

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Presidio Nuestra Senora de Loreto de La Bahia

AND/OR COMMON Presidio Nuestra Senora de Loreto de La Bahia

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

1 mile south of Goliad State Park on U.S. 183

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Goliad

 VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

23rd

STATE

Texas

CODE

48

COUNTY

Goliad

CODE

175

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Catholic Diocese of Corpus Christi

STREET &amp; NUMBER

620 Lipan Street

CITY, TOWN

Corpus Christi

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Texas

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Goliad County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

Goliad

STATE

Texas

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey (5 photos)

DATE

1936

 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress/Annex

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D. C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

As built in 1749, the Presidio de La Bahia was comprised of several wooden buildings and some 40 grass huts that were enclosed by a palisade made of wooden poles. Beginning in the early 1760's and continuing until about 1795, the wooden buildings and walls were gradually replaced by stone structures and the rock walls of the Presidio were progressively extended until the fort attained its present size. The Presidio is constructed in the form of a quadrangle that is approximately one-seventh of a mile in its exterior circumference. The massive stone walls and buildings are constructed of white limestone and are one story in height. Four rounded bastions, built to mount cannon, project from each corner of the walls and provided flanking fire. Stone sentry boxes rise from three of the bastions. The buildings, which include quarters for the officers and men, offices, storehouses, workshops, and an arsenal, form a part of the defensive walls and open into the enclosed parade ground. Three gates, located in the north, west, and south walls, provided easy access to the fort. The Presidio chapel, built between 1775 and 1790, is situated near the northwest corner of the fort. This church is about 90 feet long, 27 feet wide and its massive stone walls are four feet thick. The facade has an arched entrance and a massive, square bell tower with a pyramidal roof. Over the door is an octagonal window which lights the choir loft. Above the window, a semi-circular pediment, crowned with a cross, frames a rough stone arched niche containing a statue. In the groin-vaulted interior, a shell-formed doorway leads into a side chapel on the right and on the left is the sacristy, projecting from the outer wall.

Following the Texas Revolution, the Presidio de La Bahia was abandoned as a military post. From the mid-1840's to the mid-1850's the old fort was occupied by Judge Pryor Lea as a home and ranch. The chapel was utilized as a residence and other structures as carriage houses and bunk houses. In later years the Presidio was completely abandoned and fell into ruins. Only the chapel was preserved in tact and this was again utilized as a church. On April 24, 1963, the restoration of the Presidio de La Bahia began. The existing walls and buildings were stabilized, and the Presidio compound walls, the commanding officers quarters, arsenal, sally port, and guard house entrance, bastions, and other structures were restored to their appearance in 1836. Work on the Presidio was completed in 1967. Careful workmanship and devotion to detail make the restoration a superb one. Located on a hill overlooking the San Antonio River and with no modern intrusions, the Presidio de La Bahia is open to visitors.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1749, 1836

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The recently restored Presidio de La Bahia near Goliad, Texas, is probably the finest example in the United States of a Spanish presidio. Built in 1749 in a strategic position to defend the missions of southern Texas, the Presidio, as the principal link between Mexico and East Texas from San Antonio to the Rio Grande was always the principal military post under the Mexican and Spanish governments. After the secularization of the missions, La Bahia was the scene of a number of conflicts during the years of the Mexican Revolution. It again became a focal point of activity during the Texas Rebellion, leading to the disastrous massacre of over 400 Americans on Palm Sunday in 1836. Goliad, like the Alamo, became a rallying point for disorganized and demoralized Texans and won sympathy for their cause in the United States and Europe. Restored in 1963-67, the Presidio de La Bahia sits upon its hill as it has for over 200 years, giving a vivid impression of our past history in the southwest.

## HISTORY

Captain Domingo Ramon, of the Aguayo expedition, founded the Loreto Presidio near Matagorda Bay in 1672, near the site of Fort St. Louis built by Rene Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle. The purpose of the fortification was to prevent further attempts of the French to colonize Texas. Commonly referred to as the Presidio of La Bahia (Presidio of the Bay), it moved to a site on the Guadalupe River in 1726 and again, in 1749, to the San Antonio River, where the presidial settlement became the town of Goliad. At the beginning of Anglo-American colonization, Goliad was one of three Spanish settlements then in Texas. Although technically the name of the presidio was Nuestra Senora de Loreto, it continued to be known as La Bahia.

