National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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OMB No. 1024-0018

10-31-87

Expires

See instructions in How to Complete National Reg	jister Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections	

1. Name

historic Historic Resources of Stamford, Texas N/A and/or common Location 2. The incorporated limits of Stamford (see continuation sheets for individual properties) N/A not for publication street & number city, town Stamford N/A vicinity of 048 Texas 253 code Jones state county code 3. Classification Status **Ownership** Category **Present Use** X public X_ occupied _ district _ agriculture museum X building(s) park _X_ private _X_ unoccupied X_ commercial X private residence _ structure both ... work in progress educational X religious **Public Acquisition** Accessible _ site entertainment X government <u>X</u> yes: restricted <u>N/A</u> in process _ scientific _ object industrial being considered ____ yes: unrestricted transportation no military X other: vacant rooming house **Owner of Property** 4. (see continuation sheets for individual properties) name street & number N/A vicinity of city, town state Location of Legal Description Jones County Courthouse courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. street & number Anson Texas city, town state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title		ord Historic ic Sites Inv		у,	has this propert	y been dete	rmined ellg	jible? <u>X</u> ye	s <u>X</u> no
date	1984	•				federal	<u> </u>	county	local
depo	sitory for	survey records	Texas Hi	storical	Commission				
city,	town	Austin					state	Texas	

7. Description

Condition

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Check one _____ deteriorated __X__ unaltered _____ ruins ____X__ altered ______ unexposed **Check one** \underline{X} original site

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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Stamford, Texas, is a typical small town of northwest Texas which developed entirely in the 20th century. Its creation, in 1900, was followed by steady growth for the following half century. During those years the commercial, residential, social, civic, and religious needs of the community were met by an interesting and varied array of structures. One-, two-, and a few three-story commercial structure were constructed on the town square, while impressive churches and civic buildings were put up in the central part of the city. Residential areas developed, as did a warehouse/industrial section. Vernacular treatments predominate in Stamford, but excellent examples of Beaux Arts, Neo-Classical Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Mission Revival, and late Victorian stylistic influences can be seen scattered throughout the town. Twenty-one of these structures are here being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

The present nomination results from a historical/architectural survey of the city made in 1983-84, by Don and Sally Abbe, Historic Preservation Consultants of Lubbock, Texas. After driving and walking every street, the survey crew photographed all commercial and industrial structures with any possible historical potential, as well as all residences with historic or architectural merit. Needless to say, library and documentary research was also carried out. One hundred thirty-six buildings were documented. The survey also reported on all industrial downtown governmental and religious studies built before 1950. The activities of the local Main Street Program have resulted in a well-preserved and accurately restored downtown section.

Stamford lies in the rolling plains section of Texas, about 40 miles north of Abilene. The land was originally relatively treeless, except for along stream beds and near natural springs. Today the town is fairly heavily wooded with ornamental types of trees and shrubs, while the ranch lands around the city are now heavily infested with mesquite. One presently finds both ranching and farming lands contiguous to the city.

Stamford is basically laid out in a grid pattern, with the central, commercial section in the flattest area. Most of the city is situated on relatively flat terrain, except for the southeast section of town (the College Heights area) which is in a lower and more rolling section. Two railroad routes cross Stamford; the old Texas Central crosses the city center on a northwest-southeast line, while the old Wichita Valley track enters the city on its northeast corner, then curves across the south-central neighborhood, exiting the city on the southwest side. The city limits are irregular but clearly marked. Stamford has brick streets in the business district and in the older residential neighborhoods near downtown, which complement the historical buildings.

A wide variety of structures emerged in Stamford over the years. Architectural styles varied, as did the uses to which buildings were put. Retail stores, warehouses, facilities, and residences gave builders in the numerous choices to express the styles and building types of the era.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet

Item number

7



Most existing commercial structures are of one or two stories with 25-ft. or 50-ft. fronts. Exceptions are the three-story Penick-Hughes Building (property no. 6), last known as Thompson's Hardware; the West Texas Utilities Building (property no. 8), a long, low, one-story structure; and the C.R. Anthony Store, a modern, one-story building. Corner buildings are narrow and deep, to utilize the long side frontage for commercial purposes. The typical Stamford commercial building tends towards the vernacular, but some recognizable stylistic elements also appear. The use of the Spanish Colonial Revival style on the West Texas Utilities Building (property no. 8), and on Gail's Hallmark Shop (the old West Texas Utilities Building) (property no. 2) represents the most elaborate application of style on any of Stamford's commercial buildings.

