms of unequal size that share a common wall. Unlike the center-passage dwelling, this plan type has no hallway. They were among the earliest domestic dwellings built in Cuero, but few have survived. The residence (Survey Site No. 1071) at 802 Stockdale is a rare local example. This house type remained popular in later periods, and examples that date to the late 19th and early 20th centuries can still be found. Two-room dwellings are of box-frame or board-and-batten construction and have side-gable roofs. The front elevation usually has a shed-roofed porch that extends across the facade and doors that open onto each room. Some versions of this house type have a single offcenter doorway that opens into the public or social room, while an interior door provides access to the smaller, more private room. The most common configuration features two symmetrical outside doorways into each room.

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Shotgun houses comprise another vernacular house form that gained some popularity in Cuero, although only a small number were identified in the historic resource survey of the town. The shotgun house, whose origins have been traced to Africa, is a modest dwelling with an elongated, linear arrangement of rooms. Shotguns are one room wide and almost always are capped with a front-gabled roof. Board-and-batten or box-frame construction is used most often. Because they were frequently the homes of poorer individuals, shotguns typically lack any substantial architectural detailing. Porches on these houses generally have shed roofs with unadorned wooden supports. The best local examples of this house type are found on the north side of the 200 block of W. Newman Street. None, however, are being nominated due to the lack of historic integrity.

Bungalows and Revival Houses

During the early 20th century, residential construction in the United States underwent a great transformation, as traditional building techniques gave way to more "modern" concepts in plan, form and design. Unlike vernacular buildings, which have a strong regional identity, the new architectural forms are more homogenous and are found in all parts of the country. Pattern books and architectural catalogues had long been used as a major source of ideas on design and style. However, the expanded popularity of builder's trade publications, the success of mass-produced and circulated magazines, such as the Ladies Home Journal, and the advent of mail-order businesses during the early years of this century radically changed perceptions about the way a house should appear and how interior spaces should be used. A general stylistic shift was made from the Victorian vertical to the modern horizontal.

Although many styles, forms and types were promoted and built during this period, none attained the widespread acceptance and popularity as that of the bungalow. The term "bungalow" is derived "from the Bengali word bangala which means a low house with galleries or porches all around" (Lancaster 1985: 19). American designers embraced this form during the early 20th century and explored many variations of the bungalow in the years that followed. One of the most common derivations was inspired by the Arts and Crafts Movement. Architect brothers Greene and Greene of Southern

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California are regarded by many as the pioneers of this mode. Other variations incorporated features of the Prairie School Style. As one architectural historian has noted, bungalows came in many forms and

. . . any attempt to classify bungalows by style categories would be beside the point, for in the minds of the designers of the best of them questions of style were secondary to considerations of planning -- it was the bungalow as much as any other kind of house that led to the general adoption of the "living room" and the "outdoor-indoor" living space -- of craftsmanship, climatic adaptation, and harmony with the landscape. (Whiffen 1969: 221)

Because of the large number inventoried in the historic resources survey, bungalows prove to be an important house form in Cuero. Most were built from the 1910s to the early 1940s, and typically are of frame construction with wood siding. An exception is the Young House (Site No. 158 - Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District) at 210 W. Sarah with its brick exterior walls. Roofs are either gabled or hipped with exposed rafter ends and are low-pitched to emphasize horizontal lines. Porches, a distinctive feature of all bungalows, dominate the facades and often feature tapered box supports of wood or, in some cases, masonry construction. In general, local bungalows have porches, with gables that extend either parallel to or perpendicular with the street. Windows and doorways are broad and often have some type of geometric detailing on the screens or in glass lights. The Curlin House (Site No. 913 - Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District), which was built in 1912, is the city's earliest and most outstanding example of bungalow architecture. Other noteworthy examples are the Prigden House at 401 E. French (N.R. Site No. 259) and the R.A. Nagel House at 401 E. Reuss (Site No. 123 - Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District).

Tudor and other revival houses were also built locally but in fewer numbers than the bungalow. Tudor Revival dwellings were constructed during the late 1920s and 1930s and typically feature high-pitched, multi-gabled roofs and round-arched entries and porches. Good examples can be found at 808 N. Gonzales (Survey Site No. 997) and at 802 E. Main (E. Main Street Residential Historic District - Site No. 458).

High-Style Dwellings

Many of the city's financially successful individuals erected dwellings that reflected their wealth and social status. These houses, in many cases designed by architects such as Jules Leffland of Victoria, A.O. Watson of

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Austin and Atlee B. Ayres of San Antonio, were more stylish in their detailing and grander in their scale than other domestic buildings in Cuero. The Queen Anne and Eastlake styles were the most popular among Cuero's elite during the late 19th century. Examples include the Sames House, the Gohmert House, the Proctor House and the Sheppard House (Site Nos. 114, 910, 970 and 1097 respectively), all of which are located in the Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District.

Others, such as the Mugge House (N.R. Site No. 917) or the William Frobose, Sr. House (N.R. Site No. 664), were not designed by academically trained architects, but the builders of the houses nevertheless understood sophisticated design principals and possessed great skills and knowledge of their craft.

After 1900, domestic architectural tastes became more diverse, and conforming to trends and preferences that were sweeping the rest of the country. The Prairie School Style gained some popularity in Cuero during the early 20th century, as did the Classical Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival styles in later years. The Thornton Hamilton House (Site No. 921 - Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District), with its broad eaves, low-pitched hipped roof, and expansive one-story porch, displays characteristics often associated with the Prairie School. Atlee B. Ayres designed two of Cuero's more stylish residences, both of which were built for members of the Hamilton family. The two-story Alexander Hamilton, Jr. House at 912 N. Esplanade (Site No. 941 - Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District) has large two-story Corinthian columns and other details suggestive of Classical Revival architecture. Behind this residence is the Graham Hamilton House (Site No. 920 - Cuero Residential Historic District), with stuccoed exterior, tile roof and simple detailing indicative of the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Virtually all of Cuero's high-styled domestic architecture is found along Terrell, Indianola and Reuss streets, which comprise a historic district nominated to the National Register. For more information, see the the Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District.

Non-Residential Architecture

The city's most prominent landmark is the DeWitt County Courthouse (Site No. 1176 - listed in the National Register, 1971). Its architect, A.O. Watson, utilized a design that bears a strong influence of Henry Hobson Richardson's version of the Romanesque Revival mode. As Whiffen writes, Richardson's interpretation differs from earlier examples of the style "by being wholly or in part of rock-faced masonry, while arches, lintels, and other structural features are often emphasized by being a different stone from the walls" (Whiffen 1969: 133).

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The sophisticated design of the courthouse, which was built in 1894-1896, helped to raise citizen's awareness and appreciation of architecture and ushered in an era of tremendous building activity, especially in the downtown area. Many of the new commercial buildings that were erected in the 1890s featured semicircular window openings, the trademark of the Romanesque Revival style, which were also used on the courthouse. The Cuero Commercial Historic District provides a more detailed discussion of the architecture in the city's business district.

Designers of most local churches favored the Gothic Revival style, with its pointed-arch openings and strong vertical emphasis. Grace Episcopal Church (N.R. Site No. 970) is the oldest extant religious structure in Cuero. Other examples include the First Methodist Church and the Macedonia Baptist Church. St. Michael's Catholic Church, however, is the grandest of all religious structures in Cuero. Its architect, F.B. Gaenslen, relied heavily on Mission Revival and Romanesque Revival details but used them in such a unusual way that the building defies a stylistic classification.

Survey Methods

The comprehensive survey of Cuero's historic resources began with an overview of the community. Survey teams, consisting of a principal of Hardy-Heck-Moore and an assistant, canvassed all city streets, and every property that appeared to be at least 50 years old was included in the inventory, regardless of changes or insensitive alterations. As each site was identified, its location was plotted on a city street map. Surveyors photographed each property and noted major aspects of its physical appearance, including construction materials, number of stories, plan type and stylistic details. Survey teams also assigned a preliminary rating of each property's relative architectural significance or likely association with important individuals, events, or historical trends and patterns. These evaluations established priorities for subsequent research and more intensive documentation in later phases of the project. For those sites that were categorized as HIGH or MEDIUM priority both a black-and-white photograph and a color slide were taken. All information generated from the overview was entered into a data-base computer program, developed by Hardy-Heck-Moore, which served as the basis for ensuing work.

Survey efforts during the initial phase identified 1,179 properties that appeared to be at least 50 years old. During the next phase of the project, the more significant properties, i.e. those rated as HIGH or MEDIUM priority, were examined more closely. Supplemental black-and-white

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photographs and color slides were taken of the majority of these properties. Surveyors then completed a detailed architectural description of each HIGH priority site. This information appears on Texas Historic Sites Inventory forms, which are on file at the Texas Historical Commission and at the Cuero City Hall.

