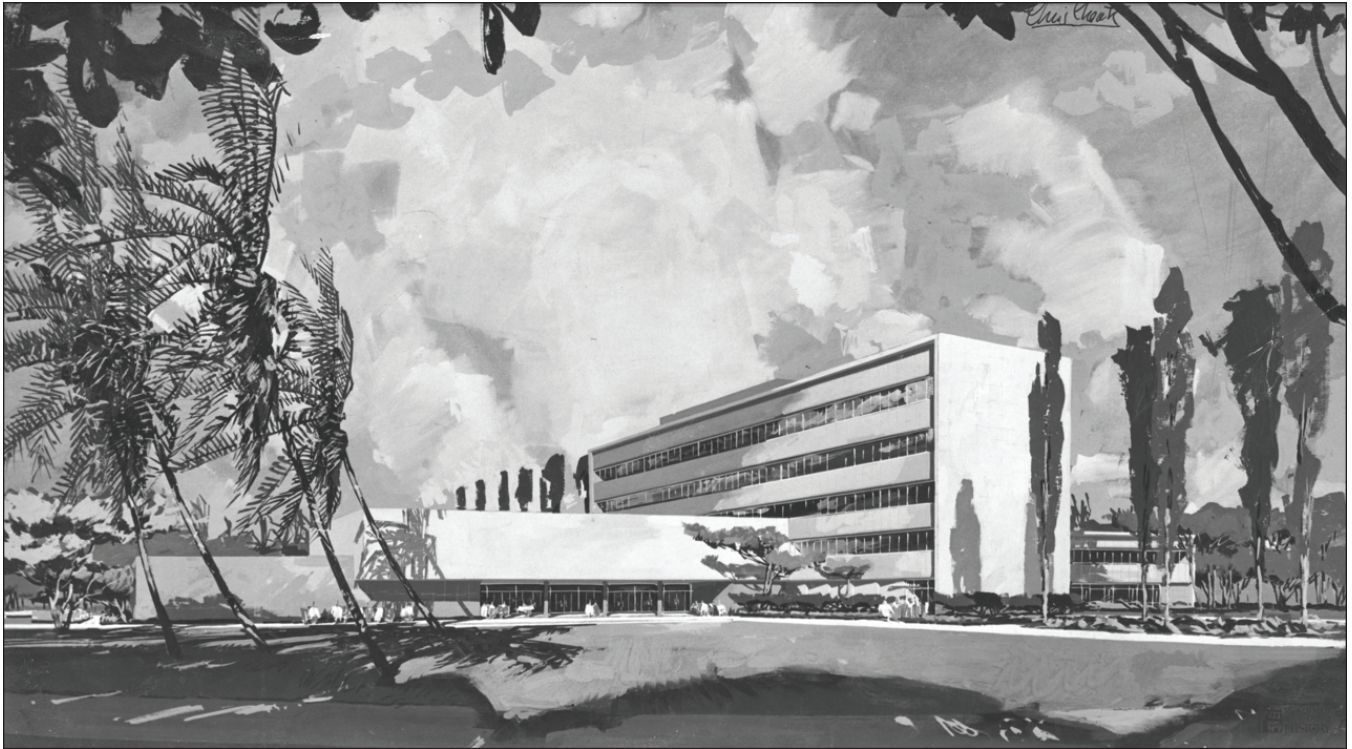


Historic
HIDALGO COUNTY COURTHOUSE



Prepared as a Component of the
HIDALGO COUNTY COURTHOUSE
Master Plan

May 2012
LIMBACHER & GODFREY Architects

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Postcard view of the “old” 1910 and the “new” 1954 courthouse, near the time of the dedication ceremony for the new building.
Image: Museum of South Texas History, Closner Ramsey Collection, 1988.66.5c.
Hidalgo courthse.



Introduction

Overview and Methodology

When the historic courthouse opened in 1954, it was the pride of the county. A grand building in the latest architectural style, 70,000 square feet in area, it held all the branches of county government under one roof. By 1977 though, the county population had increased by fifty percent, and many departments had been moved to annex sites. The courthouse was in need of repairs, and planning for expansion and improvements began. In 1980, the building was enlarged substantially to 93,000 square feet and seven courtrooms were added. As the courthouse passed the 50-year mark in 2004, the county population had increased over four-fold, and more remodelling was done to insert new courtrooms into the crowded building. The county's growth has continued, with a population now almost five times that of 1950. Many legal, administrative and general government functions once located in the historic courthouse are now in off-site facilities, but the infill construction and sometimes unsympathetic modifications remain. The current long-range master planning effort for the Hidalgo County Courthouse is an opportunity to set new preservation goals for the historic courthouse, and make it the pride of the county once again.

This study of the Historic Hidalgo County Courthouse is a component of the *Hidalgo County Courthouse Master Plan*, prepared by ERO Architects for Hidalgo County. The study is an abbreviated historic structures report and preservation master plan, and includes information on the history of the courthouse, an overview of existing conditions and broad recommendations for preservation treatment of the building. The study is intended to identify opportunities for preservation and restoration of significant elements and spaces remaining in the Historic Hidalgo County Courthouse. The information will inform the planning team, as recommendations for the future use and preservation of the historic courthouse are formulated.

Partial construction drawings for the original 1954 construction phase and subsequent major additions and renovations, completed in 1980 and 2006, were provided by Travis County (through ERO Architects) for use in this study. The construction specifications were not located, and the drawings of earlier courthouses were also not located, and may not exist.

Historic photographs of the original construction work, the completed building exterior and interior, and later additions and renovations were located in the Museum of South Texas History photo archives. Photographs of earlier county courthouses were located in the holdings of the Texas Department of Transportation photo archives, the University of Texas-Pan American Library, the Museum of South Texas History and the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin.

The office staff of the Hidalgo County Clerk provided frequent access to Commissioners Court minutes for information relating to the development and maintenance of the courthouse. The minutes were searched for references to the courthouse, including the site, construction, furniture, furnishings, maintenance, alterations and improvements. (A synopsis of the relevant minutes is included in the appendix.) Additional research was conducted at the Museum of South Texas History, University of Texas-Pan American Library, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Texas State Law Library and the Texas State Library and Archives, to locate reference materials about the building, the county courts system and contemporaneous descriptions of significant events.

Hidalgo County (through ERO Architects) provided copies of previous reports and studies of the courthouse, commissioned by the county, for review. Finally, a general sense of the condition, occupancy and use of the building was gathered during the course of two day-long site visits, to assist in preparing the broad preservation recommendations.

*Map of the Rio Grande
Frontier Texas, 1892.
Image: Texas General Land
Office, Map 4660 .*



History and Development

Early History of Hidalgo County

Hidalgo County is in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, bounded by Brooks County to the north, Kenedy, Willacy and Cameron Counties to the east, Mexico to the south and Starr County to the west. The area was inhabited by nomadic Coahuiltecan and Karankawa Indians for thousands of years before the arrival of Spanish explorers in the sixteenth century. During the Spanish occupation of Texas, the area that is now Hidalgo County was part of a large territory below the Nueces River that remained uncolonized for two centuries, known as El Desierto del Muerto or the Wild Horse Desert.¹

During the first half of the eighteenth century, as France made inroads from the east, Spain focused its attention on inhabiting and stabilizing the territory. In 1746, Jose de Escandon was assigned the task of colonizing the territory by the Spanish government. He founded the province of Nuevo Santander, which extended from near present-day Matagorda Bay south to Tampico, Mexico, and from the Gulf west to the foothills of the Sierra Madre Oriental range. The Rio Grande river was central to Nuevo Santander, and Escandon founded a string of towns along the length of the river over the course of the next few years.²

During the nineteenth century, Mexico won independence from Spain and governmental control was more closely held, but the area was sparsely settled, due to inhospitable terrain and ongoing skirmishes with the Indians. After the Republic of Texas was formed in 1836, the area between the Nueces and Rio Grande Rivers was a wild no man's land, claimed by both Mexico and Texas. In 1845, as the Republic of Texas became a part of the United States, the boundary dispute with Mexico became a military issue, sparking the Mexican-American War. Once the boundary dispute was resolved by the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, South Texas

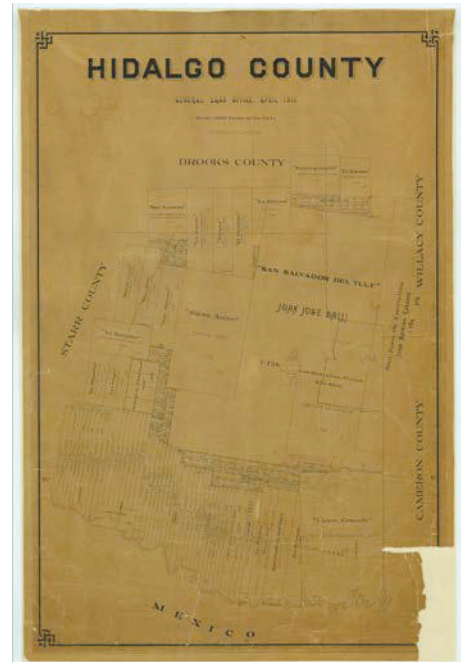


Hidalgo County, 1880, left.

Image: Texas General Land Office, Map 3667.

Hidalgo County, 1911, right.

Image: Texas General Land Office, Map 16850.



became more stable and settlement grew. The territory between the Nueces and Rio Grande rivers was first designated as one large county (San Patricio), but was further subdivided into the better part of four counties (Webb, Nueces, Starr and Cameron) later in 1848. The 1850 census for Cameron County, which encompassed the area of present-day Hidalgo County, showed a population of 8,451.³

In 1852, the Texas Legislature created Hidalgo County from the western end of Cameron County. Population in the new county was greatest along the Rio Grande river, where the original Spanish land grants (porciones), long narrow tracts extending north of the river bank, had been settled as ranches and small towns. Transportation, farming and trade with Mexico were the primary activities along the river. In the area north of the river, larger tracts of land supported livestock and large ranch holdings.⁴

La Habitación, a ranch settlement on the Rio Grande dating from 1774, was made the county seat. It was renamed Edinburgh, in deference to settler John Young, who was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. The first Hidalgo County Commissioners Court met on September 2, 1852 in temporary quarters in E. S. Smith's store and their first order of business was to regulate the operation of ferries crossing the river. The Court also arranged to lease a building from Smith for use as the courthouse, and purchased the building the following year, at a cost of \$750, and added a brush fence around the courthouse. At some point, perhaps as early as 1861, the town was renamed Hidalgo.⁵

Despite these efforts at civilization, county government struggled to take hold in a vast area sparsely populated by its citizens, more heavily populated by livestock than people,

The first Hidalgo County Courthouse, located on the banks of the Rio Grande River in Hidalgo, about 1905. Image: Museum of South Texas History, exhibitnegfile.



and far from the closest city of Brownsville. Law enforcement was lax, and cattle rustling and robbery were common for the next few decades. County politics trended to boss rule and block voting in these years, as well.⁶

Also significant to the development of the county was the beginning of the railroad network in South Texas, which competed with the steamboat trade along the Rio Grande that had dominated commerce in prior years. In 1871, the Rio Grande Railway Company completed a rail line between Brownsville and Brazos Santiago (near present-day Port Isabel), shifting the transport of goods from the river to the land. A decade later, the Tex-Mex Railroad was completed from Corpus Christi to Laredo, as were lines from San Antonio to Laredo and from Monterrey to Nuevo Laredo, shifting trade from Brownsville and the Rio Grande to Corpus Christi and the overland route.⁷

Early Courthouses of Hidalgo County

In 1886 the citizens of Hidalgo County resolved to build a permanent courthouse and jail and a location more removed from the edge of the Rio Grande, which tended to flood, and north of the original townsite was selected for the new buildings. Bonds were issued for the erection of a new courthouse and jail in the amount of \$20,000. Advertisements for bids from interested contractors were placed in the Brownsville, San Antonio and Galveston papers, and the bid was awarded to Martin Hanson and S. W. Brooks. The building was described as follows:

Court house and jail, building material to be brick and separate from each other. Court house not to cost more than \$14,000.00 and Jail \$6,000.00. Courthouse to be two stories high, and to furnish room at least equal to a building 50 x 40 and Jail to be of sufficient capacity to accommodate 25 prisoners.⁸

As construction proceeded, a brick wall was added around the jail, and new furniture

*The Hidalgo County
Courthouse and Jail in Hidalgo,
about 1905.*

*Image: The Robert Runyon
Photograph Collection (image
number 03013), courtesy
of the Dolph Briscoe Center
for American History, The
University of Texas at Austin.*

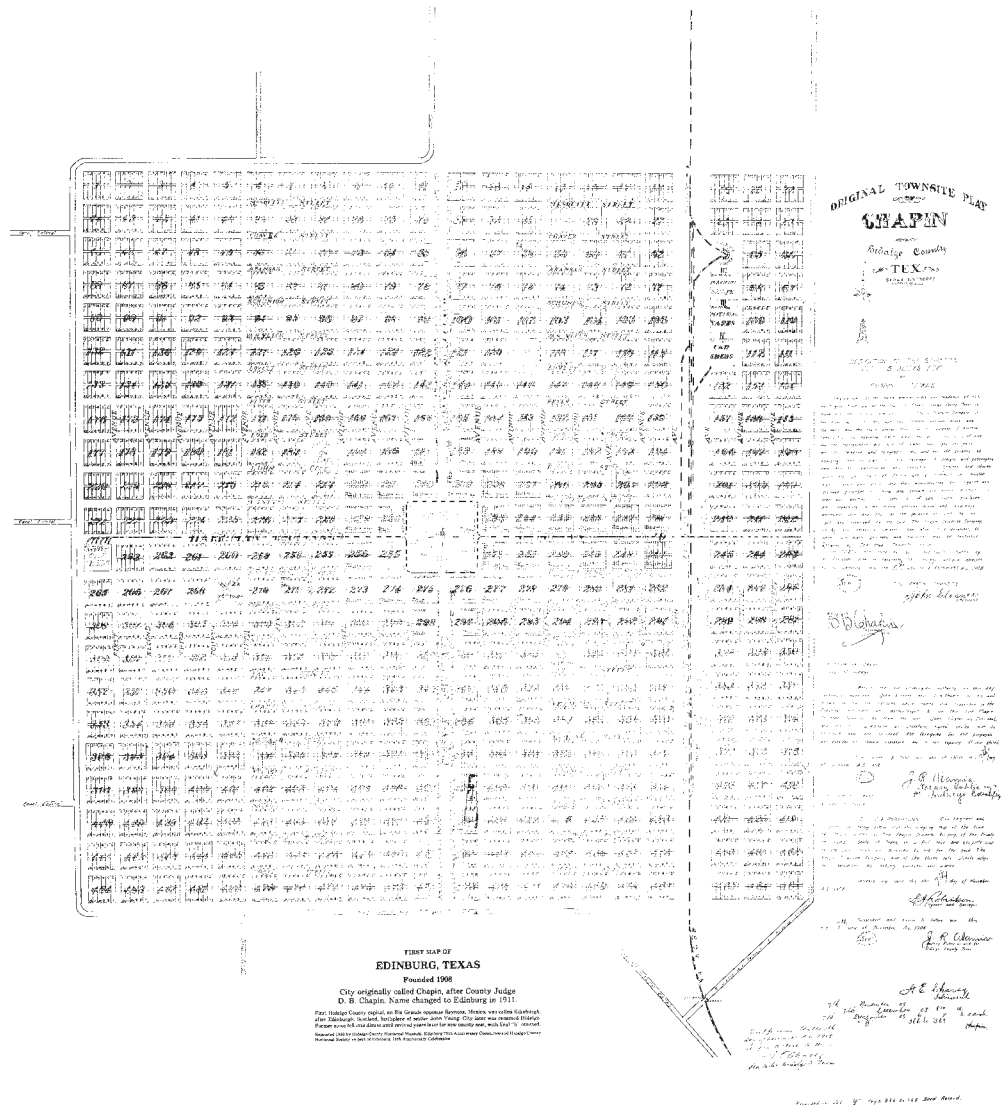


and lighting were purchased for the courthouse as the construction neared completion in 1887. The old courthouse and jail were sold for \$155.00, once the new buildings were ready to occupy.⁹

Unfortunately, the new site for the town was still close to the river, and in 1887 a great flood heavily damaged Hidalgo. The Court appropriated funds to protect the new courthouse from encroachment of the river as construction was completed in 1887. In 1889, the Court petitioned the Legislature to provide funds for a jetty and break water in the Rio Grande, to protect the still new courthouse and jail. A new bond issue for \$5,000.00 was authorized, to protect the buildings from further erosion of the river. Apparently, the protections were effective enough to inspire confidence in the permanence of the buildings, and a few years later 120 trees were ordered and planted around the courthouse square. The county invested in the translation of the records and archives in 1894, as well as new locks on the doors and cisterns. A few years later, matting was installed on the courthouse floors.¹⁰

As the fledgling county matured, new residents settled in the area. The population for 1880 was 4,347 people, almost double the number recorded for 1870. Among the newcomers was John Closner, often considered the father of modern Hidalgo County, who came to Hidalgo in 1884 and purchased land in the area. He was appointed deputy sheriff of Hidalgo County and was instrumental in stemming the cattle rustling and robbery that had become rampant in the county. He later served as sheriff, tax collector and county treasurer, and amassed sufficient support and power to become the political boss of the county. He continued to acquire land, and became one of the largest landholders in the area. Closner's San Juan Plantation, located on the banks of the Rio Grande about ten miles east of Hidalgo, was 7,000 acres in 1904. He installed a pumping plant and a network of canals to take water from the Rio Grande and

Original Townsite Plat of Chapin, Hidalgo County, Texas.
November 7, 1908.
The town planners dedicated four city blocks for the courthouse square in the center of town. The square was prominently located at the intersection of the two main boulevards, with a street car line planned around the square.
Image: Courtesy of the Museum of South Texas History.



irrigate his land. He was the first to raise commercial crops, including alfalfa, sugar cane, fruits and vegetables and tobacco. His land holdings eventually amounted to 45,000 acres.¹¹

Through the end of the nineteenth century, the population of the county continued to grow, and was at 6,837 in 1900. Growth came more quickly at the beginning of the twentieth century, when the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway was chartered in 1903. The line was part of a rail network built to connect Chicago, St. Louis and the Midwest to Louisiana, Texas and Mexico, enhancing trade and access for all points along the line. In South Texas, the prospect of the railroad was enthusiastically received and generous donations of land and capital were made by ranchers and the citizens of the city of Brownsville to provide the right of way and cash needed to build the line.¹²

Not to be left behind, *The Hidalgo Advance* began publication in March 1903, for the purpose of attracting the railroad to Hidalgo County. Clossner gave 2,000 acres for the

railroad, and worked with county business leaders to get the extension of the railroad from Harlingen to Sam Fordyce, on the western edge of Hidalgo County at the border with Starr County. Work on the Sam Fordyce branch began in April 1904, and by the summer had reached the site of present-day Mercedes. The branch continued west, through what would become Weslaco, Donna, Alamo, San Juan, Pharr, McAllen and Mission, and work was completed in 1905 at Sam Fordyce. Land prices appreciated dramatically, from twenty-five cents an acre in 1903 to fifty dollars by 1906 and approaching \$300 dollars an acre by 1910. The railroad also made commercial farming more practical, as there was now a way to get crops to market.¹³

Keenly aware of the potential of commercial agriculture, Closner began to plan for irrigation and railroad networks to nurture the development of the interior of the county. In 1906, Closner and William Sprague built the first branch of the San Antonio and Rio Grande Valley Railroad from the Sam Fordyce branch at San Juan Plantation north to the new town of Chapin. The railroad never made it beyond Chapin, although some grading work was done further north in anticipation of a future rail extension. In fact, there was never a roundhouse installed at the north end of the rail line, so the train went forward when travelling north, but had to back up on the return trip to the south. The train, affectionately called Flossie, had one engine and two cars, one for passengers and one for freight, and made its first run in 1908 or 1909. The train would continue as the only rail service for two decades, until the Southern Pacific railroad came to town in 1927.¹⁴

Closner and Sprague donated 1,400 acres for the development of Chapin, and in partnership with County Judge Dennis Chapin platted the new townsite on November 7, 1908. A month before, the three men had engineered an election to consider the relocation of the county seat from Hidalgo, on the Rio Grande, to Chapin, about twenty miles to the north. (Apparently to maintain a veneer of propriety, Chapin resigned as county judge between calling the election to move the county seat and the canvassing of the returns. Sprague then presided over the meeting long enough to seat S. P. Silver as the new county judge.) In the October 10, 1908 election, 513 votes were cast, 422 in support of relocation and 90 against. Among the reasons for moving the county seat were the continued erosion of the river bank, frequent floods, inaccessibility once the St. Louis and Brownsville Railroad was completed, distance from the geographical center of the county, as well as the potential for growth and development in this part of the county.¹⁵

Closner sent his ranch foreman, W. L. Lipscomb, who was deputized to allow him to carry a gun, to oversee the transfer of the county records from Hidalgo to Chapin the following morning, to head off any heroic opposition to the move of the county seat. The records were stored in a canvas tent while a temporary brick vault and wooden courthouse were quickly built on the southwest corner of the courthouse square, beside the dusty road to Hidalgo.¹⁶

The developers of the new town of Chapin prepared a plat for the townsite, which showed a simple grid plan of twenty-two blocks square, with provisions for irrigation canals at the outer edge of the town and the San Antonio and Rio Grande Valley Railroad line on the east edge of town. Four blocks in the center of the townsite were

View down the dusty road to Hidalgo, taken from the new courthouse under construction in Chapin in 1909. The temporary frame courthouse and canvas records vault are at the right. Image: Museum of South Texas History, Closner Ramsey Collection, 1988.66.5c. HidCo. Courthouse2.



dedicated for use as the courthouse and grounds, located at the intersection of the two main boulevards shown in the town. (Closner Boulevard would later become Highway 281 and Harriman Boulevard FM 107.) The courthouse building was shown at the very center, and the boulevards split within the large, four-block square, with traffic encircling the building. The plat was signed by the townsite corporation representatives on November 7, 1908, and recorded with the Hidalgo County Clerk on December 7, 1908.¹⁷

The Commissioners met in the temporary courthouse on November 9, 1908, less than a month after the election on the county seat move and two days after the townsite plat had been signed, and discussed the need to build a permanent courthouse and jail in Chapin. The Commissioners “looking ahead and believing that the present prosperity and great development of our county is only a forerunner of what the future will show” decided that an election on the issuance of \$75,000 in bonds for the construction of a courthouse and jail in Chapin be held. The election was held about a month later, and 164 votes were cast, 159 in favor and five against.¹⁸

1910 Courthouse

In February 1909 the Court was visited by Austin architect Arthur O. Watson, who presented plans for several previous courthouse projects. Watson had been practicing architecture for over thirty years, and likely presented information on the Val Verde County (1887), Comanche County (1890), Milam County (1890), Llano County (1892) and DeWitt County (1896) courthouses, as well as church and institutional projects he had completed. Perhaps ambivalent about what they saw, the Court then decided to hear from a range of architects in a future meeting. A week later they met with Watson a second time, the San Antonio Structural Steel Company (who likely presented jail projects) and Atlee B. Ayres, of San Antonio. Ayres was apparently representing a joint venture of his firm and that of his colleague Henry T. Phelps. The

two were younger than Watson, but had already complete an extensive body of work in a range of styles for institutional and government clients. They also offered the advantage of better proximity to Chapin, which was surely an advantage when the town was still somewhat difficult to reach. Following the meeting, Ayres and Phelps were hired to design and superintend the construction of the new courthouse and jail project.¹⁹

Atlee B. Ayres was born in Ohio in 1873, and came to Texas as a boy with his family in 1879. He studied architecture in New York City at the School of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, graduating in 1894, then practiced architecture in San Antonio and Mexico City. In 1898 he returned to San Antonio and began an architectural practice with a partner, C. A. Coughlin that lasted until Coughlin's death in 1905. The firm continued as Atlee B. Ayres Architect until 1922, when he took his son, Robert, as a partner and the firm became Atlee B. Ayres & Robert M. Ayres, Architects.

Prior to receiving this commission, Ayres had considerable experience with the design of public buildings. The State of Texas hired Coughlin and Ayres to prepare a campus master plan for the University of Texas and design the Woman's Building (1903) and the Engineering Building (1904). After Coughlin's death, Ayres designed the Law Building (1908). He would go on to design a string of other courthouses in South Texas, including Cameron County (1912), Jim Wells County (1912), Kleburg County (1914) and Refugio County (1919). In 1915, he was appointed the State Architect and designed the General Land Office Building (1916), the State School for the Blind (1917) and the first building-wide remodeling of the State Capitol (1915). Over the course of his long career, which lasted more than 70 years, he produced over 500 projects. Ayres died in San Antonio in 1969.²⁰

Henry T. Phelps was born in Victoria County in 1871, educated at the University of Texas, graduating in 1890, and apprenticed in several San Antonio architectural offices before establishing a practice with S. L. McAdoo 1902. In 1909, he had a practice with D. R. Jacob but by 1910 he formed an independent practice, which continued until the 1940s. By 1912, his reputation was widely established for both residential and public buildings. He designed eleven courthouses in Texas over a twenty-seven year period, done in a range of architectural styles. Before beginning the Hidalgo County Courthouse, Phelps had completed several public buildings, including the MKT Depot in Dennison (1909) and the Frio County Courthouse (1904). He would also produce courthouse designs for Atascosa County (1912), Mills County (1913), Blanco County (1916), Kenedy County (1918), Schleicher County (1924), Uvalde County (1927), San Patricio County (1928), Kimble County (1929) and LaSalle County (1931). He died in San Antonio in 1944.²¹

During the design and construction of the new courthouse in Chapin, the minutes refer to both Atlee Ayres and the firm of Phelps and Jacob in various combinations. Ayres and Phelps were awarded the commission, and a month later plans prepared by Ayres and Phelps and Jacob were approved by the Court. In May 1909, Ayres and Jacobs submitted the final plans and specifications, prior to issue for bids. One year later, the minutes state that Phelps and Jacobs had dissolved their partnership and Phelps asked to end his contract with Hidalgo County, which was done. Still, Phelps' name was listed on the cornerstone, which was installed at the new courthouse about



View of the courthouse and square in 1925, above. Citrus trees were planted in the square from 1916 to 1925. Image: Museum of South Texas History, excerpt, FIMC. Panorama. 5-12-1925.



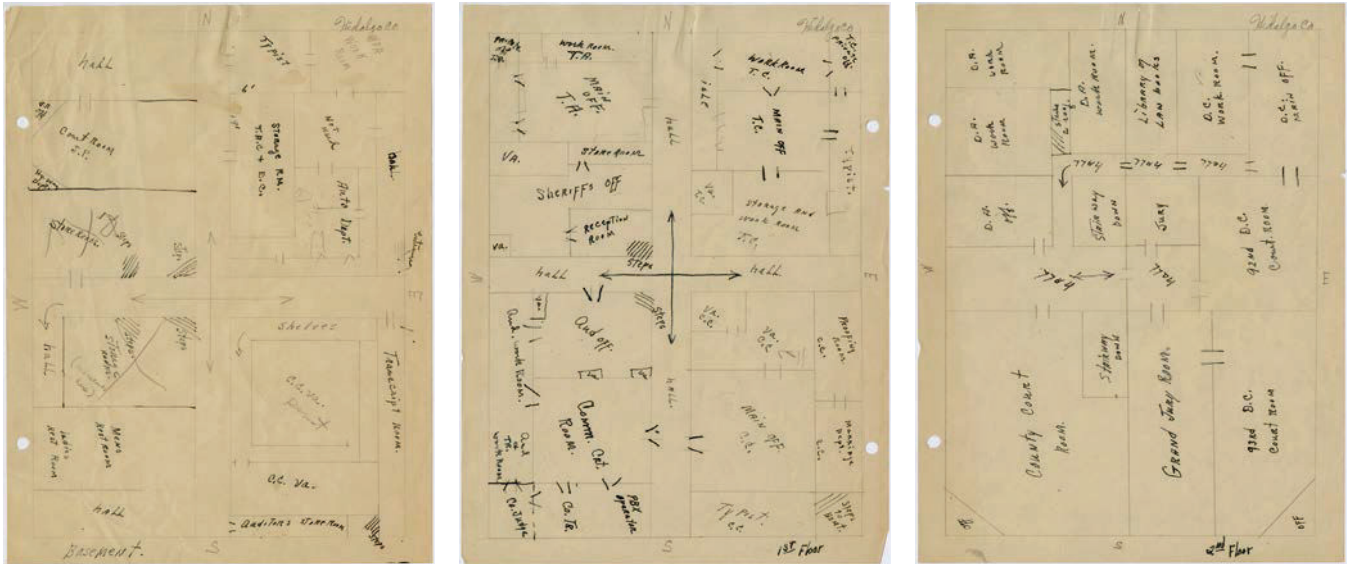
The Hidalgo County Courthouse in Edinburg, about 1910, right. (A free-standing jail was also built a block away from the courthouse.) Image: The Robert Runyon Photograph Collection (image number 02985), courtesy of the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

six weeks after he was released from his contract with the County.²²

The construction contract was awarded to the firm of Waterston and Schoenfeldt, of San Antonio, in July 1909. The partnership between these two was also dissolved before the completion of the project. The minutes do not make clear which of the former partners actually completed the project, and both names are given on the cornerstone.²³

Construction proceeded on the \$85,000 courthouse for the next year, and on June 24, 1910 the cornerstone was laid, followed by a great celebration. The members of the Mercedes Masonic Lodge conducted the ceremony of laying the cornerstone, assisted by members of the Brownsville and San Benito Masonic Lodges. The ceremony was attended by a large gathering of Valley citizens, attracted in part by a special low train fare from Brownsville for the event. An outdoor barbecue lunch was served to 700 attendees, and a special banquet for 100 Masons was held at the Woodman Hall, which had been decorated by the ladies of Chapin for the event. Later in the afternoon, a baseball game between McAllen and Mission was played. Five months later, the Court officially accepted the courthouse furniture and fixtures, and the building was officially in use as the new home of county government.²⁴

The new courthouse was designed in the Mission Style, sometimes called the Mission Revival Style, inspired by the Spanish mission buildings of the early 19th century in California. The style was at the height of its popularity between 1890 and 1915, and was characterized by smooth plastered walls, arched openings and red tile roofs. Towers or turrets, with hipped or domed roofs, and simple balconies and smooth, flat trim were also typical treatments. Ayres likely influenced the design of the building to



Sketch floor plans of the 1910 Hidalgo County Courthouse, prepared after 1935 as a Works Progress Administration project. Image: WPA Records "Hidalgo County Courthouse", di_07818, di_07819, di_07820, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

reflect the trends he had learned in Mexico, when he practiced there a decade earlier, such as the elaborate mirador and the delicate decorative iron work.

The basic plan of the building was a simple, cross-axial design, with entry porches at each of the four elevations. The plan was symmetrical about both axis on the first floor and was asymmetrical on the second floor to accommodate the large district courtrooms at that level. The building exterior was strongly grounded by the use of a larger ground and first floor mass, topped by an inset second floor. Hip-roofed towers marked each corner, and shaped parapet walls marked each entry. At the first floor, open air arcades extended across each facade, between the corner towers.