Civic structures tend to be small but of high quality. Examples are the two-story City Hall (property no. 4) and the one-story U.S. Post Office (property no. 1), both of which were designed in the Beaux-Arts style, as interpreted on a small scale.

Churches in Stamford are either small and simple, or large and complex, depending on the wealth and size of the congregation. The earliest, largest, and wealthiest churchs in Stamford are the First Baptist (property no. 7) and St. John's Methodist (property no. 5) churches. In 1908 the Baptists constructed a large two-story building with Neo-Classical Revival influences, while in 1910 the Methodists build a two-and-a-half-story building which utilized the Prairie Style mixed with Gothic touches.

Residential needs of Stamford's citizens were met by a variety of structures as well. Large and expensive Neo-Classical Revival homes, such as the Astin House (property no. 17), appeared in small number, as did elaborate Queen Anne houses or late Victorian homes. However, the typical house in Stamford is a smaller, one- or one-and-a-half-story house built initially within a vernacular or simplified Queen Anne style, later generally a bungalow. Some isolated examples of larger homes in other styles are found in the city, but they are certainly not representative of the norm.

Materials used to construct Stamford's buildings vary almost as much as the styles. Most commercial buildings are either of solid brick or have a brick veneer over wooden frame. Concrete and clay tiles were also much used. Unfortunately, many of these early vernacular brick facades are now encased in stucco. The best surviving examples of the brick commercial structure in Stamford are the old Penick-Hughes Building (property no. 6) and the A.C. Humphrey Warehouse (property no. 9). The Humphrey Warehouse is a particularly good example of the early twentieth-century use of NPS Form 10-900-a (3-82)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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Expires

OMB NO. 1024-0018

10-31-87

received data antered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

decorative and elaborate brickwork in a commercial structure designed for a mundane purpose. Civic buildings are also of brick, as are the large churches. Some buildings used a rough-cut ashlar stone, while one, the SMS Building, is of smooth-cut and polished stone. The most unusual treatment in Stamford is the front facade of the West Texas Utilities Building (property no. 8), whose ornate Spanish Colonial Revival treatment was achieved by using precast concrete panels across the entire front of the building.

Residential construction was dominated by the simple frame house, with a smaller number being frame with a brick veneer. A few examples of brick over a clay tile inner wall can be found, as can stucco over clay tile walls.

Generally, the civic, religious, and residential structures in the town retain their original appearance and materials. The same cannot be said of the commercial buildings. Many of the better stone and brick structures have been encased in stucco and "modernized" over the years. As a result, many fine buildings have been denatured or completely obliterated by stucco or by aluminum, wooden, or concrete panels on their original facade. The downtown commercial section no longer retains the cohesive look of style and materials which it once possessed. The unaltered or lightly altered building leaps out of the streetscape as a reminder of what once existed downtown.

It is the intention of this nomination to present those structures in Stamford which are architecturally or historically significant and which retain their original appearance and character. It is also intended to nominate structures which do not possess great historical or architectural merit, but which are still representative examples of a type of building at a point in time, and still original in appearance and materials. Unfortunately, these criteria eliminate several historically significant structures which are heavily modified or badly deteriorated. In particular, the Stamford Inn (STA-012), Hassan's (STA-047), Hassan's for Her (STA-049), Bunkley's Drugstore (STA-046), White's Auto (STA-098), and others, would be clearly eligible for nomination if they were restored or stabilized.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899 X 1900–	agriculture architecture	community planning conservation economics	military music philosophy	religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation X other (specify) ranching
	Laco individual			

(see individual Specific dates continuation sheets) Builder/Architect (see individual continuation sheets)

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Stamford, Texas, is presently an excellent example of an early twentieth-century town spawned by speculators selling acreages to land-hungry farmers. It is also a good example of a small, rural town which was born and matured during the early decades of this century. Because of this, Stamford contains many fine structures which represent both early twentieth-century architecture and the local history of this small West Texas city. Shortly after 1900, the town developed as a busy agricultural center with railroads, flour mills, and cotton gins. Stamford remained prosperous even in the 1930s, when newly discovered oil provided badly needed support for the local economy.