Additional documentation of all HIGH and some MEDIUM priority resources was completed during the research phase of the survey. The project historian synthesized data from such primary sources as tax rolls, mechanic's liens, Sanborn maps, and census records which yielded a framework with which to more effectively evaluate the resources. The most valuable information was obtained from old tax rolls on file at the Office of the DeWitt County Tax Assessor-Collector. Because these records have survived completely intact, researchers were able to trace properties as far back as 1880, the first year such records were kept. Data obtained from old tax rolls enabled researchers to document pre-1937 owners and also helped determine the approximate construction date of these structures, as a dramatic rise in the property's value most often indicated improvements on the lot. For those structures that involved any type of financial assistance, mechanics' liens on file at the DeWitt County Clerk's office revealed the date of construction and the amount of money involved, as well as the names of principal individuals or firms associated with the building's construction. Information gathered in tax roll and mechanic's liens research was recorded on Research Data Sheets which have been presented to the City of Cuero. The project historian also examined materials at the DeWitt County Museum, the Texas State Library, the State Marker Program of the Texas Historical Commission, the Barker Texas History Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and the Sidney R. Weisiger Collection at the University of Houston at Victoria. Sanborn maps, prepared by the New York-based insurance company during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, revealed much about the physical growth of the city. These maps proved to be a particularly useful source of information for noting the construction of and changes to individual buildings. Color-slide copies of these Sanborn Maps have been presented to the city. The 1881 bird's-eye map of Cuero in the DeWitt County Museum helped document the town's early growth and also aided in the identification of Cuero's oldest structures. A photographic copy of the Jules Leffland daybook, filed in the Victoria Historic Resources Survey materials stored in the Local History Collection at the Victoria Municipal Library, lists many Cuero buildings designed by the renowned South Texas architect. Most information on the town's black community came from Beatrice Lyarels, who presented a narrative on important black individuals and institutions in Cuero. Copies of Ms. Lyarels' monograph have been presented to the Cuero Municipal Library.

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Questionnaires mailed to owners of the more significant properties further expanded knowledge of individual sites. Of the more than 300 questionnaires mailed, almost 100 were completed, returned and integrated into final survey results.

When all fieldwork and research phases were completed, each survey property was assigned a final preservation priority rating. Based on its architectural integrity and historical associations, documented sites were evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

HIGH PRIORITY - Contributes significantly to local history or broader historical patterns; is an outstanding or unique example of architecture, engineering, or crafted design; retains a significant portion of its original character and contextual integrity; meets, in some cases, criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places or is eligible for a Texas Historical Marker.

MEDIUM PRIORITY - Contributes significantly to local history or broader historical patterns, but alterations have diminished the resource's integrity; is a significant example of architecture, engineering, or crafted design; is a good example of a common local building form, architectural style, or type; is a modern or recent landmark not old enough to be judged in a historical context.

LOW PRIORITY - Typifies a common local building form, architectural style, or type, with no identified historical associations; is a moderate to severely altered resource with reversible modifications that exemplifies a distinctive building type or architectural style, or that has only minor historical significance.

Of the 1,179 sites identified in the survey, 238 were classified as HIGH, 318 were classified as MEDIUM, and 623 were classified as LOW priority. Properties included in the HIGH category were automatically considered for National Register designation. All architectural sites were grouped by house type or style, and through a careful analysis, the most outstanding or unique examples were then selected for inclusion in the nomination. Properties with strong associations to important historical events or individuals were identified, and those sites that best represented the established areas of significance were selected for National Register nomination.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) ethnic history

Specific dates	see individual site forms	Builder/Architect	see individual site forms
----------------	------------------------------	-------------------	---------------------------

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Cuero is a town with a rich and diverse history, and many of its residents and businesses have played a vital role in the development not only of Cuero, but also for much of South Texas. Founded in 1872, Cuero has served as the seat of government for DeWitt County since 1876. Well known as the "Turkey Capital of the World," the town is also closely associated with the long abandoned city of Indianola, which was a major seaport in Texas during the mid 19th century. Many of Cuero's most important and influential citizens moved from Indianola after the hurricanes of 1875 and 1886. Cuero's greatest period of economic prosperity occurred in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as the town expanded in size and growth. Many of the structures erected at that time remain standing and provide a tangible link to that boom period. Several significant business and political leaders have called Cuero their home, and houses built by these individuals stand as testimony to their prominence in local and regional affairs. Only one structure, the DeWitt County Courthouse, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, but this multiple-resource nomination includes an additional 48 individual properties to this prestigious list. Three historic districts which, altogether, include 147 contributing properties are also proposed for similar designation.

Overview of the City's Historical Development

Following the Civil War, Texas experienced tremendous population and economic growth as the state, having been spared much of the devastation that caused so much hardship throughout the Confederate South, offered opportunities for both old and new settlers. One of Texas' fastest growing cities at the time was Indianola, a port city on the Gulf Coast. The establishment of rail service from Indianola to the hinterlands in the 1860s boosted further that coastal city's development into a major trade center in the State. Charles Morgan, who operated a steamship line between Indianola and New Orleans, purchased the partially completed San Antonio and Mexican Gulf Railway in 1869 and vowed to provide service from Indianola to San Antonio within two years and ultimately California. Morgan renamed the company the Gulf, Western Texas and Pacific Railroad, and its route to San Antonio generally followed the Guadalupe River, extending through such already established cities as Victoria and Gonzales. This railroad, like others throughout the state and nation, helped to develop entirely new communities whose livelihood was dependent upon the railroad. The establishment of Cuero is but one example of this common late 19th-century trend.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property See individual site forms

Quadrangle name Cuero, Texas

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References See individual site forms

A

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

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F

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G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

See individual site forms

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David Moore/Historian

organization Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc.

date July 1986

street & number 2112 Rio Grande

telephone 512/478-8014

city or town Austin

state Texas 78705

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

State Level:

☐ national ☒ state ☒ local

Cuero Commercial Historic District
Terrell-Reuss Sts. Historic Dist.

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Laurie's J. J. J. J. J.

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 12 Sept. 1988

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

See Continuation Sheet for listings
Keeper of the National Register

date 10-31-88

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Organized settlement had reached the region as early as 1825 when the empresario Green DeWitt received a large land grant from the Republic of Mexico. While the colony proved successful and many settlers moved to the region, the town of Cuero was not founded until 1872. In February of that year Colonel Gustav Schleicher, a civil engineer, lawyer and surveyor for the Gulf, Western Texas and Pacific Railroad, bought a league of land in DeWitt County that stood along the proposed path of the railroad. Anticipating that a new town could be established there, he conveyed the property to the Cuero Land and Immigration Company which had been formed a few months earlier. Principal stockholders of the company included Schleicher, Fletcher S. Stockdale, Colonel Charles M. Terrell and John C. French. The company was organized to develop and promote a settlement near the confluence of a small creek into the Guadalupe River. This creek, which had been named by early Spanish explorers to the region, was called Cuero. When translated from Spanish, cuero means cow or raw hides. This name was selected because of the abundance of cattle which roamed nearby. Schleicher himself laid out the original town and set aside a market square at the southern edge. Soon afterwards, the Cuero Land and Immigration Co. conveyed a 100-acre tract of land (known as the Morgantown Addition) to the Gulf, Western Texas and Pacific Railroad which was located immediately south of the proposed rail line. All these events led to the establishment of Cuero (Texas Historical Commission 1973).

On March 4, 1873, the first rail passenger service reached the new town, linking it to Indianola. Because it served as the terminus of the railroad for many years, this small settlement became an important trade center in the area and soon surpassed other nearby communities, such as Clinton and Yorktown, as the most significant in DeWitt County. By 1876 voters elected to move the county seat from Clinton to Cuero, thus solidifying its position as an important regional hub of activity. Since then, the town has remained the seat of government for DeWitt County.

Cuero's population increased during the late 19th century, as evidenced by the table on the following page. Much of this growth resulted from the relocation of many citizens from Indianola who came after devastating hurricanes struck that city in 1875 and 1886. For more information about this important chapter in Cuero's history, see Indianola and Cuero: A Thematic Component later in the nomination.

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CUERO POPULATION FIGURES AS REPORTED BY THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Year - Population

Year - Population

1880 - 1,333

1940 - 5,474

1890 - 2,442

1950 - 7,498

1900 - 3,422

1960 - 7,338

1910 - 3,109

1970 - 6,956

1920 - 3,671

1980 - 7,124

1930 - 4,672

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Cuero developed into an important commercial, retail and agricultural center along the lower Guadalupe River. Although the Gulf, Western Texas and Pacific Railroad extended through Cuero first, another line, the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad, reached Cuero in 1878 (Webb 1952 I: 497). Victoria, located about 30 miles to the east and with an 1890 population of 3,046, was the only city in the region that surpassed Cuero in its number of residents. Cuero entered its most prosperous and dynamic era by that time, and the town was rapidly transformed into a lively, bustling community.