No original plans and specifications for the 1910 courthouse were located, save for a set of sketches of the floor plan made as part of a Works Progress Administration project describing the condition of records stored in the county courthouse, made after 1935. By this time, the open air arcades at the first floor had been infilled, to create additional office space for the first floor. The basement level housed the justice of the peace courtroom, the auto department, the typist office, restrooms and storage rooms and vaults. The first floor housed the auditor, county clerk, sheriff, treasurer, tax assessor and tax collector, as well as the commissioners court room and county judge's office. The marriage department and document storage vault were also on this level. The second floor housed the 92nd and 93rd District Court rooms, the grand jury room and the county court room. The district attorney, district clerk, jury room and law library were also on this level.

The courthouse square was by design a commanding public place, taking a full four blocks in the center of town. The courthouse was prominent on the skyline, and was the tallest building in town for many years, and was the only building of any stature when first built. The large square was developed as a park, beginning a few months after the courthouse was opened, when the county judge ordered 250 shade trees for planting on the square. In 1915, the streets around the square were gravelled. At about that time, a bandstand was built on the square. In 1916, a citrus grove was planted



Panoramic view of Edinburg, with the courthouse, square and jail on May 12, 1925, top. Citrus trees were planted in the square from 1916 to 1925.

Image: Museum of South Texas History, FIMC. Panorama. 5-12-1925.

Panoramic view of the courthouse and square on March 17, 1930, center.

Perimeter palm trees, lush grass and a covered bandstand support the public park use.

Image: Museum of South Texas History, Fimc.Hid. Co. Courthouse. 3-17-1930 (ii).

Street view of courthouse and square, taken in the late 1930s.

Even as new commercial buildings were built downtown, the courthouse remained a prominent feature of the skyline.

Image: Texas Department of Transportation.

in the parks, which appears lush and full in photographs, but was removed by the county in 1925. Deer were kept on the grounds for a time, as well. In later years, palm trees were planted along the edges of the parks, and turf was planted on the grounds. Postcard views of the courthouse and grounds make note of the view “through the palm trees.” In 1933, the Edinburg Chamber of Commerce was given permission to build and maintain a free-standing building on the northwest corner of the courthouse square for office and meeting room space, but the parks remained a key outdoor public space for the city and the county.²⁵

The courthouse building, while a source of great civic pride, appears to have had some maintenance and durability issues. In 1915, contractor M. L. Waller was hired to reinforce the foundation. In 1916, there were expenses for drainage repairs, and plumbing work was also done. At some point, portions of the open air arcades were enclosed, for use as added space; some of this shows in photographs taken on November 11, 1927, when the Southern Pacific Railroad train reached Edinburg. More repairs were made in 1925, and in 1931 the roof and basement windows were repaired. Gas service was installed in the building in 1927. Architect Robert Vagler was hired to remodel the 93rd District Courtroom in 1931, likely in conjunction with the creation of the 92nd District Court effective in 1932. At some point, before the time of the WPA records storage review, all of the arcades on the first floor were enclosed. The ladies rest room was renovated in 1935, at a cost of \$100. In 1939, the court house was repaired under a National Youth Administration project.²⁶

In the WPA review, entitled “Housing, Care and Accessibility of the Records of Hidalgo County”, several concerns about the condition of the building were noted. As a general assessment, the report noted:

The exterior walls are in fairly good condition, but the floors, ceilings, and interior walls are in generally bad condition, there being large cracks due to seepage and an inferior foundation.

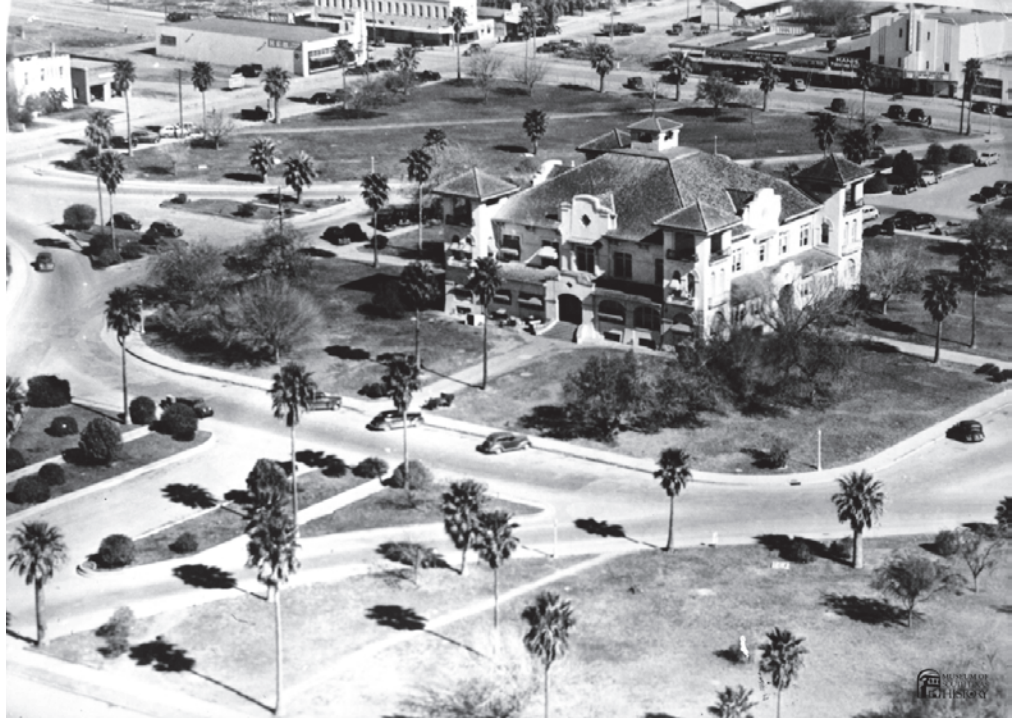
In a hand-written annotation, the word “inferior” is struck out, and the word “defective” written in. The writer went on to describe the storage facilities for the County Clerk’s records as follows:

The county clerk has a roomy vault 16’ x 20’ adjoining his office in the southeast corner of the first floor....Ample artificial lighting is provided but there is no ventilation, and the air is foul. Steps lead from this vault down to the basement vault 32’ x 32’, with wood shelving on the south and east walls.....Here are located the map records which are referred to very frequently and it is recommended that they be placed in a lighter,

Aerial view of the courthouse and square in the late 1930s.

The original mirador was replaced with a simpler form, due to damage of some kind. The park is still a strong urban element, with many more sidewalks.

Image: Museum of South Texas History, Finc.HidCo Courthouse2.



better ventilated and more conveniently accessible place. 35% of the records are stored in this vault and are damp and moldy due to seepage in the basement and lack of ventilation.

The report concluded with this recommendation:

Generally speaking, care given the records of Hidalgo County has been such as to preserve and make them accessible to those desiring to consult them. It is hoped that the present and successive county officials may work out a plan whereby those records stored in the basement may be removed to a dry place.²⁷

As the building conditions deteriorated, Hidalgo County and the county seat flourished. In 1911, the county petitioned the federal government for permission to change the name of the county seat from Chapin to Edinburg; D. B. Chapin was involved in a murder in San Antonio, and it was apparently deemed best to return to the earlier name to minimize and negative association.

Also in 1911, the overall area of the county was decreased when the northern third of the Hidalgo County was incorporated into the newly formed Brooks County. Yet, the 1920 census of the reduced county area was double that of a decade earlier, due in large part to a great influx of farmers settling in the county. In 1921, the area of Hidalgo County was further reduced by the creation of Willacy County, which took a portion of the eastern edge of the county. Again, by the time of the 1930 census, the population in the county had doubled over that of the previous decade, and the number of farms had more than doubled. The population increased by 50% in both the 1940 and 1950 census, and the number of farms in the county continued to increase.²⁸

As the county grew, the Legislature shifted and added district courts to accommodate the changes. When the new courthouse in Chapin was occupied, Hidalgo County was

in the 28th Judicial District, and the 28th District Court met in the new building. In 1915, Hidalgo County was removed from the 28th Judicial District and included in the new 79th Judicial District, along with Starr, Brooks, Jim Hogg, Duval and Jim Wells Counties. In 1923, the 93rd Judicial District, composed of Hidalgo County alone, was created, and the 93rd District Court met in the courthouse. In 1932, the 92nd Judicial District, composed of Hidalgo County alone, was created, and Hidalgo County was removed from the 79th Judicial District. As the county continued to grow, it was certain that more judicial districts and district courts would be created, but the courthouse was at capacity by the late 1930s.²⁹

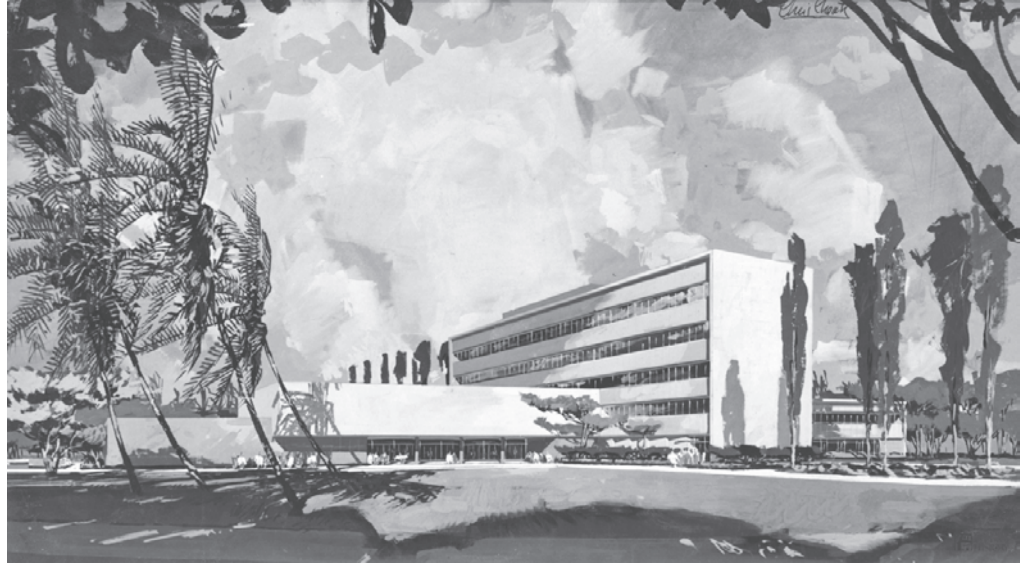
1954 Courthouse

On June 19, 1951, the Court accepted “numerous” petitions signed by county citizens calling for an election for a new courthouse. The Court voted to begin the procedure of calling an election on a new courthouse. The first order of business was to establish an estimate of the cost to design and construct a new building, which required engaging the services of an architect. A few weeks later, the Court interviewed seven architectural firms -- three from Houston, two from Weslaco, one from Pharr and one from Harlingen. On July 5, 1951, they hired R. Newell Waters of Weslaco as the architect for the new courthouse.³⁰

Roscious Newell Waters was born in 1899 in San Angelo, Texas. Upon graduation from high school in San Antonio in 1917, he served in the US Army until the end of World War I. In 1919, he enrolled in the University of Texas at Austin, where he studied for two years, then transferred to Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He received his undergraduate degree in architecture from MIT in 1923, interning with a Boston architectural firm while in school. He continued with post-graduate studies at MIT for one year, then moved to Weslaco and began to practice architecture. His parents had recently moved to Weslaco, and his father was a partner in a real estate development company in Edinburg.³¹

As the region was developed, R. Newell Waters received many commissions for houses and civic buildings in the area, including the Weslaco City Hall and Fire Station (1928) and the Howard E. Butt house in Corpus Christi (1936). His early work was often in a Spanish Colonial Revival style, and later he was known for his work in the Monterrey style. He worked in partnership and collaboration with other architects, including several early projects with Ralph Cameron, a prominent San Antonio architect, to produce a city hall and fire station for city of Mercedes (1927) and a large residence for A. Y. Baker, in Edinburg (1927). In 1936, he was hired by the Weslaco Chamber of Commerce to “modernize” the business blocks of Main Street. Waters prepared sketches and watercolor renderings of a remodeling scheme for over 45 buildings, altered to create a harmonious, Mission style commercial district. The transformation generated a 50% increase in business, and was published in architectural and business journals of the time. As his career matured, he produced modernistic style designs for school districts and commercial clients across South Texas. He also had oil, farming and ranching interests in the Rio Grande Valley. He retired from architectural practice in 1962, and died in Weslaco in 1979. (Unfortunately, he apparently burned his architectural drawings and papers several years before he passed away, so no drawings or files for the Hidalgo County Courthouse project from his office survive.)³²

Architect's rendering of the
Hidalgo County Courthouse,
produced in 1951.
R. Newell Waters, Architect.
Image: Museum of South
Texas History, Closner
Ramsey Collection,
1988.66.5c.1. Govt Bldgs.
courthouse27 .

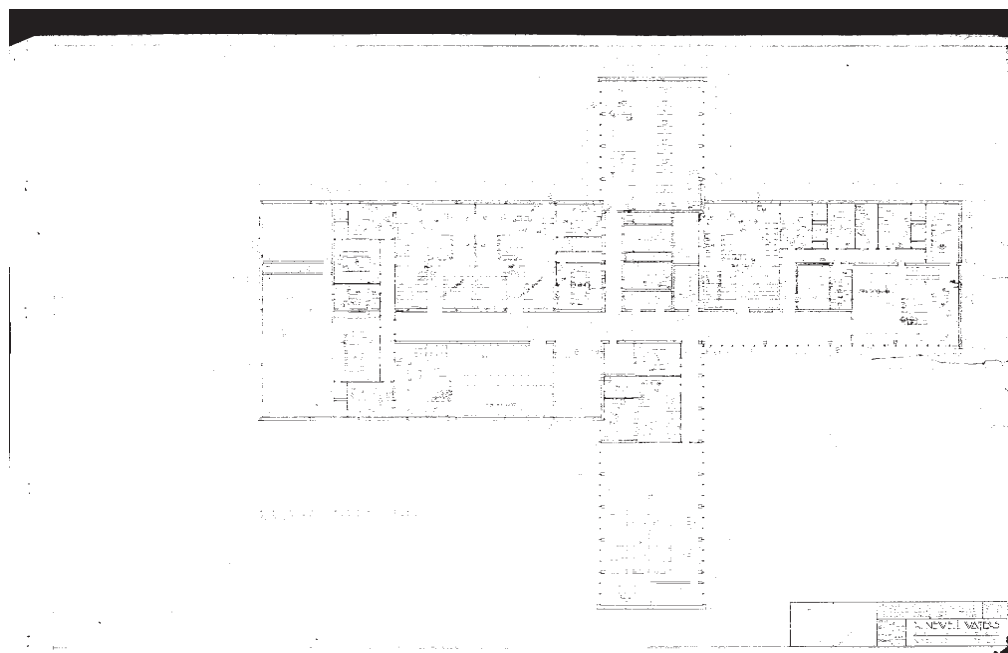


Waters met with the Court a few days after he was hired to discuss the county's preliminary space needs. He returned a little over a week later with a space analysis chart for the proposed new courthouse, and recommendations for the size and projected cost for the new building. The space analysis compared the 1910 courthouse, at roughly 30,000 square feet and a 54% efficiency factor, to the proposed new courthouse, at 70,000 square feet and 72% efficiency. Waters proposed a project budget of \$1,500,000, to include \$1,260,000 for the new building and associated fees, \$150,000 for furnishings, \$25,000 for razing the old building and \$90,000 for the grounds. The Commissioners moved to call an election on a bond issue of \$1,500,000 for a new courthouse, with the election to be held on August 11, 1951, on a unanimous vote.³³

The day after the bond election, the *Brownsville Herald* reported that "Hidalgo County will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 1952 around a new \$1,500,000 courthouse, courtesy of the taxpayers who voted Saturday." The bond issue carried by a margin of three to one, with 3,125 votes in favor and 1,386 against. At its next meeting, the Court authorized Waters to proceed with preliminary sketches of the new courthouse building, pending final approval of his contract with the county. The preliminary sketches were approved by the Court five weeks later, and the general public was invited to visit Mr. Waters to view the plans and make any suggestions to the Court. Waters followed up a few weeks later with a letter to the Court, noting that he had met with each departmental branch of county government to occupy space in the new courthouse, and that all had indicated their approval of the space as proposed. He cautioned against any further changes, especially during construction, which would involve additional expense and confusion.³⁴

The building was designed to house all county government functions, except for the jail, and included space for several newly created county functions, such as the back tax attorney, the drivers license office and the county health unit. There were five courtrooms on the second floor -- three for the functioning County Court at Law and the 92nd and 93rd District Courts, one for the newly created 139th Special District Court and one proposed for use as a federal district court space -- as well as the district clerk

There were five courtrooms designed for the second floor, each fully outfitted with courtroom furniture, as shown in the original furnishings plans. Hidalgo County Court House, R. Newell Waters, Architect, sheet F-2 of 6, February 10, 1955. Hidalgo County, Facilities Maintenance Department.



and court support offices. There was also a Commissioners Courtroom on the first floor, as well as a suite of offices for the county officials and staff. The auditorium on the first floor was designed for jury impanelling, and there was a large law library space on the second floor. The county clerk and tax assessor occupied the first floor south wing. The upper three floors had offices for a range of county staff and departments, including the district attorney, the county agent and the home demonstration agent, as well as two jury dormitories. The building was completely up-to-date in style, employing the principles of Modern and International Style architecture. Simple building volumes with an asymmetrical juxtaposition of forms was typical of the International Style, without the ornament or decoration used in earlier architectural styles. Flat roofs, smooth wall surfaces broken only by ribbon windows and cantilevered forms, expressed in three distinct stones, made up the powerful building composition of the striking new courthouse. The building was located on the western edge of the courthouse square, immediately west of the old, 1910 courthouse.

In January 1952, the City of Edinburg notified Hidalgo County that the old courthouse was condemned and must be removed within one year. The order noted that the building was liable to fall down, dangerous, not fire proof and a non-conforming building. If the County did not remove the building, the City would do the work, and bill the County for the cost incurred. An article in the *Brownsville Herald* included the background on this issue. In order to build the courthouse, the County needed the permission of the National Production Authority. The NPA was established under the federal Defense Production Act of 1950 and was part of the Department of Commerce. The NPA addressed the production and supply of materials needed for military defense, and was one of several federal agencies authorized to regulate the economy so that defense production needs could be met, even if this meant restricting the flow of goods and services to the civilian sector of the economy. Hidalgo County was required to seek permission to devote resources to the construction of a new

View of the north and east wings of the Hidalgo County Courthouse, looking southwest, in the 1960s.

Image: Museum of South Texas History, Lucy Wallace Collection, 1986.62.1ji.



courthouse, and the condemnation order for the old courthouse was part of the justification for the request. The permission was granted, and a bid date of June 3, 1952 was set for the project. Later, the bid date was pushed back, to allow for the completion of the sale of the bonds for the project costs.³⁵

The bids were finally received on September 16, 1952. Eight bids were received from general contractors from Houston, Austin, McAllen, Brownsville and Mercedes. Judge Richardson thanked the bidders, and indicated that the Court would not rush their final decision, but would study the bids for ten days before making an award. On September 22, 1952, the Court awarded the contract to Noser Construction Company, of McAllen, at a base bid of \$1,264,000 and 365 days. Eight alternates to the bid were also considered, and six were accepted -- four additions and two deductions. Two substitutions on stone selections, both deductions, were also accepted, for a total cost of \$1,256,412.³⁶

Noser Construction Company was owned by Edward A. Noser, who operated a family-owned lumber mill in Franklin County, Missouri as a young man. In 1917, he traded his mill for a 50-acre farm in the Rio Grande Valley. By 1933, he operated Noser Lumber Company in McAllen. He was apparently a man of many interests, evidenced by a patent application for his invention of adjustable scaffolding for use in construction work, which was granted in 1942. Noser's bid included a proposal to begin construction within ten days of contract award and to complete the work within 365 days, a duration considerably shorter than proposed by the other bidders. His son, Dave Noser, supervised the construction work on the courthouse project. Noser Lumber Company continues to operate in McAllen, Texas.³⁷

View of the north and east wings of the Hidalgo County Courthouse, looking southwest, in about 1965.

Image: Museum of South Texas History, Fimc.I.GovtBldgs. Courthouse29.



The ground breaking ceremony for the new courthouse was held on October 6, 1952. After the speeches, workers removed the roads, palm trees and sidewalks on the west side of the old courthouse. In early 1953, the Court approved the final adjustments to traffic around the courthouse square, by accepting the Highway Department's proposal to gently curve US 281 around the eastern edge of the new courthouse. Later that year, the Court modified the agreement with the Edinburg Improvement Association, represented by the heirs of the original grantors of the four blocks of the courthouse square, to allow for the construction of the new courthouse and the possibility of the sale of the eastern two blocks of the original courthouse square, with the proviso that the Edinburg Improvement Association retained all reversionary rights to the property, and might choose to retain the property or to participate in the sale, should the Court determine that a portion of the square was not needed for use as part of the courthouse grounds.³⁸

On February 17, 1953, Waters reported to the Court on the progress of the construction work, noting that things were on budget, with a total project cost of \$1,536,000. He noted that "we don't have to apologize to anybody on the financial cost." The Court also selected the interior stone for the main public corridors, a marble from Missouri called St. Genevieve Rose. One commissioner asked if it would be hard to replace, in the event it cracked, and Waters replied "don't worry about having to replace it," that it was not going to crack.³⁹

Plans for new courthouse furniture and furnishings were prepared by Waters in early 1953, with one large bid package for general furnishings and three smaller bid packages for "opera chairs" for the auditorium, jail holding cells for the sheriff's office



Groundbreaking, October 6, 1952. Image: Museum of South Texas History, 1991.37.03a.I.GovtBldgs.courthse21.



Construction progress photo, 1952. Image: Museum of South Texas History, 1991.37.03a.I.GovtBldgs.courthse12.



Construction progress photo, 1953. Image: Museum of South Texas History, 1991.37.03a.GovtBldgs.HCC (i).



Construction progress photo, 1953. Image: Museum of South Texas History, 1991.37.03a.I.GovtBldgs.courthse20.



Construction progress photo, 1953. Image: Museum of South Texas History, 1991.37.03a.I.GovtBldgs.courthse14.



Dedication, May 20, 1954. Image: Museum of South Texas History, I.GovtBldgCourthse.1953-54i.

*View of the north and west wings of the Hidalgo County Courthouse, looking southeast, March 5, 1956.
Image: Museum of South Texas History, Fimc.I.GovtBldgs. Courthouse7.*

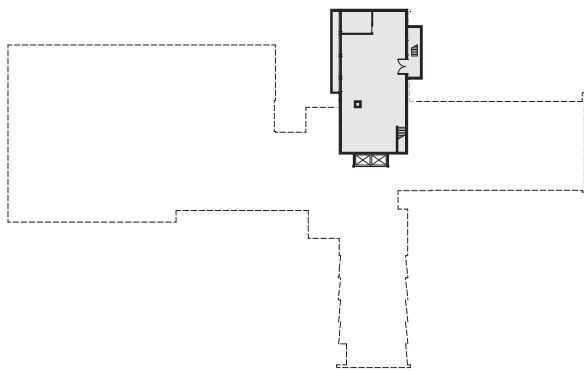


and bed frames and mattresses for the jury dormitories. Bids were opened on April 13, 1953 and awarded the following week to the low bidders. Maverick-Clarke, a San Antonio based office furniture company, was awarded the large bid package for \$110,446.78.⁴⁰

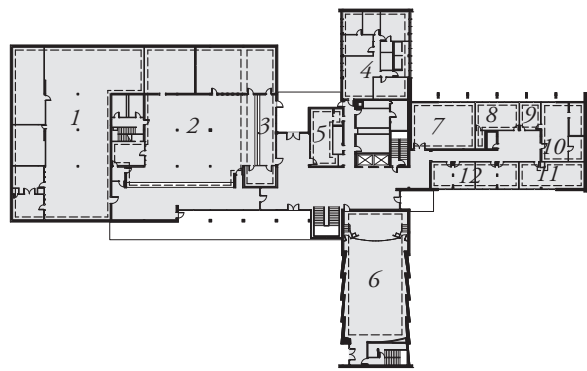
As construction was nearing completion, the Court appointed a Buildings, Maintenance and Grounds Committee for the purpose of making sure that the building was properly occupied and maintained. Members included Waters, the county judge and the sheriff. Newspaper accounts at the time of occupancy note that the committee was to make sure “there’ll be no posters stuck on the walls, no extension cords trailing along the baseboards, no exposed plumbing,” perhaps to avoid conditions existing in the 1910 courthouse. The same newspaper account noted:

*This building is built to stand longer than the useful 45 years the old building put in. Its plaster and mortar is crystallizing. Its brick are crumbling and its paint is peeling off to expose colors used years ago. It served its purpose. But it did not serve it as long as the present one is expected to serve, particularly with the watch-dog committee on the job.*⁴¹

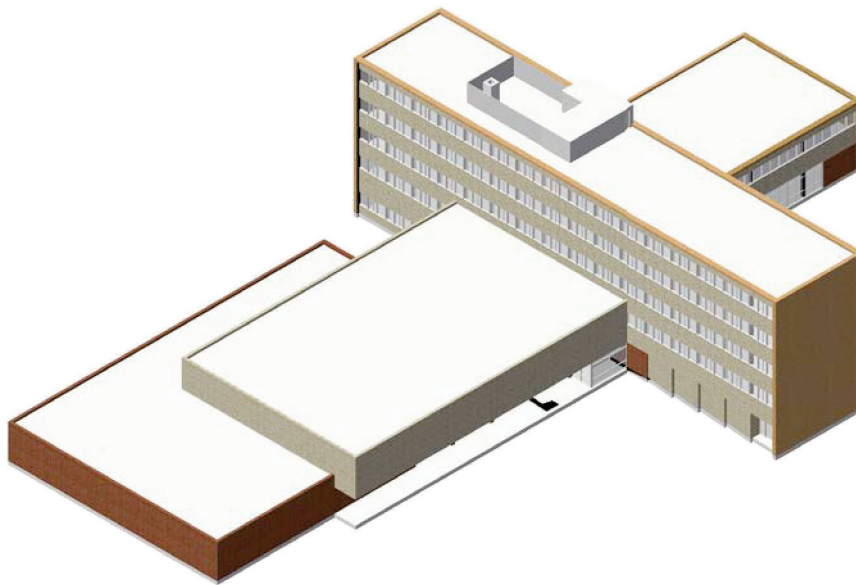
The committee would have things to monitor from early on, as the old departments moved in to new spaces, mingled together with new departments housed in the courthouse for the first time. Also, the courts themselves would undergo change. The Special 139th District Court was created by the Legislature as of September 1, 1954. As originally envisioned, the court would cease to exist in the summer of 1956. But, a year after the new courthouse was occupied, the Legislature made the 139th a permanent court. Hidalgo County also extended an invitation to the judges of the US District Court of the Southern District of Texas to sit in the new courthouse as might



Basement



First Floor

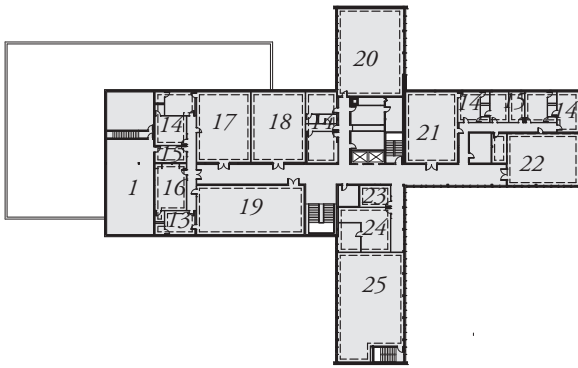


Axonometric View

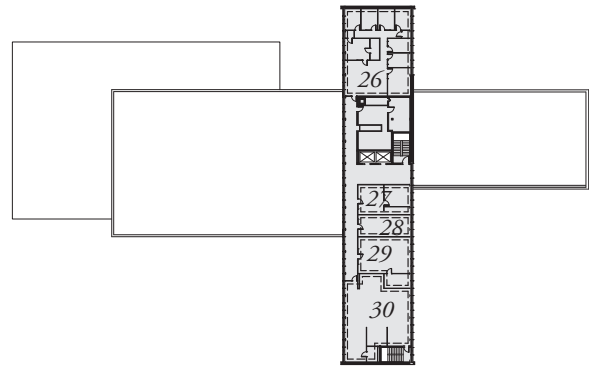
THE COURTHOUSE IN 1954

The Courthouse was built to house all the branches of county government, in approximately 70,000 square feet of space on six floors. The basement had mechanical equipment only, and the first floor had the county clerk and tax assessor offices, as well as an auditorium and coffee/snack bar. The county court functions, including the commissioners court, and the county auditor, treasurer and engineer, were also on the first floor. The second floor was devoted to court functions, with three district courts and a county court at law, and associated judge's offices, jury rooms, court reporter offices, law library and grand jury room. There was also a future federal district courtroom

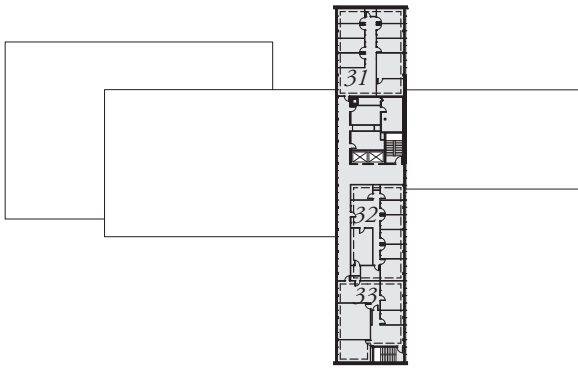
on this floor. There was a record room for the county clerk office, accessed by a staff-use only interior stair. On the third floor were the district attorney and the offices for veterans services, drivers license, the County agent and the County home demonstration agent. The child welfare, relief and old age and health unit offices were on the fourth floor. The jury dormitories, County school superintendent and the liquor control board offices were on the uppermost level. A suite of unassigned space was also located at this level.