Before the arrival of Anglo ranchers, the Stamford region was within the domain of the nomadic Comanche and Kiowa tribes. In the 1870s the ranching frontier arrived in Jones County in the form of S.M. Swenson, who purchased huge acreages in this part of Texas for a variety of ranching operations. Stamford lies in the very northern part of Jones County and actually spills over into neighboring Haskell County. It was begun as a joint venture between the SMS Ranch and Texas Central Railroad. In the late 1890s, A.J. Swenson, manager of the SMS, decided to partition some of the ranch's holdings in Jones County and sell the land to newly arriving farmers. To stimulate land sales, Swenson joined with the Texas Central Railroad in creating a townsite at the head of a forty-mile branch line, which was to be constructed from Albany to a section of land located in the middle of the SMS pasturage. Arrangements were finalized in 1899, land chosen for a townsite, and construction initiated. By 1900 the rail line was complete, a town was under construction, and farmers had begun to arrive.

Between 1900 and 1910, Stamford emerged as a flourishing trade center for an expanding agricultural economy. The city's population reached 3,902 by 1910, as the production of cotton, wheat, corn, cane, and grain sorghum skyrocketed. Flour mills and cotton gins appeared in the city to process the local crops, while transportation facilities grew to carry these to market. The original Texas Central Railroad line to Albany prospered, as did other newly constructed rail lines. The Wichita Valley Railroad Company decided to link Stamford with Wichita Falls, so in 1907 and 1908 a line was built from Seymour to Stamford via Haskell, Mundy, Wichita, and Goree. Then, in 1908, the W.V.R.R. extended another line from Stamford to Abilene. During 1909 and 1910 another railroad project led to the construction of a line, the Stamford and Northern Railway, from Stamford to Spur. Thus by the end of 1910 Stamford stood at the center of a comprehensive rail system which served a large part of northwestern Texas.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

OMB No. 1024-0018 Expires 10-31-87



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

A.J. Swenson, nephew of SMS Ranch owner S.M. Swenson, represented the SMS Ranch interests in Stamford from 1905 to 1921 as superintendent of the SMS-owned Ellenshire Ranch, and from 1922 to 1946 as manager of all local SMS Ranch holdings. His residence, at 511 East Oliver (property no. 20), is one of the structures being nominated herein.

Another influential person in the Stamford's early growth was J.P. Astin, a real estate speculator and developer who came to the city soon after it was founded. Astin became very successful, as his lavish home at 111 E. Campbell attests (property no. 17). R.L. Penick likewise had a great impact on the city. His Penick-Hughes Company, a wholesale-retail hardware and implement store, was one of Stamford's most successful and lucrative businesses. Housed in a large three-story building at 100 E. Hamilton (property no. 6), the company contributed to local growth for many decades after its creation in 1900. Mr. Penick emerged as a leader in the city as well, serving as mayor in 1903, and again in 1917 and 1919. These men and companies, and others like them, created, nurtured, and guided Stamford for over three decades.

During Stamford's first thirty years of growth, its citizens constructed a variety of structures to meet the everyday commercial, civic, social, religious, and residential need of the community. Most commercial structures were small one- and two-story buildings which either have not been preserved or have been heavily modified.

However, five commercial buildings remain intact to represent Stamford's early growth. The last remaining commercial structures in the city that are unaltered and historically significant are the old Penick-Hughes Building, last known as Thompson's Hardware (property no. 6); A.C. Humphrey's Warehouse (property no. 9); the old Bryant-Link Drygoods and Hardware Store, now West Texas Utilities (property no. 8); Gail's Hallmark Shop, the old West Texas Utilities Building (property no. 2); and the Swenson Land and Cattle Company/Berry's Furniture Building (property no. 3).