Many new buildings were constructed during the 1890s, which reflected the general prosperity that existed in the community at that time. The downtown extended along the 100 blocks of both E. and W. Main Street and the 100 to 200 blocks of N. Esplanade Street, all of which were lined with continuous rows of commercial buildings housing a variety of stores. Many new residences were built throughout the town's residential neighborhoods. In addition, most of the religious institutions erected sanctuaries in the late 19th century, many of which still stand today, including Grace Episcopal Church (N.R. Site No. 970), the First Methodist Church (N.R. Site No. 377), the Second Baptist Colored (now Macedonia) Baptist Church (N.R. Site No. 892), and Mt. Herman Baptist Church (Survey Site No. 534). Two of Cuero's oldest congregations, St. Michael's Catholic Church (N.R. Site No. 1084) and St. Mark's Lutheran Church (Survey Site No. 946), replaced their old houses of worship in the 1930s.

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Local farmers began to realize the potential of the rich and fertile lands surrounding Cuero which, in turn, encouraged the establishment of numerous agriculture-related industries. By 1881, according to August Koch's Bird's-eye map, Cuero boasted two such facilities, including a combination cotton gin, planing and grist mill and a jointly operated cotton gin and flour mill. In later years, as cotton became the primary cash crop of the region, other industries devoted to processing that crop were established. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of 1891, 1896, 1902, 1907, 1912, 1922 and 1930 indicate a textile mill, a cotton compress, a cotton oil mill and several gins in the community. These businesses provided the economic foundation and stability for Cuero's growth and prosperity of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Ranching was another important source of income for many local residents, especially during the mid- to late-19th century when this section of the state was one of the leading producers of cattle. While the City of Victoria is, perhaps, more often associated with the cattle-raising business, Cuero also claimed a large number of ranchers. These individuals maintained houses near their ranch headquarters in rural parts of DeWitt and surrounding counties but spent most of their time in large and majestic residences that they built in Cuero. Many were also prominent business and governmental leaders as well. Some of the best known ranching families include the Bells, Burns, Blackwells, Hamiltons, Reifferts, Crains, Mugges and Woffords (Murphree 1962: 175-183) and tax rolls indicate that these families owned hundreds of acres of land in the region. Extant houses built by members of these families are proposed for listing, either individually or as contributing members of a historic district, in the National Register as part of this multiple-resource nomination. This includes individual properties (Site Nos. 910, 942, 941, 921, 876, 108, and 878) and contributing members of the Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District (Site Nos. 137, 160, 917, and 102).

Cuero also offered amenities that few similarly sized communities could claim. In 1892, for example, institutionalized health care became available with the opening of Solame Hospital which was supported by the Cuero Hospital Association. It stood on Factory Hill in the far eastern part of the Morgantown Addition, near the original site of the cotton textile mill. Dr. Joesph H. Reuss served as the first chief of staff but was eventually replaced by Dr. John W. Burns. Both men went on to found hospitals of their own and each named these institutions in honor of their respective fathers. Dr. Reuss erected a 3-story brick building in 1914 which stood on the north side of the 100 block of W. Reuss Street. Throughout its many years of service, the hospital changed ownership and names several times; it was razed in recent years. The Burns Hospital was constructed in 1911 and was at the northwest of First and Gonzales streets. In 1934 the building and

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land were conveyed to the Sisters of the Incarnate Word Blessed Sacrament who staffed the hospital until its closing in 1970 (Cuero Star 1895; Murphree 1962: 33; Historical Record 1972: 28). Although neither hospital now stands, the residences of their founders are being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places either individually (Burns House - Site No. 307) or as a contributing member of a historic district (Reuss House - Site No. 105 Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District).

Cuero's most colorful and unique tradition began in 1912 when turkeys raised on nearby farms were paraded along Main Street. Created to promote the developing poultry industry, the Turkey Trot, as the event was called, attracted considerable attention to the community, and the many photographs taken of the original and subsequent celebrations attest to its success in drawing large crowds. Cuero soon billed itself the "Turkey Capital of the World." The large number of turkeys raised in the area brought several poultry-processing firms to the city. Their plants stood along W. Main Street, adjacent to the railroad tracks, and operated until the 1960s when the local turkey market declined. While none of these facilities currently do business in Cuero, the Turkey Trot has become an established affair and is a great source of civic pride (Schaffner 1952; Cuero Record 1955).

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, Cuero's economy experienced a major downturn. Crop production among farmers in the region decreased, thereby hurting local industries. Also, Cuero's merchants were hampered by competition from nearby Victoria which became the dominant trade center in this section of the state. While much of the city's economic woes were local in scope, other national trends contributed to the hardships as Cuero and the rest of the country experienced the Great Depression. The 1932 closing of H. Runge and Co., Cuero's leading commercial enterprise, suddenly brought this situation into clear focus. As further evidence of the hardships of the era, property tax appraisals were reduced across the board by a total of 30 percent between the years 1926 and 1936. Such a decision by local governmental leaders, no doubt, was believed to ease not only the tax burden but also stimulate the local economy. Unfortunately, conditions did not improve until the post-World II era.

Throughout the modern era, Cuero has remained a remarkably stable community. The lack of a "boom" during the modern era has helped preserve much of the town's historic fabric. At present, the town is experiencing renewed growth and activity, as many citizens are rediscovering the unique character of residences throughout the older neighborhoods. In addition, the city's participation in the Main Street Program since 1985 has spurred interest in the revitalization of downtown.

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Indianola and Cuero: A Thematic Component

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, Cuero maintained close ties to Indianola and much of the Cuero's early history is firmly rooted with people that lived and events that occurred in that port city. During the middle to late 19th century, Indianola, located on Matagorda Bay about 60 miles southeast of Cuero, developed into an important shipping and immigration center in Texas and was surpassed only by Galveston in the volume and significance of its trade. Indianola's strategic position on the Gulf Coast made it the primary and most accessible shipping point not only for San Antonio, then the state's largest city, but also for the vast regions of West Texas. And with the railroad stretching deeper into the new territories, Indianola's future seemed bright.

The town was also the primary port of entry for the large influx of Germans who came to Texas during the middle and late 19th century. Although the majority were bound for New Braunfels, Fredericksburg and other German communities in the Texas Hill Country, many immigrants settled in Indianola, Victoria and other cities that lay along the path from the coast to the Hill Country. A large number of those who remained in Indianola became prominent and influential citizens.

By 1870 the population of Indianola included several thousand individuals, and as the community developed into a major seaport along the Gulf Coast, its citizens expected to reap great economic benefits in the coming years. Instead, their hopes and dreams were shattered when a devastating hurricane struck the city in 1875. The storm destroyed much of the town and many lives were lost. A large number of survivors moved inland. Because it stood at the western terminus of Indianola's railroad, Cuero received most of those seeking to live safely away from the coast. And at this time, some of the town's most dynamic business and civic leaders moved to Cuero, such as Emil Reiffert, William Wagner and David Heaton (Murphree 1962: 32). (See Site Nos. 490, 491, 492, 952, and 431 for more information on the business dealings of these individuals.)

Although Indianola was rebuilt, another hurricane struck in 1886. This storm dealt a death blow to the community, and it was soon abandoned. As with the earlier hurricane, Cuero was the destination of the majority of survivors. Many of those who moved to Cuero dismantled their homes, or salvaged whatever materials they could, and rebuilt their residences in Cuero. Perhaps the most graphic evidence of this trend is the Peter Clements House (N.R. Site No. 603) which stands at 701 E. Morgan. The Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth possesses a photograph that shows the intact

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Clements House in Indianola after the 1886 storm. The rubble of what had previously been residences is scattered nearby. According to local histories, boards and planks of the Clements and other houses were numbered and then used as a guide during their reconstructions. Most were built in the Morgantown Addition, located on the southside of the railroad tracks, and closely resembled their original appearance. Research of tax rolls and abstracts have identified at least 30 houses that were probably moved from Indianola. Those nominated to the National Register of Historic Places include:

William Frobese House, Site No. 664

Keller-Grunder House, Site No. 597

Clements-Nagel House, Site No. 603

Susan Weisiger House, Site No. 498, E. Main Residential Historic District

Kleinecke House, Site No. 449, E. Main Residential Historic District

Charles Wittmer House, Site No. 639

Dane Wittnebernt House, Site No. 1110

Bates-Sheppard House, Site No. 287

Billows-Thompson House, Site No. 288

Lynch-Probst House, Site No. 289

Valentine Ley House, Site 639

Reiffert-Mugge House, Site 876, Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District

Just as structures were moved to Cuero, so too were Indianola's most prosperous and successful businesses, including the H.J. Huck Lumber Co., Keller's Crockery Store, Warn Hardware, J.M. Reuss and Son Drugs, Heaton Brothers Drugs, and the H. Runge and Co., a wholesale grocery and private banking firm. Many of these establishments had already opened branch facilities in Cuero soon after the arrival of the railroad or following the 1875 storm. When Indianola was abandoned in 1886, however, these and other firms permanently relocated their primary base of operation to Cuero.