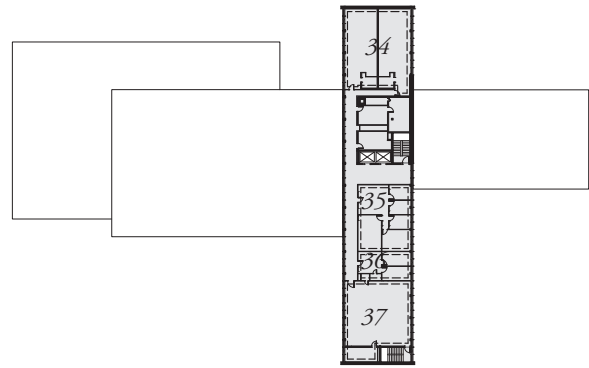
Second Floor



Third Floor



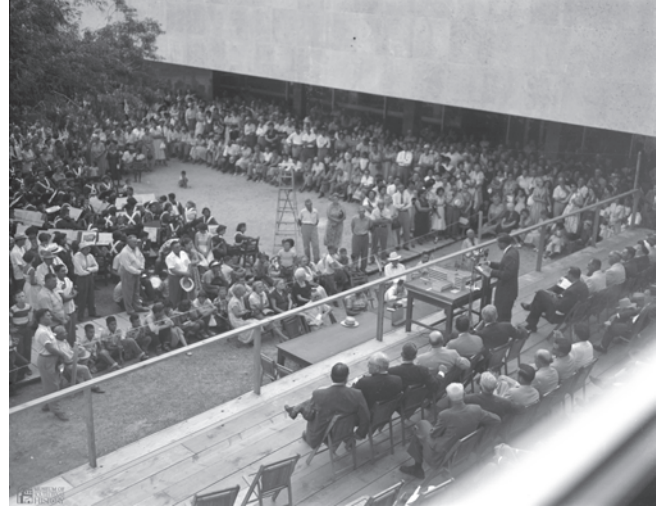
Fourth Floor



Fifth Floor

LEGEND

1 County Clerk	11 County Engineer	21 District Court (93rd)	31 Child Welfare
2 Tax Assessor	12 County Commissioners	22 Federal Dist. Ct. (proposed)	32 Cty Relief & Old Age
3 Motor Vehicles	13 Judge's Office	23 Conference	33 County Health Unit
4 Sheriff	14 Judge/Jury	24 Delinquent Tax Attorney	34 Jury Dormitory
5 Coffee Bar	15 Court Reporter	25 Law Library	35 Superintendent of Schools
6 Auditorium	16 Grand Jury	26 District Attorney	36 Liquor Control Board
7 Commissioners Court	17 County Court at Law	27 Veterans Services	37 Unassigned
8 County Judge	18 District Court (139th)	28 Drivers License	
9 County Auditor	19 District Court (92nd)	29 County Agent	
10 County Treasurer	20 District Clerk	30 Home Demonstration Agent	



The dedication took place on May 20, 1954, adjacent to the vacant 1910 courthouse. Many interested citizens attended to hear the address by Lloyd Bentsen and tour the building.

Image: Museum of South Texas History, 1991.37.03a.I.GovtBldgs.courthse31, left. 1991.37.03a.I.GovtBldgs.courthse26, right.

be convenient to them, at the suggestion of the County Bar Association, which would be another new circumstance for the committee to address.⁴²

As construction neared completion, the Court made preparations to occupy the new building. On May 18, 1954, the east door of the new courthouse was designated as the official location of all public sales. The official bulletin board for public notices was located on the south wall of the new lobby. The dedication ceremony was held on May 20, in the shadow of the old courthouse, attended by “several thousand owners of the new building” and visiting judges and other dignitaries. The Bobcat Band from Edinburg High School performed, and choirs from Edinburg and surrounding town high schools sang several patriotic songs. Lloyd Bentsen, Jr., who had served as the state’s youngest county judge in the 1910 courthouse before running for legislative office, gave the dedication speech. A large barbecue was held at Bobcat Stadium, followed by a square dance performance on the courthouse square. The adjacent streets were roped off, to allow for dancing on in to the evening. Newspaper accounts described the new building in great detail, even down to the two automatic elevators, which would be run for a short while by human operators until the “do-it-yourself” controls were familiar.⁴³

A few days later, the Court opened bids on the razing of the 1910 courthouse. Only one bid was submitted in the amount of \$22,730 by Rowland & Hunter, of Pharr, which the Court turned down. A week later, a bid of \$5,200 from Ted Hall, of Des Moines, Iowa, was accepted. Hall made the bid by telephone, without having seen the building, while his firm was demolishing the old courthouse in Bryan, Texas. A few weeks later, with the demolition nearing completion, the contents of the cornerstone were examined, including mesquite beans, old coins, old newspapers, names of county officials and a folding fan. The cornerstone itself was salvaged and installed on the courthouse grounds, where it remains today.⁴⁴

In August, a meeting between the County, City of Edinburg and the State Highway Department was held to discuss the streets around the new courthouse, related to landscaping the courthouse grounds. A right of way easement was granted for the course of US 281 through the square, and also for a twenty foot strip around the edge of the square. On November 30, 1954, the Court awarded the bid of E. B. Darby for



The dedication ceremony continued on the interior of the building, where visitors enjoyed the opening proceedings in one of the second floor courtrooms.

Image: Museum of South Texas History, 1991.37.03a.I. Govt Bldgs. courthse24, right.

Postcard views, above, tout the courthouse as "the newest, the finest, the most modern" courthouse in the state.

Images courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission.



\$30,000 for the site development work, and also determined that the east side of the original courthouse square would not be sold, but retained by the County. The sheriff was authorized to contact local nurserymen for designs and costs for landscaping the courthouse grounds. Meanwhile, citizens approached the Court with suggestions to pave the east side of the square for use as a parking lot, and offers of plants and assistance for "beautifying" the grounds. In 1956, the Junior Chamber of Commerce petitioned for permission to plant carpet grass in the four corners of the parking area on the east side of the square. At the end of 1957, the east side of the square was named Hidalgo Plaza, and operated jointly with the City of Edinburg, and more landscape improvements were made. In late 1958, royal Poinciana trees were planted on the north side of the plaza by the Chamber of Commerce and the Edinburg Jaycees.⁴⁵

On October 27, 1954, a disgruntled oil field employee brought a homemade bomb in to the courthouse, which exploded and caused great damage to the building. Henry Miller attended a court hearing on his workmen's compensation case, in which he sought payment for missed salary related to an oil field accident. He was leaving the courtroom on the second floor and was at the head of the monumental stair when the bomb, made with several sticks of dynamite, went off. Miller was killed instantly, but although the building was crowded, there were no other injuries. Interior marble panels were blown off the walls, glass windows were shattered and the exterior stone was damaged. The damage cost almost \$40,000 to repair, including replacement of several St. Genevieve Rose marble panels.⁴⁶

In 1956, perhaps the most significant trial to be held in the new courthouse was filed in the 93rd District Court, *State of Texas v. Hidalgo County Water Control and*



Shortly after the building opened, a disgruntled oil field worker detonated a homemade, dynamite bomb in the building. Although the building was full of people, the only casualty was the bomber himself. The crowd was sent outside, while the incident was investigated. The building sustained considerable damage which was quickly repaired.

Image: Museum of South Texas History, 1989.18.2, left. 1989.18.1, right.



Improvement District No. 18. In 1949, a catastrophic drought that would last through 1956 took hold in the Rio Grande Valley, and the residents of Starr, Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy counties struggled to conserve limited water supplies. The Rio Grande River flows were fundamentally changed with the construction of the Falcon Dam in 1953, designed to provide flood control, water conservation, power and recreation on a huge lake upstream of Hidalgo County. On orders from the Governor, the State Board of Water Engineers monitored water levels and ordered releases from the reservoir to provide water for municipal, agricultural and industrial uses from 1953 to 1956. In June 1956 the Board determined that there was only enough water in the United States share for three months of municipal, domestic and livestock consumption, and ordered all water remaining in the reservoir reserved for these uses. On June 9, 1956 the Rio Grande stopped flowing at Brownsville. Releases from the Falcon Reservoir were diverted by upstream irrigators, and never reached the municipal, domestic and livestock users downstream.⁴⁷

On June 28, 1956 the State of Texas, on behalf of the Board and joined by the cities of Brownsville, Edinburg, Harlingen, McAllen, Mission, Pharr, Raymondville and San Benito, filed a suit to restrain the diversion of water for irrigation when the Falcon Reservoir was at or below 50,000 acre-feet capacity. The 93rd District Court took custody of the waters of the Rio Grande from the head of the Falcon Reservoir to the mouth of the river at the Gulf. The defendants claimed that their right to access the waters for irrigation was conveyed under the old Spanish and Mexican land grants, an issue that was considered in a separate case, *State of Texas v. Valmont Plantations*. That case held that the rights to water for irrigation did not convey under the grants, unless expressly addressed in the grant, in a final decision issued in 1962. The main case was then tried from 1964 to 1966, and an office suite on the fifth floor of the courthouse was vacated for use by the court clerk and reporter assigned to the trial. The final judgment was given on appeal in 1969. The case, which took over thirteen years to resolve, involved almost 3,000 parties and cost millions in court costs and fees, illustrated the need for a better system of water rights determination, and led to the passage of the Water Rights Adjudication Act in 1967.⁴⁸



Aerial view of the courthouse and square, right, about 1955. The west parking lot is developed, but the east side of the square is not improved. The Chamber of Commerce building, now the Courthouse Annex, shows at the lower left. Image: Museum of South Texas History, 1987.38.1.



Postcard view, above, about 1976. The Plaza Hidalgo improvements to the east side of the square are complete, and the Courthouse Annex is in use by the county, after additions were made to the original Chamber of Commerce building. Image courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission.

As the massive water rights case slowly wound its way to conclusion, the Commissioners dealt with modifications and repairs in the new building. In 1957, tinting film was added to the courthouse windows to reduce glare and heat transmission. In 1959, jurors asked the Court to provide more sanitary facilities for jurors, who found sharing a single lavatory, toilet and shower between eleven male jurors, as one petitioner described, difficult. The facilities were finally expanded in 1963, when Noser Construction Company was hired to do the work on an emergency basis. That same year, Sam Gatti was hired to repair plaster cracks and remove “fungus resulting from dampness” inside the courthouse. A swing scaffold was purchased at the same time, for use in repairing the exterior walls of the building. The glass exterior doors were apparently replaced in 1973, when the minutes note the original glass doors were sold.⁴⁹

In early 1959, the Chamber of Commerce and the Edinburg Women’s Community Club proposed the sale of their office building to the County for \$5,000. Permission had been given to the Chamber to construct the small office building on the northwest corner of the courthouse square in 1933, and they had occupied the building ever since. The Court quickly accepted the offer, moved the Right of Way Department in to the building, and designated it the Courthouse Annex a few months later. Noser Construction Company was hired to remodel the vacated space in the courthouse for use as the County Treasurer’s Office. The Annex was expanded in 1961, and again in 1973.⁵⁰

In 1961, plans for beautification of the parking area on the east side of the square were again discussed. The Texas State Historical Survey Committee installed a historical marker about El Sal Del Rey on the grounds in 1963, complementing the Centennial marker about Hidalgo County, which had been installed in 1936. The Edinburg

*View of the original 1954
courthouse, on the left, and the
1980 addition, on the right,
looking west,
February 20, 2009.
Image: © Capitolshots
Photography.*



Garden Club installed a statue of St. Francis of Assisi and a bird bath on the grounds in 1964. The cornerstone of the old 1910 courthouse was installed on the south lawn, along with two markers placed by the Hidalgo County Historical Survey Committee that year, as well. In 1966, the City of Edinburg was given permission to build a fountain on the southeast quarter of the square, adjacent to US 281, under the Highway Beautification Act of 1965. Other beautification plans were presented, including a proposal in 1971 to add benches, walks and palm trees to the southeast corner of the square. The following year, the Chamber of Commerce was authorized to stripe the east parking lot for a more orderly parking layout, remove trees and a fall-out shelter from the parking area and plant new trees for beautification. The square was named Plaza Hidalgo in 1976, and dedicated for use as a park during the Fiesta Hidalgo Bicentennial celebration.⁵¹

County government, reflecting the population of Hidalgo County, continued to grow through the decades following the construction of the new courthouse. The State Welfare Department and the Drivers License Department vacated office space on the fifth floor in 1963. A new courthouse annex at 14th and Loeb was opened in 1964. The original courthouse annex was expanded in 1973 to provide offices for Manpower programs. The Legislature created the 206th Judicial District as of September 1, 1973, and the 206th District Court was added to the building functions. Several major repairs to the building were made, including the replacement of the rooftop cooling towers in 1972. The south wing roof, over the tax assessor and county clerk offices, was repaired on an emergency basis in 1976. Other emergency repairs followed, and in the spring of 1977, the Court began to discuss the possibility of expanding the courthouse.⁵²

1980 Alterations and Addition

Judge Ramiro M. Guerra advised the Court that more space was needed in the courthouse during the meeting of April 18, 1977. The Judge pointed out that all county departments had grown since the building was occupied, and another court would be added to the load in the near future. (The Legislature did, indeed, create the 275th District Court effective April 8, 1981, which Judge Guerra must have had an understanding of. But, the 332nd District Court was added in 1983 and the 370th District Court was added in 1989. Two special courts, an Impact Court and a Masters Court

View of the original 1954 courthouse, on the left, and the 1980 addition, on the right, looking west, February 20, 2009. Image: © Capitolshots Photography.



were also added by 1991.) Prior to the meeting, the Judge had discussed the issue with Merle A. Simpson, a Houston architect who had worked in R. Newell Waters' office as the 1954 courthouse was designed and built. Simpson told the Judge that the foundation of the original building was not built to support additional floors. The Judge outlined two possible schemes for expansion, one involving a free-standing building across US 281 on the east side of the square, and one involving a two story addition to the northeast corner of the existing building. He noted that a study of the present and future courthouse needs for the next five to ten years would be prudent to have, and suggested that Mr. Simpson be invited to appear before the court to further discuss such a study.⁵³

Merle Arthur Simpson was born in Washington, Iowa in 1919 and graduated from Washington High School in 1937. In 1948, he was employed as a draftsman in the Houston office of Wyatt C. Hedrick, where he perhaps worked on the Shamrock Hotel project which was underway at the time. Simpson began work with R. Newell Waters in Weslaco in 1949 as a draftsman. He remained with Waters' office until early 1956, through the completion of the 1954 Hidalgo County Courthouse project. He then established a private design practice, and also provided field supervision services to another architectural firm. In 1962, he moved to Austin and worked as a staff designer for the Gulfmont Hotel Company and the Lakeway Land Company, where he perhaps worked on the Lakeway Inn and Marina project. The Gulfmont Hotel Company had recently completed the Fairway Motel Hotel in McAllen, and Simpson may have been introduced to Gulfmont through that project. Simpson was licensed as an architect in 1963 and opened his private architectural practice in Austin in 1964. He moved to Houston a decade later and continued to practice architecture. On January 30, 1978, he announced the opening of Merle A. Simpson, AIA, Architect and Robert S. Simpson, Associate Architect (Merle Simpson's son), with offices in Houston and McAllen. He died in Philadelphia in 1993.⁵⁴

Mr. Simpson met with the Court the following week, and outlined two options for expansion similar to those noted by Judge Guerra. He did allow that it might be

View of the original 1954 courthouse, on the right, and the 1980 addition, on the left, looking east from University Boulevard. The cooling towers were moved from the roof to the ground during the 1980 alterations and addition project. The stone sheathed screen wall for the cooling towers shows at the base of the original west wing. A new building sign was installed on this wall.



possible to do a vertical addition to the existing north wing, by reinforcing the existing structural frame. The discussion touched on the relative ease with which an addition could be made in the northeast corner of the existing building, the challenge of shifting court functions to a small building, and the expense of incorporating parking beneath a new building. The Judge described the Court's need for a space assessment and program, with growth projections for the next ten years. Although he had been approached by other firms, he was confident that Mr. Simpson was most familiar with the County, which was advantageous. The Court hired Simpson to prepare a study of present and future needs, in anticipation of a courthouse expansion.⁵⁵

Two months later, Simpson returned with a report of his findings and recommendations, including sketches and cost estimates. He discussed recommendations for moving functions to new locations in the existing building, such as shifting the Law Library to the first floor, in the original sheriff offices. He also talked about areas to be remodelled in the existing building, such as the County Clerk and Auto License suites and the Commissioners Courtroom, to allow for use by the County Court at Law #2. A two-story addition to the northeast corner of the existing courthouse would have a foundation designed to carry the load of two future floors. The Court hired Simpson to proceed with the design and development of the project on the spot. A brief account was given in the *Valley Morning Star* the following day:

Hidalgo County Commissioners Monday approved to \$1.4 million courthouse expansion project. As recommended by architect Merle Simpson the project will involve construction of a new 9,200 square foot, two story annex building about 12 feet away from the existing structure on the northeast side between the courthouse

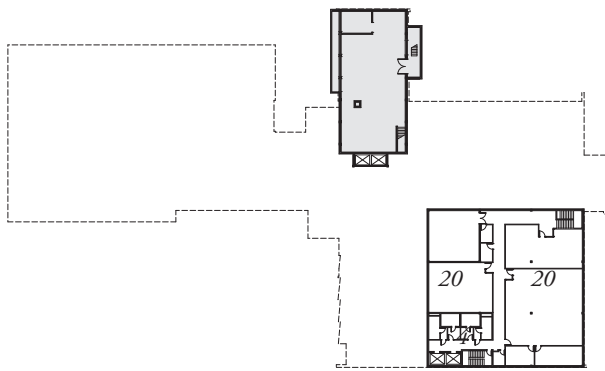
View of the 1980 addition, in front, and the 1954 original courthouse, beyond, looking south from Closner Boulevard (281). The sally port, added in 2006, also shows in this image.



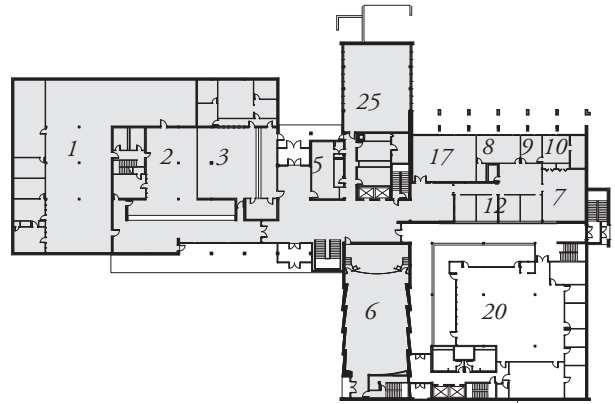
auditorium wing and county right-of-way and administrative offices. A foundation substantial enough to support more floors will be provided.⁵⁶

Simpson began work immediately, and within five months the first set of plans and specifications for alteration work was issued to bidders. The design and construction work was done in a series of separate bid packages, to complete work in discrete areas of the existing building, in preparation for the larger new addition bid package. From the minutes, it appears that Package 1, 2 and 3 were for alteration work in the existing building, and were bid in late 1977 and early 1978. Package 4 was for the larger addition, and was bid on April 13, 1978. Package 5 and 6 were for alteration work in the existing building. The building was occupied throughout the course of construction, which created challenges for maintaining public access and egress and providing sufficient parking as the project was completed. The project also included the relocation of the cooling towers for the mechanical system from the fifth floor roof to the ground, at the west end of the west wing, requiring a total building shut down for a few hours while the transfer was made.⁵⁷

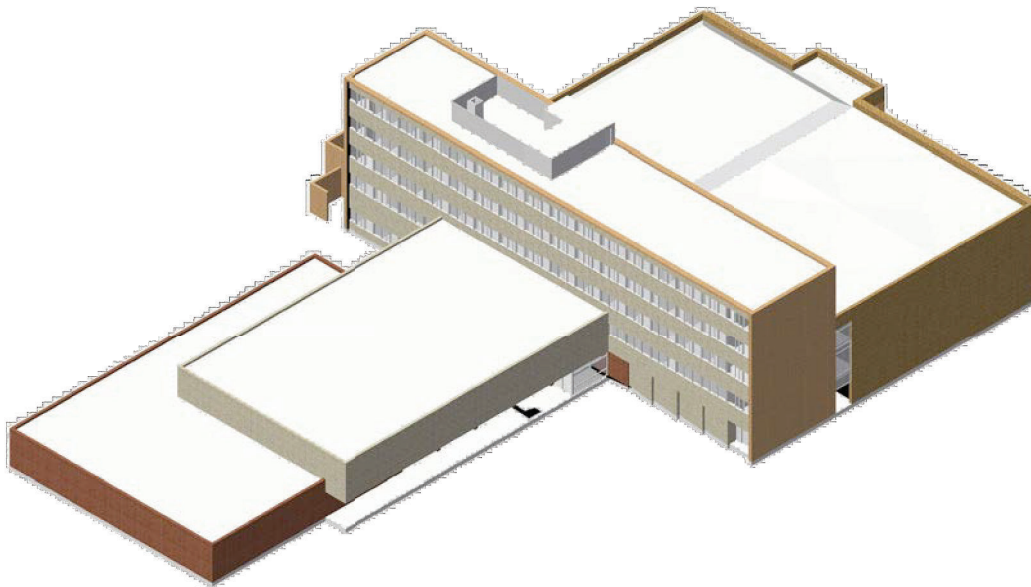
On March 5, 1979, Judge Guerra discussed the possibility of increasing the scope of the ongoing project to provide more space in the expanded courthouse. Again, he had preliminarily discussed the idea with Mr. Simpson, and there were two possible schemes for further expansion, one involving a vertical addition of two more floors to the new space at the northeast corner of the existing building, and one involving adding one floor to the new space and one floor above the north wing of the existing building. The second option would cost several hundred thousand dollars less than the first option. If done now, instead of in the future, the building infrastructure would be



Basement



First Floor



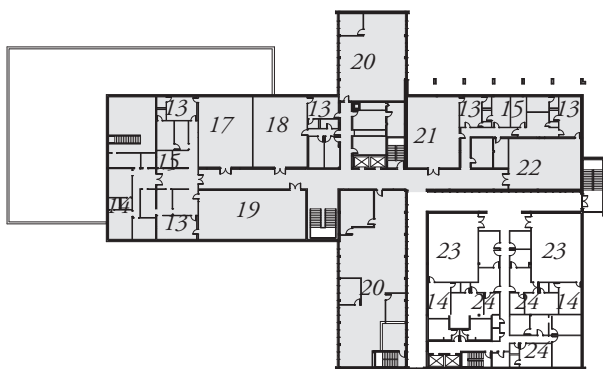
Axonometric View

THE COURTHOUSE IN 1980

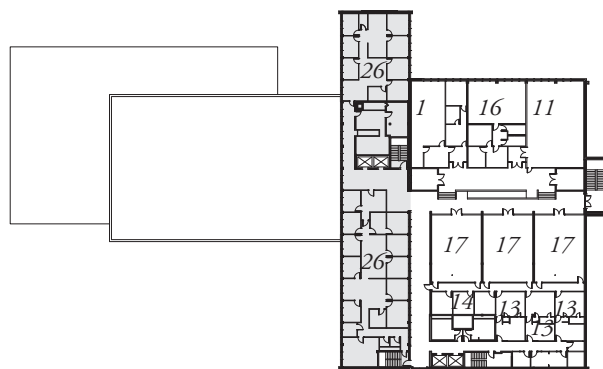
A three story addition was made to the northeast corner of the original building to provide additional court rooms and expanded district clerk staff offices. A third floor was added above the north wing of the original building, as well. The overall size of the building was increased to approximately 93,000 square feet. Five courtrooms were designed for the addition, two on the second floor and three on the third floor, along with associated jury rooms, staff offices and judicial offices. The addition included an assembly room, as well as a grand jury room. To accommodate the new occupants, both visitors and staff, two new fire stairs, two new elevators and new public restrooms on each floor were included.

Alterations were made to parts of the first, second and third floors of the original building. (The interior area of the 1954 Courthouse is

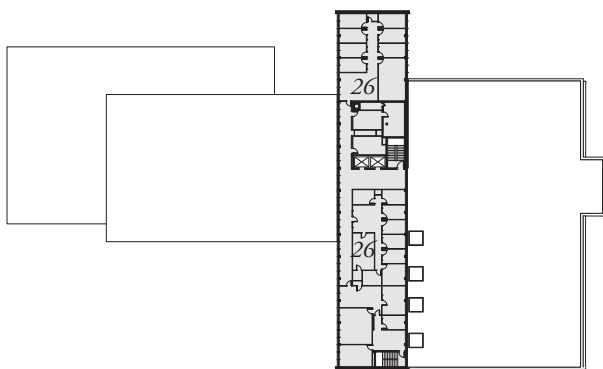
shown shaded in the plan diagrams above.) The sheriff department vacated the building, and the law library was moved to the first floor space it once occupied. On the first floor, the county clerk, tax assessor and motor vehicles area in the south wing was remodelled, and the commissioners court area in the north wing was remodelled to add a new county court at law room. The upper floors were selectively remodelled for various staff offices, primarily the district attorney. Note that the documentation is not entirely clear as to the locations of the specific courts and the various staff offices in much of the original building. The plan diagrams indicate the best understanding from available information.



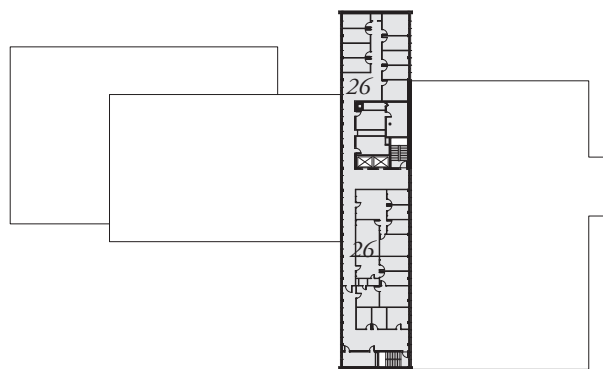
Second Floor



Third Floor



Fourth Floor



Fifth Floor

LEGEND

1 County Clerk	11 Assembly Room	21 District Court (93rd)
2 Tax Assessor	12 County Commissioners	22 District Court (206th)
3 Motor Vehicles	13 Judge's Office	23 District Court
4 Holding Cell	14 Jury	24 Judicial & Staff Offices
5 Coffee Bar	15 Court Reporter	25 Law Library
6 Auditorium	16 Grand Jury	26 District Attorney
7 Commissioners Court	17 County Court at Law	
8 County Judge	18 District Court (139th)	
9 County Auditor	19 District Court (92nd)	
10 County Treasurer	20 District Clerk	

in place, and elevators and mechanical systems would not need to be replaced in the future. The County anticipated added courts in the near future, and there was concern that the current project would not provide adequate space, when that occurred. The Court discussed options to fund the added work, and were mindful of the need to maintain the construction schedule, as well. Given the amount and schedule, certificates of obligation seemed the appropriate funding mechanism.⁵⁸

The additional expansion was front page news in the *Edinburg Daily Review* the following day, and Judge Guerra gave comments, including:

Guerra said he felt the idea was justified, but he wanted feedback from the general public..... Guerra said the increase in population in the county has necessitated the need for at least one more district court and possibly one more county court at law. However, he said "I feel we're building for the present needs. In four or five years, there will be a definite need for (more) expansion, and it will be the peoples' problem..... Guerra maintains that now is a good time to make a decision on additional construction. "The new wing has a foundation for five floors," he said, "but if we don't make a decision soon, they (construction crews) will have to remove the roof later on when more floors are added." ⁵⁹

The question was studied over the course of the next few weeks, and on March 19, 1979, the Court approved the additional expansion and authorized the expenditure of \$1.2 million dollars for the total project cost, including design, construction, furniture and other project soft costs. The funds would come through certificates of obligation and anticipated tax revenues. The County reserved the right to reject all bids, if the construction costs did not come in as anticipated. Again, the issue was front page news in the *Edinburg Daily Review* the following day.⁶⁰

A few days later, the new loop of US 281 to the east of Edinburg was opened, and highway traffic was routed along the new road alignment. Government officials from the city, county and state highway department attended the ribbon cutting ceremony. Reagan Houston, chair of the State Highway Department, was the featured speaker, and noted "I don't have to tell you people how frustrating it is to have highway traffic using your main street." The loop, which took five years to build, was part of a highway alignment intended to put traffic on a four-lane divided highway from US 83 to the Brooks County line. The new loop also had a significant impact on the courthouse square, since only local traffic would now cross the grounds. The city presented a plan to modify Plaza Hidalgo by removing some of the plantings to provide more parking area, and to repave and make drainage upgrades to the parking area. The county had initiated a study of the parking around the courthouse, to be done by the State Highway Department, and advised that the two efforts be coordinated. The issue was tabled until the study was complete. In 1980, the issue was resolved when the County passed a resolution reserving the east parking lot for people doing business at the courthouse. In 1981, the modifications to the east parking lot configuration were completed, removing some of the plantings in the corners of the parking lot.⁶¹

The construction work on the alterations and addition project continued through 1979 and 1980, with many separate bid packages, construction contracts and change orders issued during that time. The court minutes do not address any specific opening

*View of the original 1954 courthouse, on the left, and the 1980 addition, on the right, looking northwest, February 20, 2009. The sally port, added in 2006, shows at the far right.
Image: © Capitolshots Photography.*



or occupancy date, but bids for new furniture for the additions were received in June and December 1980. From this, it appears that the work was largely completed in late 1980, although minor work continued through 1981.⁶²

Later Modifications

As the population of Hidalgo County continued to grow, there was an increasing need for district and county courts. The Legislature created three new district courts in the 1980s (the 275th, 332nd, and 370th District Courts), two more in the 1990s (the 389th and 398th District Courts) and two more in the 2000s (the 430th and 449th). By then, there were also six County Courts at Law and a Probate Court for the county. Although some of the courtrooms are located in annex buildings, there are 16 courtrooms packed into the historic courthouse and addition, and every available space in the original building that might be converted to courtroom use, such as the original district clerk office and the original law library, has been remodelled for that purpose.

In conjunction with changes in judicial seniority for the courts located in the building and the relocation of some courts to annex buildings, the rooms used by the original courts in the historic courthouse were shifted and re-assigned to different courts. The original Commissioners Court room, on the first floor, north wing, was initially remodelled in 1980 during the expansion project. The area has since been substantially remodelled for use as a County Court at Law, and outfitted with two district courtrooms and associated staff offices, one for the 275th District Court and one for the 370th District Court. Of the five original courtrooms on the second floor, all remain in use as courtrooms, but the courts assigned to each room have changed from the initial assignments. The original “proposed federal district court” at the north end of the north wing is now the 93rd District Court room. The original 93rd District Court

View of the original 1954 courthouse, on the left, and the 1980 addition, on the right, looking northwest, February 20, 2009. The sally port, added in 2006, shows at the far right.
 Image: © Capitolshots Photography.



room, at the south end of the north wing, is now the County Court at Law 5. In the south wing, the original Special 139th District Court room is now the 92nd District Court room, the original County Court at Law room is now the 139th District Court room and the original 92nd District Court room, the largest in the original building, is now the 398th District Court room.⁶³

There have also been several significant renovation and addition projects completed at the historic courthouse since the last expansion project. In 2006, a sally port was added to the northeast corner of the building, to allow secure transport of prisoners to the building. In addition to adding walls and paving to the exterior of the building, minor changes were made in the basement level to augment holding cells that had been installed in the 1980 expansion. Later that year, the largest courtroom on the second floor of the original building, currently used as the 398th District Courtroom, was remodelled to provide accessibility for trial participants and enhanced administrative and judicial office space.

On the second floor of the original building, three courtrooms were added in areas that were originally designed and used as administrative office space for the district clerk, tax attorney and law library. The drawings for this work were not located in the course of this analysis, so the exact dates on which these changes occurred are not clear, but they took place at some point after the 1980 expansion project. Minor changes have been made over time to the administrative office areas on the third, fourth and fifth floors of the original building. These changes are primarily to interior wall placement and door placement and door swings.

The courthouse square, and its amenities for both pedestrians and vehicles, continued to be an area of interest for the Court. The use and capacity of the parking lot was apparently still unsatisfactory, and in 1981 the commissioners discussed enforcement of parking use restrictions, including the possibility of posting a deputy on site to monitor the use of the lot, which was finally done in 1987. Improvements were also made to the parking lots, although the minutes do not state what was actually done. In 2005, the asphalt paving in the east parking lot was removed, the subsoil re-graded to drain, and damaged curbs repaired. The lot was repaved and restriped to make the lot as efficient as possible. In a separate project, sidewalk improvements to the west side of the square were made to provide new curb ramps and concrete sidewalks to the site and building.⁶⁴



Original wall clock in the main entrance lobby from the 1954 courthouse construction.