The First Baptist Church (property no. 7) and St. John's Methodist Church (property no. 5) are two of the most monumental structures in town, as well as two of the best preserved. The Stamford City Hall (property no. 4) and the U.S. Post Office (property no. 1) are good examples of the Beaux Arts style and are the two most important civic buildings. The Buena Vista Hotel (property no. 10), a small rooming house, is an excellent example of its genre and the only one of its kind left in the city.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

S received date entered

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Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page 2

The city benefitted from the railroads through increased economic activity (including both wholesale and retail sales companies) and as a railroad division point complete with engine shops, roundhouses, and other service facilities. The growth of Stamford's trade area led to its development as a financial center as well. By 1910 the city possessed three banking facilities as well as two newspapers which "boosted" the city's image.

Indeed, Stamford's future seemed so bright in the early years that the Methodist Church established Stamford College in 1906. The school opened with twelve teachers and 256 students housed on a twenty-acre campus which contained an administration building, as well as a men's and a women's dormitory. In 1918 the Administration Building burned and the college was closed. It was incorporated into McMurray College in Abilene in 1920, and its land and buildings in Stamford were given to the Stamford school system.

Stamford has remained a relatively prosperous town throughout its entire history. At first it flourished on agriculture and railroad dollars. Then, in the dark days of the 1930s, oil discoveries pumped new life into the flagging local economy. For these reasons the city has developed a diversified farming, ranching, and oil economy which has served it well over the years.

Population figures reflect this stability. The city's population of 3,902 in 1910 dropped slightly to 3,704 in 1920, then rose steadily for three decades, to 4,095 in 1930, 4,810 in 1940, and 5,819 in 1950. Consolidation and mechanization in agriculture and decline in the railroad industry have caused a population decline since 1950: to 5,259 in 1960 and 4,558 in 1970. The decline stabilized by 1980, as the population only dropped that year to 4,542 residents.

Throughout its history, certain corporations and individuals guided Stamford's development. The primary factor in the town's growth was the Stamford Townsite Company, a creation of the Swenson brothers and the Texas Central Railroad. This company created the townsite, sold lands, and dominated local affairs for decades. The Stamford Townsite Company (SMS Ranch included) funneled time, effort, and dollars into the town. It built and maintained the Stamford Inn, a well known local hostelry, and rebuilt it after a fire in 1925. The Swenson Land and Cattle Co. built its local headquarters building in Stamford (property no. 3), and donated lots in the city for schools and for the city hall (property no. 4).

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

OMB No. 1024-0018 Expires 10-31-87

3



Continuation sheet	Item number	8	Page

Eleven residential structures are included in this nomination because they are architecturally and/or historically significant, or because they are well-preserved, representative examples of early twentieth-century housing in Stamford.

Each of the above 21 structures will be addressed individually on continuation sheets for each property.

Major Bibliographical References

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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 Hational Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer

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GPO 911-399

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

Keeper of the National Register

Noble Attest: ice) Registration af

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

OMB No. 1024-0018 Expires 10-31-87

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Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page

Complete Business and Professional Directory of Abilene, Albany, Aledo, Alvard, Anson, Baird, Barstow, Benjamin, Big Springs, Bluffdale, Carbon, Cisco, Clyde, Colorado, Comanche, Decatur, DeLeon, Dublin, Eastland, Fort Worth, Gordon, Goree, Gorman, Granbury, Hamlin, Knox City, Travis, McCauley, Merkel, Midland, Millsap, Mingus or Thurber Royston, Rule, Sagerton, Santo, Seymour, Stamford, Stanton, Stephenville, Strawn, Sunset, Sweetwater, Tolar, and Weatherford, Texas. n.p., 1908.

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National **Register** of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

OMB No. 1024-0018 Expires 10-31-87



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Multiple Resource Area

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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