During the Mexican Revolution against Spain, the Presidio was the scene of a number of bloody conflicts. A Mexican force, composed mostly of Americans, under Bernardo Gutierrez and August Magee took the Presidio in 1812. After withstanding a siege by the Spanish, they routed the Governor's troops and conquered San Antonio, only to be defeated on the Medina River. In 1817, Lieutenant Henry Perry and 50 men attempted to take the Presidio but Spanish reinforcements arrived, and Perry and his men were all either killed or captured. In 1821 James Long and 54 adventurers took the Presidio by surprise, but later surrendered after a 24-hour siege.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Buckley, E.C., "The Aguayo Expedition into Texas and Louisiana," Texas Historical Association Quarterly, Vol. XV, 1911-12.
- Davenport, Herbert, "The Men of Goliad," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Vol. XLIII, July 1939.
- Richardson, R.N., Texas, The Lone Star State, New York, 1943.
- Rives, Groege L., The United States and Mexico, 1821-1848, New York, 1913.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY c. 45

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,4	6,5,8	4,7,0	3,1	6,9	8,5,0	B	1,4	6,5,8	4,5,0	3,1	6,9	6,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			
C	1,4	6,5,7	9,2,0	3,1	6,9	6,1,0	D	1,4	6,5,7	8,9,0	3,1	6,9	9,3,0

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of Presidio La Bahia includes as part of the landmark the Presidio and the grave site of Fannin's army; beginning at the southwest corner where Loop 71 begins off U.S. 77A, then east along the southern edge of Loop 71 to Fannin's grave site; thence south to a point; thence east to a point; thence north to a point; thence west to Loop 71; thence north along the eastern edge of Loop 71 until it intersects with the dirt road; thence north along the eastern edge of the dirt road to a point;

*see continuation sheet*

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Patricia Heintzelman, Architectural Historian  
rewritten by Cecil McKithan, Historian

ORGANIZATION	DATE
<u>Historic Sites Survey Division, National Park Service</u>	<u>December 1977</u>
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE
<u>1100 L Street, N.W.</u>	<u>523-5464</u>
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
<u>Washington,</u>	<u>D.C.</u>

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

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

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

Landmark Designated: Dec. 24, 1967 date

Boundary Certified: [Signature] date Mar. 16, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
<u>[Signature]</u>	DATE <u>4/3/78</u>
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE
ATTEST:	DATE
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

In 1829 the name of the town was officially changed to Goliad. During the first outbreak of hostilities of the Texas War for Independence, Republicans, under Captain Collingsworth attacked the Presidio, now called Fort Goliad, on October 9, 1835. Only 24 Mexican soldiers had been left there so the takeover met with no resistance. Collingsworth was promoted to Major and moved to San Antonio. Philip Dimmitt was then elected commander of the fort.

During the winter of 1835-36 one of the most unfortunate episodes of Texas history took place which was the ultimate cause of unnecessary loss of life. The hurriedly drawn articles of government did not clearly define the power and duties granted the Council and the Governor, resulting in a clash of authority. Each sought to depose the other, thus plunging the state into great disorder and divisive factions. The Council, disregarding the fact that Houston had been made Commander-in-Chief by Governor Smith and acting in direct opposition to him, authorized J. W. Fannin to collect, outfit and command a force of Texas soldiers. For some reason, now unexplained, they also gave the same authority to Dr. James Grant and F. W. Johnson. All three men wished Houston's title and their ambitions and schemes contributed greatly to the tragedy at Goliad.

While Dimmitt and his forces were out of the fort, Dr. James Grant stripped Goliad of its horses and supplies and installed Captain P. S. Wyatt as commander. Houston arrived in Goliad on January 14 and took steps to correct the defenseless situation of the fort. He temporarily left Wyatt in command, but later transferred him to Regugio and ordered Lt. Thornton with his command of 29 regulars and a few recruits to hold Goliad.