Recommendations for Preservation

Much of the building fabric of the 1954-era courthouse has survived intact. While there have been significant changes to the building, due to the large addition and interior remodeling projects, the building has been in continuous use as the seat of Hidalgo County government. It has architectural, cultural and historical significance, and the continued preservation of the building is of great importance. Future maintenance, repair and change to the building should be carefully considered to ensure that the work is compatible and consistent with the historic character and significance of the building.

Generally, the building appears to be in good physical condition. From the references in the historical record and from a cursory site review, it appears to suffer from the typical physical forces of expansion and contraction of materials, water and air infiltration at fenestration and constant use by an ever growing citizenry.

Exterior Conditions

Three types of stone are used on the exterior skin of the building -- Sunset Red granite on the south wing, Texas shell limestone on the north and south faces of the tower, and Kasota dolomitic limestone on the east and west faces of the tower and on the north wing. The granite is in excellent condition, aside from some discoloration at locations where irrigation heads spray the surface. The exterior limestone is in generally good condition, although the historical records refer to at least one episode of emergency repair. It also appears that select panels of the dolomitic limestone have been repaired to provide more secure attachment, using surface mounted through fasteners. Some stones are spalled or cracked, generally when in contact with metal edging or fasteners that have rusted and expanded, stressing the stone to the point of spall or crack failure. There are some areas of discoloration where the dolomitic limestone has taken on moisture or where the shell limestone has turned dark at drip edges. Future cleaning efforts should use the gentlest possible cleaning procedures for the limestone surfaces and the type of stain or environmental deposit to be removed. A preliminary testing program to identify the source of the staining or discoloration and observe the effect of the proposed cleaning program is also recommended. To aid in future repointing efforts, a chemical analysis of existing mortar materials should be done to identify the composition of the original mortar and any subsequent replacement mortar materials. Any new mortar installed should be of a mix design that is compatible with the performance of the stone and consistent with the appearance of the original mortar materials.

The roofs of the various levels of the courthouse are flat, built-up roofs, set behind low parapet walls. The roofing layers have been turned up to wrap the back of the parapets, which are capped with a granite coping course on the lowest roof and with roofing membrane on the upper roofs. The backs of the parapet walls have been flashed with applied membrane roofing, with metal pressure bars at the lowest roof, and the tops have been sealed with neatly installed membrane roofing. The historical records refer to problems with occasional roof leaks particularly at the first floor. To guard against ongoing roof leaks, accumulations of vegetation and debris should be periodically removed and the scuppers, downspouts and roof drain baskets kept free-running.



South elevation, showing shell limestone at left and dolomitic limestone at right and ribbon windows.



View of west elevation of the original tower, showing the distinctive dolomitic limestone veneer. (The signage is not original.)



Cracked, damaged stone veneer, due to expansion of metal fasteners in the stone.



Some of the dolomitic limestone panels have been re-attached with surface mounted fasteners, such as the unit at the far right.



North elevation, showing the addition construction to the left, right and top of the original north wing, completely obscuring it.



South elevation, showing non-original exterior doors. The 1980 addition and 2006 sally port show at the far right.

The original metal windows are largely extant in the building, although much of the glazing has been tinted with a film treatment. The metal windows are rectangular, in a horizontal ribbon band, in a range of sizes and configurations. The operable sections are a distinctive bifold casement style, spaced regularly along the length of the ribbon window band. The metal windows are quite handsome and are important, character defining features of the building exterior which should be retained and preserved as needed. From a brief field review, it appears that the window hardware is largely intact, but that the sash and glazing are not weather tight. Sealant has been surface applied to some interior surfaces to remedy the issue. The future preservation program for the windows should include weatherization treatments, with appropriate glazing compounds or gaskets and weather seals at the operable units. It may be possible to improve the thermal performance of the glazing, through an appropriate replacement material, while preserving the configuration and appearance of the sash units.

The original exterior doors to the main entrance lobby and the auditorium show in the background in several of the historic photographs located for this report. The original doors were simple glass slabs on pivots, with rectangular pull and push plates through-bolted at the meeting condition. None of the original doors remain at the building, but evidence of the pivots remains at the location of the former entry to the north wing. All the existing exterior doors are aluminum storefront framed doors with horizontal push bars. The main entry doors are sliding doors with automatic operators. Even though the original exterior doors have apparently been removed, the original doors were important, character defining features of the building and future replacement doors should have an appearance similar to the original doors.

The character of the site and grounds have changed over time since the original 1954 construction. In the early years, many of the plantings remaining from the 1910 courthouse were retained, and there was a ring of palm trees lining the edge of the square. Later, additional right-of-way was given around the square, and the palm trees were apparently removed at that time. The planted area surrounding the courthouse has been infilled at most of the north end, due to the expansion of the Courthouse Annex building (the original Chamber of Commerce building) and the construction of the 1980 addition and the 2006 Sallyport structures. The development of the east parking lot has also changed over time since the original 1954 construction. The lot was first largely undeveloped, the later small parks were added to each corner for Plaza Hidalgo, providing a sense of the inviting ground that once existed on the site. In more recent years, the corner parks have been reduced in size and given over to paved parking areas, removing any sense of park-like setting in that area.

While there have been significant changes to the building exterior, due to the large additions of 1980 and 2006, the east facade of the 1954 courthouse is unchanged, up to the point where it meets the later additions. The 1980 addition is not within the 50-year period of potential historic significance, and while it is compatible with the original building in terms of roof form and exterior materials, but does depart from the characteristics of the original International style design. It lacks the powerful composition of asymmetrical but balanced forms of the earlier building and the later addition diminishes the original central tower element. It also contains space designed for the specialized court functions, many of which may be moved to new buildings in



The south corridor at the fifth floor, showing resilient flooring, plaster walls and ribbon windows.



The fifth floor elevator lobby, with original plaster ceiling. A lay-in, acoustic tile ceiling has been added in the corridor, beyond.



Terrazzo floor, marble wall paneling and wood slab door with ribbed glass sidelites at the second floor.



An original semi-recessed fluorescent light fixture in the plaster ceiling of the first floor entry lobby.



Original exterior ribbon windows remain on the second and third floors, enclosed in the corridors of the 1980 addition.



Original exterior shell limestone and granite walls remain on the first floor. The bench is an original furniture piece.

conjunction with the master plan project. As the overall campus master plan is implemented, consideration should be given to removing the 1980 addition and restoring the historic building to its 1954 appearance.

Interior Conditions

Regarding the interior character of the building, a number of significant elements remain in the 1954 portion, including the terrazzo and resilient tile floors, smooth plaster walls and marble paneling in the public spaces. Examples of the original wood slab interior door and fluted glass sidelite installations remain in parts of the building, and some original door hardware also remains. Examples of the smooth plaster ceilings and semi-recessed fluorescent light fixtures with fluted lenses also remain in some of the public spaces, and there are a few examples of surface mounted acoustic tile ceilings and stylized, round air grilles and registers, as well. The major circulation patterns are largely intact, although parts of the corridors along the south wall of the upper office floors have been infilled with office suites. In the northeast corner of the building, the infilling of many of the original window openings where the addition was made has fundamentally changed the character of the adjacent spaces, altering the pattern of natural light and ventilation in the spaces. The installation of new infrastructure, such as above ceiling ductwork and piping, has also changed the floor plan, space use patterns and ceiling heights in some parts of the building. Finally, partitions installed in original spaces have changed the floor plan, space use patterns and spatial volumes in the original portion of the building. The instances where main corridors have been infilled, such as on the third, fourth and fifth floors, are especially intrusive.

Generally, the interior finishes are in good condition, primarily because the building is actively used in all areas except a very few service spaces. Through the various remodeling and renovation projects completed at the building, some of the original interior treatments have changed. The most fundamental changes involve the replacement of the resilient tile floors with carpet in the courtrooms on the second floor and of the plaster ceilings with dropped, acoustic tile ceilings in many spaces. In some cases, the original materials may remain behind the new replacements, providing good documentation for future restoration of the original conditions, should that be desired. Other changes involve the replacement of the semi-recessed light fixtures in spaces throughout the building with contemporary light fixtures.

The county is also fortunate to retain a good bit of the original furniture and equipment installed in the 1954 courthouse. This collection should be retained in the building and preserved in its original context. As an overall preservation program is developed for the original courthouse, in conjunction with the campus-wide master plan recommendations, it may be possible to return to use (or at least display) some pieces that have been shifted or abandoned.

Preservation Program

Hidalgo County has expressed an interest in the preservation of the historic courthouse. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, produced by the US Department of the Interior and the National Park Service, establish professional standards and guidelines for treating historic properties. The documents are the professional norm for the practice of architectural preservation, and are used by federal, state and municipal regulatory authorities as the compliance measure

for appropriate preservation treatment. The Standards are specifically noted in Rule §17.2 of the Texas Administrative Code as the basis of appropriateness reviews made by the Texas Historical Commission of work proposed for historic Texas courthouses. (Under Texas Government Code §442.008, work done on historic Texas courthouses must be reviewed by the Texas Historical Commission.)

The Standards identify four treatments for historic buildings, each with its own set of standards and guidelines. Before undertaking any work on a historic structure, an appropriate preservation treatment should be determined and the respective set of standards and guidelines consulted. An abbreviated description of the four treatments is given below; the italicized text is taken directly from the Standards and the National Park Service description of the Standards. The treatment terms are often used interchangeably and inaccurately, which can lead to confusion, and it is useful to review the definitions in the context of a discussion of a preservation program for the historic courthouse.

- ***Preservation*** is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity and materials of an historic property. *Preservation focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time.*
- ***Rehabilitation*** is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. *Rehabilitation acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character.*
- ***Restoration*** is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. *Restoration depicts a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.*
- ***Reconstruction*** is defined as the act or process of depicting by means of new construction, the form, features, and details of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location. *Reconstruction re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes.*

Preservation projects may include aspects of more than one of these treatments, depending on the condition of the resource, the historic documentation available and the specific circumstances of the project. Rehabilitation is the treatment most frequently used, and would likely be the primary treatment selected for the Hidalgo County Courthouse, with some elements preserved, restored or reconstructed as appropriate.

Significant Historic Spaces and Elements

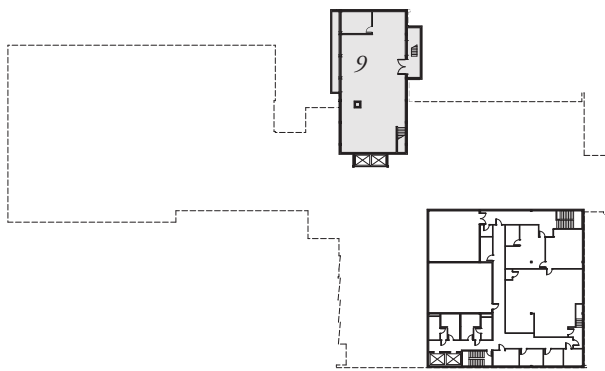
As Hidalgo County builds new facilities or acquires additional annex space and begins to move occupants and departments to ancillary spaces, the historic courthouse should

be rehabilitated for ongoing future use. Moving occupants and functions out of the historic building will relieve the overcrowded conditions and allow for the removal of infill construction from the historic spaces. While architectural programming and functional space planning is not part of this analysis, it is recommended that appropriate functions and occupants be identified for the historic courthouse that will have some sort of court or related function, consistent with the original design and intent of the building.

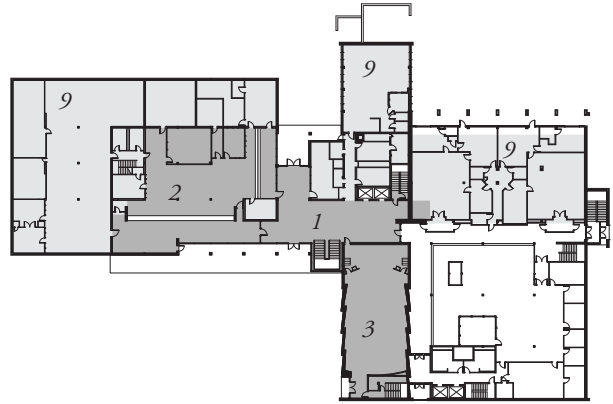
As the space program is developed for the historic courthouse, consideration should be given to the restoration of several significant historic spaces. The significant spaces were major public spaces in the original building design, have maintained the original occupant or use through time, and retain sufficient integrity or are sufficiently documented with drawings and photographs to inform an accurate restoration of the spaces.

Primary significant spaces are:

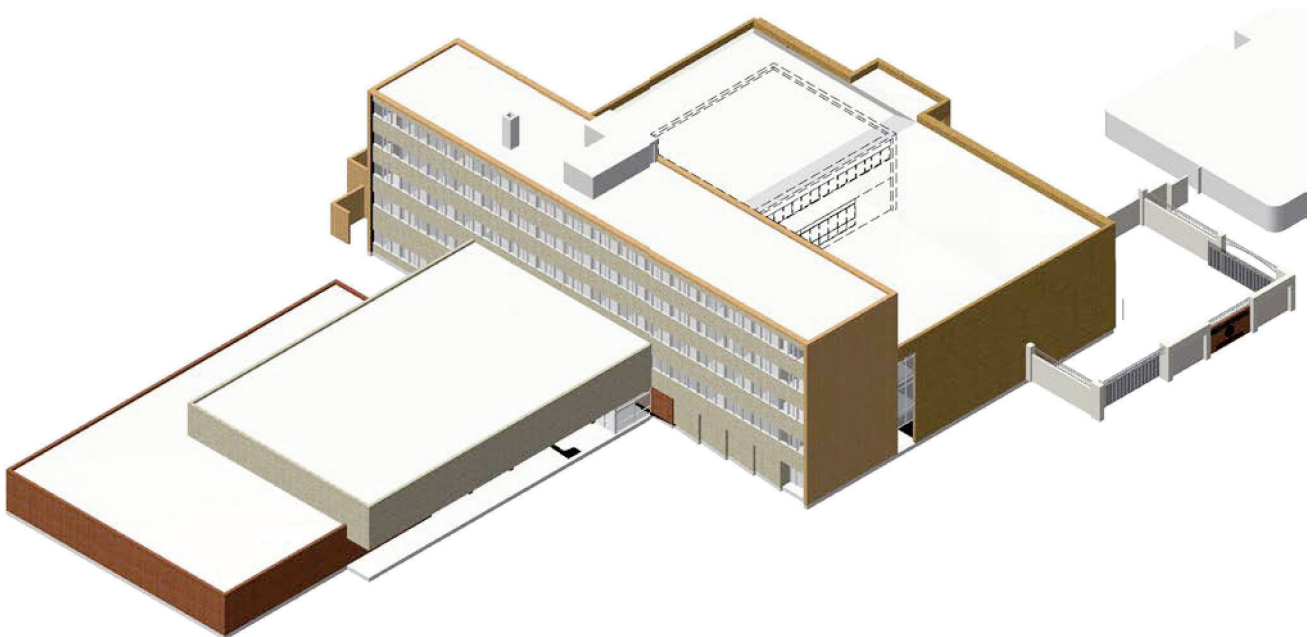
- Entry lobby, monumental stair and main corridors at the first through fifth floors: All later infill construction in the corridors, such as that at the ends of the third, fourth and fifth floor corridors, should be removed and the walls, floors and ceilings restored. This will restore a sense of the original pattern of natural light and view in the spaces. The semi-recessed lighting should also be restored. There is good documentation in the original 1954 furnishings drawings, but historic photographs of these spaces would be useful, if they can be located.
- County Clerk and Tax Assessor customer service areas (accessed from the entry lobby on the first floor): The County Clerk has occupied this space since the original construction. Although modifications have been made to the space, there appear to be pieces of the original furnishings still in use, and the counters could be restored or interpreted in combination with the other furnishings. There is good documentation in the original 1954 furnishings drawings and a documentary photograph from a real-photo postcard view.
- The Auditorium (on the first floor): The Auditorium has occupied this space since the original construction. The room was used for jury empaneling sessions, so was used by great numbers of courthouse staff and the general public. There is good documentation in the original 1954 furnishings drawings, but historic photographs of this space would be useful, if they can be located.
- Original County Court at Law Courtroom (now used as the 139th District Courtroom): One of the five original courtrooms on this floor, which retains a great deal of integrity. The original ceilings, light fixtures, wood and marble paneled walls and the bulk of the furnishings remain. There is good documentation in the original 1954 furnishings drawings, but historic photographs of this space would be useful, if they can be located.
- Original 92nd District Courtroom (now used as the 398th District Courtroom): One of the five original courtrooms on this floor, which



Basement



First Floor



Axonometric View

SIGNIFICANT SPACES

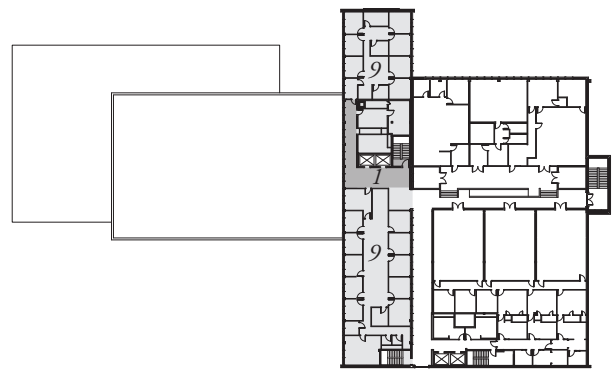
Consideration should be given to the restoration of several significant historic spaces in the building. Spaces of primary significance (shaded most dark, above) were major public spaces in the original building design. In general, they have also maintained the original occupant or use through time, and retain sufficient integrity or are sufficiently documented with drawings and photographs to inform an accurate restoration of the spaces.

The remainder of the original 1954 building (shown lightly shaded in the plan diagrams, above) is of secondary significance and should be rehabilitated, or restored as might be appropriate.

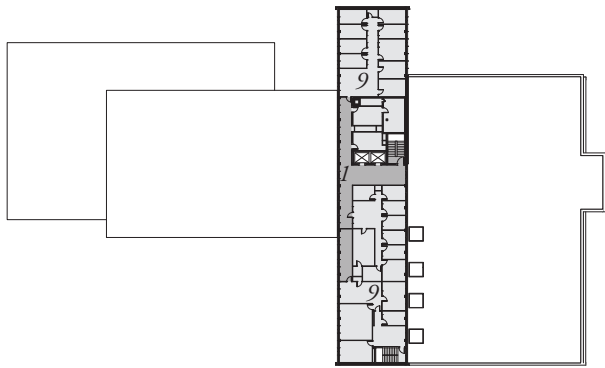
Modifications to the 1980 and later additions (shown without shading, above) should be done without adverse impact to the existing exterior appearance of the original building, by maintaining fenestration, exterior walls and roof planes.



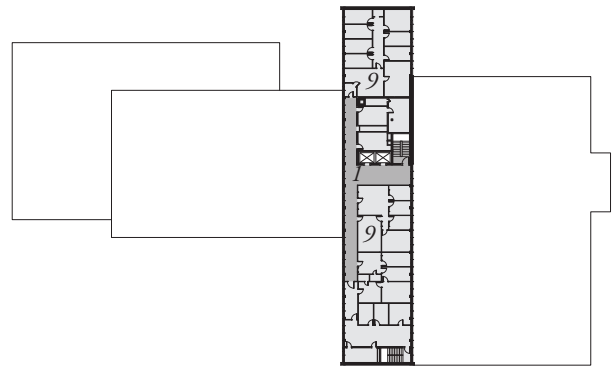
Second Floor



Third Floor



Fourth Floor



Fifth Floor

LEGEND

Areas of Primary Significance, dark shade:

- 1 Corridor, Monumental Stair
- 2 Assessor/Clerk
- 3 Auditorium
- 4 Original 93rd District Court (now County Court at Law 5)
- 5 Original 92nd District Court (now 398th District Court)
- 6 Original 139th District Court (now 92nd District Court)
- 7 Original County Court at Law (now 139th District Court)
- 8 Original Proposed Federal District Court (now 93rd District Court)

Areas of Secondary Significance, light shade:

- 9 The remainder of the original 1954 building. (If desired, spaces within this area may be designated as primary significant spaces, and slated for restoration, by the removal of later modifications and infill construction.)



The monumental stair from the first floor entry lobby to the second floor corridor.



The second floor corridor, with original terrazzo flooring and marble wall panels, is furnished with original benches.



The corridors at the third, fourth and fifth floors (pictured), with original resilient tile flooring, plaster walls and ribbon windows.



The auditorium, with original "opera seats", wood paneling and plaster walls and ceilings, was used for jury empaneling.



The historic 92nd District Courtroom, now used as the 398th District Courtroom, with original ceiling, paneling and furnishings.



The historic 139th District Courtroom, now used as the 92nd District Courtroom, with original ceiling, paneling and furnishings.

retains a great deal of integrity. The original ceilings, light fixtures, wood and marble paneled walls and the bulk of the furnishings remain. A recent project to make the room handicapped accessible included some changes to the original millwork elements, but was sensitively handled and much historic fabric was retained. There is good documentation in the original 1954 furnishings drawings, and the interior photograph taken during the dedication ceremony appears to be of this room.

- Original 139th District Courtroom (now used as the 92nd District Courtroom): One of the five original courtrooms on this floor, which retains a great deal of integrity. The original ceilings, light fixtures, wood and marble paneled walls and the bulk of the furnishings remain. There is good documentation in the original 1954 furnishings drawings, but historic photographs of this room would be useful, if they can be located.
- Original 93rd District Courtroom (now used as the County Court at Law 5 Courtroom): One of the five original courtrooms on this floor, which was apparently remodelled in the 1980 alterations work. The ceilings are modified and light fixtures contemporary, and new wood paneling has been installed, but the marble panel at the dais and some of the furnishings remain. There is good documentation in the original 1954 furnishings drawings, but historic photographs of this room would be useful, if they can be located. This room was apparently the location of the initial filing of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Water Case, and has significant associations with that event.
- Original Proposed Federal District Courtroom (now used as the 93rd District Courtroom): One of the five original courtrooms on this floor, which was apparently remodelled in the 1980 alterations work. The ceilings are modified and light fixtures contemporary, and new wood paneling has been installed, but the marble panel at the dais and some of the furnishings remain. There is good documentation in the original 1954 furnishings drawings, but historic photographs of this room would be useful, if they can be located.

The remainder of the original 1954 area of the building is of secondary significance, in its current condition. Most of the other public spaces in the original 1954 construction area of the building have been more heavily modified, with the addition of infill construction. However, these spaces could also be considered for restoration, as might be desired, by the removal of infill walls and construction and the restoration of the original conditions. An example of this type of existing area is the location of the original Commissioners Courtroom and associated offices, in the north wing of the first floor of the 1954 portion of the building. Currently, this area has been modified with infill walls, dropped ceilings and raised platforms and is used as two district courtrooms and associated judicial support offices. But, there is good documentation for the original configuration of this room in the 1954 furnishings drawings.

There are also significant architectural elements remaining from the original 1954

construction, although there have been modifications to or loss of historic fabric over time. Any future preservation program should strive to restore these significant elements, including light fixtures, ceilings, windows, doors and limestone.

In locations throughout the building, the ceiling plane has been modified to conceal ductwork and other utility infrastructure elements above ceiling. Often, the ceiling height is below that of the heads of the window openings in the room, further truncating the original volume and reducing the natural light in the space. The ceiling material in these modified areas is typically suspended acoustical tile with exposed ceiling grid. These modifications to the ceiling plane, particularly in the historic core of the building, negatively impact the historic spaces. Every effort should be made to restore the historic ceiling profile and material, which will need to be coordinated with the re-design of the mechanical system. If it is not possible to fully restore the original ceiling configuration, the heights should be raised as much as possible and the materials changed, to better evoke the historic ceilings.

As noted in the existing conditions description, the historic windows are significant, character defining features of the building. Plastic glazing film has been installed in some locations. Some windows are apparently leaking, with applied sealant to mitigate infiltration, and need to be repaired and conserved. Every effort should be made to preserve and maintain the window sash and glazing in good condition.

As also noted in the existing conditions description, the exterior limestone masonry is a significant, character defining feature of the building. The historic record refers to one major emergency repair done on the stone and several spot patching or repair projects completed in the past. A thorough analysis of the masonry and mortar joints was not completed in this abbreviated conditions review, but as more detailed analyses of the building are done, the condition of the stone and mortar should be checked to see if it is still performing as intended. Particular attention should be paid to the attachment and support systems for the masonry veneer. Expansion, jacking or deterioration in the anchoring system may lead to shifting and stress in the veneer, and a few areas of deterioration were noted in this abbreviated conditions analysis. Typical for buildings of this period, the original specifications may have called for the use of galvanized iron anchors, which may have deteriorated since they were installed. Non-destructive testing, including boroscope investigations of the wall cavity behind the stone veneer, should be performed to determine the condition of the attachments and a program for stabilization and repair.

Finally, the courthouse grounds are no longer pedestrian friendly and inviting, as they were historically. As the overall campus master plan is implemented, consideration should be given to restoring the perimeter plantings around the square and enlarging the corner parks, to complement the handsome courthouse building and evoke the lush grounds that were once on the site. Rehabilitation of the grounds with shaded walkways and rest areas will be an important element for a government campus building environment.

Historic Designations

The Hidalgo County Courthouse has not been designated as a historic structure at either the national or state level, but it is certainly eligible for it, if historic designation

is desired. In evaluating the significance of properties for eligibility for historic designation, a range of criteria are considered, including the age of the property, architectural attributes and integrity, historical associations and archeological resources. Historic designation may qualify properties for grant funding or tax credits for qualified restoration projects, and identifies historic resources for communities. Depending on the type of designation, there may be additional review or permitting requirements for change contemplated at the property.

The National Register of Historic Places is a federal program, administered in Texas by the state historic preservation office (the Texas Historical Commission) and the National Park Service. A National Register listing does not impose any restriction in use or change of the property. It does ensure that all federally funded projects (such as transportation infrastructure) planned in the vicinity of listed properties are subject to additional review, to mitigate adverse impact to the historic property. It also clarifies the application of separate building and accessibility code provisions for qualified historic properties.

Properties nominated to the National Register are evaluated for significance at a national, state or local level in terms of one or more of four criteria. Eligible properties:

- are associated with historical events.
- are associated with the lives of significant people in our past.
- embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or represent the work of a master.
- have or may be likely to yield archaeological information important in prehistory and/or history.

In order to be designated to the Register, properties must also be at least 50 years old and must have maintained their historical integrity in terms of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Designations at the state level are evaluated under similar criteria, but have more restrictive review and permitting requirements if changes are made to the property after designation. Recorded Texas Historic Landmark designation, a program administered by the Texas Historical Commission, requires property owners to notify the Commission 60 days prior to making exterior changes, to allow time for review and consultation with the Commission. State Archeological Landmark designation, also administered by the Texas Historical Commission, requires property owners to seek an antiquities permit from the Commission prior to making alterations.

In considering the significance of the Hidalgo County Courthouse, several of the above criteria are applicable. The building is certainly 50 years old and retains integrity of materials and design. It is a good example of the International Style of architecture, and represents one of a small number of governmental buildings built in the era immediately following World War II. The historical association with the Lower Rio Grande Valley Water Case would certainly be considered, as would the use as the seat of County government since 1954.

Historical Documentation

Hidalgo County is fortunate to have access to a good bit of historical documentation on the design and construction of the courthouse. These resources are available from

several local archival repositories and in Hidalgo County records.

The office archive of R. Newell Waters, the architect of the 1954 courthouse, was not located during the course of this research. Waters apparently destroyed these materials some years before his death. Also, although much of Atlee Ayres' office archive is in the collection of the Alexander Architectural Archive at the University of Texas at Austin, there are no drawings or other files for the 1910 Hidalgo County Courthouse. This is perhaps a reflection of the fact that the project was apparently done in collaboration with another architect. Useful floor plan diagrams for both buildings were located in archival repositories contacted during the course of this research, and help fill in the gaps a bit. For the 1954 courthouse, the *Daily Review* newspaper in Edinburg published a long issue at the time the new courthouse was dedicated, and floor plan diagrams of the building, as well as a good many photographs, were included. For the 1910 courthouse, a set of sketch floor plan diagrams was attached to a Works Progress Administration report on the records storage conditions in the building.

Selected drawings for the 1954 original construction, the 1980 alterations and addition and the later improvements are in the holdings of the Hidalgo County Facilities Management Department. The drawings for the 1954 construction are limited to the furnishings drawings and the structural plans and details. The drawings for the 1980 alterations and improvements are typically undated sheets, and are not designated as to the specific bid package for which the drawings were prepared. The specifications for the projects were not found.

The minutes of the Hidalgo County Commissioners Court include extensive information about the original courthouse and later modifications and additions, as well as the early history and courthouses of the county. The minutes cite other drawings and contract documents that likely contain useful information about the building, but these were not located during the course of this research effort.

The files of the Museum of South Texas History include numerous newspaper clippings, photographs and reference materials about the original courthouse and later modifications and additions. The University of Texas-Pan American Library and Archives collections also have numerous photographs, newspapers and reference materials about the county and the courthouse. There are likely other articles in the decades of local newspapers in the two collections, but these are not indexed in any way and require exhaustive searching to find. Certain articles referenced in this research were gathered by searching newspapers published surrounding the dates of significant events at the building. The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin collections include newspapers, photographs and reference materials about the county and courthouses, as well.

Recommendations for Further Research

As more in-depth research and restoration work proceeds on the building, there are a few key items referenced, but not actually found, in the research done to date that would be useful additions to the historical record of the courthouse. These include:

- architectural drawings and specifications from original or early construction phases, including the complete documents for the 1954 courthouse,

- missing sheets from the 1980 alterations and addition set,
- specifications for the 1980 alterations and addition work,
- drawings and specifications for later renovation projects, particularly the renovations done in the interior of the 1954 courthouse.

Many informative and useful historic photographs were located in the Museum of South Texas History, University of Texas-Pan American Library, Texas Highway Department and Center for American History archives. But, there are still mysteries and undocumented spaces and elements of the buildings. The search for additional historic photographs, particularly of the major public spaces (courtrooms, corridors, public service offices, etc.), the original lighting, the exterior doors and the appearance of the original north wing of the 1954 courthouse should continue. The county may want to make an open request to the general public for access to or donation of personal images of the courthouse.

Prior to beginning any restoration or rehabilitation project, it would be helpful to complete a program of non-destructive probing, to search for evidence of missing or obscured finish materials and elements. There may be vestiges of original flooring under walls or trim, ghosts of original lighting on plaster surfaces, etc. Paint analysis and mortar analysis, documenting original paint treatments and colors and mortar composition and appearance, should be included in this effort. To identify the existing condition of the exterior masonry attachments, boroscope investigations of the wall cavity behind the stone veneer should also be completed.

In the course of researching the Lower Rio Grande Valley Water trial, it was revealed that there were likely other similar suits against the private irrigators, also filed in the Hidalgo County Courthouse. Additional research should be conducted on this topic, searching for information on suits that may have been brought, to expand the knowledge on the history of water rights in the courthouse.

Finally, if it has not already been done, the County should prepare a preservation maintenance plan, to assist in scheduling periodic maintenance and in defining appropriate treatments for the historic building.