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Since 1886 the citizens of Cuero have sought to preserve their link with this once prosperous city of Indianola. Many of the houses that originally stood there have been saved and, in some cases, awarded designation by the State Marker Program.

Politics and Government

Although Cuero has remained a rather small community, many influential governmental, judicial and political leaders, some of regional and state-wide significance, have called Cuero their home. This tradition began with the town's establishment, as one of the town's founders, Fletcher S. Stockdale, served as Lieutenant Governor of Texas from 1863 to 1865 and briefly assumed the governorship in the summer of 1865. After his tenure in public office, Stockdale returned to his residence in Indianola and resumed his law practice. He subsequently became involved with the Gulf, Western Texas and Pacific Railroad and was a charter member of the Cuero Immigration and Land Co. Following the 1875 storm he moved to Cuero and died there on February 4, 1890 (Parmelee 1964: 161-171).

A.B. Davidson, who served three terms as the the state's lieutenant governor, also resided in Cuero. Born in 1855 in Tennessee, he and his family moved to a farm near Georgetown, Texas, in 1870. Davidson graduated from Southwestern Methodist College in 1879 and moved to Gonzales where he studied law with attorneys James F. Miller and W.B. Sayers. In two years he was admitted to the bar and moved to Cuero, where he established his own practice with Robert A. Pleasants, son of famed Judge Henry A. Pleasants. In 1890 Davidson was elected district attorney for the 24th Judicial District and held that office until 1898 when he successfully ran for the state Senate. After serving two four-year terms, he was elected lieutenant governor of the state in 1906. His previous experience in the Senate, no doubt, contributed to his ability to preside over that chamber and he was re-elected in 1908 and 1910 (Texas Bar Association 1921: 94-95). Upon his retirement from active politics, he returned to his old residence (Site No. 916 - Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District) in Cuero. He died in 1920 (Branda 1976: 228).

William H. Crain was another prominent politician from Cuero. Although born in Galveston, he was raised in New York City and graduated from St. Francis Xavier's College of that city. He eventually moved to Indianola and studied law with Fletcher B. Stockdale and David C. Proctor. In 1872 he successfully ran for the Office of District Attorney of the 24th Judicial District, serving until 1876 when he was elected to the Texas Senate. He held that office until 1886 when he was elected to the U.S.

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House of Representatives. His district extended to Cameron County and included much of south Texas. Crain retained that position until his death in Washington, D.C. in 1896 (Wharton 1930 III: 215-217). Crain had come to Cuero after the 1886 storm and built a 2-story residence (N.R. Site No. 364) at 508 E. Courthouse soon after his arrival.

Other locally prominent politicians and elected officials include Robert A. Pleasants, who was Chief Justice of the Court of Civil Appeals for the First Judicial District (Texas Bar Association 1921: 95). He resided at 108 N. Hunt (N.R. Site No. 1106). John M. Green, who purchased the David C. Proctor House (Site No. 927 - Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District), was Judge of the 24th Judicial District (Historical Record 1972: 8). John J. Bell, who lived at 217 W. Broadway (Site No. 300 - Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District), served in the Texas House of Representatives (1936-1947), the Texas Senate (1947-1954) and the U.S. House of Representatives (1954)(Texas Historical Commission, 1979).

Commerce

Most of Cuero's commercial and retail activity has been concentrated along Main Street and Esplanade Boulevard, just north of the railroad tracks. The first stores occupied small frame structures that were erected along these thoroughfares. While none of these buildings remain, historic photographs and the 1881 bird's eye map of the City provide graphic documentation of the types of stores and buildings that once prevailed in the downtown area. The most common businesses, as was typical of similarly sized towns, included grocery, hardware, drug and general merchandise stores, as well as hotels, saloons and livery stables.

When Cuero was the railhead of the Gulf, Western Texas and Pacific Railroad, the town attained considerable importance as a center of trade in the region. As one observer has noted

Early in the 1870 period when Cuero was the jumping off place for visitors from all over the world . . . the towns of Yorktown, Runge, Nordheim, Kenedy, Floresville, Karnes City, Helena, Stockdale, Gonzales, Nixon, Smiley, Riddleville and other dozens of cities depended almost entirely on Cuero for its food, implements and supplies. There were a number of towns in this territory such as Goliad, Yorktown, Gonzales and others that were possibly older than Cuero, but none of them boasted a railroad and all came to Cuero for their freight and merchandise after the railroad had been extended here early in 1873 (Cuero Record 1923).

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In some cases, these establishments were originally based in nearby Clinton, on the Guadalupe River, and relocated to Cuero because of its access to the rail. The J.R. Nagel Hardware Co. (Site No. 483 — all sites listed in this section are located in the Cuero Commercial Historic District, unless otherwise noted) was one example. Others, such as H. Runge and Co. (Site Nos. 478, 490, 491 and 492), were based at Indianola and opened branch facilities in Cuero. After the 1875 hurricane, however, a large influx of other Indianola businesses, such as Heaton Brothers Drug Store (Site No. 431), R.C. Warn Hardware (Site No. 951) and J.M. Reuss and Son Drugs (Site No. 435), moved to Cuero and contributed to the development of its commercial center. Virtually all of these firms maintained headquarters in Indianola until the 1886 storm. Most of the businesses subsequently moved their bases of operation to Cuero.

While many commercial ventures played an important role in Cuero's development, none were as significant as H. Runge and Co., and its history is important not only to Cuero but to much of South Texas as well. The firm's beginnings can be traced to 1845 when Henry Runge, a newly arrived German immigrant co-founded a mercantile and trading business in Indianola. Originally known as Runge and Fromme and Co., the business was renamed H. Runge and Co. in the following year. By the mid 1850s, the firm was engaged in the forwarding of goods to such places as El Paso, Fort Clark, Eagle Pass and San Antonio. H. Runge and Co. also became involved in the banking business and was among the first such establishments in the state. Two other German immigrants, Emil Reiffert and William Frobese, joined the company soon after the Civil War and became sole proprietors after they purchased Runge's share of the business. Runge subsequently moved to Galveston and became a prominent merchant in that coastal city. He died in 1873. Edward Mugge, another German immigrant, became the third partner soon after the Civil War and was given responsibility of establishing and running branch facilities in Cuero once rail service was provided.

Initially, the firm was engaged in the forwarding, grocery and banking businesses but soon expanded its services. Operations in Cuero remained an integral, although secondary, part of the company's expanding trade. In 1886, however, the firm abandoned Indianola and moved its headquarters to Cuero. That same year, the firm purchased the Guthrie Cotton Gin and Grist Mill (razed) which stood on block 9 of the Morgantown Addition and operated through the 1930s. H. Runge and Co. also owned a great deal of property in the downtown, and during its many years of operation the company was responsible for the construction of several extant buildings in the business district, including Site Nos. 438, 478, 490, 491 and 492. All are contributing members of the Cuero Commercial Historic District. Besides the previously mentioned businesses, the company operated hardware and furniture

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stores. In addition, the firm maintained vast land and cattle holdings in DeWitt, Karnes and other adjoining counties and is credited with the establishment of Nordheim in southwestern DeWitt County near the firm's ranching headquarters. The ranch was originally operated by the company but was divided among the families of the three principal partners around the turn of the century. The township of Runge in Karnes County is also closely linked with the company (Davis 1925 III: 1973; Murphree 1962: 182-183; Cuero Star 1895).

The impact of H. Runge and Co. on the history of Cuero cannot be overstated; it remained a dominant force in the community until 1932 when the company, reeling from the economic hardships that affected so much of the country, ceased operations. Many of Cuero's most successful businessmen were affiliated, in some capacity, with the firm, including Walter Reiffert, Fred Mugge, Otto Straeker and Herman Currilin, to name a few. One of the most prominent was Walter K. Breeden. Although an employee of H. Runge and Co. for only a short time, he co-founded a retail grocery business, Breeden Brothers Groceries, in 1889 that eventually rivaled a similar venture by his former employer. Breeden's partners included his brother Charles G. Breeden and his brother-in-law Robert Wofford, who was merely a financial investor and thus was not actively involved in day-to-day affairs. Breeden Brothers Grocers is reported to have been one of the largest retail grocery businesses in this region of the state (Cuero Record 1923). The firm's operations eventually expanded to include the buying and selling of cotton and wool, and in 1907 the company hired Victoria architect Jules Leffland to design a building on the prominent corner of Main and Esplanade streets (Leffland n.d.). It (Site No. 479) stands today as a vivid reminder of the firm's prosperity. Walter K. Breeden served as manager until his death in 1931, at which time his son Paul H. Breeden ran the company. The business closed in 1940 (Historical Record 1972: 18; Cuero Record 1923).

