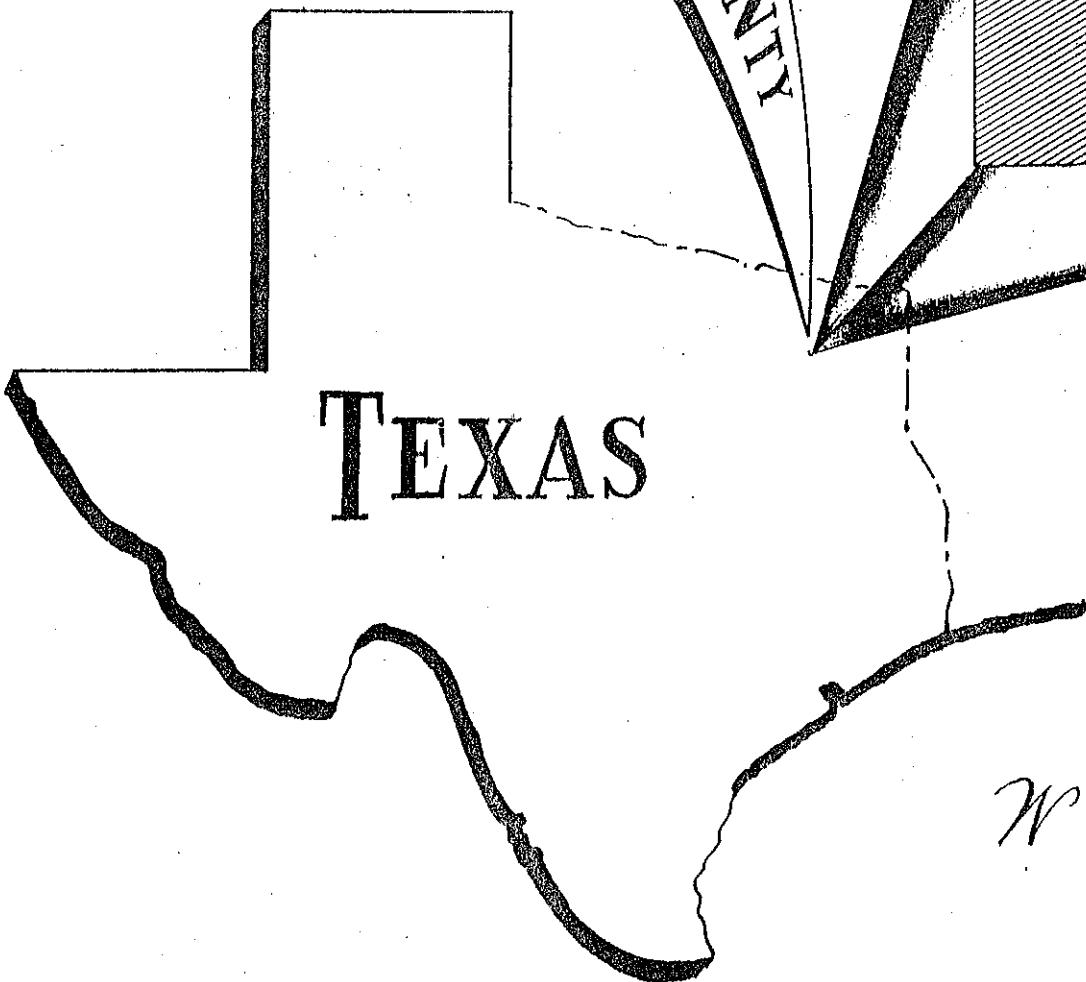
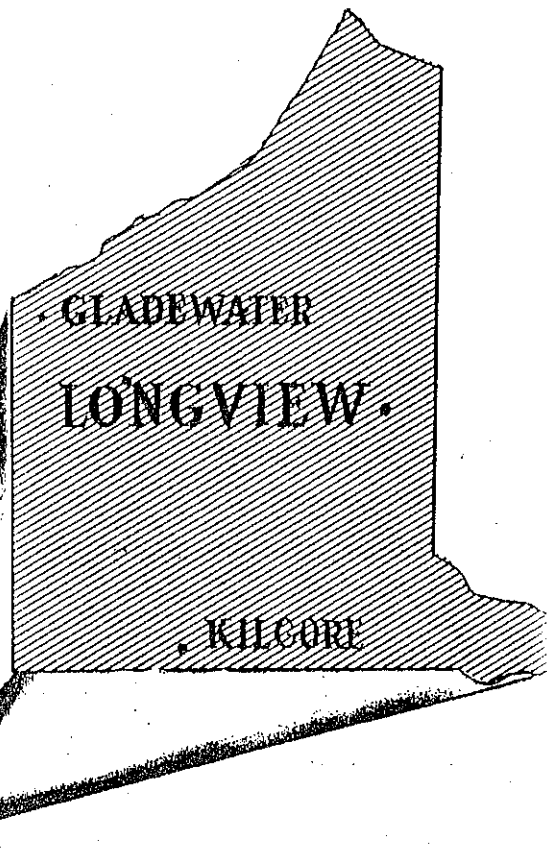