Appendix

End Notes

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4. Hidalgo County, *The Handbook of Texas*.
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25. Hidalgo County Commissioners Court Minutes, 15 Feb 1911, D:92; 10 May 1915, D:604; 5 Jun 1915, D:626; 14 Jun 1915, D:629; 14 Feb 1916, E:70; 15 Feb 1916, E:73; 10 Oct 1925, H:349; 16 Jan 1933. M:300. Oral history interview, E. M. Card,
26. Hidalgo County Commissioners Court Minutes, 22 Nov 1915, E:55; 11 Jan

- 1916, E:66; 10 Apr 1916, E:113; 10 Oct 1925, H:349; 8 Aug 1927, I:36; 10 Mar 1931, K:569; 13 Apr 1931, L:3; 4 Dec 1931, L:342; 7 Dec 1931, L:352; 17 Apr 1935, N:542; 8 Aug 1939, VV:36.
27. "Housing, Care and Accessibility of the Records of Hidalgo County," Works Progress Administration, undated. Holdings of the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History.
 28. Hidalgo County, *The Handbook of Texas*.
 29. Dossett, *District Courts of Hidalgo County, 1852-1994*, 2, 3.
 30. Hidalgo County Commissioners Court Minutes, 19 Jun 1951, 9:61; 5 Jul 1951, 9:77.
 31. Waters, Roscious Newell, *The Handbook of Texas*.
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 33. Hidalgo County Commissioners Court Minutes, 17 Jul 1951, 9:83; 17 Jul 1951, 9:84.
 34. "Courthouse Bonds Voted," *Brownsville Herald*, 12 Aug 1931; Hidalgo County Commissioners Court Minutes, 28 Aug 1951, 9:142; 30 Oct 1951, 9:183.
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(Diagrams of the original floor plans and occupant locations are shown on page B-6 and B-7.)
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<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Text</i>	<i>Source</i>
9/2/1852	First meeting of Comm Ct	The first Hidalgo County Commissioner's court met in E. S. Smith's store at Edinburgh.	<i>Edinburg</i>
1852	Temp courthouse	The Court ordered that the house of G. S. Wood be rented for the use of the County at the rate of Forty dollars per month.	V1 P22
1853	Temp courthouse	Minutes changed 1853 to read house of E. S. Smith rented for courthouse at \$50.	V1 P32
1853	Courthouse	May 1853 E. J. Merriman County Commissioner is ordered to negotiate with E. S. Smith for the purchase of the building now occupied by the county or obtain it under more favorable terms or some other building.	V1 P50
1853	Courthouse	Courthouse was purchased from E. S. Smith for \$750 dollars to be paid. Note in the name of the county payable out of the taxes upon real estate in the county 7/8 of that collected, and interested to commence upon the 1 st of March AD 1853, the amt to be paid to E. S. Smith correction interest to start July 1, AD 1853.	V1 P55
1853	Courthouse	Brush fence built around the courthouse in 1853 for nine dollars by G. S. Wood.	V1 P58
1855	Courthouse	Courthouse repaired in 1855.	V1 P75
1856?	Courthouse	Petition of John McAllen for renting the court house, "upon consideration it was resolved that the county court house is hereby rented to John McAllen for the term of one year in and for the use of said Building he is to put the said building in good and complete order and at the time of the meeting of the district court the center building or Room is to be vacated for holding the district court. He said McAllen to put a good fence and sufficient fence around the said lot upon which the county court house stands and to give Bond in the contract acted upon, by the chief justice, the said bond to be in the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars and the repairs of the court house is to be completed and repaired by the 15 day of March 1857.	V1 P92
1858	Courthouse	Courthouse repaired 1858.	V1 P103
1858	Courthouse	The court the ordered that the house of Francisco Garcia be rented for the use of the dist. court and for the county clerk's off. For 3 or 4 month at the rate of \$10 a month, Nov. 1858.	V1 P106
1867	Jail	Plans to build a jail 1867 and special tax to pay for same, equal to ½ the State upon all property both personal and real, order passed to make an index of all county records which are recorded 1867.	V1 P132
1875?		All slaughter pens, sheep and goat pens be removed 500 yards from the Courthouse for the health of the Courthouse.	V1 P165
1878		Edinburgh called Hidalgo in 1878.	V1 P192
1878		Report of land and town sites situated in Hidalgo Co. 1878	V1 P198
1885		Still Edinburgh in Feb 10, 1885	V1 P225

1885 (maybe 1886?)	Bond election	\$20,000 in bonds for the erection of courthouse and jail 20 cents levied on the dollar for real and personal property 1885.	V1 P246
1886	Bids adv	Ready for bids 1886. Advertised in Brownsville News, San Antonio Express, and Galveston News.	V1 P252
1886	Bids	Bid accepted from Martin Hanson & S. W. Brooks. \$14,000.00 and jail \$6,000.00.	V1 P253
1886	Contract	<i>Court house and jail, building material to be brick and separate from each other. Courthouse not to cost more than \$14,000.00 and Jail \$6,000.00. Courthouse to be two stories high, and to furnish room at least equal to a building 50 x 40 and jail to be of sufficient capacity to accommodate 25 prisoners.</i>	V1 P260
1886		Brick wall around new C. jail, \$450.00, 1886	V1 P263
1886	Furniture	\$700 for furniture for courthouse accepted Dec. 1886, lights put in courthouse 1887.	V1 P278
1886?	Flood protection	The court appropriated \$150.00 to protect the courthouse from encroachment of the river.	V1 P286
1887		Old courthouse and jail sold for \$155.00.	V1 P292
1889?	Fence	Iron fence around courthouse. Contract to Hanson \$147.00.	V1 P305
1889?	Flood protection	<i>On this day the County Comm. Crt. Petitioned the Legislature of the state of Texas to pass a special act to levy a special tax for the purpose of building a Jetty and Break Water in the Rio Grande in front of Hidalgo to protect the court house and jail from the erosion of said river and also for a rebate of the State Tax for the year 1889.</i>	V1 P308
1889?	Flood protection	<i>An act of the 21st Leg. of the State of Texas, Entitled "An Act to Authorize the County Commissioners Court of Hidalgo to issue Bonds for the protection of the Courthouse and Jail and other property from further erosion of the Rio Grande River and to Levy a tax to pay the interest and principal thereof".</i>	V1 P310
8/12/1889	Bond issue	\$5,000 bond issue voted Bonds for the protection of the courthouse and jail and other property from further erosion of the Rio Grade River. Land values fixed at 80 cents per acre for taxation.	V2 P3
2/1893	Trees	120 trees ordered planted in and around courthouse square. \$125 appropriated.	V2 P40
6/14/1894	Archives	Authorized translation from Spanish to English all records and archives of county clerk, 15 cents per hundred words paid for translation and recording. This same day the commissioners court ordered the thanks of the people to John I. Klieber, district attorney, for removal of corrupt officials.	V2 P60
6/16/1894	Locks	Supt. Of Public Inst. (first time mentioned) Co. judge and clerk authorized to put new locks on doors, also cistern gets a lock.	V2 P70
1897	Matting	In 1897 they had matting on courtroom floor.	V2 P118
5/8/1905	SLBM RR	St. L. B. M. Ry. first mentioned	V2 P160
2/1907	Irrigation Co.	Am. Rio Grande Land and Irrigation Co. prays for	V2 P190

		authority to make changes in Military Rd.	
9/16/1907	Irrigation Co.	Court appoints J. H. Dawson, civil engineer to make examination and locate the necessary canals, laterals and levees, and estimate probable cost of maintenance.	V2 P197
2/19/1908	Drainage Dist.	Election ordered to be held Mar 24, 1908, to vote for drainage district. Apr. 9, 1908, Election favors drainage district, Hidalgo Co. Drainage Dist. #1.	V2 P220
4/9/1908	A. Y. Baker	A. Y. Baker was elected to fill out unexpired term of county treasurer. First appearance of his name.	V2 P225
6/4/1908	Telephone	Rio Grande Valley Tel. Co. formed to operate between Santa Maria and Sam Fordyce.	V2 P230
1908	Mercedes	Mercedes (500 population) petitions for incorporation.	V2 P232
10/12/1908	County seat election	Election held Oct. 10, 1908 as to whether the county seat remain at Hidalgo or be removed to Chapin. 513 votes cast, 422 for removal, to remain 90 votes.	V2 P240
11/9/1908	Bond election	Commissioners court convened in courthouse in Chapin. Commissioners discuss feasibility of erecting courthouse and jail at Chapin, all records and archives being kept in a temporary building (which is called a courthouse) the commissioners "looking ahead and believing that the present prosperity and great development of our county is only a forerunner of what the future will show," decided that an election be held to vote \$75,000 worth of bonds for a courthouse and jail at Chapin.	V2 P245
12/16/1908	Bond election	Election held Dec. 12. 159 votes for issuance, 5 votes against.	V2 P250
2/1909	Architects	Atlee B. Ayres and Harvey T. Phelps, employed as architects.	V2 P256
2/8/1909	Rent	To Chapin Townsite Co. for rent of house occupied by courthouse, to be paid out of courthouse & jail fund, \$175.00	V2
2/19/1909	Bonds	Terms of courthouse bonds, property tax levied	V2
2/19/1909	Architects	A.O. Watson presented plans of several courthouse buildings. Court decided to set Feb. 25, 1909 the day for different architects to present plans and specifications of courthouse and jail buildings.	V2
2/25/1909	Architects	San Antonio Structural Steel Co. (Mr. Youngblood), Atlee B. Ayres, San Antonio, A. O. Watson, Austin submitted plans for courthouse and jail. Atlee B. Ayres and Henry T. Phelps employed as architects, also to superintend the erection of the building, on commission on the contract price at which buildings let.	V2
3/24/1909	Plans	Commissioners Court adopted final plans and specifications of courthouse and jail And the plan of Atlee B. Ayres and Phelps & Jacob was approved.	V2
5/10/1909	Plans	Mr. Jacob, of the firm name of Phelps and Jacob Architects, and Atlee B. Ayres submitted the plans and specifications of the courthouse and jail, which after careful examination, were accepted. Specifications printed to be available to contractors. Second Monday in June (June 14) bids will be	V2

		opened.	
7/1/1909	Contractor	Contractor winning bid for courthouse construction, Waterston & Schoenfeldt, San Antonio, \$25,954.00 bond put up by them.	
7/1909		Contract awarded for construction of courthouse and jail to Masterson and Schoenfeldt.	V2 P261
2/8/1909	Rent	To Chapin Townsite Co. for rent of house occupied by courthouse, to be paid out of courthouse & jail fund, \$175.00	
11/1909		County judge authorized to employ county engineer.	V2 P268
1910		Building accepted in 1910.	V2 P288
2/15/1910	Contractor	Dissolution of partnership between Waterston and Schoenfeldt, the courthouse and jail building contractors. (Read document dated Dec. 15, 1909.)	V2 ?
3/22/1910	Building	Extra extension of the roof of courthouse, \$1,406.00, includes partition around stairs in basement corridor, and also includes fifty-thousand Fenn's brick, for press in second story for stress supports. Terrazzo floors are to be used in corridors instead of tile and terrazzo base in place of marble base, and plaster in place of composition work on stairs, leaving out stair rail on main stairs in basement where the above partitions are. Approximately seven hundred lineal feet of one and one-quarter rods, with turn buckles for roof tiles. F. A. Schoenfeldt.	V2 ?
5/9/1910	Payments	Atlee B. Ayres, balance on plans and specifications, \$400.00. Henry T. Phelps, balance on plans and specifications, \$400.00.	VD ?
5/10/1909	Phelps	Henry T. Phelps and D. R. Jacob together with Atlee B. Ayres, Architect. Phelps and Jacob dissolved partnership. Phelps became liable for all indebtedness and assets and wanted to end contract with county. \$150.00 paid Phelps which released him from contract.	VD ?
6/24/1910	Cornerstone	Minutes of the Mercedes Masonic Lodge No. 1010, describing laying of the cornerstone for the new courthouse. Also newspaper articles describing the event.	<i>CC Ramsey</i>
6/25/1910	Hidalgo CCH	Courthouse cornerstone was dedicated.	<i>Hidalgo County Texas</i>
11/21/1910	Furniture	Received and accepted courthouse furniture and fixtures	VD P79
2/14/1911	Edinburg	Petition granted by Federal authorities changing name of Chapin to Edinburg, Texas.	V2 P300
2/15/1911	Trees	County Judge ordering 250 shade trees	VD P92
3/25/1911	Trees	Lipscomb, W. L., County Commissioner Precinct 2, purchasing one dozen palm trees for park	VD P96
2/9/1915	Mower	County Judge authorized to by gas lawn mower	VD P542
4/29/1915	Typewriter	J. P. Almania authorized to buy typewriter	VD P597
5/10/1915	Water	Valley Reservoir & Canal Co. agree to water courthouse parks	VD P603
5/10/1915	Gravel	Committee named to get prices for graveling street around county courthouse	VD P604

6/5/1915	Gravel	Committee report, prices for gravel, etc. \$6.00 per car of gravel	VD P626
6/5/1915	Gravel	County Judge authorized to buy necessary amount of gravel	VD P626
6/14/1915	Parks, streets	Commissioners Court order warrants issued to pay for parks and street work at courthouse	VD P629
11/22/1915	Foundation	M. L. Waller bid to reinforce foundation of courthouse	VE P55
11/22/1915	Foundation	Crawford & Horn subcontractors of M. L. Waller	VE P55
Ca 1915	Bandstand	Uncited reference to bandstand on courthouse square. Bandstand first erected on the west side of the square. In about 1928, was moved to the east side.	
1/11/1916	Drainage	County Clerk pays for drainage etc. courthouse & grounds	VE P66
2/14/1916	Trees	Commissioners Court orders trees for courthouse parks	VE P70
2/15/1916	Park	Commissioners Court beautifying county park	VE P73
2/15/1916	Citrus	W.Z. Miller to buy citrus trees for park	VE P73
4/10/1916	Plumbing	C. W. Richmond, plumbing of courthouse	VE P113
4/10/1916	Plumbing	M. L. Waller (architect) overseeing plumbing	VE P113
5/14/1917	Old CH	Manuel Samano buys old courthouse	VE P289-90
5/14/1917	Old CH	Commissioners Court executes deed to Manuel Samano	VE P290
1/14/1918	Lights	Valley Plumbing & Supply Co, bid to change lights, etc., courthouse	VE P349
1/14/1918	Lights	Commissioners Court accept bid of Valley Plumbing Supply Co.	VE P349
11/14/1918	Mower	W. H. Gossage buys discarded lawn mower	VE P542
9/9/1919	Incorporation	Election held on incorporation of the City of Edinburg	<i>Edinburg</i>
1920	Census	Population of 38,110, double that of 1910. The number of farms in the county had increased seven-fold since 1890, to 1,727. Railroad brought new settlers, farmers coming to speculative land parties, and segregation of new towns established along US 83. US 83 was known as the longest main street in America by 1930, because of the string of towns along its length.	<i>Handbook of Texas</i>
5/9/1921	Jail	Jail: I. A. Walker estimate for \$20,000 approved	VG P19-20
5/10/1921	Shades	G.W. (?) Brooks, Comm., list of shades, etc.	VG P26
6/13/1921	Jail	Jail: I. A. Walker estimate for \$21,000 approved	VG P35-36
6/13/1921	Jail	Jail: Sheriff to purchase bedding, etc.	VG P40
6/13/1921	Lights	H. E. Wilcox authorized to install lites.	VG P41
7/11/1921	Jail	Jail: I. A. Walker estimate for \$14,000 approved	VG P47-48
8/23/1921	Jail	Jail: E. M. Everitt to be paid for new bed	VG P66
8/23/1921	Jail	Jail: Roland B. Moore to be paid for plumbing	VG P66
10/14/1921	Jail	Jail: W. L. Lipscomb to repair drain pipe	VG P138
7/14/1924	Insured	Courthouse to be insured	VH P74
8/2/1924	Shelving	A. J. Ross to install shelving	VH P79
2/4/1925	Hidalgo	Young & McAllen heirs permitted to erect buildings, Hidalgo	VH P160
10/10/1925	Repairs	W. L. Lipscomb to supervise repairing	VH P349
10/10/1925	Citrus	County Auditor to remove citrus trees, etc.	VH P349
1/11/1926	Jail	Jail: Mission Insurance Agency to insure	VH P416
8/9/1926		Lot 162, Edinburg, leased to Pruitt	VH P521
1/10/1927		Jail: J. J. Closner to insure	VH P585
1/11/1927	SP RR	The first Southern Pacific RR train reached Edinburg, an	<i>Edinburg/</i>

		extension of the San Antonio-Aransas Pass line. 7,000 to 10,000 spectators gathered to meet the train. Events at the courthouse	<i>Handbook of Texas/Hidalgo County Texas</i>
8/8/1927	Gas	County Auditor to have gas installed (in courthouse and Jail)	VI P36
10/10/1927	Repairs	Jail: County Judge et al to repair	VI P99
12/13/1927	Repairs	Jail: Jos. E. Robinson paid for repairing	VI P229
1928	R. Newell Waters	Weslaco City Hall, designed by Waters, built.	<i>Hidalgo County Texas</i>
Ca. 1928	Bandstand	Uncited reference to bandstand on courthouse square. Originally erected in about 1915 on the west side of the square. In about 1928, moved to the east side.	
1929	Good Government League	Good Government League led struggle to remove Hidalgo County government from boss rule and pachanga voter manipulation. Also remove from forces that controlled irrigation projects and oil.	<i>Handbook of Texas</i>
3/5/1929	Lawn	E. Besh service courthouse lawn, \$20.00	VJ P310
6/22/1929	Road to Hell	First paved road from Edinburg to Reynosa described in <i>Collier's Magazine</i> as the "nickel plated road to hell."	<i>Edinburg</i>
1930	Census	Population of 77,004, double that of 1920. 41,522 identified as Mexican. The number of farms in the county had increased to 4,321, more than double the number of 1920. Livestock production was diminished from earlier decades, but continued in the northern part of the county. Oil production began in this decade, 9/18/1934, O. C. Woods.	<i>Handbook of Texas</i>
1/21/1930	Jail	Jail: Renew fire insurance policies	VK P67
1/3/1931	Employees	Courthouse employees to be discharged Jan 15	
1/3/1931	Jail	Jail: Plumbing to be improved	VK P460
1/3/1931	Jail	Jail: Sheriff to provide bedding, etc.	VK P460
1/5/1931	Jail	Jail: Gas co. to install fittings and stoves	VK P461
1/5/1931	Jail	Jail: Rush Electric Co. to repair electric system	VK P462
1/7/1931	Jail	Jail: Proposal of I. W. Faires to repair plumbing in jail	VK P462
1/8/1931	Insurance	Fire insurance policies approved and premiums ordered paid (also for jail)	VK P465
1/12/1931	Jail	Jail: Sheriff to pay \$102.53 for blankets for jail	VK P471
1/15/1931	Jail	Jail: Jailor to secure equipment – list	VK P475
1/20/1931	Jail	Jail: Jailor to make certain changes in jail	VK P483
2/13/1931	Insurance	Premiums on fire insurance policies courthouse approved and ordered paid	VK P529
3/4/1931	Lunch stand	Margaret L. Ruffner granted permission to run lunch stand in courthouse	VK P552
3/4/1931	Jail	Jail: W. F. Doenges bill for \$482.50 overhauling jail	VK P551
3/10/1931	Repair roof	T. L Griever to repair roof of courthouse. (Note: this may be the replacement of the mirador.)	VK P569
3/13/1931	Jail	Jail: purchase washing machine for jail	VK P572
4/13/1931	Windows	H. D. Hughes to repair basement windows	VL P3
5/18/1931	Jail	Jail: Sheriff instructed to build kitchen in jail	VL P55
6/8/1931	Lights	Central Power & Light authorized to turn on 12 lights around courthouse at \$2.00 per month	VL P77-78

7/17/1931	Lease	Lease-by Hidalgo Co. to St. Louis Brownsville & Mexico RR, of property from Feb 1, 1931 to Jan 1, 1932	VL P117-120
11/20/1931	Jail	Jail: Jailor authorized to purchase 100 blankets for jail at lowest bid of \$250.00	VL P324
12/4/1931	93 rd Dist Ct	Remodeling of 93 rd District Court Room	VL 342
12/7/1931	93 rd Dist Ct	Agreement between Commissioners and architect, Robert L. Vagler concerning remodeling of Court Room	VL P352-354
12/11/1931	Lawn	Courthouse lawn sprayer ordered cut off for three months.	VL P355
1/18/1932	Blinds	Venetian blinds ordered purchased for Court Rooms and Grand Jury Room	VL P377
4/17/1935	Ladies	Appropriation of \$100.00 to renovate Ladies Rest Room	VN P542
1936	R. Newell Waters	Designed the remodel of a two block long stretch of Weslaco downtown, on Texas Boulevard between Third and Fifth Streets. White stucco facades, red tile, blue neon lights at the roofline.	<i>Hidalgo County Texas</i>
1/7/1937	Furniture	A. W. Boynton, furniture (Index entry does not indicate where or what this is)	VP P366
2/1/1937	Soft drink	Mr. Cook of McAllen Coca Cola Company granted permission to install soft drink vending machine in Lobby	VP P400
2/15/1937	Mower	Purchase of one Whirl Wind power lawn mower	VP P443
2/15/1937	Postage	Purchase of one Pitney-Bowes postage meter machine	VP P458
2/15/1937	PBX	Motion that a PBX board be installed in courthouse, also phones	VP P459
3/22/1937	Cigarette machine	Motion that M.G. Clark & Son be granted permission to install cigarette machine in lobby of courthouse	VP P509
7/19/1937	Cooler	Purchase of electric cooler for courthouse	VQ P367
4/4/1939	Bonds	Court House and Jail bonds be called	VU P48
4/4/1939	Bonds	Court House and Jail bonds, one cancelled	VU P48
4/25/1939	Furniture	Furniture and equipment donated by Mrs. Handley (Index entry does not indicate where or what this is)	VU P158
5/2/1939	Jail	Jail: Plumbing installed in Jail	VU P216
5/23/1939	Jail	Jail: to advertise for bids for electric refrigerator, meat chopper	VU P345
5/29/1939	Jail	Jail: to advertise for changing drains in jail, new floor in part of jail	VU P391
7/18/1939	Jail	Jail: dishwasher purchase for jail	VV P1
8/8/1939	Annex	Annex partitions removed and stored	VV P36
8/8/1939	Repairs	Court House, Annex, county buildings and hospital to be repaired under NYA project	VV P36
1940	Census	Population of 106,059, an increase over 1930. The number of farms in the county grew to 5,094. Oil production gained importance in this decade. First military base near Mission, Moore Air Field.	<i>Handbook of Texas</i>
1/28/1941	PBX	PBX board, extension phone to be installed. No long distance calls.	VW P200
5/28/1941	Play ground	City play ground, permission granted by commissioners. (Is this on the grounds, or elsewhere in the city?)	VW P416
7/18/44	Sprinkler	\$219.00 sprinkler to be purchased from D. E. Aloney (sp?) To irrigate CH square	V3 P93
5/7/46	Trucks	Truck parking Prohibited around CH square	V5 P491

8/20/46	Peanut vend	Mrs. Payne Permitted to install peanut vending machine	V6 P91
8/5/47	Workman	Man be hired for General work around CH & J	V7 P35
8/31/48	Grounds	County take over the Upkeep of CH grounds	V7 P428
8/23/49	Concession	Howard Cole Allowed space in CH for refreshment concessions	V8 P152
1950	Census	Population of 160,446. The number of farms increased to 5,314. Citrus fruit production became the most important industry. Cotton and vegetables also produced in great quantities.	<i>Handbook of Texas</i>
6/19/51	Petition	Court acknowledges receipt of The required number of signatures presented to proceed with the necessary steps for calling election for new CH	V9 P61
		After accepting numerous petitions, it was moved by Cmmr Callis, seconded by Cmmr Gree, and carried unanimously, that Court acknowledge receipt of the required number of signatures presented, and that Court proceed with the necessary procedure in calling Election for a new CH.	
6/21/51	Bond election for new CH	<i>Hidalgo Sets Bond Election Within 30 Days</i> <i>Edinburg – An election on a bond issue for a new Hidalgo County courthouse will be held within 30 days, county commissioners announced Tuesday.</i> <i>County Judge Milton Richardson said Tuesday that enough petitions have been received “to call five elections.”</i> <i>The actual election must await a fairly exact estimate of construction costs, expected to be around \$1 million.</i>	Brownsville Herald (BH) p5 c3
7/5/51	Architects	Mr. R. Newell Waters Services employed as Architect	V9 P77
		The Commr Court met Tuesday, July 3 rd , and interviewed the following architects, as follows: Hetrick & Co., represented by R. Daugbjerg, of Houston, Texas; Newell Waters, of Weslaco; Larsen & Byers, of Pharr, Texas; Cowell & Neuhaus, of Houston, Texas; Cocke, Bowman & York, of Harlingen, Texas, represented by Mr. Bowman; Wm. Baxter, of Weslaco, Texas; Boelker & Dixon, of Houston, Texas, represented by Mr. Boelker. It was agreed that the Court would meet on Thursday morning, July the 5 th , to make the final selection of one of the above firms, there being no more Architects to interview, the Court adjourned. Upon motion made by Commissioner Hester, seconded by Commissioner Reyna, and unanimously carried to employ the services of Mr. R. Newell Waters, of Weslaco, Texas, as Architect for the new Courthouse.	
7/5/51	Architect	Memorandum of agreement entered	V9 P77-78
7/5/51	Architects	That letter be sent each Firm direction appreciation of their	V9 P78

		interest in the matter of the CH	
7/6/51	Location of county seat	<i>Hidalgo Makes Bid for New Courthouse</i> <i>Edinburg – The border town of Hidalgo has its hat in the ring today in the scramble for the site of the proposed Hidalgo County Courthouse.</i> <i>Its adjacency to Reynosa, Mexico makes it a more convenient spot to transact county business, according to a letter from E. G. Gonzalez, Hidalgo, addressed to the commissioners' court here.</i>	BH p10 c5
7/8/51	Bond election	<i>Hidalgo Voters Will Consider Bond Issue</i> <i>Edinburg – A \$1 million to \$1,500,000 bond issue to build a courthouse will probably be put before Hidalgo County voters in six or eight weeks.</i> <i>R. Newell Waters, Weslaco architect who is preparing the plans, met with commissioners Friday to get a preliminary picture of space needs. He said he believes he can present a reasonable accurate figure on the probable cost of the building at the July 17 commissioner's court meeting.</i>	BH p17 c7
7/17/51	R. N. Waters	Mr. Newell Waters Displayed a space analysis chart for the proposed CH Mr. Newell Water was called before the Court and displayed a space analysis chart for the proposed CH. This chart showed a total gross area of 70,000 sq. ft. He recommended that one and one half million dollars would be the amount needed to build this space, with furniture and surrounding area properly landscaped. His tentative estimate was: \$1,260,000.00 – fee and building \$150,000.00 – furnishings \$25,000.00 – razing old building \$90,000.00 - grounds	V9 P83
7/17/51	Bond election	That an election be held on Aug. 11 th 1951 to build a new CH. Amount of Issue one and one-half million dollars. Motion made by Commissioner Hester, and seconded by Commissioner Reyna, that an election be called to vote on the bond issue to build a new CH, on August 11, 1951. The amount of the bond issue to be one and one half million dollars. Motion carried UNANIMOUSLY.	V9 P84
7/17/51	Bond election	<i>Hidalgo Votes Aug. 11 on New Courthouse</i> <i>Edinburg – Hidalgo County voters will be asked to vote Aug. 11 on a proposed bond issue of \$1 and half million for a new court house building.</i> The article goes on to describe the space analysis chart, and the efficiency factor of the old building at 54% compared to the 72% factor proposed for the new building.	BH p2 c6
8/12/51	Notice	Affidavit of publication of notice of election	V9 P118, 119
8/12/51	Returns	Returns of Bond Election Canvassed and approved 3,125 for and 1,386 against.	V9 P119

8/12/51	Returns	Order canvassing returns & declaring results of election	V9 P121, 125
8/12/51	Bond election	<i>Courthouse Bonds Voted</i> <i>Edinburg – Hidalgo County will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 1952 around a new \$1,500,000 courthouse, courtesy of the taxpayers who voted Saturday.</i> <i>The courthouse bond issued carried by an almost three to one majority with 3,110 votes in favor and 1,390 against it, according to almost complete returns. Twenty-one precincts voted for the issue and 11 opposed it.</i> <i>County Judge Milton D. Richardson said “it S more of a pleasure than I thought when I was running for county judge, to live in this country. I know I’m among friends.”</i>	BH p1 c2
8/28/51	R. N. Waters	Mr. R. Newell Waters To proceed with preliminary sketches <i>Upon motion made by Commissioner Callis, seconded by Commissioner Reyna, it was unanimously carried, to instruct Mr. R. Newell Waters to proceed with the preliminary sketches of the new Ch building, subject to the approval for the contract by Mr. Truett Hubbard.</i>	V9 P142
10/8/51	Sketches	Preliminary sketches of new Courthouse accepted. Check issued for \$12,000.00 as part of architectural fees. <i>Motion by Commissioner Callis, seconded by Commissioner Green, and carried unanimously, to accept or approve the preliminary sketches of the new CH as presented by Mr. Waters. It was further moved that the General Public is welcome to visit Mr. Waters and make inspection of plans, and any suggestions they may offer to the Court. The Commissioners Court also approved the issuance of check in the amount of \$12,000.00 to Mr. Waters, as a part of his fee on the architectural contract.</i>	V9 P178
10/30/51	Space	That Judge Richardson Write letters to the respective officials as to space alternates <i>A motion was made by Commissioner Hester, seconded by Commissioner Green, and carried unanimously, that the following request be spread on the minutes, and that Judge Richardson write letters to the respective officials.</i> <i>October 29, 1951</i> <i>Commissioners Court</i> <i>Edinburg</i> <i>Texas</i> <i>Gentlemen:</i> <i>We have gone over on one of more occasions the layout for each departmental branch of the Government that will occupy a space in the new Court House. So far as I know, they all</i>	V9 P183

indicated their approval of each of their respective layouts. In this connection, I would suggest that your Court write a letter to each of these offices getting their final approval on their layout. In case there is any question in their mind that the layout does not meet with their ideas they should immediately get in touch with the office of the Architect and go over their respective space allotment and office arrangements. This is to be done before Saturday, November 10. Anyone we do not hear from we will consider that it would be impractical to make any changes on the plans and particularly to make any changes during construction would involve additional expense, confusion and would be unsatisfactory from every standpoint because it virtually becomes a remodel job. We should use every precaution to avoid this.