Another of Cuero's most successful commercial endeavors was operated by Charles G. Breeden, among the town's most highly regarded citizens at that time. Besides serving as a founding member and partner of Breeden Brothers Groceries, he also was responsible for the formation of Breeden-Runge Wholesale Grocery Co., a joint venture with H. Runge and Co. This firm was established in 1911 with a capital stock of \$85,000 and operated out of a brick building (N.R. Site No. 849) on Frederick William Street. Originally, the company served only the Cuero area, but branch facilities were soon opened throughout the region, including a store in Kenedy in 1916, one in Alice in 1924, one in Yoakum in 1928, and one in Yorktown in 1929. Thus the

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firm's territory covered much of south-central Texas. Breeden died in December 1925, and in July 1939 the business was purchased by Groce-Parish Wholesale Grocery Co. of Victoria (Cuero Record December 30, 1925; Kokernot 1987 personal files).

Yet another wholesale grocery firm was founded in 1893 by Claude B. Moore and Frank B. Sames. By 1903 Moore and Sames, as the company was called, operated out of the ground floor of the newly completed Knights of Pythias Building (Site 947). While much of their business was concentrated in Cuero, the company was reported to have had extensive coverage throughout south Texas (Historical Record 1972: 26). The firm's warehouse and shipping headquarters were located at 202 N. Frederick William (Survey Site No. 848). On February 28, 1929, Moore and W.P. Meissner purchased Sames share of the business and the company was known as Moore and Meissner and operated until 1936 (Cuero Record 1944; DeWitt County Tax Abstracts of Lots, 1936).

The town's first hardware store was owned by J.R. Nagel, who moved from nearby Clinton in 1872. Nagel's business was among the most successful retail establishments in town and in 1907 new facilities were built that reflected its profitable operation. Jules Leffland served as architect of this finely crafted edifice (Site No. 483) at 113-115 E. Main. Nagel's son Henry became a partner in 1889 and the firm was renamed J.R. Nagel and Son Hardware (Cuero Star 1895; Leffland n.d.).

R.C. Warn operated another hardware business on N. Esplanade Blvd. Warn, one of the many merchants to move from Indianola following the 1886 storm, erected a 2-story brick structure (Site No. 951) about 1890. After his death in the 1890s, Frank Hutchins and F.W. Bates continued the store (Texas Historical Commission 1978). Now known as Wagner Hardware, it remains the city's oldest such enterprise.

Many drug stores have operated in Cuero throughout its history but none have played a more significant role or have remained in business as long as Reuss' Drugs. Its founder, J.M. Reuss, was a German physician who studied medicine at the University of Wurzburg. He came to Texas in 1845, eventually settling in Indianola. Four years later, he established that town's first drug store and quickly became a highly respected citizen. During a yellow fever epidemic in the 1850s, Reuss provided medical care for many of the townspeople. In 1873 Reuss opened a branch store in Cuero and moved to the city after the 1875 storm (Cuero Star 1895). J.M. Reuss and Son, as the firm was then called, was at 130 E. Main (Site No. 435). The business has since moved to newer quarters but is still run by a member (fourth generation) of the Reuss family.

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David Heaton was proprietor of another drug store, Cuero's first, which opened in 1872. Heaton and his brothers had previously opened stores in Lavaca in 1854 and Victoria in 1870 (Cuero Star 1895). The Cuero store originally was housed in a small frame building but was replaced in 1889 by a 2-story brick structure (Site No. 431) which is currently occupied by Reuss' Drugs. Heaton's business remained in operation until the early 20th century.

H. Runge and Co., as previously mentioned, opened the town's first bank in 1872; however, Otto Buchel established another by 1873. Buchel, a nephew of Colonel August Buchel and a brother of Fred and August Buchel, who operated a cotton gin and grist mill (Survey Site No. 537), initially was a partner with George Seeligson of Indianola. They opened a grocery and mercantile business but soon became involved in banking. After Seeligson's departure in 1875, William Wagner joined the firm and along with Buchel enjoyed great financial success. The Otto Buchel and Co. Banking and Exchange, as it was originally called, was located in a two-story brick building that was erected about 1890. On June 20, 1911, a fire gutted the building, and new facilities (Site No. 952) were soon constructed. Buchel Bank and Trust remains in operation.

Cuero's economic boom of the late 19th century facilitated the creation of a third bank by 1881 when rancher and businessman Alex Hamilton and lumberman C.L. Stadler joined forces to establish the First State Bank. In 1893 the bank erected a 2-story brick structure (Site No. 973) that stands at the northeast corner of Esplanade and Church streets. In 1926 the bank was reorganized and renamed Farmer's State Bank and Trust Co. Recently, the bank has moved to new headquarters about five blocks north of its original location.

Many other businesses have contributed to Cuero's commercial development. Among the more significant are J.A. Graves Dry Goods Store at 127 E. Main (Site No. 488), the Cuero Record at 119 E. Main (Site No. 484), Mistrot Dry Goods (Site No. 471), R.C. Flick Buggies and Harness Store (Site No. 950) and John Stratton Livery (Site No. 974). All were housed in buildings that are located in the proposed Cuero Commercial Historic District. Additional information on these and other commercial ventures is provided in that section of the multiple-resource nomination.

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Industry

Cuero's industrial development traditionally has been based upon the high yields of local farmers. Wheat and corn were the most frequently harvested crops during the city's early settlement period, and the processing of these raw goods into foodstuffs was a primary concern of the townspeople. Flour and grist mills thus were the first industrial ventures, and by 1881 Cuero boasted two such enterprises. One was founded by Buchel Brothers and the other was operated by S.M. Guthrie. As was often the case at that time, owners of these kinds of businesses combined other operations under one roof because of the large amount of capital required to establish such a business and the limited supplies of labor and power. Cotton gins were incorporated into both of these mills, which also reflected the growing importance of the cotton market along the Guadalupe River.

The Buchel Brothers Gin and Mill, in operation by the mid 1870s, was founded by August and Fred Buchel, both of whom were German immigrants who arrived in Indianola by the 1850s. They were nephews of August Buchel, a prominent figure in the Texas Confederate forces. Like their uncle, they served in the Civil War and returned to Indianola after its conclusion. They eventually made their way inland and began large-scale farming operations in the fertile Guadalupe River valley. They established a cotton gin and flour mill in Cuero on Block 5 of the Morgantown Addition. The business prospered but in 1887 disaster struck when a fire completely destroyed the facility. The Buchel brothers, with the help of the plant's manager and soon-to-be partner Charles Fischer, rebuilt the mill, utilizing brick rather than frame construction as was used in the original plant. Portions of the 1887 facility still stand, although subsequent alterations, expansions and modernizations have compromised its historic integrity. Unlike the original mill, the new facility was involved solely in the production of flour. The mill was sold later to Quaker Oaks Co. and presently is owned by Allied Feed Co. It remains in operation but the plant has been converted into a feed mill. This is the city's oldest industrial concern and has long been an important landmark in the community.

The Guthrie Mill was a competitor of the Buchel Brothers in the processing of flour during the early years of Cuero's history. Although its facilities have been dismantled and no physical trace of its operation remains, the Guthrie Mill opened as early as 1881 on Block 9 of the Morgantown Addition. Little is known about its founder S.M. Guthrie, but in 1886 H. Runge and Co. purchased the plant (Cuero Star 1895) which was subsequently renamed the Runge Gin and Mill. Sanborn maps show that a Morse Press was used in the facility.

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Because cotton was a profitable crop for farmers in surrounding areas, other industries involved in its processing were established during the late 19th century. The Cuero Cotton Oil Mill (Survey Site No. 821) was founded in 1890 by A.T. Schmidt, but was later purchased by Alexander Hamilton, Otto Buchel and Emil Reiffert, Sr. Hamilton served as president and general manager but was succeeded by his son Thornton Hamilton, who continued to run the business until his retirement in the 1940s. The mill extracted cotton seeds during the ginning process. The seeds were ground into oil which was used for a myriad of purposes, including soap formulas and cooking oil. The mill continued in operation until the 1970s but only the hull and seed houses still stand.