On the 20th, Johnson arrived and tried to interfere with Houston's command, showing him his credentials from the Council and notifying him that, under the council's order, Fannin would soon take over the command of the post at Goliad. Houston, seeing the confusion of orders, withdrew and went to the seat of government to try and straighten out matters.

Meanwhile Fannin was delayed in reaching his first objective, Copano, and Goliad. He issued a call for volunteers and enrolled under his command the men from Georgia who had just landed at Velasco.

Early in January the Texans had information that Santa Anna was leading a large force to subdue the rebellion. Houston was in favor of withdrawing to east Texas to consolidate and hold the army. Fannin, Grant and Johnson wanted to meet the enemy on the border and keep the war out of Texas. The inaction resulted from the divided state of command and authority until the Mexican Army was upon

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

them. On February 23, Santa Anna appeared before San Antonio, where Travis withdrew into the Alamo. Here, after a long siege by Santa Anna's superior force, all were killed.

The Texans, under Johnson, Grant and Morris had carelessly divided their forces and both were surprised by Urrea's army of 1000 men. All were killed with the exception of five of six, including Johnson, who escaped. Placido Benavides went to Goliad to warn Fannin of Urrea's approach.

In the meantime, Fannin, who had taken command at Goliad late in January, had set out for the Alamo on February 25 in answer to a plea from Travis. However, no means for proper supplies or means of transportation had been provided so the effort was abandoned 200 yards outside the fort.

On March 13, Fannin received orders from General Houston, then formally reinstated as sole commander, to blow up the fort and fall back to Victoria, a more defensible position. Fannin, who sided with the Council against Governor Smith, ignored the order. By the 17th, he had received news of the annihilation of King and the retreat of Ward and his remaining force toward Victoria. Still he dallied. From the date of Houston's order on March 13 to the 17th he made no move to obey the command. Only when, on that date, he was notified that a large force of the enemy was in the immediate vicinity were preparations begun for removal.

When the retreat finally began on the 18th it was too late. Caught at rest in the open prairie just a short distance from a more protective wooded area, with only a hurried entrenchment to protect them, the small group held off the Mexicans until March 20. The necessity of surrender became obvious and Fannin went to discuss terms with the Mexicans. They were promised treatment as prisoners of war with medical attention for all wounded. The prisoners were marched back to Goliad. On March 25, Ward and the remainder of his captured force were brought to Goliad.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

On Sunday, March 27, the prisoners and wounded were marched from the fort under the pretext of being returned to the United States. All were killed under orders of Santa Anna and against the pleas of Urrea, who could not bring himself to attend the scene. The bodies were placed between alternate layers of wood, and burned. Then the charred remains were left exposed until June 3, when General Rush, passing through Goliad in his pursuit of Filisola's army, gathered the remains and interred them with military honors.

In 1841 an act was signed which returned some of the Spanish missions, including Goliad, to the Catholic Church. At the time, Our Lady of Loreto, the chapel of La Bahia, and the Presidio itself stood abandoned. Several Mexican raids occurred in 1842 as well as scattered attacks of ex-United States soldiers and the so-called Victoria Cowboys, who plundered the area and **nearly** completed the destruction of the old Presidio. The old town stood virtually deserted and American squatters living in the chapel made efforts to restore religion there useless.

About 1850, the Presidio was sold by the new Goliad City Council to Judge Pryor Lea, who lived in the old chapel. A visitor at that time described the buildings, citing the church as the only one in any state of preservation.

In 1963, the restoration of La Bahia began under a grant from the Kathryn O'Conner Foundation. Today the Presidio and grounds serve as a museum and the Chapel of Our Lady of Loreto serves as an active church with a priest in charge, residing on the property.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

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O'Conner, Kathryn Stoner, Presidio La Bahia del Espiritu Santo De Zuñiga,  
1721-1846, Austin, 1966.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

thence west along the northern edge of the dirt road until it connects with Loop 71 and continues west along the northern edge of Loop 71 to U. S. 77A, then south along the eastern edge of Route 77A to the point of beginning as shown on sketch map A.