*Very truly yours,
R. Newell Waters*

10/30/51	R. N. Waters	Mr. Waters before the Court Making suggestions & asking opinions relating to new CH	V9 P184
		<i>Mr. Waters appeared before the Court, making suggestions & asking opinions from the Court, relating to new CH</i>	
1/22/52	Condemn	Excerpt from Minute Book #7, City of Edinburg, condemning CH	V9 P296
		<i>Upon motion by Commissioner Green, seconded by Commissioner Hester, it was unanimously ordered that the following Order be spread on the Minutes, to-wit: Excerpt from Minute Book #7, City of Edinburg, County of Hidalgo, Texas. After thorough discussion of the condition of the County Courthouse, a motion was made by Commissioner Berry that the County Courthouse, now located in Edinburg, Hidalgo County, Texas, is in such condition that it is liable to fall down, that it is dangerous to the people, as well as the property located therein; and, further, that it is not fire proof and does not conform with the City Building Code; and, therefore, that the County Judge and County Commissioners be notified that this building must be taken down and removed within one (1) year from date; and, unless said building is removed one (1) year from date, that by virtue of the authority vested in the City of Edinburg by State Statute, the City will remove same and charge the expense of said removal to said County; and, that notice of this action be given in writing to the County Judge and to the County Commissioners of the County of Hidalgo, State of Texas. Motion seconded by Commissioner Bliss and carried unanimously.</i>	

1/23/52	Condemn	<i>Old Courthouse to be Destroyed</i> <i>Edinburg – The city has condemned the county courthouse and has given Hidalgo county one year to tear it down. The city's order was read into the minutes at the county commissioners court meeting Tuesday.</i> <i>The county is trying to get strategic materials for the proposed new courthouse. The city's order condemning the old courthouse said the building is not fireproof and is structurally dangerous. The city is authorized by law to proceed with demolition of the courthouse at the end of one year if the county has done nothing about its removal. In such a case the county would be handed the bill for tearing down the building.</i> <i>The condemnation order and other data to complement the county's stand for the needed building will be sent to the National Production Authority in Washington.</i>	BH p5 c7
4/8/52	Bid adv	Ad for bids for the construction of the new CH For June 3 rd 1952 at 10:00 o'clock a.m.	V9 P379
4/14/52	Wage rates	That general prevailing per Diem wages be paid for work on new CH	V9 P380, 381
4/14/52	Bids	Notice of intention to receive bids for the construction of the new CH For June 3 rd , 1952 at 10:00 o'clock am	V9 P381, 382
5/1/52	Fee	Mr. R. Newell Waters be paid \$42,000 less sum advanced	V9 P391
5/28/52	Postpone bids	To postpone opening of bids on new CH until program of the Permanent Improvement Ref. Bonds is completed <i>Motion was made by Commissioner Callis, seconded by Commissioner Reyna, and carried unanimously, to postpone the opening of the Bids for the new CH until the program of the Permanent Improvement Refunding Bonds is completed, and to advertise for Bids for the Court House Bonds, and when the money is available will open bids for the construction of the new Court House.</i>	V9 P403
6/9/52	Drainage	That county participate with City of Edinburg on the drainage around CH <i>A motion was made by Commissioner Green, and seconded by Commissioner Callis, that the County participate with the City of Edinburg on the Drainage around the Courthouse. With the understanding that when the Drainage Line is completed, the City of Edinburg will assume all the responsibility of maintenance of said drainage line from Fay Street to the County property line. Commissioners Green, Callis and Reyna voted "Aye", and Commissioner Hester voted "no", motion carried.</i>	V9 P410
7/8/52	Elevators	Service man from Otis Elevator explains type of service this Co. would give	V9 P461
8/19/52	Bids	Bids asked for Sept. 16th on construction of new CH Advertised on Sept. 8th.	V9 P486

9/8/52	Bonds	Bid of 3.7246% accepted on CH bonds	V9 P507-509
9/8/52	Bonds	Certificate of County Clerk, statement of indebtedness, statement of taxable values, order authorizing the issuance of bonds	V9 P510-522
9/16/52	Bids	Bids received, opened and read.	V9 P527-529
9/22/52	Bids	The Texair Company of Pharr withdrew their bid, leaving the electric unit as was bid on in the Base Bid	V9 P529
9/22/52	Noser	Noser Construction Co. Contract and Bond	V9 P530-530F
9/30/52	Centennial	Centennial Board given the right to use CH grounds for all concessions during Centennial Week	V9 P532
9/30/52	Furniture	Everybody will be given a chance to bid on the furniture for the new courthouse	V9 P533
11/22/52	Noser	Noser Const. Co. paid \$20,149.89 on first payment	V9 P564
11/22/52	Noser	Noser Const. Co. offer on stockpile rejected	V9 P564
		<i>A motion was made by Commissioner Hester that the offer of Noser Construction Company on the stockpile of dirt be rejected. Motion died for lack of a second.</i>	
11/22/52	Dirt	Agreement with Noser Const. Co. dirt be stock-piled and to be used for making fills	V9 P564
		<i>It was agreed that the dirt moved out of the hole made for the basement of the new Courthouse be stock-piled on the ground. That the Court use this dirt in making fills; and if the Court does not want to pay anything Mr. Noser said then to forget it.</i>	
12/16/52	Noser	Noser Const. Co. paid 2 nd estimate of \$29,989.27	V9 P578
12/16/52	Bonds	Authorizing the exchange of \$22,000.00 Hid. Co. Tex. Perm. Imp. Ref. Bonds Ser. 1952 for a like amount of valid outstanding indebtedness against the Perm. Imp. Fund	V9 P578-579A
1/12/53	Noser	3 rd payment to Noser Const. Co. in the amt. of \$30,568.35	V10 P21
2/3/53	US 281	That Mr. Snyder's plan be accepted about routing traffic around new CH	V10 P34
		<i>Motion was made by Commissioner Hester, seconded by Commissioner Reyna, that the plan of Mr. Snyder, routing the traffic around the new Courthouse, wherein U.S. Highway No. 281, going North and South curve slightly East of the Courthouse, and other traffic will use the present outside square or street for one-way movement to the right, be accepted. Motion carried unanimously.</i>	
2/3/53	Furniture	That Mr. R. Newell Waters proceed with the bids for the selling of the old furniture	V10 P34
		<i>It was agreed with Mr. R. Newell Waters to proceed with the Bids of the selling of the old furniture as set out in is plans. Bidding Contractors will make allowance for old furniture in their Bid.</i>	

2/17/53	Marble	St. Genevieve Rose Bresh marble accepted for new CH	V10 P53
		<i>Motion was made by Commissioner Green, seconded by Commissioner Hester, and carried unanimously, that the St. Genevieve Bresh Marble be accepted for the new Courthouse.</i>	
2/17/53	Noser	Payment No 4 Cert. No. 1062 for \$34,367.69 to Noser Const. Co.	V10 P 53
2/17/53	Furniture	Bids to be opened on March 17 th 1953 on furniture for new CH	V10 P53
2/17/53	Furniture	To adv. For bids on new furniture, not considering the trade-in of the old furniture, will adv. for Bids on the old furniture when ready to move out of the old CH	V10 P53
2/24/53	Furniture	Date extended for opening of bids on new furniture for CH To April 13, 1953	V10 P60
3/9/53	Fee	R. Newell Waters paid \$7,126.13	V10 P69
3/9/53	Furniture	Addendum No. 1 to plans and specifications of Hidalgo County CH Furnishings	V10 P70-71
3/9/53	Furniture	To accept all 4 separate bids for CH furnishings on April 13 th 1953	V10 P71
3/17/53	Furniture	Architect R. Newell Waters to be instructed to issue letter clarifying the proposal to read "any or all" CH furnishings	V10 P79
3/17/53	Noser	Crt. No. 1064 in the amount of \$39,916.76, being 5 th payment to Noser	V10 P79
4/7/53	Noser	Noser Const. Co pd. Payment 6 in the amount of \$67,605.93	V10 P91
4/13/53	Furniture	Bids were opened for the CH furnishings. Bids tabulated.	V10 P102
4/21/53	Furniture	That low bid of Maverick-Clark for general furnishings for CH in the amount of \$11,307.00 be accepted and to work out alternates.	V10 P111
4/21/53	Furniture	Bid of O'Shea Furniture Co. of Mercedes Tx. Accepted on 13 beds and 13 pillows.	V10 P111
4/21/53	Furniture	Bid of Southern Steel Co. of San Antonio, Tx. Accepted on 2 holding cells.	V10 P111
4/21/53	Furniture	Bid of Griggs Equipment C. of Belton, Tx. Accepted on Auditorium chairs.	V10 P111
4/28/53	Furniture	Maverick –Clarke Contract on furnishings approved	V10 P113-117
5/11/53	Noser	Noser Const. Co. paid 7 th payment in the amt of \$78,442.79	V10 P149
6/16/53	Noser	Noser Const Co 8 th payment made	V10 181
7/7/53	Noser	" 9 th "	V10 P223
8/10/53	Noser	" 10 th "	V10 P242
9/8/53	Fee	Statement from R. Newell Waters, Architect, in the amount of \$6,330.21 approved.	V10 P291
9/14/53	Noser	11 th payment to Noser Const Co in the amount of \$56,257.78	V10 P294
10/20/53	Edinburg Improvement Assoc.	Resolution: Contract & Agreement with Edinburg Improvement Association	V10 P317-324

11/17/53	Noser	Noser Const Co Cert No 1086 being payment 13 approved	V10 P355
12/14/53	Noser	Noser Const Co payment 14 approved	V10 P368
12/14/53	Furniture	Courthouse furnishings	V10 P368
12/22/53	Drainage	To advertise for bids for drainage pipe from south entrance of CH to N. W. corner of property	V10 P374
12/22/53	Work man	Application of Willard Johnson accepted as a combination electrician and air conditioning maintainer, to be employed on Jan 1 st 1954	V10 P374
12/29/53	Committee	The Co Judge, Sheriff and Mr. R. Newell Waters to serve on Buildings, Maintenance and Grounds Committee from date of acceptance of new CH	V10 P379
1/11/54	Noser	Noser Const Co paid \$57,465.80 being payment No. 15	V10 P383
1/19/54	Southern Steel	Southern Steel Co. of San Antonio paid #2,125.00 for jail equipment in new CH	V10 P390
2/2/54	US 281	Plan of proposed alignment, HW US-281, through CH square	V10 P401
2/16/54	Noser	Noser Const Co payment 16, amount of \$54,969.85 approved	V10 P417
3/8/54	Noser	Noser Const Co payment 17, amount of \$83,545.42 approved	V10 P449
4/6/54	Noser	Noser Const Co payment 18, amount of \$52,562.51 approved	V10 P480
5/4/54	Bar Association	Resolution as presented by the Bar Assn to invite the Federal Ct. for the Southern Dist of Texas to hold court in the new CH	V10 P504
5/4/54	Old CH	Proposal-Hidalgo Co CH to buy & raze the old CH	V10 P505-507
5/4/54	Federal Court	<i>Hidalgo Asks Federal Court to Sit There</i> <i>Edinburg, May 4 – Hidalgo county commissioners today extended a formal invitation to the judges of the US District Court of the Southern District of Texas to sit in Hidalgo county. The commissioners court acted after Edinburg Attorney Jackson Littleton, acting on behalf of the county Bar Association, read a Bar Association resolution suggesting the federal court be invited to use the new county courthouse.</i> <i>The commissioners unanimously adopted a motion inviting the federal judges to sit in Edinburg “whenever and as often as the applicable laws, rules and work of the court will permit or justify”.</i> <i>The motion said it should “be of great convenience” to litigants and attorneys, particularly in Hidalgo and Staff counties, to have a federal court here.</i> <i>The commissioners were also informed that Grandview Hospital Administrator E. R. Andres had resigned. Andres sent a letter to County Judge Milton D. Richardson saying he had handed his resignation to the hospital board.</i>	BH P3 c 6
5/18/54	Noser	Noser Const Co payment 19 approved	V10 P512
5/18/54	Main entrance	Main Entrance of the east door of new CH designated as	V10 P512

		location of all public sales	
5/18/54	Bulletin board	Official bulletin board to be located on the southside wall of main lobby	V10 P512
5/18/54	Furniture	Notice of public auction sale be made of all furniture for Friday morning	V10 P512
5/18/1954	Grand Opening	<i>Hidalgo Courthouse Among Few New Ones</i> Articles describe the planning, design, construction and planned occupancy of the new courthouse. Topics noted include the 4 types of stone in the building, the planned longevity of the new building, the groundbreaking, coffee bar, automatic elevators, jury dormitories, grand jury room, 92nd district courtroom, reception rooms, library, detention cells, clerks' offices, flagpole and sale of the old courthouse for salvage. The article is illustrated with numerous photographs of the building and furnishings. There are also articles about the old courthouse and county history, including the day the SP RR arrived in town, the year the electric service went 24 hour, the cupola as a landmark, the bond issue of 1920 for roads, the Falcon Dam idea proposed in 1920 and finally realized in 1953, the story of moving the county seat. See also the excerpted article, clipped by Closner Chapin Ramsey, which gives a listing of the events scheduled for the grand opening.	<i>Daily Review</i> (DR) pB1 c1
5/20/54	Dedication	<i>Hidalgo is Ready for Dedication</i> <i>Edinburg, May 20 – The network of roadways southeast of the new \$1.5 million Hidalgo county courthouse was blocked off today in preparation for the dedication of the structure and a general celebration late today and tonight.</i> <i>The dedication ceremonies, highlighted by an address by Rep. Lloyd M. Bentsen, Jr., of McAllen, were scheduled to be short. We'll try to hold them down to an hour," said Harry Hall of Mission, who headed the committee in charge of the program. The top state official in Edinburg for the ceremonies was Chief Justice J. E. Hickman of the Texas Supreme Court</i> <i>Also on the program were Sen. Rogers Kelley of Edinburg as master of ceremonies. County Judge Milton D. Richardson and high school musicians from several Valley cities.</i>	BH P3 c 6
5/24/54	Razing	Rowland & Hunter bid turned down on razing old CH \$22,730	V10 P515
6/1/54	Razing	Bid of Ted Hall accepted on razing old CH \$5,300	V10 P517
6/1/54	Stage	Cert. No. 1099 to Texas Scenic Co. of San Antonio be paid \$935.00 For stage equipment	V10 P518

6/1/54	Razing	<i>Hidalgo Gets Bid on Old Courthouse</i> <i>Edinburg, June 1 – A Des Moines, Iowa man today offered to tear down and remove the old Hidalgo county courthouse for \$5,200 – less than a quarter of the amount asked by a Pharr firm.</i> <i>The Iowa wrecker, Ted Hall, made the bid by telephone “sight unseen.” He said his firm was now tearing down a courthouse in Bryan, Tex. And had just completed a job in Louisville, Ky. The commissioners took no formal action, but indicated they were very interested in the offer and would probably accept it unless a better proposition turned up.</i>	<i>Brownsville Herald</i> P1 c5
6/20/54	Cornerstone	<i>Old Courthouse Stone Yields Long-Ago Items</i> The contents of the cornerstone of the 1908 courthouse are described in this article. There is a mention of a county historical museum on the 2 nd floor of the new courthouse, which may be an error.	<i>Monitor</i>
6/29/54	ROW easement	Right of way easement approved for highway running through the CH square	V10 P531, 534
8/31/54	Work man	Roger Palmquist hired as Asst. to Supt. Of Building	V10 P563
8/31/54	Street	Meeting called for the purpose of discussing street around courthouse <i>A meeting was set for 2:00 o'clock p.m. with the City Commission, the Commissioners' Court and the State Highway Department, on Wednesday, Set. 1st 1954, for the purpose of discussing the street around the Courthouse, in order to start landscaping the Courthouse Grounds.</i>	V10 P564
9/21/54	Elevator	Elevator maintenance co. contract approved	V10 P569
10/5/54	ROW	R/W easement on a strip of land 20 ft. wide of all sides of CH square	V10 P582
11/23/54	Site	E. B. Darby & Co. bid accepted on site development in the amount of \$51,00.00	V10 P612
11/30/54	Site	E. B. Darby & Co. awarded revised contract in the amount of \$30,000	V10 P617
11/30/54	East lot	That east blocks of CH not be sold	V10 P617
1/4/55	Water lines	Mr. Younkin authorized to purchase pipe for water lines on CH grounds <i>A motion was made by Commissioner Curtis, seconded by Commissioner Green, and carried unanimously, to authorize Mr. Younkin to purchase all pipe for water lines that is necessary to do this job on the Courthouse Grounds.</i>	V11 P26
1/4/55	Site	Proposal site development, Hidalgo County CH	V11 P27-28
1/10/55	Site	E. B. Darby be paid \$6,750.00 on a 25% completion of their \$30,000 contract	V11 P46
1/25/55	Site	E. B. Darby paid \$23,436.90 for completing site of CH	V11 P67
3/14/55	Nurserymen	Sheriff authorized to contact nurserymen to give estimates and sketches for the purpose of landscaping CH grounds	V11 P133

		<i>Motion by Commissioner Carter, seconded by Commissioner Dudley, and carried unanimously, that the Court authorize Sheriff Vickers to contact nurserymen to give estimates and sketches for the purpose of landscaping the Courthouse grounds.</i>	
3/22/55	Landscape	To authorize Flowerland to draw a master plan for landscaping CH grounds	V11 P135
5/17/55	East parking lot	Group citizens of Edinburg appears in Court approving making parking lot of East CH Square	V11 P184
		<i>A large group of citizens of Hidalgo County appeared in a body before the Court, stating that they approved the original plan to pave the east side of the Court House Square for parking, and presented to the Court a petition to that effect, containing 106 signatures. Mr. C.E. Blodgett of Edinburg was spokesman for the group.</i>	
9/20/55	Grounds	Beautification Committee and Garden Club appeared offering assistance in beautifying CH grounds	V11 P273
		<i>A number of members of the Beautification Committee and Garden Club of Edinburg appeared before the Court to offer their aid in beautifying the Court House grounds and adjacent county owned property. Mr. Bill McCaleb, manager of Edinburg Chamber of Commerce, who was spokesman for the group, was assured by the Court that their services and plant donations would be gratefully accepted when the pending master plan for beautification of the grounds is complete.</i>	
9/20/55	East parking lot	CH parking lot-adopted plan to pave east side Courthouse.	V11 P273
		<i>Upon motion by Commissioner Carter, and seconded by Commissioner Green, it was voted unanimously to adopt the plan, as discussed in Court, this date, for paving a parking area on the vacant lots east of the Court House. Such plan proposing paving approximately 300 feet in width, extending from 12th Street to Highway 281; a two lane drive from the south entrance, to the center of parking place, and a two lane drive north into the parking area.</i>	
7/24/56	Corner parks	CH parking lot – Jr. Chamber of Commerce to plant grass	V12 P29
		<i>Upon motion by Commissioner Green, seconded by Commissioner Carter, it was voted to permit the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Edinburg (as represented by Ernest Smith, Jr.) to proceed with the planting of carpet grass in the four corners of the parking area east of the Court House. Motion carried.</i>	
12/18/56	Window tint	Mr. Younkins, Building Superintendent, presented cost figure on tinting curtain windows-Sun Shield Window Tinting Co.	V12 P221
		<i>Mr. Younkin, Courthouse Superintendent, presented cost figures from the Sun Shield Window Tinting Co. for treating the east entrance windows of the Courthouse with non-glare, heat</i>	

		<i>resistant tint, at a cost of \$369.72, which was company cost price and would not be effective after a dealer was established in the Valley. This figure represented cost on 827 square feet @ 44.7 per square foot. Mr. Younkin was instructed to get a dollars and cents figure on all the windows that needed tinting and present for further consideration.</i>	
2/19/57	Window tint	Valley Glass Tinting Co, McAllen – bid accepted for tinting CH windows, \$32.00 per hundred square feet.	V12 P302
9/17/57	Elevator	Elevator maintenance Company to continue service on CH elevators	V12 P599
11/19/57	Hidalgo Plaza	City of Edinburg, re: “Hidalgo Plaza”. Joint recreational park operating agreement	V13 P14-15
12/17/57	Hidalgo Plaza	Jr. Chamber of Commerce. Landscape plan for Hidalgo Plaza accepted.	V13 P46
		<i>Motion was made by Commissioner Green, seconded by Commissioner Carter, and carried unanimously, to approve the landscape plans, including plants, grass and trees, submitted by the Junior Chamber of Commerce for beautifying the parking area east of the Courthouse, known as Hidalgo Plaza.</i>	
3/10/58	Postage	To advertise for bids for postage meter for CH mail room	V13 P189
9/11/58	Trees	<i>Poinciana Trees Due for Square</i> <i>Edinburg’s Hidalgo Plaza soon will be grazed by a blaze of red blooms of the royal Poinciana trees.</i> <i>Eight trees, ordered by the Edinburg Chamber of Commerce will be planted this week along the north entrance to the plaza, where they will not cause any interference with traffic.</i> <i>Landscaping of the area has been done by the chamber and the Edinburg Jaycees with cooperation from both the county and the city.</i>	DR, p6 c8
9/12/58	Water	<i>Situation on Water “Best Ever”</i> Article describes the findings for August 1958 by the special water master for the 93 rd District Court.	DR, p1 c1
2/9/59	Jury toilets	Fred Phillips, Jr., McAllen. Request for additional sanitary facilities, CH. <i>Fred Phillips, Jr. of McAllen appeared before the Court stating that he represented “a minority group of second-class citizens”; that he had served as a juror on a jury of 11 men and 1 woman and calling the Court’s attention to the need for additional sanitary facilities for jurors; that there was only 1 lavatory, 1 commode and 1 shower to serve the Men’s Jury Dormitory and only 1 commode for the Jury Deliberating Room; that the jury who served with him asked him to appear before the court and request that the situation be remedied. The Court agreed to contact Mr. Noser, the Courthouse building contractor, and Mr. Younkin, the Courthouse Superintendent, to see what could be done.</i>	V14 P375
3/24/59	Chamber of Commerce building	Chamber of Commerce and Edinburg Women’s Community Club – Resolutions to accept their proposal to sell C. of C. Building on CH grounds to County for	V14 P525-526

		\$5,000 and resolution terminating permit granted 1/16/33 to maintain C. of C. Building.	
7/28/59	Remodel	<i>It was moved by Commissioner Pike, seconded by Commissioner Evins, that Noser Construction Company be notified to begin the remodeling work in the County Treasurer's Office, formerly occupied by the Right of Way Department, according to their contract. Motion carried.</i>	V15 P421
7/28/59	Annex	Right of Way Building – designated as CH Annex <i>Commissioner Curtis read the following resolution: Be it remembered that the Commissioners' Court recently acquired from the Chamber of Commerce of the City of Edinburg, and the Women's Community Club of Edinburg, that certain one story building located on the Courthouse grounds immediately north of the Courthouse, and Be it further remembered that the Court has deemed it expedient and necessary that the County Right of Way Department be located in said building, and Whereas, it is intended by the Commissioners' Court that said aforementioned building be and is considered an annex to and a part of the County Courthouse, and Whereas, it is deemed expedient and advisable that said building be officially designated as an annex and a part of the County Courthouse. Now, therefore, be it resolved that said afore described building be and the same is hereby designated as the Courthouse Annex. Whereupon Commissioner Curtis moved the adoption of the resolution, which said motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Carter, and adopted by all members present by voting "aye".</i>	V15 P421
9/14/59	Electric service	Central Power & Light Co. approved contract for service Five year service period	V15 P625
1960	Census	Population of 180,904. The number of farms in the county decreased to 4,124, decrease due to increase in large farming corporations on large tracts of land.	<i>Handbook of Texas</i>
1/11/60	Lights	Central Power & Light Co. – contract on 6 mercury vapor lights #8281 <i>On motion by Commissioner Pike, seconded by Commissioner Curtis, County Judge Milton D. Richardson was authorized to execute on behalf of Hidalgo County a contract between Central Power and Light Company for service on 6 mercury vapor 20,000 lumen street lights on the median of U.S. Highway 281 on the east side of the Courthouse. Motion carried.</i>	V16 P410
2/2/60	Pest control	Abash Insect Control Service – contract for CH-5 years <i>Motion was made by Commissioner Pike, seconded by Commissioner Curtis, that the Court enter into a Contract with Abash Insect Control Service of McAllen for the control of termites in the Courthouse, at a stipulated price of \$115.00 per</i>	V16 P466-467

		<i>year for a 5-year period.</i>	
4/5/60	Flags	American Legion Post, Donna – six 3x5-50 star flags for courtrooms ordered	V17 P10
4/28/60	Bonds	Courthouse Bonds - \$5,000 to be used to purchase county wide road bonds 1960	V17 P87
1/17/61	Telephone	Southwestern Bell Tel. Co. – termination agreement for installation of equipment in CH	V18 P387
2/21/61	Annex remodel	City of Edinburg – request that County obtain building permit for Courthouse Annex	V18 P518
		<i>Jack Reynolds, City Manager of the City of Edinburg, appeared before the Court requesting that the County obtain a Building Permit for the addition being made to the Courthouse Annex, also known as the Right of Way Department building.</i>	
2/23/61	Annex remodel	City of Edinburg – to obtain building permit for courthouse annex	V18 P535
		<i>Motion was made by Commissioner Evins, seconded by Commissioner Carter, to obtain a Building Permit for the addition to the Courthouse Annex, also known as the Right of Way Department building. Motion carried.</i>	
3/28/61	Photo copy	Office Equipment Co. - \$225 A.B. Dick photo copy machine purchased for all departments in CH (for use by all departments in the building)	V18 P668
5/16/61	Mower	Willis Younkin, building superintendent – authorized to purchase 26” Yazoo mowing machine, \$324.01	V19 P139
11/7/61	East parking lot	Joe B. Evins, County Commissioner, Precinct 4 – to work out plan for beautification of parking lot east of courthouse & submit to Court	V20 P183
		<i>It was moved by Commissioner Pike, seconded by Commissioner Curtis, that Commissioner Joe B. Evins assume charge of working out a plan for beautification of the parking lot east of the Courthouse, and to submit the final plan to the Commissioners’ Court for consideration and approval.</i>	
9/25/62	Floor	To advertise for bids for battery powered automatic floor maintainer	V22 P163
10/8/62	West parking lot	To advertise for bids for re-paving courthouse parking area west of US 281	V22 P186
		<i>Motion was made by Commissioner Curtis, that the County Auditor be authorized to advertise for bids for paving by re-topping the parking area around the Courthouse on the west side of US-281, which motions was seconded by Commissioner Pike, and carried.</i>	
10/16/62	Floor	Valley Janitor Supply Co, bid \$1,500 for Clark-A-Matic floor maintainer, accepted.	V22 P200
10/23/62	Site	E. B. Darby & Company Inc, cost estimate, Jan. 31, 1955. Plans & specifications for site grading and paving showing corrections for perimeter sidewalk reduced from 6 ft to 3 ft	V22 P213

		in the amount of \$798.30, bal \$23,436.90, spread on minutes.	
		<i>Motion was made by Commissioner Curtis, seconded by Commissioner Carter, and carried, that the Cost Estimate of E.B. Darby & Company, Inc. dated January 31, 1955, for the Site Grading & Paving-Hidalgo County Court House Grounds Per Plans & Specifications, showing the correction for Perimeter Sidewalk reduced from 6 ft. to 3 ft., in the amount of \$798.30, leaving a balance of \$23,436.90, and approved by the Commissioners' Court, be spread on the Minutes. (Also transcribed is a memo or letter with the estimate information, dated 1/31/55, from E. B Darby.)</i>	
11/13/62	Paving	Mission Paving Co, bid of \$3,603 for repaving courthouse parking lot west of US 281, accepted	V22 P284-285
	Plans	Publishers affidavit of notice – plans and specifications prepared by C. L. Fabian	V22 P283
12/18/62	Legal Aid office	Hidalgo County Bar Association, request for free rent in Courthouse for Legal Aid Office	V22 P363-364
		A long entry, describing the efforts of the Hidalgo County Bar Association to establish a non-profit Legal Aid Society for Hidalgo County. Discussion of county staff and budget support.	
		<i>County Judge Richardson stated that he would consult with Sheriff E.E. Vickers as to any available space in the Courthouse for the Legal Aid Office, and the Court agreed to take the matter under advisement.</i>	
1/8/63	Repairs	Sam R. Gatti, proposal \$1,750 to repair plaster cracks inside Courthouse, accepted	V22 P398
		<i>On motion by Commissioner Curtis, seconded by Commissioner Carter, and carried unanimously, it was voted to accept the proposal of Sam R. Gatti, Edcouch, Texas, to furnish labor and material for repairing all plaster cracks, fungus resulting from dampness, replacing metal lath where needed, expansion joints where needed, plaster stops inside the Courthouse. All cracks to be opened one inch or more where necessary and expansion joints and plaster stops shall be of galvanized material, for the sum of One Thousand, Seven Hundred and fifty (\$1,750.00) Dollars.</i>	
12/18/62	Plaques	Hidalgo County Bar Association, Presented to Hidalgo County two plaques. "A Lawyer's Obligation" and "A Judge's Obligation" to be hung on 2 nd floor of courthouse	V22 P401
1/31/63	Scaffold	W. H. Younkin, Courthouse Superintendent. Authorized to purchase scaffolding equipment from Safeway Scaffolds Company of San Antonio for \$598.50 for use in repairing Courthouse outside walls. Emergency declared.	V22 P496
		<i>On motion made by Commissioner Curtis, seconded by</i>	

		<i>Commissioner Carter, declaring that an emergency exists for the purchase of certain scaffolding equipment to be used in repairing the outside walls of the Courthouse and that W. H. Younkin, Courthouse Superintendent, be authorized to order scaffolding equipment from the Safeway Scaffolds Company of San Antonio, Texas, consisting of a set of Safeway Jr. Swings complete with a 20" x 20' Aluminum Stage and Roof Hooks, at a cost of \$598.50.</i>	
2/26/63	State Welfare Dept office moves out of CH	State Welfare Dept. Office to be vacated March 15 th , if possible, as office space needed for Court Clerk and Reporter for Water Rights suit in 93 rd Dist. Ct – Judge J.H. Starley, Special Judge	V22 P536
		<i>County Judge Milton D. Richardson announced that the State Welfare Department, occupying offices on the 5th floor of the Courthouse, and been notified to vacate the office by March 15th, if possible, as the office space was needed for the Legal Aid Office and for the Court Clerk and Court Reporter, in connection with the Water Rights suit pending in 93rd District Court in which Judge J.H. Starley is Special Judge.</i>	
3/26/63	Jury toilets	Noser Construction Co. Proposal for additional toilet facilities for Jury Dormitories 5 th floor, courthouse. \$5,169.00. Accepted.	V22 P665
		No description of the specific work done. Described as enlarging the toilet facilities for the convenience of jurors, and done on an emergency basis. Excerpt of long passage: <i>We propose to install the additional toilet facilities on the Fifth Floor of the Hidalgo County Courthouse in accordance with the plan prepared by us, including plastering, ceramic tile work, electrical, plumbing, metal toilet stalls, painting, and revising the existing air conditioning duct work for the sum of Five thousand One Hundred Sixty Nine Dollars, (\$5,169.00)</i>	
5/7/63	Marker	John Ben Shepperd, president of Texas State Historical Survey Committee. Letter received informing County Judge that a Confederate Memorial Information Marker commemorating El Sal Del Rey would be placed on Courthouse lawn	V23 P70-71
		<i>A letter received from John Ben Shepperd, President of the Texas State Historical Committee, was read informing County Judge Milton D. Richardson that a Confederate Memorial Information Marker would be placed on the Courthouse lawn commemorating the part the El Sal Del Ray (salt lake) played during the Civil War, being part of a new program by the Texas Historical Survey Committee to place markers in accessible places for the benefit of tourists and Texans, at no expense to the County, and described the marker as being of Texas pink granite, 5 feet high, 2 feet 6 inches wide, 8 inches thick.</i>	
11/19/63	Lights	To advertise for bids for 12 mercury vapor flood lights for	V24 P170