A cotton compress was built in Cuero in 1895. This plant, which was fitted with a Morse Press, packed cotton into dense bales, thereby enabling the crop to be transported more economically. Edward Mugge, W.K. Breeden and Louis Keller, all of whom were local residents, helped finance its establishment. The plant stood along the tracks of the Gulf, Western Texas and Pacific Railroad near the present-day 300 block of Bridge Street. Although similar operations were established in Gonzales and Victoria, the Cuero Compress Co. serviced a relatively large number of cotton growers in the lower Guadalupe River region. The compress was razed in recent years and a large brick firewall (Survey Site No. 532) is all that remains of this once active industrial site.

In 1883 local businessmen formed the Cuero Cotton Mill, which stood at the far eastern end of town at the terminus of Morgan Avenue. This site was eventually abandoned and new facilities (Survey Site No. 394) were built in 1901 on blocks 95 and 96 of the original town site. When the cornerstone was laid, dignitaries from around the state, including Governor Joseph Sayers, came to Cuero for the dedication. The original directors, as carved in the building's dedication stone, included J.A. Graves, Otto Buchel, F.P. Sames, Emil Reiffert, G.J. Schleicher, Alexander Hamilton, Charles G. Breeden, William Westhoff and Sam C. Lackey.

Like all of the other textile mills that were established in Texas during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Cuero Cotton Mill was founded in reaction to exploitation by mills of the eastern United States, which took potential profits from Texas. Promoters of the Cuero mill and others in the state believed that Texas, the leading producer of cotton, could also develop into the leading processor of the raw good. The growth and industrial development that would result, they argued, would greatly stimulate both local and state economies and usher in an era of great prosperity. With these expectations the Cuero Cotton Mill was founded.

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The early years of its operation were only marginally successful. In keeping with prevailing thoughts that housing should be provided for company workers, small dwellings of uniform construction and design were built in close proximity to the plant soon after its opening. Sanborn maps and tax abstracts reveal that Blocks 87, 94 and 93 of the original town site were developed by the mill and were lined with workers' housing. At its peak in the 1920s, 24 such houses were built by the company. Only three remain today.

Despite the grand intentions of its founders, the mill has had a stormy operation and has closed numerous times. In 1911, the first reorganization took place and H. Runge and Co., Charles K. Breeden and J.A. Graves purchased the mill. The plant has undergone major modifications over the years, the most severe in 1955, and has changed ownership many times. Nonetheless, it remains in operation and attests to the important role cotton has played in local history.

Ethnic Heritage

Blacks

A significant percentage of Cuero's population has been black and the many contributions of this group of people have been largely overlooked and neglected. Little evidence survives to document the earliest of Cuero's black citizens. The most important source comes from Beatrice Lyarels, a long-time resident who prepared a manuscript on local black history as part of the historic resource survey of the town. She describes the general role of blacks in the community and also notes important individuals, businesses and institutions. Supplemental information comes from courthouse, tax and census records, as well as local newspapers.

Cuero's black population has been confined, for the most part, to the southwestern quadrant of the city. Unlike many other Texas towns, such as Waxahachie which had two separate and distinct business districts, Cuero had a single retail center, patronized by both blacks and whites. Sanborn maps and local informants reveal that a few black-run businesses operated along the 200 and 300 blocks of Main Street, somewhat isolated from other commercial establishments. Several buildings still stand in this area but most of the frame structures that were indicated on Sanborn maps have been razed. These blocks still serve the black community as a primary center of activity.

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Little is known about the first blacks to settle in Cuero. Deed records at the DeWitt County Courthouse state that a Methodist Episcopal (Colored) Church, presumably Brothers Chapel A.M.E. Church, obtained the rights to block 3, lot 11 of the Morgantown Addition on July 18, 1875 (DeWitt County Deed Records, Volume 5, page 442). The conveyence of this property to the church at such an early date indicates that blacks were among the first pioneers of Cuero. The first written account of locally important blacks is found in the October 1895 special historical edition of the Cuero Star, which was published to promote the city. While most articles deal with prominent whites and their businesses, the newspaper at least acknowledges that a black population existed and that there were several individuals worthy of note. Brief biographical information is provided for educator C.H. Griggs, Dr. J.T.M. Lindsay, and bus operator Richard Harris. Fred Hamilton is described as the leader of Cuero's black community in 1895. Historical research has yet to uncover his or any of the others' homesteads.

One reason that the newspaper included articles on these individuals possibly stems from the pride that the local black community had for itself and its awareness of the long struggle for justice and freedom that blacks had encountered for so many years. By 1896 and possibly much earlier, streets in the southwestern quadrant of town were named for prominent blacks. Douglas [sic] Street, for example, honored Frederick Douglass, a famous 19th-century American black leader, while Touissant L'Overture Street recognizes a black man who successfully led a slave revolt in Haiti in 1791. Other streets were named in honor of Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant.

Churches have served as the most important social institution throughout the black community. Brother's Chapel A.M.E. Church was Cuero's first, and its house of worship stands at 312 W. Morgan (Survey Site No. 557). In 1888 Mt. Herman Baptist Church (Survey Site No. 534) was organized with Reverend H.C. Johns as pastor. Three years later, the Second Baptist Church (Colored), later renamed Macedonia Baptist (N.R. Site No. 892), was established. Reverend G.W. James of Lafayette, Louisiana, was instrumental in its founding and he served as pastor until his death in 1905. The congregation met in a frame structure that is still in use. The building originally was constructed for St. Michael's Catholic Church and stood at McLeod and Church streets. When a new brick facility was planned by the Catholics, members of Macedonia Baptist Church purchased the old frame sanctuary with some furnishings for \$300. The church was then dismantled and rebuilt on its present site by Charlie Gallagher, one of the founders of Macedonia Church (Historical Record 1972: 55; Lyarels 1986). Some of the other older black congregations include Quinn Chapel A.M.E. Church (organized 1896), Mt. Bethel Baptist Church (Survey Site No. 853 - organized 1878) and Little Zion Baptist Church (Survey Site No. 764 - organized 1895).

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C.H. Griggs, as previously noted, was an early education leader in Cuero, serving as the first principal of the local black school. He, along with Reverend G.W. James and fellow teacher E.A. Daule, came to Cuero from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1890. When Griggs resigned a few years later, Daule assumed the position of principal and held the job for more than 40 years. During his tenure, a 2-story frame school was built in 1904 on the outskirts of town. Originally known as the Cuero Colored High School, it was renamed the Daule School in honor of the long-time principal of the institution. This facility was replaced in 1946 when a 2-story masonry building (Survey Site No. 762) was erected (Cuero Record, November 24, 1948). It presently is used as a vocational training center for the school district. Daule lived in a 1-story, L-plan house (N.R. Site No. 655) on W. Newmann Street which is nominated to the National Register in recognition of his contributions to local educational efforts and his prominence as a leader in the black community.

While many individuals were prominent in local black history, none are held in as high esteem as Leonard Ray Harmon. A native of Cuero and a graduate of its schools, Harmon joined the Navy in 1939. He was eventually commissioned to the cruiser U.S.S. San Francisco. On November 13, 1942 during the Battle of Guadalcanal, Harmon was killed while attempting to rescue wounded shipmates. For his heroic deeds, he was awarded the Navy Cross. The following year a destroyer was named in his honor, the first U.S. warship named for a black man (Texas Historical Commission Subject Marker 1977). The location of his Cuero home has not been determined.

Many black-run businesses, including cafes, garages and barber shops, have operated in Cuero over the years. The longest to survive is the Jamison Funeral Home, which was established more than 40 years ago. Mark Cater Jamison and his wife Amanda ran a similar business in nearby Yoakum prior to their opening of this branch facility in Cuero. The Jamisons were responsible for the construction of the present building (Survey Site No. 623) in the 1940s. Their nephew, D.C. Byrd, continues to run the business (Lyarels 1986).

Germans

German-born immigrants comprised the most populous European group to settle in Cuero and outlying areas, and by 1890 almost 15 percent of the county's population was listed as Germans in the census. When considering that many of these immigrants had children once they arrived and thus were counted as U.S. born, first and second generation Germans comprised a

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substantial portion of the population. The many successes and contributions of these Germans are well documented. One need only to look at the town's most significant businesses, such as H. Runge and Co., Reuss Drugs, Keller's Crockery Store, Gohmert's Department Store and Buchel Bank, to understand the dramatic impact these Germans made to the historical development of Cuero.

During the 1880s and 1890s Germans were actively recruited to emigrate to Cuero, as evidenced by the 1887 publication of Beschreibung des Counties DeWitt und seinen Hulfquellen: Ein Handbuch für Einwander (roughly translated, Description of the Resources of DeWitt County, Texas: The Immigrant's Handbook). This promotional booklet portrayed Cuero and nearby environs as a land full of opportunities. Other Germans who moved to Cuero had resided in DeWitt county as early as the 1840s when the first major wave of immigrants reached Texas. Towns such as Meyersville and Yorktown had substantial German-speaking residents.