		Courthouse	
		7 fixtures of 1000 watts, 5 of 400 watts. Text describes the exact specifications of the fixtures.	
12/3/63	Lights	Edinburg Electric Motor Service. Bid \$1,600.00 for 12 mercury vapor floodlights. Accepted.	V24 P184
		Text describes bids received in detail.	
3/24/64	Furniture	Judge Richardson authorized to purchase desk chairs, filing cabinets for Courthouse offices vacated by State Welfare and Drivers License Division.	V24 P419
		<i>It was moved by Commissioner Pike, seconded by Commissioner Curtis, and unanimously adopted, that County Judge Milton D. Richardson be authorized to purchase the necessary desks, chairs and filing cabinets to furnish the offices in the Courthouse vacated by the State Welfare Department and the Drivers' License Department.</i>	
5/11/64	Utility bill	Utility bills for Courthouse Annex at 14 th and Loeb to be paid from Utilities Courthouse Fund	V24 P492
		<i>It was moved by Commissioner Guerra, seconded by Commissioner Curtis, and carried, that the utility bills for the Courthouse Annex at 14th and Loeb in Edinburg be paid from Utilities-Courthouse fund, appropriated from the General Fund.</i>	
5/26/64	Birdbath	Edinburg Garden Club, birdbath on grounds. Judge Richardson received biography of St. Francis of Assisi, statue on bird bath	V24 P567
		<i>It was moved by Commissioner Pike that the biography of Saint Francis of Assisi as taken from the Book of Knowledge, read by County Judge Milton D. Richardson for information as to the Statue on the Bird Bath constructed on the Courthouse grounds by the Edinburg Garden Club be spread on the Minutes of the Court, which said Motion was seconded by commissioner Guerra and unanimously adopted.</i>	
		Text of the biography is recorded in the minutes.	
12/16/64	Duplicator	County Auditor reported office duplicator used by all departments not working. Authorized to advertise for bids.	V25 P545
		Full specification of the offset duplicator is given in the minutes.	
1/11/65	Duplicator	Addressograph, Multigraph, Multilith, Corpus Christi, Bid of \$3,057.21 for Multigraph Multilith Offset Duplicator for Courthouse use, accepted.	V26 P87-88
4/5/66	Switchboard	Jane Hopkins employed as part-time switchboard operator for Courthouse	V28 P316
		<i>Whereas, it appearing to the Commissioners' Court that it has become necessary to employ a part-time switchboard operator for</i>	

		<i>the Courthouse in addition to the regular operator; and Whereas, it appearing that Jane Hopkins should be employed a part-time switchboard operator for the Courthouse at a salary of \$125.00 per month, effective April 1, 1966;.....</i>	
5/3/66	Fountain	R. Ramirez, mayor of Edinburg. Request on behalf of individuals and civic and political organizations for permission to construct fountain on Courthouse grounds. Permission granted subject to final plans being submitted <i>Whereas, request having been received from A. R. Ramirez, Mayor of the City of Edinburg, Texas, on behalf of interested individuals, civic and political organizations, for approval from the Commissioners' Court to construct a fountain on the southwest corner of the southeast quadrant of the square in the City of Edinburg, Texas, said property adjoining US Highway 281 and being owned by Hidalgo County, Texas; and Whereas the proposed fountain being considered as a beautification project under a law passed by the Congress of the United States known as the Highway Beautification Act of 1965; and Whereas, it being the opinion of Commissioners' Court that such approval should be given; Now, therefore, be it resolved the by Commissioners' Court of Hidalgo County, Texas, that approval be granted to interested individuals, civic and political organizations to construct a fountain on property owned by Hidalgo County, Texas, and to be located on the southwest corner of the southeast quadrant of the square in Edinburg, Texas, said property adjoining US Highway 281 on the west and the beautification project being undertaken under a law passed by the Congress of the United States known as the Highway Beautification Act of 1965, the approval to be subject to final plans to be submitted to Commissioners' Court.</i>	V28 P456
10/24/67	Plaques	Hidalgo County Bar Association authorized to hang 2 plaques of past presidents on 2 nd floor of Courthouse	V31 P72
7/30/68	East parking lot	City Commissioner Henry Payne appeared presenting proposed beautification plan for Courthouse square east of US 281. Taken under advisement.	V32 P92
8/21/68	Veterans Services officer	J.J. Pointbouef (sp?), past County Veteran Services Officer, on behalf of American Legion and other veterans organizations. Resolution that US flag be flown at half-mast on Courthouse Square on date of burial of any County war victim now serving in Armed Forces	V32 P150
1970	Census	Population of 181,533. Civil rights movement during the 1960s increased participation of Hispanics in county politics. Increase in migration from Mexico. Population increased between 1970 and 1977 to 232,300	<i>Handbook of Texas</i>
3/31/70	Jail	Gene Hobart, architect, authorized to make application for federal funds to provide 60% cost of construction of a new County Jail and a detention facility for juveniles and federal prisoners.	V34 P233

3/23/71	Parking	County Sheriff. To be authorized to regulate and control traffic in Courthouse parking area	V35 P394 (or 374?)
4/12/71	Bailiff	J.J. (Frenchy) Poinbouef, Bailiff for 92 Dist Court, deceased. Courthouse flag to be flown at half-mast on April 13, 1971 in tribute. Resolution and eulogy to be furnished to family.	V35 P469
7/6/71	Roof repairs	Willie Younkin, Courthouse Superintendent, authorized to repair the roof on Courthouse Annex (ROW Building)	V35 P697
9/7/71	Southeast grounds	Edinburg Chamber of Commerce. Proposal to beautify southeast corner of Courthouse approved.	V36 P4
		<i>Walter Shirah, Manager of the Edinburg Chamber of Commerce, and David Bell, President of the Edinburg Chamber of Commerce, appeared before the Court presenting a proposed plan for beautification of the Southeast corner of the Courthouse square at 12th and Cano Streets. They stated that the plan called for supplying benches, sidewalks and planting palm trees and that it did not entail building any monuments or buildings, and that funds were available for the project.</i>	
1/18/1972	Cooling towers	Willis Younkin, Courthouse Superintendent, to advertise for bids for 2 air conditioning water cooling towers	V36 P667-68
		<i>Whereas, it having been brought to the attention of the Court by County Auditor Robert B. McLeaish, Jr. that consideration has been given to replacing the Air Conditioning Cooling Towers on top of the County Courthouse and that conferences have been had with Willis Younkin, the Courthouse Superintendent, and he having drawn specifications therefore, ...</i>	
2/1/1972	Cooling towers	Texair Co, Inc, bid of \$7,440.00 for Proposal A for 2 cooling towers for courthouse accepted, and Proposal B to be considered in amount of \$3,610.00 additional.	V36 P741-42
8/22/1972	East parking lot	Edinburg Chamber of Commerce authorized to mark parking lines on East parking lots of courthouse, to remove trees obstructing parking and demolish fall-out shelter.	V37 P855-56
		<i>There appeared before the Court L. A. Youngman, Chairman of the Edinburg Chamber of Commerce Beautification Committee and Robert Stewart, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, presenting a proposed plan for beautification of the East courthouse parking lot, in which they stated that they felt improvements could be made by marking off parking lines to provide an orderly parking of cars and which would provide an increase of 40% or more cars, also they proposed to remove some trees now in the parking lot which interfere with orderly parking and to plant other trees for beautification purposes...</i>	
9/11/1972	Fiesta Hidalgo	Edinburg Chamber of Commerce request permission to use East parking lot of courthouse for Carnival during Fiesta Hidalgo granted	V38 P24
12/11/1972	Photo machine	Xerox Photo Co, request for permission to install coin-operated photo machine in courthouse	V38 P477
1/22/1973	Photo	Xerox Corporation, proposal to furnish coin-operated photo	V39 P115

	machine	machine for use in courthouse	
1/29/1973	Parking lot	Claudio Castaneda, Co. Sheriff, proposal for changed in courthouse parking lot, approved. To advertise for improvements to courthouse parking lot, see notice 3/19/1973	V39 P147
		<i>County Sheriff Claudio Castaneda presented a proposed Plan for changes in the Courthouse parking lot as had been previously requested by the Commissioners Court and explained that the proposed plan would permit entrance to the parking lot from the west entrance only and exits on Cano and McIntyre Streets and changing the direction of parking, eliminating islands that now exist and which plan would provide for 160 parking spaces. He stated that it would necessitate re-stripping the parking lines, removing the islands and putting up the proper signs and that it would be the responsibility of the Commissioners Court to pass Orders for the enforcement and punishment for violation of the parking order...</i>	
3/19/1973	Repairs	Office of Emergency Preparedness, received \$998.63 final payment for repairs due to Hurricane Fern (Index entry doesn't state what or where these repairs were. Most of the repairs were for roads and bridges, and the courthouse repairs were only a small part of the overall total.)	V39 P413
3/19/1973	Parking lot	To advertise for curb and gutter, paving, traffic stops, etc. for parking lot, bids 4/23/1973. (Work approved on 1/29/1973.)	V39 P417-18
4/16/1973	Glass doors	Harold Johnson, bid of \$15 for glass courthouse door. A. R. Ramirez, bid of \$15 for glass courthouse door. County judge authorized to sell doors.	V39 P619
4/23/1973	Paving	Frank Vesckio Paving Co, McAllen, bid of \$1,755 for curb and gutter, paving, traffic stops and signs on courthouse parking lot. (Work approved on 1/29/1973)	V39 P635
4/23/1973	Parking	Commissioners Court, no parking spaces to be marked reserved	V39 P636
6/11/1973	Copier	Addressograph Multigraph Corporation, proposal to sell Multilith Offset Copier for courthouse use	V39 P1057
8/13/1973	Copier	Multilith Corp, statement for \$10,505.59 for Multilith Machine for courthouse received and lease agreement	V40 P401
8/20/1973	Annex	Rolando Cantu, official agent for Manpower Programs, request for additional office space, courthouse annex to be enlarged. Ashby, Humphries & Garza Architects to draw plans.	V40 P523
		<i>...He stated that he had discussed the matter of office space with Department of Labor officials and they had suggested a centralized office to save administrative cost, that \$300.00 per month was being expended on rentals for various offices, telephone, etc. and that by centralization of the offices this cost could be cut 50%, and that he would like to recommend an addition to the Courthouse Annex (Right of Way Building) of 800 to 1000 square feet, and that the Department of Labor is</i>	

prepared to enter into a Lease Agreement to pay rental for the use of the building.

Commissioner Guerra stated that he thought enlarging the Courthouse Annex would be the most economical way of providing necessary office space which was needed for other departments and the Traffic Coordinator, recently appointed. He stated that he had requested Tom Ashley of the firm of Ashley, Humphries & Garza, Architects, employed by the County to plan the new Jail facilities, to look at the building and make suggestions for enlarging it, and Mr. Guerra stated that he thought the building could be enlarged 1600 square feet at a cost of approximately \$8.00 to \$10.00 per square feet, expanding it on the East and North.

Commissioner Curtis suggested that plans be drawn and bids be received for construction, and Commissioner Guerra suggested that the County forces could build the building at a much lower cost since supervision was a large portion of the cost.

County Judge Ed Gomez stated that since Mr. Ashley had agreed to draw up the plans and take measurements, that the Court should proceed with the plans for enlarging the Courthouse Annex.

8/24/1973	Annex	Ashby, Humphries & Garza Architects, report on enlargement of courthouse annex, directed to proceed and report to court	V40 P573
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Mr. Ashley stated that at the request of the Commissioners Court he had done some investigation and work on the proposal to enlarge the Courthouse Annex for the Man Power Office and other offices that could be moved from the Courthouse. He suggested that the Courthouse Annex could be enlarged on the West, on the South and also by an L-shaped addition on the East, and that he was considering the appearance of the building from the outside and the entrances so as to give better use of space and for the convenience of those using the building, and that he would need to talk to the Department heads to determine their various needs, and that he was trying to program it to function for other offices that may be relocated from the Courthouse. He displayed sketches of his proposed extensions and additions.

Commissioner Guerra stated that he thought Mr. Ashley should proceed with the planning and report to the Court.

7/24/1973	Parking	Claudio Castaneda, discussion re: regulating parking on Courthouse parking lot. Order to be prepared for meeting 9/28/1973. (Recent changes in the last legislative session allow for this.)	V40 P753
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9/28/1973	Parking	County employees and those conducting business at courthouse only persons permitted to park in parking lots	V40 P773
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		south, west and north of courthouse (this is to address double parking, parking in restricted areas, and use of the parking lots by people other than county employees or those who are conducting business in the courthouse.)	
10/12/1973	Annex foundation	Spencer Concrete Co, Edinburg, emergency declared and approved bid of \$20.25 per cubic yard for concrete for courthouse annex. (This is for the foundation of the enlargement of the Courthouse Annex.)	V40 P830
10/18/1973	Parking	The Monitor, McAllen, publishing affidavit of order regulating parking on south, west, north of courthouse	V40 P867-68
10/19/1973	Annex	Clarence Dobbs, county maintenance foreman, emergency declared and purchases of materials authorized for courthouse annex	V40 P886
3/18/1974	Annex	Ashley, Garza, Humphries Associates, approved payment of \$3,182.00 for labor and overhead in remodeling courthouse annex	V41 P646
5/6/1974	Air conditioning	Dalton Service Agency Inc, San Antonio, emergency declared and \$4,792.35 cost for overhauling and repairs on courthouse air conditioning system approved	V42 P55
5/13/1974	Paving	Mission Paving Co, Inc, payment approved for paving courthouse parking lot, and budget amended	V42 P84
6/3/1974	Annex	Robert L. Harrison Paint Contractors, Pharr, approved payment \$2,634 for 2 coats Flex-Coat on courthouse annex	V42 P111
8/12/1974	Postage	Pitney Bowes, Corpus Christi, emergency declared and authorized payment of \$2,320 for new postage meter and rental of \$56 for courthouse	V42 P473
4/7/1975	Jail	Bids for Jail still being studied. Meeting with contractor to work out best	V43 P689
4/23/1975	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, architect, be authorized to negotiate with Krueger Construction on bid of detention facility received 3/27/1975	V43 P772-73
5/2/1975	Jail	Jail: Report on latest developments on negotiations with low bidder (Krueger Construction). Letter from Braselton Construction to enter negotiations also.	V43 P804-809
5/5/1975	Jail	Jail: Claudio Castaneda and Guadalupe Betancourt, o present report on recommendations to be made and considered for jail in accordance with grand jury	V43 P822-29
5/19/1975	Jail	Jail: Accept bid and award contract to Krueger Construction for #2,265,722, and Judge authorized to execute	V43 P928
5/19/1975	Jail	Jail: architects to revise plans and specifications to delete or change certain items	V43 P930
6/9/1975	Jail	Jail: No bids received for jail equipment. Authorization to purchase equipment on the open market	V44 P76
8/25/1975	Jail	Jail: Change order in amount of \$108,727 being in addition to contract already awarded	V44 P397
10/6/1975	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, report on detention center and that bill for work done to be presented soon	V44 P526
10/20/1975	Fiesta Hidalgo	Johnny Ortiz, request use of town square weekend of 3/3/1976 for joint activities by Fiesta Hidalgo and Bicentennial Committee	V44 P592

11/3/1975	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, month end report and discussion about access adjoining farm land	V44 P616
12/8/1975	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, monthly report on construction of jail	V44 P753
1/12/1976	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, monthly report	V45 P27
1/19/1976	Roof repairs	Republic Powdered Metals, emergency declared and Judge authorized to purchase necessary materials to fix roof over Tax and County Clerk's offices (The proposal describes the L-shaped roof on a portion of the courthouse. It notes that the steel deck is sound, but that the roof is nearly dead level with three drains, and that over time water ponding in low spots has caused leaks.)	V45 P78-9
2/2/1976	Jail	Jail: Marshall-Clegg, agreement to draw up specs on jail equipment	V45 P140-44
2/2/1976	Plaza Hidalgo	Courthouse Square, request by Bicentennial Committee to name it "Plaza Hidalgo" and invite Commissioners to participate in parade and ceremony (Parade to be held on March 6, 1976)	V45 P137
2/9/1976	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, month end report	V45 P177
3/8/1976	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, monthly report. 27% complete. Question as to kitchen equipment	V45 P375
4/19/1976	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, monthly report	V45 P615
5/10/1976	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, monthly report	V45 P670
5/24/1976	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, report on inside materials for jail. Carpet ruled out.	V45 P723-24
6/14/1976	Repairs	Courthouse maintenance, emergency declared and authorized to pay \$308.75. (Index entry doesn't indicate what or where this is.)	V45 P769
6/14/1976	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, monthly report. 6% during May. All necessary material at site so work pick up. Change in floor covering being done and working on revised schedule	V45 P771
8/9/1976	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, jail through 7/76 was 53% complete. Materials and equipment at site, no problems	V45 P947
10/18/1976	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, monthly report on jail. Request for extension of time. 61% complete, as of 10/1/1976	V46 P201-205
11/15/1976	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, monthly report. Facility by mid Nov was 72% complete	V46 P343
1/3/1977	Repairs	Courthouse maintenance, emergency declared and authorized to pay \$304.50 to Industrial Solvent and \$318.25 to Duratronic, Inc.	V46 P496-97
1/17/1977	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, monthly report for month of 12/76 and change order regarding furniture approved	V46 P569-70
2/14/1977	Mini courthouse	Mini courthouse, request for permission to advertise for 60-70' pipe (Index entry doesn't indicate what or where this is. Minute entry doesn't indicate this either. Refers to a 60-70 foot pipe, if the drive way was 50'. Also refers to a 48" pipe, as requested by the Water District.)	V46 P743
2/22/1977	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, monthly report for month of Jan 77	V46 P777
2/28/1977	Jail	Jail: Litton Office Supply, accept bid on furniture and equipment for detention facility	V46 P809
2/28/1977	Square	Courthouse Square, request by Chamber of Commerce for	V46 P811

		use on 3/24, 25 and 26, approved	
3/7/77	Mini courthouse	H. P. Fowler, accept bid of \$7,200 for concrete pipe for mini courthouse	V46 P825
4/18/1977	Addition	County Judge informed court that more space was needed and authorized to ask architect to appear and make suggestions	V47 P26-27
<i>County Judge R. M. Guerra stated that more space was needed in the Courthouse and that he had contacted the person that was in charge of building the courthouse and who assisted in designing it. He at present is in charge of constructing the McAllen Hospital. He pointed out that the longer that we put this off the worse it will get. All departments have grown and there are plans for another court. In talking with Mr. Merle Simpson it has been pointed out that no provisions were made on the foundation for additional floors. Judge Guerra stated that there were two proposals: build something across the street and connect with passage way or add two floors to the Northeast of building. He stated that before a decision is reached a study of present and future needs within 5-10 year period and arrive at conclusion. He asked the Court for a chance for Mr. Simpson to appear before them and discuss the matter. At this point, County Judge Guerra made reference to a letter from Mr. Simpson in which he stated that he would be willing to appear before the Court regarding the possible expansion of the courthouse at the Court's convenience.</i> <i>Brief discussion was held in which all Commissioners agreed that a study was needed before a decision would be reached. It was also suggested that all courts be relocated to another building and County Judge offices that needed to be near them. Discussion followed in which parking situation was mentioned and where it was pointed out that we are late in getting the project started. Commissioner Curtis stated that by the time that additional space is built we will be in trouble again.</i> <i>County Judge Guerra asked if it was all right with the Court he would have Mr. Simpson come and talk to them next week.</i>			
4/25/1977	Addition	Merle Simpson, made suggestions and county entered into survey contract for \$12,500	V47 P33-34
<i>Whereas, County Judge Guerra stated that he had gotten authorization from the Court to bring Merle Simpson to talk to them about a possible study of the expansion of the Courthouse. Judge Guerra introduced all commissioners and news media to Mr. Simpson.</i> <i>Mr. Simpson stated that in considering the possible expansion of the Courthouse and after he conducted a very brief study there were two alternatives: 1. Expand this building either vertical or horizontal; 2. Or go across the street. He stated that the south</i>			

part of the courthouse was not designed for vertical expansion. The north part it would be possible to put another floor. County Judge Guerra asked Mr. Simpson to clarify if foundation had been constructed so that additional floors could be added. He pointed that he had stated earlier that neither the North or South ends of the Courthouse had been constructed for vertical addition. Mr. Simpson stated that the south section was constructed of steel and a lot would have to be torn down while the south side would have to be reinforced. The adding at the northeast corner would create no problems since material could be found to blend.

Discussion followed where it was pointed that the 2nd floor could be extended over the County Clerk's Office but that this could not be done for the auditorium. Mr. Simpson stated that if alternative was across the street that the Department with the most outside traffic could be re-located. It was pointed out that if the Courts were moved across the streets then a lot of the other offices would have to be placed close by.

County Judge Guerra mentioned that last week a question about using the bottom portion for parking lot and building on top. Mr. Simpson state that this could be done but that it would be forcing a lot of extra construction. Commissioner Curtis stated that he felt that we should try to build adjacent to original building. County Judge Guerra stated that the Court would have to decide today or in the near future what will be done. Whether we want to rely on someone to provide us with services to survey facilities, along with report the re-alignment of departments and also abide with projection of needs within 10 years. County Judge Guerra stated that he had material from several firms but that he felt that M. Simpson was better acquainted with the situation and that would be to our advantage.

Mr. Simpson stated that in a previous job his firm had been able to create additional space by just re-alignment of offices. He also pointed out that there were several areas which needed to be protected such as the air conditioning which was already over loaded. Discussion followed on how this problem could be solved. Mr. Simpson stated that he could give a cost estimate within 2 or 3 % if he knew whether building would be here or across the street. He also asked the Court to consider the fact of using solar energy. He pointed that he had three kinds of architectural contracts: 1. Lump sum; 2. Percentage; 3. Construction management proposal. He stated that study would take 31 days and would cost \$12,5000 and after this he could give recommendation as to how to proceed. County Judge Guerra stated that the first step would be the survey.

It was moved by Commissioner Curtis, seconded by

		<i>Commissioner Ponce, that we enter into a survey contract with Mr. Merle Simpson for the survey and study of present facilities, utilization and re-location of departments in order to follow through with plans to expand for the cost of \$12,500. And, the Motion upon being put to a vote carried.</i>	
5/16/1977	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, monthly report for month of March and April 1977	V47 P167
6/27/1977	Addition	Merle Simpson, discussion about possible expansion of courthouse, go into contract with Mr. Simpson for necessary functions for expansion	V47 P347-48
<i>Whereas, there came on for consideration a report from Merle Simpson, Architect, regarding the possible expansion of the Courthouse and better utilization of present courthouse space; and Whereas, County Judge Guerra stated that Mr. Simpson had been employed by the County to make a study and make recommendations to this Court. He stated that Mr. Simpson's report would consist of sketches and cost estimates.</i> <i>Mr. Simpson handed out a written report on his findings and recommendations. He went on to say that after studying departmental functions they had decided to go horizontal. He stated that room for the Law Library had been found on the first floor, that the Maintenance Department did not have a space to store or an office of any sort, consideration should be given to the elimination of the switchboard in the lobby area since he felt that the giving of information took too much time from the operators, he pointed out area allowed for the County Clerk's Office and stated that he felt that by removing partition that would give that office all the information that was needed. Auto License Department would stay where it is and expanded a little in order to serve more people during rush time.</i> <i>He informed the Court that foundation for the addition would cost about \$12,000.00. Foundation would be made for two floors now and so that two (2) others could be added on later on. He went on to indicate space allowed for each department on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th floors. He also asked that air locks or double entrances be made in order to save on the air conditioning. Brief discussion was held on the remodeling of the Commissioners Courtroom in order to accommodate the County Court at Law #2. It was pointed out that all benches etc. would be only temporary.</i> <i>It was moved by Commissioner Curtis, seconded by Commissioner Ponce, that the County go into contract with Mr. Merle Simpson, Architect, so that we can proceed with the necessary functions for expansion of courthouse and that County Judge R. M. Guerra be authorized to sign all necessary; and the motion upon being put to a vote carried.</i>			
8/15/1977	Jail	Jail: Tom Ashley, change order #3 and 4 to Krueger	V47 P530

		Construction	
11/7/1977	Alterations	Courthouse alterations, advertise for remodeling and open bids on 11/28/1977 at 2:00 pm	V47 P827
		This was for alterations to the "old Sheriff's Department area" and that "the inside of the building had already been torn down by our crew and that we needed to advertise for remodeling".	
11/21/1977	Alterations	Request for extension on bid opening date, approved for 12/5/1977	V47 P920
		This was also for alterations to the old Sheriff's Department area.	
12/5/1977	Alterations	Courthouse alterations, accept bid of Summers Electric in amount of \$4,181.00	V47 P987-88
12/5/1977	Alterations	Mr. Simpson informed the court that bids on alterations would be opened at 4:00pm. He was informed that (1) bid had been opened and accepted	V47 P1008
		This was also for alterations to the old Sheriff's Department area. The newspaper ad stated bids due at 2pm, and Simpson's notice stated they were due at 4pm.	
12/5/1977	Alterations	Palmer Building & Supply, accept bid of \$1,151.00 for flooring	V47 P1010
		Mr. Simpson gave the Court all their estimates and stated that he could not understand why some of the bids were lower than his estimates but that it was good for the County....	
12/5/1977	Alterations	Robert L. Harrison, accept bid of \$758.00 for painting	V47 P1010
12/5/1977	Alterations	South Texas Sales, accept bid of \$885.00 for ceiling	V47 P1010
12/5/1977	Alterations	Summers Electric, court waived formality and accepted bid of \$4,181.00	V47 P1011
12/12/1977	Alterations	Trouble with Summers bid, so court accepted next lowest bid of Heggen Electric in amount of \$3,450.00 and Valley Weather Makers in amount of \$1,437.00	V47 P1020
		Summers could not provide a bid or performance bond, so the next lowest bid was accepted. The presentation to the Court was apparently made by Bob Simpson.	
1/16/1978	Alterations	Courthouse renovation, Package #2, advertise and open bids 2/6/1978	V48 P58
		The Court discussed Package #2, which included work to re-surface and refinish existing walls, certain gypsum board partition work, new carpeting and window sun control systems, and acoustic ceiling applications. The Court discussed the recommendation to use carpet, and were told that the maintenance of carpet would be cheaper than (apparently) the existing floor finishes. Carpet was recommended in the Library, Adult Probation and District	

		Attorney's Office.	
1/23/1978	Alterations	Heggen Electric Co, change order 77-101-C5 (1) in the amount of \$815.00 (Electrical work)	V48 P80-2
		Work described as being in Old Sheriff's Office and the District Clerk's office.	
1/30/1978	Alterations	South Texas Sales, change order #77-101-C2(1) in the amount of \$46.00 (ceiling work)	V48 P123-24
		Simpson's office was at 3605 Katy Frwy, #104, Houston, Texas, 77007. Change order form is included in minutes.	
1/30/1978	Alterations	Valley Weathermakers, change order #77-101-C4(1) in the amount of \$359.25 (air conditioning work)	V48 P125-26
		Change order form is included in minutes.	
1/30/1978	Alterations	Package #3, permission to advertise and open bids on 2/23/1978 at 2:00 pm at ROW Department	V48 P126
2/6/1978	Alterations	Package #4, permission to advertise and open bids on 3/6/1978, 2:00 pm	V48 P193
		Bid Package #4 was the new addition.	
2/6/1978	Alterations	South Texas Sales, Inc., accept bid of \$650 for gypsum board and \$97 for ceiling for Bid Package #2	V48 P196
2/6/1978	Alterations	Robert L. Harrison, accept bid on painting in amount of \$1,134.00	V48 P196
2/6/1978	Alterations	Sigler, Winston, et al, request for employment for site study for temporary parking and fence sites. Matter tabled.	V48 P196
		Sigler, Winston and Greenwood & Associates to do the site study for temporary parking and fence sites for the new addition to the Courthouse. Court needed at least an estimate of the cost of such contract, before taking action on this item.	
2/13/1978	Alterations	Package 4, postpone bid opening and authorize re-advertise and open bids on 3/9/1978	V48 P211
		<i>Whereas, Mr. Merle Simpson, architect for the alterations to the Courthouse, gave a brief report on the progress of the repairs which have taken place. He stated that we had already advertised for Package #3, also wanted permission to advertise for Package #4 and open bids on March 9, 1978. It was moved by Commissioner Curtis, seconded by Commissioner Cavazos, that postpone bid opening on Package #4 and permission be granted to re-advertise and open bids on March 9, 1978.</i>	
		<i>Mr. Simpson stated that schedules for Bid package 5 & 6 would be available on March 6, 1978. He also asked that permission be granted to employ a Civil Engineer to assist in providing temporary access to the construction site. It was moved by Commissioner Curtis, seconded by Commissioner Martinez,</i>	

that Mr. Simpson be authorized to employ a civil engineer for a maximum of \$4,000.00 and the motion upon being put to a vote carried.

Mr. Simpson informed the Court that the obtaining of building permits for Package 1, 2 and 3 was OK but that there might be a problem on #4 because of the parking problem, but Mr. Simpson stated that a study of parking would be made. The Court informed Mr. Simpson that they had the two blocks across the street for parking and that area could be cleared of benches if the City wished.

Mr. Simpson asked if the county could use their own personnel to build the construction enclosures because if they contracted with a contractor it would cost a lot more. County Judge Guerra informed the Court that the County had some chain link fence which could be used and that county personnel could be used to build the construction enclosures.

Mr. Simpson asked for authorization for permission to install a water softener system. He pointed out that the fixing up of the present system would be over \$5,000 and that the installation of a new system would cost about \$8000. That this could be included in Bid Package #3 by Addendum. It was moved by Commissioner Curtis seconded by Commissioner Cavazos that the installation of a new water softener system be included in Bid Package #3 by addendum, and the motion upon being put to a vote carried.

At the point, Mr. Ciro Trevino, Tax Assessor Collector, asked when his office would be included in the bids. Mr. Simpson pointed that his office would be taken care of in Bid Package #6.

Mr. Simpson asked for permission to replace the incinerator by competitive bidding. County Judge Guerra stated that he had some brochures on his desk regarding a baler and shredder. Discussion was held in which problems existing with incinerator were brought up.

Mr. Simpson stated that he had talked with a representative from Consumat, agency which had a contract with the federal government for this type of equipment. The Court asked that more information be presented before making a final decision.

Mr. Simpson asked that the Court appoint a representative that would handle the orderly transfer of departments. The court felt that the County Judge's office should be the one to take care of this. It was the opinion of the Court that the transfer of department be handled through the County Judges' Office. Mr. Simpson stated that he would be working up a tentative

		<i>schedule for this.</i>	
2/13/1978	Alterations	Mr. Simpson authorized to employ a civil engineer for a maximum of \$4,000 to assist in temporary access to construction site	V48 P211
2/13/1978	Alterations	Water softener system to be included in Bid Package #3 by addendum	V48 P211-12
2/13/1978	Alterations	County Judge's office to be the one to take care of the orderly transfer of departments	V48 P212
2/27/1978	Alterations	Valley Weathermakers, alterations and additions to courthouse, change order #77-101-C4(2) in the amount of \$226.00 for HVAC	V48 P248-50
		This was for the addition of a thermostat	
3/2/1978	Alterations	Bid Package #3, bids all opened but to be awarded on 3/6/1978	V48 P278
		Bid tabulation given in the minutes. Bids from 2 GCs, 2 electrical, 3 mechanical and 1 elevator subcontractor.	
3/3/1978	Farmers Protest	<i>Farmers, Police Standoff Continues at Jail</i> More on the farmers protest over the importation of Mexican beef and vegetables. AG John Hill met with Hidalgo County DA Oscar McInnis.	Edinburg Daily Review (EDR), p1 c5
3/5/1978	Farmers Protest	<i>Farmers Rally at Hidalgo Bridge</i> About 2,000 farmers held a peaceful protest on the Hidalgo-Reynosa bridge, related to a mass arrest made on the bridge a few days earlier, protesting the importation of beef and vegetables from Mexico. A few days earlier, 220 farmers had been arrested on the bridge and were held in county jail. The prisoners were released two days later, after AG John Hill persuaded local law enforcement to reduce charges from a Class B to a Class C misdemeanor. At one point shortly before the prisoners were released, a tractor pulled up to the courthouse door and demonstrators chanted "we want them out."	EDR, p1 c5
3/6/1978	Alterations	Wilson Construction, accept bid in amount of \$196,000, Alternate #1 in the amount of \$6,880 and Alternate #3 in the amount of \$15,500	V48 P325
3/6/1978	Alterations	Elevators, informality was waived and Mr. Simpson to review bids	V48 P325-26
3/6/1978	Alterations	Coastal Engineering, accept bid of \$99,948.00 for HVAC	V48 P326
3/6/1978	Alterations	Heggen Electric, accept bid of \$33,067	V48 P326
3/6/1978	Alterations	Mr. Simpson asked that time clause be waived from all contracts	V48 P326
		Liquidated damages clauses were waived from all contracts.	
3/6/1978	Alterations	Mr. Simpson gave report on fencing, etc	V48 P327
		Minutes state that the back entrance would be blocked for 90 days and that two temporary entrances would be constructed.	

3/7/1978	JP budget	<i>County JPs Ask for Bigger Budget</i> The bids for Package 3 were reported on, as per the Court action of 3/6/1978. Discussion of access provisions to the existing building.	EDR p1 c6
3/12/1978	Embezzlement	<i>Money Apparently Missing from County</i> Money missing from district clerk's office. Investigation ongoing by district clerk, county auditor and district judge, and a secret audit ongoing as well.	EDR p1 c5
3/13/1978	Alterations	Robert L. Harrison, change order #77-101-C3(1) in the amount of \$104.00 for painting work To remove green film coating from windows in the Old Sheriff's Office and refinish an existing door and frame to the old Sheriff's Office.	V48 P338-340
3/13/1978	Alterations	Trinity Testing Laboratories, authorize payment of \$2,600 for testing courthouse grounds NE of main building	V48 P340
3/13/1978	Alterations	Geotechnical samples and analysis Merle Simpson, all bids on elevators to be rejected and authorized to include in Package #4	V48 P340
3/13/1978	Alterations	This work was to renovate two existing elevators D. Wilson Construction, accept bid of 3,000 yards for total of \$21,440.00	V48 P341
3/13/1978	Alterations	This was for carpeting, to be purchased at a good price and stored prior to installation. D. Wilson Construction, change order in amount of \$1,200 for chain link fence, etc. Approved subject to county not having wire, and if county did, have Simpson to negotiate.	V48 P341
3/13/1978	Alterations	Report later in the week regarding temporary site access and traffic control	V48 P341
3/20/1978	Alterations	Merle Simpson, given approval to issue work order to White Marble Co, in the amount of \$475 This was to have a setter and helper come to Edinburg and remove part of the marble on the second floor and store it.	V48 P364
3/20/1978	Addition	Bid Package #4, readvertise and open bids on 4/13/1978 at 2:00 pm	V48 P386
4/3/1978	Alterations	Three contractors requested more time to bid. Heggen Electric Co, change order #2 in amount of \$975.00 for electrical work	V48 P436-37
4/3/1978	Alterations	This was for telephone and electrical outlets added in the District Clerk's office. Courthouse, survey to see if a system can be done in order to take care of offices	V48 P438

		This was related to the telephone systems in the building.	
4/13/1978	Addition	D. Wilson Construction, general construction, accept bid on amount of \$785,000	V48 P484-85
		Bids from 3 GCs, 2 HVAC, 2 elevator, 2 electrical and 2 plumbing subcontractors, as well as several combined bids. Court discussed information from Architect regarding the low GCs preference to not work with the low electrical, hence the request to further study the electrical bids.	
4/13/1978	Addition	Dover Elevator, elevator work, accept bid on amount of \$112,161	V48 P485
4/13/1978	Addition	Coastal Engineering, combination, accept bid on amount of \$273,000	V48 P485
4/13/1978	Addition	Electrical work, bids be studied more carefully and recommendation made on Monday	V48 P485
4/17/1978	Addition	Bid Package #4, architect needed more time to discuss electrical bid. Matter tabled until next week.	V48 P521
4/24/1978	Addition	Amos Electric, accept bid of \$156,789, subject to Simpson and Hiester meeting and making him understand his obligation regarding contract	V48 P527
		Also, GC withdrew his objection to working with this electrical	
5/22/1978	Alterations	Amos Electric Co., change order #77-101-C12(1) in the amount of \$300.00 for electrical work	V48 P645
		This was for 20 telephone stub outs in the ceiling of the 2 nd floor.	
5/22/1978	Alterations	Wilson Construction Co., change order #77-101-C6 (4) in the amount of \$3,873.00 to be deducted from contingency for general construction	V48 P646-47
		This was for a sump pump system for a new ceramic cooling tower installation	
5/30/1978	Alterations	Wilson Construction, change order #77-101-C6(5) in the amount of (\$450.00) for hardware allowance	V48 P669
5/30/1978	Alterations	Heggen Electric, change order #77-101-C3(1) in the amount of \$1,535.00	V48 P669
5/30/1978	Alterations	Wilson Construction, change order #77-101-C3(1) in the amount of \$30,336.50 for marble work	V48 P669
6/19/1978	Alterations	Heggen Electric, change order for installation of 4 outlets	V48 P713-14
		This was for 4 added electrical outlets in the District Clerk's office	
6/19/1978	Alterations	Discussion on old incinerator and replacement	V48 P714
		<i>...Mr. Simpson stated that this incinerator was environmentally unsound and that in order to fix it to where it would operate right it would cost in the neighborhood of about \$4,000. Mr. Simpson stated that it would be more economical</i>	

		<i>if the county would install a new one and leave the old one. ...</i>	
6/19/1978	Alterations	Painting of 5 th floor, advertise and open bids on 7/3/1978	V48 P714-15
		This was for painting and renovation of the east part of the 5 th floor. Adult Probation Offices on 5 th floor to be vacated (Adult Probation to move to 2 nd floor) and District Attorneys to move into the space. Also discussed adding work to renovate the north wing of the 2 nd floor.	
6/19/1978	Alterations	Incinerator and renovation of the 2 nd floor North wing, and bid be opened on 7/10/1978 at 9:30am	V48 P715
6/26/1978	Alterations	Reset bids on incinerator for 7/17/1978	V48 P735-36
7/3/1978	Alterations	Painting of 5 th floor, no quorum, tabled	V48 P746-47
		Bids received by Judge, to be awarded later in the week when a quorum could be convened.	
7/6/1978	Alterations	Painting of 5 th floor, accept bid of Hugh V. Lafferty Decorating Co, in the amount of \$3,380.00	V48 P752-53
7/10/1978	Alterations	Coastal Engineer Inc, change order #77-101-C7(1) in the amount of \$4,500.00 got mechanical to alter and additions of courthouse	V48 P763-64
		This was for repair and replace soil lines under existing basement slabs, new drains, sump pumps.	
7/17/1978	Alterations	Open bids on incinerator and 2 nd floor renovation. Court did not waive bid bond, accept following: D. Wilson Construction, \$46,908.00. Coastal Engineering, Inc., \$16,144.00. Context Systems, Inc., \$9,652.00.	V48 P828-30
7/17/1978	Alterations and Addition	Report by Merle Simpson on construction, telephone system	V48 P835-37
		<i>Mr. Merle Simpson presented his report to the Commissioners Court regarding the Alterations and Addition to the Hidalgo County Courthouse.</i>	
		<i>He reviewed all bid packaging, and reported that the cooling tower would be completed by August 18, 1978, and that they would try and get all machinery working but in order to do so they would have to have the Courthouse closed for maybe 4 hours since there would be no water or light available. Court felt that if Courthouse needed to be closed that they should have an advance notice. Mr. Simpson informed the Court that if they need to close the Courthouse for four hours on August 18, 1978, existed they would know by August 11, 1978.</i>	
		<i>Mr. Simpson gave a recap of package No. 3, recap of package no. 4 and on package No 5(A) went into detail regarding the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company proposal for DIM System. He informed the Court that the Telephone Company had made a study and was making a proposal which they stated would save the county about \$19,000 a year. He pointed out</i>	

that this would be a computerized system and was to be spread over a five (5) year period. He stated that he would recommend that a committee be appointed to look into this and so that the telephone company can show them what the DIM System can do. He indicated that Ms. Laura Etnire and Mary Mercer needed to be on this committee. He also informed the court that his office operated on this system and it had cut down on problems.

Mr. Simpson also gave the Court a run down on the Energy Management proposal. He pointed out that this system operates itself and has a lot of savings. He went into detail regarding the fact that the courthouse was left unattended and possibilities of over-coming this.

Mr. Simpson also reported on future work to be done on the 1st floor and a site development study. Discussion was held on the problem regarding parking and he stated that the City, County and the Chamber of Commerce should get together regarding this problem. He showed a chart in which areas were designated in order to control traffic, and said discussion took the possible elimination of curve in US Highway 281, possible parking structure, assignment of employee parking at far east side of east parking lot by entry or attendant entry, etc.

7/24/1978	Alterations	D. Wilson Construction, change order #77-101-06(6) in the amount of \$868.71. Coastal Engineering, change order in the amount of \$3,731.00	V48 P843-44
8/7/1978	Addition	Coastal Engineering, change order #77-101-C11(2) in the amount of \$1,990.00 for HVAC and plumbing	V48 P899-900
		This was for putting a 2" copper water line in the same ditch as the rerouted storm sewer line next to the existing building.	
8/7/1978	Alterations	Heggen Electric, accept bid of \$5,875 for electrical bid package 5.1	V48 903
8/14/1978	Alterations	Coastal Engineering, change order reducing by (\$2,662.00) bid for south end of the 2 nd floor (Bid Package 5.1)	V48 P928
		This was for simplifying work at the south end of the 2 nd floor.	
9/18/1978	Addition	Coastal Engineering, change order in the amount of \$6,113.00	V49 P65-66
9/18/1978	Addition	Wilson Construction, change order in the amount of \$1,069.00 to cover cost of engraving name on stone	V49 P67-68
10/9/1978	Addition	Wilson Construction Co., change order #77-101-C9(3) in the amount of \$587.30 for bronze plaque	V49 P143-44
10/16/1978	Alterations	Wilson Construction, change order #77-101-C6 (7) in amount of \$6,266.00	V49 P180-81
		This was to remove old HVAC equipment from the 5 th floor roof, and furnish a new counter/wall on the 2 nd floor	

10/16/1978	Alterations	Wilson Construction, change order #77-101-C6(8) in amount of \$379.00 to be decreased from contingency	V49 P181
		This was to repair a loose Kasota stone coping over the auditorium entrance	
10/16/1978	Alterations	Coastal Engineering, change order #77-101-C7(3) in the amount of \$1,579.00	V49 P181
		This was to replace the HVAC expansion tank on the 5 th floor roof	
10/16/1978	Addition	Coastal Engineering, change order #77-101-C11(2) in the amount of \$5,198.00 to be deducted from contingency fund	V49 P182
		This was to install a 4" PVC foundation drain line on the north and east walls of the new basement.	
10/16/1978	Addition	Discussion held regarding back filling of new basement	V49 P182
10/16/1978	Alterations	Heggen Electric, change order #77-101-C8(4) in the amount of \$1,030.29. From now on talk to Judge so court can know about changes before made.	V49 P182
		This was for a catch all for a lot of items related to light fixtures and telephone receptacles.	
11/27/1978	Alterations	Courthouse, change order #77-101-C7(5), Coastal Engineering, \$830.00. Change order #77-101-C7(4), Coastal Engineering, \$489.63. change order #77-101-C11(4), Coastal Engineering, (\$1,671.00) from contingency. Change order #77-101-C12(2), Amos Electric, (\$1,330.00) from contingency. Change order #C6(9), Wilson Construction (\$537.00) from contingency. Change order #C13(1), Wilson Construction, (\$707.00) from contingency.	V49 P325-26
		This was for water service for restrooms on 3 rd floor east wing; various gauges, eggcrates, overtime and valves on HVAC; systems monitoring control unit; metal stud drywall partition, door and frame on 2 nd floor east and south.	
12/28/1978	Alterations	Heggen Electric, change order #C15(1) for total \$440 less \$279.76 from contingency for a total of \$160.24	V49 P408
1/15/1979	Alterations	Request by Simpson, re: study and figures on controls for courthouse be authorized	V49 P460
1/15/1979	Alterations	Merle Simpson look into cost of caulking windows in courthouse and findings presented to Court	V49 P460-61
		Whereas there came on for consideration a request for prices for caulking on windows. It was pointed out that there existed some leakage which stained the paint and carpet. The Court was informed that major leakage was in the 3 rd floor, but that some existing in the 4 th , 5 th and 2 nd . Brief discussion followed in which it was stated that windows	

		should be kept locked so that they are unable to be opened.	
		It was moved by Commissioner Curtis, seconded by Commissioner Chazos, that Mr. Simpson look into the cost of recaulking the windows of the Courthouse and that findings be presented to the Court for consideration.	
2/5/1979	Alterations	Courthouse, advertise for A/C system controls and open on 2/26/1979	V49 P535
3/5/1979	Alterations	Johnson Controls, accept low bid in the amount of \$8,658 for an auto temp control system provided it meets specs	V49 P637
3/5/1979	Expansion	Discussion regarding addition to the on-going construction	V49 P643
		<i>County Judge R. M. Guerra stated he had an item which he wanted to discuss with the Court. He stated that he had talked to Mr. Simpson but was not sure where to get the money but that if we could add two floors to the existing extension it would cost about \$950,000 or if we put 1 floor over the existing extension and come over the second floor it would cost about \$750,000. He pointed out that if this was not done now in the future if we wanted to go up higher we would have to replace elevator equipment whereas if it was done now elevator could be changed now. He stated that there was no question that more space would be needed and that if it could be financed the county would save from \$125,000 to about \$150,000. He informed the Court that it would be good business to issue Certificates of Indebtedness but how could we pay for them. He pointed out that we would be getting an additional District Court and County Court at Law and if this happen then we would be back to where we are now. Brief discussion followed in which it was discussed how this could be done in relation to financing. It was pointed out that bids could not be extended the 25% and that the best thing was for the County to advertise. County Judge Guerra stated that because the cut in Revenue Sharing Funds the county would have to supplement budget by \$1M in order to stay at the present level of operation. It was stated if a bond issue was put before the voters it would take too long but that certificates of indebtedness could be issued without having a bond election but how long could they be issued for. County Judge Guerra pointed out that if any problems arose from the receiving of bids, bids could be rejected because the county reserved that right.</i>	
3/6/1979	CH Expansion	<i>More Courthouse Expansion Studied</i> Judge Guerra asked Commissioners to consider adding two more floors to the CH project. Would not be presented with plans unless the financing is feasible. When the current project was begun, there was a hope to do more, but the cost was limited by available funds. Population increasing, and at least one more district court and possibly one more county court at law will be needed soon.	EDR p1 c 5
3/8/1979	Tax collection	<i>Tax Collections Proceed Smoothly</i> Computerization of county tax rolls completed. Transition	EDR p1 c 7

		from manual accounting to computers completed, a process begun several years ago.	
3/12/1979	Expansion	County Judge Guerra, authorized to proceed with negotiations but with understanding that it is not final commitment (re: cert of indebtedness for construction of 3 rd floor)	V49 P657-58
		Long passage in the minutes explaining this discussion about certificates, bonds and financing the proposed expansion of the ongoing project.	
3/13/1979	CH Expansion	<i>Courthouse Expansion Would Not Raise Taxes</i> Issue to be further studied for one more week, but preliminary analysis is that proposed increase of ongoing courthouse addition project could be paid for without raising taxes. Options under consideration include the use of certificates of obligation and increased tax revenues due to increased county evaluations. Two schemes discussed, to add two levels to the wing currently under construction or to add one floor to that wing and a floor to the north wing.	EDR p1 c1
3/19/1979	Addition	Amos Electric Co, change order #77-101-C12(3) in the amount of \$50,000.00 for energy management system awarded to Johnson Service Co.	V49 P672-73
3/19/1979	Alterations	Wilson Construction, change order #77-101-C13(2) in the amount of \$1,029 to be deducted out of contingency for miscellaneous	V49 P673-75
		Painting, repair, installation and refinishing of miscellaneous items	
3/19/1979	Expansion	Go ahead to proceed with additional construction to courthouse. Either add 2 floors or add 1 and across to North wing	V49 P678-79
		Long passage in the minutes about this decision.	
3/19/1979	Cert of Ob	Certificate of obligation, \$1.2 million to finance additional construction	V49 P679-80
3/20/1979	Courthouse addition	<i>Go-Ahead Given on Courthouse Plans</i> The article described the CC authorization of \$1.2 million in certificates of obligation. Several options for increasing the size of the addition now underway were discussed – add one floor to the wing under construction and one floor to the north wing, or add tow floor to the wing under construction. Additional space would be used to house one or two additional district courts, another county court and other county offices.	EDR p1 c1
3/21/1979	US 281	<i>US 281 Officially Opened Today</i> Ribbon cutting for new loop of US 281 to the east of Edinburg. “I don’t have to tell you people how frustrating it is to have highway traffic using your main street.” The project began with studies in 1964, and had been under construction for the last five years. This and other related	EDR p1 c 5

		projects intended to put county traffic on 4-lane divided highways from the Brooks County line to US 83.	
3/26/1979	Parking	Discussion regarding parking for courthouse	V49 P705-06
		Long passage about parking issue	
3/29/1979	Parking	<i>Judges Attest to County's Court Needs</i> The article documents the CC discussion held on 3/26/1979, including upcoming improvements to the parking area on Plaza Hidalgo planned by the City and a study of parking in the area planned by the State.	EDR, p1 c 3
4/16/1979	Addition	Wilson Construction, change order #7, in the amount of \$73,500.00 plus 5% contingency to add partial 3d floor structures	V49 P821
4/16/1979	Addition	Wilson Construction, change order #8 in estimated amount of \$27,043.00 to modify 2 nd floor existing and addition	V49 P822
4/16/1979	Addition	Dover, change order #1 in the amount of \$17,100 for extension of new elevators	V49 P822
4/30/1979	Addition	Amos Electric, change order #77-101-C12(4) in the amount of \$312.00 to be deducted from contingency	V49 P866-67
4/30/1979	Addition	Wilson Construction, change order #77-101-C6(10) in the amount of \$330.00 to be deducted from contingency	V49 P867-68
		This was for the installation of a 10' column in the basement.	
4/30/1979	Alterations	Wilson Construction, change order #77-101-C6(11) in the amount of \$1,400.00, par from contingency and add \$504.77 to contract	V49 P868-69
		This was for additional painting and a new fresh air intake hood over the toilet room vent chase.	
4/30/1979	Addition	Wilson Construction, change order #77-101-C9(4) in the amount of \$381.00 to be deducted from contingency	V49 P869-70
		This was for cutting stone to work around a relief angle support.	
6/4/1979	Addition	Request by Mr. Simpson to order (3) 4' sections of refractory lined stack @ \$330/ plus freight of \$375, approved	V49 P993-4
		This was related to the decision to add floors to the project, which required that the incinerator flue be extended.	
6/4/1979	Addition	Merle Simpson, 1)authorize extension of contract to include services of 3 rd floor addition to North wing and new addition to courthouse. 2)approve assignment to any bank of his choice benefits paid to him by Hidalgo County for services rendered	V49 P994
		This was for the addition of a 14,000 SF third floor addition to the north wing, to be paid through certificates.	
10/22/1979	Addition	Coastal Engineering, CO #C11(6) in the amount of	V50 P572-

		\$7,429.00 for mechanical work	73
10/24/1979	Addition	Bid Package #6: Electrical, plumbing, HVAC and combined bids received and opened, Bids taken under advisement	V50 P626-27
11/5/1979	Pumps	County advertise for two sump pumps and condensate pumps and open 12/3/1979	V50 P671-72
11/5/1979	Addition	Signing of contracts for Bid Package #6. Bids to be awarded on 11/12/1979 due to fact that it would have to be done in injunction with Certificate of Obligation	V50 P672
11/12/1979	Addition	Coastal Engineering (\$29,800), Valley Weathermaker (\$120,283.80) and Amos Electric (\$63,299) low bids on Bid Package #6 be accepted and Judge authorized to sign contracts	V50 P718
11/12/1979	Cert of Ob	Certification of Order accepting bid and authorizing the issuance of Certificates of Obligation and Judge authorized to sign	V50 P718-727
12/3/1979	Cert of Ob	Discussion as to Certificates of Obligation and that at every regular meeting this should be listed on agenda	V50 P793
12/10/1979	Addition	D. Wilson Construction, payment for Bid Package #6 in the amount of \$12,283.00	V50 P822
12/10/1979	Fees	Merle A. Simpson, payment for architectural services for Bid Package #6 in the amount of \$55,652.67	V50 P822-831
6/11/1979	Addition	Wilson Construction, CO #C9(5) in the amount of \$3,278 from contingency	V50 P7-9
6/18/1979	Addition	Dover Elevator, CO #77-101-C10(1) in the amount of \$17,100	V50 P24-25
6/18/1979	Addition	Wilson Construction, CO #77-101-C9(6) in amount of \$1,843.00 to be deducted from contingency fund	V50 P25-26
6/18/1979	Addition	Wilson Construction, CO #77-101-C6(12) in the amount of \$1,515.65 to be deducted from contract	V50 P27-28
6/18/1979	Roof repairs	Brief discussion regarding the roof over the County Clerk's office. Judge stated discussed with Mr. Simpson and Mr. Hiester ruled that it could be done as Mr. Simpson proposed.	V50 P28
		This may have been a suggestion to have County staff perform the roof repairs	
6/18/1979	Auditorium	Texas Scenic Co, on recommendation of architect and consultant and due to need of replacing the curtains of auditorium that county enter into contract for purchase of curtain and installation as per their price quotation of \$2,880.00	V50 P28
9/10/1979	Addition	Wilson Construction \$1,013,000. HVAC Coastal Engineering \$247,500. Electrical Heggen Electric, \$89,000 and Amos, \$89,980. Turned over to architect and awarded on Monday.	V50 P338
9/24/1979	Alterations	Coastal Engineering, CO #77-101-C11(5) in the amount of \$889 to be deducted from contingency	V50 P422
9/24/1979	Alterations	Amos Electric, CO #77-101-C12(5) in the amount of \$434 to be deducted from contingency	V50 P422

10/1/1979	Addition	Coastal Engineering bid in amount of \$247,500 rejected and authorized to rebid	V50 P456
10/1/1979	Addition	Amos Electric (\$89,980) and Heggen Electric (\$89,000) be rejected and authorized to be rebid	V50 P456
10/1/1979	Addition	Merle Simpson authorized to continue negotiations with Wilson Construction and make report on 10/8/1979	V50 P456
10/1/1979	Addition	County to readvertise for plumbing, A/C, electrical and issue Notice of Intention for additional \$250,000 in Certificates of Obligation and open bids on 10/24/1979	V50 P456
10/8/1979	Addition	Ratification of negotiation, bid rejection and Certificate issues, noted above	V50 P465
10/8/1979	Addition	Bid of Wilson Construction in the amount of \$693,289.00 be accepted with three stipulations	V50 P470
		Contract effective immediately, and work to begin as soon as materials and equipment are available. Sufficient work force be maintained to carry out the work in the shortest possible time frame. Any savings from further modifications accrue to the Owner.	
10/8/1979	Addition	\$25,000 be set aside as contingency fund for Bid Package #6	V50 P470
10/15/1979	Alterations	Consideration of change orders on alterations and additions tabled until next week	V50 P537
10/22/1979	Alterations	Wilson Construction, co #77-101-C9(8) in amount of \$3,754.00 to be deducted from contingency	V50 P569-70
10/22/1979	Addition	Wilson Construction, CO #77-101-C9(9) in amount of \$19,910.00 to be deducted from contingency	V50 P571-72
10/22/1979	Cert of Ob	County Judge Guerra pointed out that Cert of Indebtedness referred to work on 3 rd floor as 4-A, and should be 6. Attorney corrected.	V50 P572
1980	Census	Population of 283,229.	<i>Handbook of Texas</i>
1/14/1980	Pumps	Coastal Engineering, bid in the amount of \$11,877 for replacement of sump pumps and condensate pumps be approved and Judge authorized to sign	V51 P13
1/14/1980	Addition	Amos Electric, CO #C21(1) in the amount of \$22,500 tabled	V51 P13
1/14/1980	Addition	Approval of payments to contractors: Wilson, \$80,000; Coastal, \$4,000; Merle Simpson, \$10,000; subject to verification by County Judge's office	V51 P14-24
1/21/1980	Alterations	Coastal Engineering, CO #19(1) in the amount of \$550 to relocate existing transits fire line on West side of building	V51 P55
1/28/1980	Addition	Valley Weathermaker, CO #c20(1) in the amount of (\$11,696.00)	V51 P92-3
1/28/1980	Addition	Amos Electric, CO #C21(1) in the amount of (\$22,500.00)	V51 P94
2/11/1980	Addition	Approval of payments to contractors: Wilson, \$40,000; Coastal, \$9,000; Valley Weathermakers, \$15,000; Amos, \$8,000	V51 P212
3/17/1980	Alterations	Courthouse change orders (2) for the alteration and	V51 P397

	and Addition	additions to the courthouse	
3/31/1980	Alterations	Courthouse CO #C12(7) to Amos Electric in amount of \$217.00 for alteration of courthouse	V51 P629
4/7/1980	Addotopm	Courthouse CO#6 in amount of \$5,745.00 to Amos Electric approved	V51 P675
4/14/1980	Parking	Courthouse Parking Lot – Discussion of parking lot by Judge Guerra, stating that parking area needed to be reserved for people on jury and for people doing business at Courthouse. Resolution regarding vehicles with political signs parking in parking lot.	V51 P709-713
4/21/1980	Lights	Advertise for bids on 178 lighting fixtures for Bid Package #6	V51 P764
4/21/1980	Addition	CO #C9(10) to Wilson Construction in amount of \$2,580.49 to be deducted out of the contingency for concrete testing, inspection and lab control	V51 P764
4/28/1980	Parking	Resolution for the east parking lot	V51 P813-815
5/2/1980	Lights	Bids opened for lighting fixtures. Amos Electric accepted, subject to meeting specifications	V51 P898
5/20/1980	Furniture	Permission to advertise for furnishings needed to move into Courthouse addition, opened 6/17/1980	V51 P924-25
6/17/1980	Furniture	Opening of bids to furnish Courthouse Addition	V52 P7-8
7/8/1980	Addition	CO #13 to Wilson Construction, \$1,020. CO #11 to Wilson Construction, \$1,778	V52 P148
		PVC sleeves for telephone line routing, oak door and frame ILO specified aluminum.	
7/8/1980	Addition	CO #8 to Coastal Engineering \$9,250	V52 P152
8/11/1980	Furniture	CO #1 to Wilson construction in amount of \$49,447.60	V52 P391-92
		For fixed and movable furniture.	
9/8/1980	Alterations	CO #C19(2) in the amount of \$408.00 to be deducted from the contingency fund to Coastal Engineering	V52 P499
9/8/1980	Alterations	CO #C10(2) in the amount of \$390.00 to e deducted from the contingency fund to Dover Elevator	V52 P501
11/18/1980	Alterations	Permission to advertise for emergency generator for courthouse	V53 P95
12/8/1980	Alterations	CO #C9(12) Amount \$3,200 for modification of old jail cell doors to new holding cells, Wilson Construction	V53 P292
12/8/1980	Addition	Dover Elevator, CO #C10(2), Amount \$1,514.00 to furnish and install furniture pads in one of the Oildraulic elevators	V53 P293
12/16/1980	Alterations	Amos Electric CO #C12(9) amount of \$184.00 for electrical work	V53 P332
12/16/1980	Furniture	Open bids on furniture, tabled	V53 P337-38
12/16/1980	Alterations	Open bids to provide with electrical wiring for emergency generator	V53 P342-43
12/16/1980	Alterations	Bid on emergency generator accepted from B.D. Holt in amount of \$18,580.00	V53 P345

12/23/1980	Addition	Wilson Construction, CO #C9(14) amount of \$5,653.18 of a net credit	V53 P385
12/23/1980	Furniture	Award bids on furniture from Jones Office Supply in the amount of \$38,572.91	V53 P388
2/3/1981	Addition	Change Orders to Wilson Construction and Amos Electric Co., \$5,634.00	V53 P736-43
2/3/1981	Parking	Authorization to employ an engineer to develop plans for improvement of county parking lots	V53 P770
2/9/1981	Addition	CO to Wilson Construction	V53 P834-36
2/9/1981	Addition	Payment to Wilson Construction of \$49,000.00	V53 P836
2/24/1981	Addition	CO to Dover Elevator	V53 P914
2/24/1981	Addition	Advertise for roofing, to open 3/17/1981	V53 P919
3/17/1981	Alterations	Co to Wilson Construction, \$7,930.38, for additional work to County Court of Law Courts	V54 P118
3/17/1981	Addition	Open bids on roofing. Steve Roofing Co., \$15,000 provided it meets specifications	V54 P118
3/17/1981	Addition	CO to Amos Electric, \$6,100.00 for additional work	V54 P145
3/17/1981	Parking	Discussion held about the improvement of the east and west parking lots of the courthouse	V54 P198-214
4/7/1981	Addition	CO #C9(15) to Wilson Construction, \$8,463.00	V54 P330-331
4/13/1981	Parking	Resolution to enforce parking lot in courthouse. To be reviewed.	V54 P393-402
4/21/1981	Parking	Consideration and final determination of east courthouse parking lot plans	V54 P464-473
4/21/1981	Parking	Review of parking lot ordinance and the possibility of hiring a deputy to be in charge	V54 P480-489
6/8/1981	Alterations	Change order for alterations and additions, courthouse elevators, Bob Simpson	
11/9/1981	Alterations	Change Order, Wilson Construction, C9, credit contact for \$138.43	V56 P751
11/9/1981	Alterations	Change Order C25 Thompson's Electric Service for electrical work done on an emergency generator auxiliary unit (Is this for the courthouse??)	V56 P751-52
12/17/1984	Roof repairs	Request to advertise for bids to repair roof on east side of courthouse	V72 P8-10
12/30/1986	Parking	Authorization to carry forward and reappropriate 1986 unexpended funds designated for parking lot.	V84 P883, 928-929
3/17/1987	Parking	Internal line item budget adjustments: parking lot	V87 P169, 212-220
4/13/1987	Parking	Create security guard position, parking lot	V88 P283
5/11/1987	Parking	Discussion and approval of parking lot ordinance	V89 P81
6/2/1987	Parking	Internal line item adjustments, parking lot (revenue sharing)	V89 P554, 658-664
12/29/1987	Parking	Authorization to carry forward 1987 unexpended funds in accounts: parking lot	V95 P16
1990	Census	Population of 383,545.	<i>Handbook of Texas</i>