As they settled in Cuero, the Germans retained many of their most treasured customs and traditions. A large number, continued to speak in their native tongue and avoided the use of English (Cuero Record 1923). Because so many continued to do so, William T. Eichholtz published a German-language newspaper, the Deutsche Rundschau, from 1891 until the 1910s when its name was changed to the Cuero News; it was later consolidated with the Cuero Record (Cuero Star 1895; Murphree 1962). Despite the tendency among the elder first-generation immigrants to speak in German, efforts were made to encourage children to learn English. Soon after the town was founded, the privately run English-German School (N.R. Site No. 660) was established. There, both languages were taught to young German students. The school operated until 1894 (Historical Record 1972: 35). The German Turn Verein was among the city's first social organizations, helping to stage concerts, plays, dances and other events. The group met in Turner Hall which stood on the present-day location of the Post Office in the 300 block of E. Main Street (Historical Record 1972: 8). Most of the Germans who came to Cuero joined either St. Michael's Catholic Church (N.R. Site No. 1084) or St. Mark's Lutheran Church (Survey Site No. 946).

Architecture

Several domestic structures and a large number of commercial buildings in Cuero were designed by architects. Historical research has identified only one such professional who called Cuero home; however, many architects, with practices that extended throughout South Texas, received commissions in Cuero.

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The only architect known to have resided in Cuero was S.V. Slonecki in the 1890s. Relatively little is known about his work or his life, but an article that appeared in the October 1895 issue of the Cuero Star provides some background information. He was reported to be a native of Austria, receiving his education in that country. In his adult life, he traveled the world and worked on projects in Africa, India and Japan. He came to San Francisco in 1890 and eventually settled in San Antonio where he designed many residences that were built in Texas and Mexico. About 1894 he moved to Cuero and established his office in the old Buchel Building at the corner of Esplanade and Main. He also designed the Sheppard House (Site No. 1097 - Terrell-Indianola Streets Historic District). The Wofford-Finney House (Survey Site No. 135) at 202 E. Prairie bears a strong resemblance to the Stevens House and possibly was designed by him. Slonecki also supervised the construction of the Buchel Brothers Dam and Irrigation project north of Cuero (Cuero Star 1895).

Jules Leffland was the most active architect in Cuero, designing both residences and commercial buildings during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Born and educated in Denmark, Leffland came to the U.S. in 1886. He landed in New York but eventually settled in Victoria where he began his professional career. While most of his commissions were in that city, Leffland worked throughout the region, including towns such as Kingsville, San Diego, Wharton and Beeville. His scope of work included domestic, commercial and institutional buildings. Perhaps his most important, and certainly the most unique design, is the Old Nazareth Academy in Victoria. Listed in the National Register, the building is discussed at length in the multiple-resource nomination for Victoria, Texas. While he was adept in designing structures in virtually any of the many styles that were popular around the turn of the century, Leffland was especially successful with the Classical Revival mode, and his best residential designs employed that style (Hardy, et al 1985). In Cuero, Leffland's influence is greatest in the downtown area and his expert use of fanciful brickwork in Romanesque Revival designs can be seen in buildings such as the Gohmert, Flick, and Breeden Brothers buildings (Site Nos. 480, 950 and 479, respectively). He also was architect of the Sames House (Site No. 114 - Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District), perhaps Cuero's finest example of the Queen Anne style. Leffland died in 1924 in his adopted home of Victoria.

A.O. Watson was another architect to work in Cuero. His most important contribution to the town's architectural development is his design for the DeWitt County Courthouse. With a strong influence of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, the courthouse stands today, as it did when completed in 1896, as the centerpiece of Cuero; its 4-story tower can be seen for many miles. Watson hailed from Austin, Texas, and worked with Jacob Larmour, one

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of Texas' earliest and most successful architects. Watson eventually struck out on his own and submitted numerous courthouse designs throughout the state. When his plans were selected by DeWitt County Commissioners, he was also retained to supervise its construction. Unfortunately, his working relationship with the county was stormy and he was eventually dismissed. Houston architect and builder Eugene Heiner, who also designed and built county courthouses throughout southeast Texas, was hired to complete the job. Watson is also credited with the design of the Gohmert House (Site No. 910 - Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District). Its delicate woodwork and strong vertical emphasis reflect architectural trends that were popular at the time of its construction.

Other architects to work in Cuero hailed from San Antonio and include Atlee B. Ayres who designed the Alexander Hamilton, Jr. House and the Graham Hamilton House (Site Nos. 941 and 920 - Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District), Beverly Spillman who provided the plans for the Cook House (N.R. Site No. 174) and who also was responsible for remodeling efforts on the Heaton-Breeden House (Site No. 915 - Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District), and F.B. Gaenslen who is credited with the design of St. Michael's Catholic Church (N.R. Site No. 1084).

Cuero experienced its greatest prosperity during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the large number of extant structures, both residential and commercial, dating from that time are indicative of that rapid growth. While most observers of the past traditionally have demonstrated a strong tendency to look at the largest, most opulent and significant examples of historic architecture, the study of more modest, vernacular buildings is now recognized as another vital and equally important component in efforts to study the past. Indeed, such a democratic approach in architectural history is necessary to ensure that future generations will understand how and in what types of structures peoples of all classes, races and social backgrounds lived. Item 7 of this document provides a detailed account of the various types and numbers of vernacular structures found in Cuero. The following paragraphs identify the firms and individuals who built these vernacular buildings.

Many lumberyards, contractors and individual craftsmen worked in Cuero over the years. Among the earliest and most important was H.J. Huck and Co. Established in 1846 by H.J. Huck, a newly arrived German immigrant, the firm was based in Indianola and quickly became the leading supplier of milled lumber for much of south Texas. During its early years, the company obtained its goods from Florida that were shipped by way of schooners also owned by Huck. The success that followed enabled the company to open branch operations in Victoria, Cuero and other cities. The Cuero facility was managed by C.L. Stadler, who later became one of the town's most prominent

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and influential citizens. After the 1886 storm, company headquarters were moved to Cuero. By 1902 Stadler obtained controlling interests in the firm which was renamed Stadler Lumber Co. By 1907, however, the firm was known as the Cuero Lumber Co. which operated into the 1910s. Its successor was the Alamo Lumber Co. Stadler also served as president of the DeWitt County Building and Loan Association and numerous mechanic's liens list that firm as the most common "grantor" of these legal instruments in Cuero during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While more remains to be learned of the role of the DeWitt County Building and Loan Association in the local construction business, the likelihood of the involvement of Stadler's own lumber business is quite strong. Thus it is logical to assume that many of Cuero's residences were built by Stadler. (Cuero Star 1895; Sanborn Map Co. 1902, 1907, 1912 and 1922).

William Westhoff was another important lumberman and, like H.J. Huck and Co., chose Indianola as a base of operation. Sanborn maps indicate that the Westhoff Lumber Co. was in business in Cuero by 1885 and was adjacent to the Huck lumberyard. By 1891 Westhoff sold his interests in the firm to August Bischoff, but within nine years the lumberyard was purchased C.L. Stadler who incorporated it with his own business. Westhoff, meanwhile, became involved in other commercial endeavors, serving as an investor and director of the Cuero Cotton Oil Mill (Sanborn Map Co. 1885, 1891, 1907; Cuero Star 1895).

The contracting firm of Finck and Fuess was among Cuero's most successful and active enterprises in the construction business. Z.A. Finck came to Cuero from Gonzales in 1886 to build the First Methodist Church (N.R. Site No. 377). He eventually formed a partnership with Charles Feuss, formerly of San Antonio. The firm is credited with the dismantling, relocating and rebuilding of the Wofford House (Site No. 102 - Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District) and constructing the Trautwein Building (Site No. 948 - Cuero Commercial Historic District). They were also responsible for building Otto Buchel's house (razed), as well as "fifty or sixty cottages and less pretentious buildings in Cuero" (Cuero Star 1895). By 1909 the firm was known as Feuss and Allert and built the Runge buildings (Site Nos. 490, 491 and 492 - Cuero Commercial Historic District) on E. Main Street. Robert Allert, the new partner, was an English brick mason who came to Cuero in the 1890s (Texas Historical Commission 1973). His own residence stands at 610 N. Indianola (Site No. 881 - Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District).

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Education

Local educational efforts have contributed to Cuero's history and development, and several pre-1936 structures stand as symbols of this chapter in the city's past. While not of state significance, these buildings and their histories are important on a local level and show how the townspeople of Cuero dealt with the vital issue of education.

As was the case throughout much of 19th-century Texas, early efforts at education in Cuero and the region were rather piecemeal and less successful than hoped. Legislation had provided the foundation for public education as early as the 1830s, but the lack of adequate funding hampered these efforts. Most schools, therefore, were established and maintained by private individuals or religious institutions. One such facility operated in nearby Concrete (in north-central DeWitt County) as early as the 1860s and it gained some regional recognition. In Victoria, the need for education long has been recognized as a priority, and land was set aside for school purposes when the city was founded in 1824 by the Mexican empresario Martin De Leon (Hardy, et al 1985). Several privately run schools and academies operated in that city throughout the second and third quarters of the 19th century. Facilities such as these and the one in Concrete were the cornerstones of early education in the area and filled the void created by the lack of good public schools.

These conditions prevailed when Cuero was founded in 1872 and in September 1873 D.W. Nash established a private school that was named Guadalupe Academy, later called the Nash Academy. He built a 2-story frame structure (razed) that stood at the corner of Broadway and McLeod streets and operated until the turn of the century (Historical Record 1972: 35; Young 1943: 139-142). Two more local schools were established in 1877. One of these, the English-German School (N.R. Site No. 660) was founded by leading members of Cuero's German community (Texas Historical Commission marker files). The other was a parochial school, funded and operated by St. Michael's Catholic Church, which had been organized two years earlier (St. Michael's Church 1975). Although the German-English school has been abandoned and its facility converted into a private residence, St. Michael's School is still in operation and meets in a structure that was built in 1955 just north of the church sanctuary.

Private schools maintained a prominent position throughout the state until the 1880s when education reform altered the nature of public school organization and financing. This legislation, once enacted, provided for local control and taxation of schools, and by 1892 these reforms reached Cuero, as a city-wide school district was established. Thomas Colston, a former Indianola school teacher, was chosen to head the school system. He

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lived at 309 E. Prairie (N.R. Site No. 153). Colston generated great support for the schools and led a successful campaign to build a majestic 2-story brick school building. Named for John C. French, one of the town's founders, the school stood on land donated by his widow Sarah French. The building no longer stands but photographs of the Romanesque-styled structure show it to be an imposing physical landmark. Although its architect has not yet been documented, the school likely was designed by Jules Leffland and it closely resembles other commissions in his adopted hometown of Victoria. This structure served the community until 1928 when a new structure (N.R. Site No. 179) was completed. This 1928 building, now supplemented by a new facility, stands at the corner of Sarah and Hunt streets and remains in poor condition.

As was common throughout Texas, blacks were segregated from whites, and a separate school system was established for them. As previously noted, C.H. Griggs was the first principal of local black schools, but was replaced by E.A. Daule around the turn of the century. In 1904 a large 2-story frame structure was built in the city's southwest quadrant and served as the black school until new a facility (Survey Site No. 762) was built in the 1940s.

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State DeWitt County, TEXAS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

Cover

Substantive Review

Keeper Carol D. Shull 10-31-88

1. Bates-Sheppard House

for Keeper Melrose Byrum 10/31/88

Attest _____

2. Bell, John V., House Substantive Review

Keeper Carol D. Shull 10-31-88

Attest _____

3. Bennett, M.D., House

for Keeper Melrose Byrum 10/31/88

Attest _____

4. Billow-Thompson House Substantive Review

Keeper Carol D. Shull 10-31-88

Attest _____

5. Breeden-Runge Wholesale Grocery
Company Building

for Keeper Melrose Byrum 10/31/88

Attest _____

6. Buchel, Floyd, House Substantive Review

Keeper Carol D. Shull 10-31-88

Attest _____

7. Burns, Arthur, House

for Keeper Melrose Byrum 10/31/88

Attest _____

8. Burns, John W., House Substantive Review

Keeper Carol D. Shull 10-31-88

Attest _____

9. Callaway-Gillette House

for Keeper Melrose Byrum 10/31/88

Attest _____

10. Chaddock, J.B., House Substantive Review

Keeper Carol D. Shull 10-31-88

Attest _____

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11. City Water Works

Keeper

Attest

12. Clement-Nagel House Substantive Review

Keeper

Attest

13. Colston-Gohmert House

Keeper

Attest

14. Cook, Charles, House Substantive Review

Keeper

Attest

15. Crain, W.H., House

Keeper

Attest

16. Cuero Commercial Historic
District

Keeper

Attest

17. Cuero Gin

Keeper

Attest

18. Cuero High School Substantive Review

Keeper

Attest

19. East Main Street Residential
Historic District

Keeper

Attest

20. Daule, E.A., House

Keeper

Attest

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21. Eicholz, William and L.F., House
Entered in the
National Registerfor Keeper Helene Byers 10/31/88

Attest _____

22. English-German School Substantive Review

Keeper Carol O'Shull 10-31-88

Attest _____

23. Farris, J.B., House
Entered in the
National Registerfor Keeper Helene Byers 10/31/88

Attest _____

24. First Methodist Church Substantive Review

Keeper Carol O'Shull 10-31-88

Attest _____

25. Friar, Alfred, House
Entered in the
National Registerfor Keeper Helene Byers 10/31/88

Attest _____

26. Frobese, William, Sr., House
Substantive ReviewKeeper Carol O'Shull 10-31-88

Attest _____

27. Grace Episcopal Church
Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Helene Byers 10/31/88

Attest _____

28. House at 1002 Stockdale Substantive Review

Keeper Carol O'Shull 10-31-88

Attest _____

29. House at 404 Stockdale
Entered in the
National Registerfor Keeper Helene Byers 10/31/88

Attest _____

30. House at 609 East Live Oak

Keeper Carol O'Shull 10-31-88

Attest _____

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31. Keller-Grunder House <i>Entered in 1971 National Register</i>	Keeper <u><i>for Melvyn Byers 10/31/88</i></u> Attest _____
32. Leonardt, Emil, House <i>Substantive Review</i>	Keeper _____ Attest _____
33. Leinhardt, Albert and Kate, House <i>Entered in 1971 National Register</i>	Keeper <u><i>Beth Boland 11/4/88</i></u> Keeper <u><i>Melvyn Byers 10/31/88</i></u> Attest _____
34. Leske Bar <i>Substantive Review</i>	Keeper <u><i>Carey Shull 10-31-88</i></u> Attest _____
35. Ley, Valentine, House <i>Entered in 1971 National Register</i>	Keeper <u><i>Melvyn Byers 10/31/88</i></u> Attest _____
36. Lynch-Probst House <i>Entered in 1971 National Register</i>	Keeper <u><i>Carey Shull 10-31-88</i></u> Attest _____
37. Marie, Frank, House <i>Entered in 1971 National Register</i>	Keeper <u><i>Melvyn Byers 10/31/88</i></u> Attest _____
38. Macedonia Baptist Church <i>Substantive Review</i>	Keeper <u><i>Carey Shull 10-31-88</i></u> Attest _____
39. Meissner-Pleasants House <i>Entered in 1971 National Register</i>	Keeper <u><i>Melvyn Byers 10/31/88</i></u> Attest _____
40. Mugge, Edward, House <i>Substantive Review</i>	Keeper <u><i>Carey Shull 10-31-88</i></u> Attest _____

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41. Old Beer and Ice Warehouse **Entered in the National Register** *for* Keeper Melous Byen 10/31/88
Attest _____
42. Ott, Charles J. and Alvina, House **Substantive Review** Keeper Carol Oshuel 10-31-88
Attest _____
43. Ott, S.I., House **Entered in the National Register** *for* Keeper Melous Byen 10/31/88
Attest _____
44. Prigden, O.F. and Mary, House **Substantive Review** Keeper Carol Oshuel 10-31-88
Attest _____
45. Reuss, J.M., House **Substantive Review** *for* Keeper Melous Byen 10/31/88
Attest _____
46. St. Michael's Catholic Church **Substantive Review** Keeper Carol Oshuel 10-31-88
Attest _____
47. Stevens, Elisha, House **Substantive Review** Keeper Melous Byen 10/31/88
Attest _____
48. Terrell-Reuss Streets Historic District **Substantive Review** *for* Keeper Beth Boland 11/4/88
Attest _____
49. Thomson, W.F., House **Substantive Review** Keeper Melous Byen 10/31/88
Attest _____
50. Wittenbert, Dane, House **Substantive Review** Keeper Beth Boland 10/31/88
Attest _____

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51. Wittmer, Charles, House

Keeper

Helena Byrne 10/3/88

52. Wofford--Finney House

Attest

Joseph M. Lapsley 8/14/92

Keeper

Attest

Keeper

Attest

Keeper

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Entered in the
National Register of
National Register