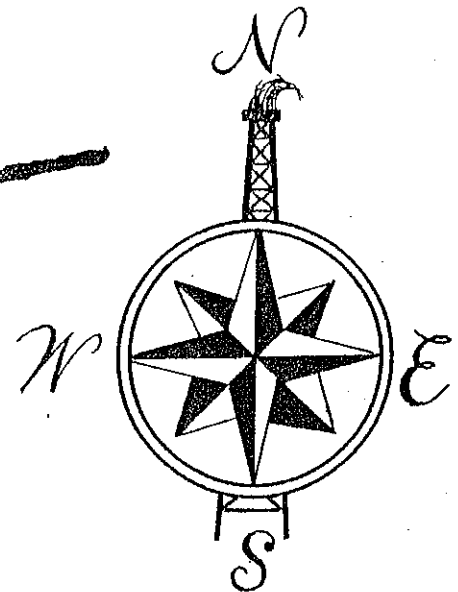


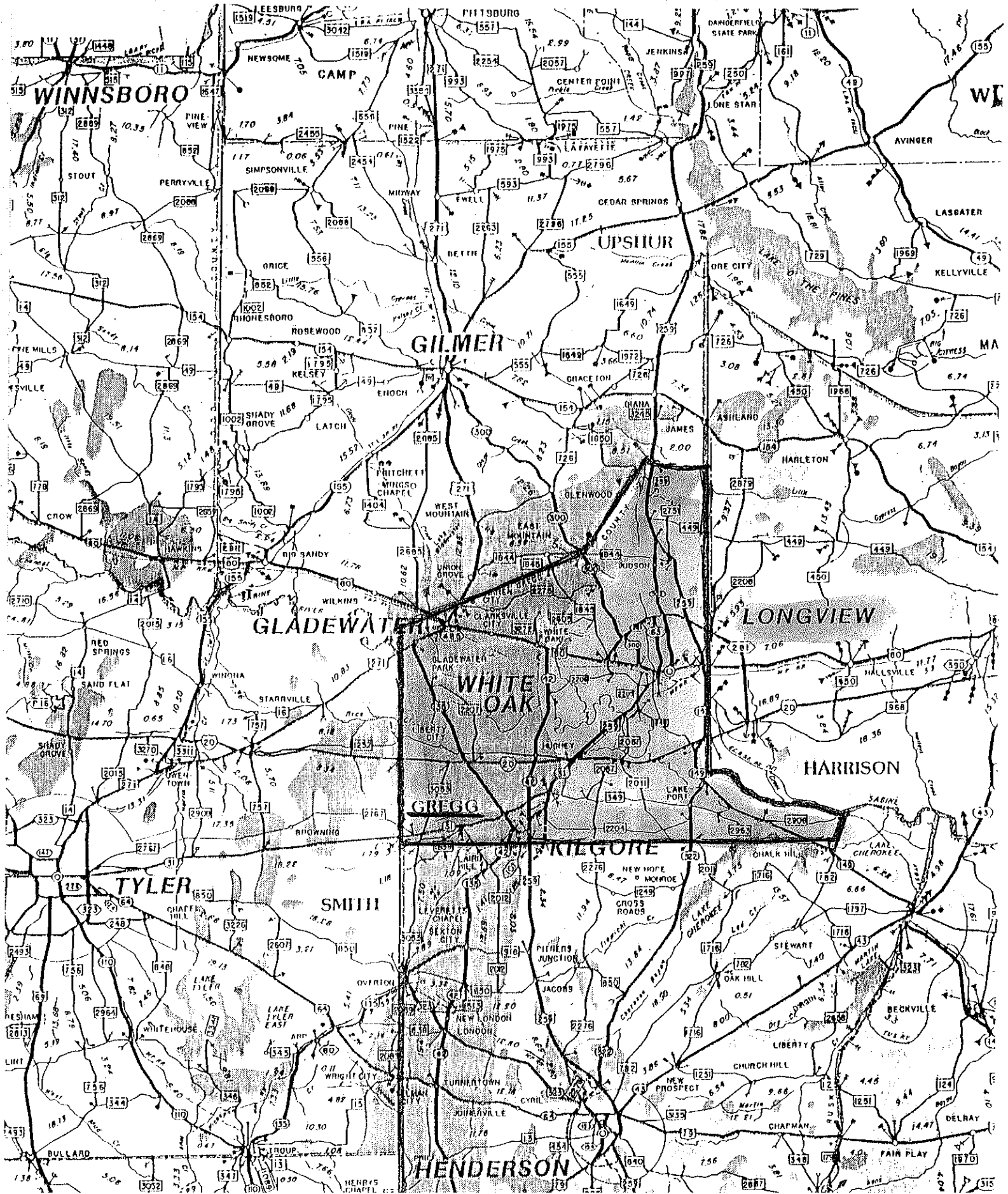
GREGG COUNTY



TEXAS

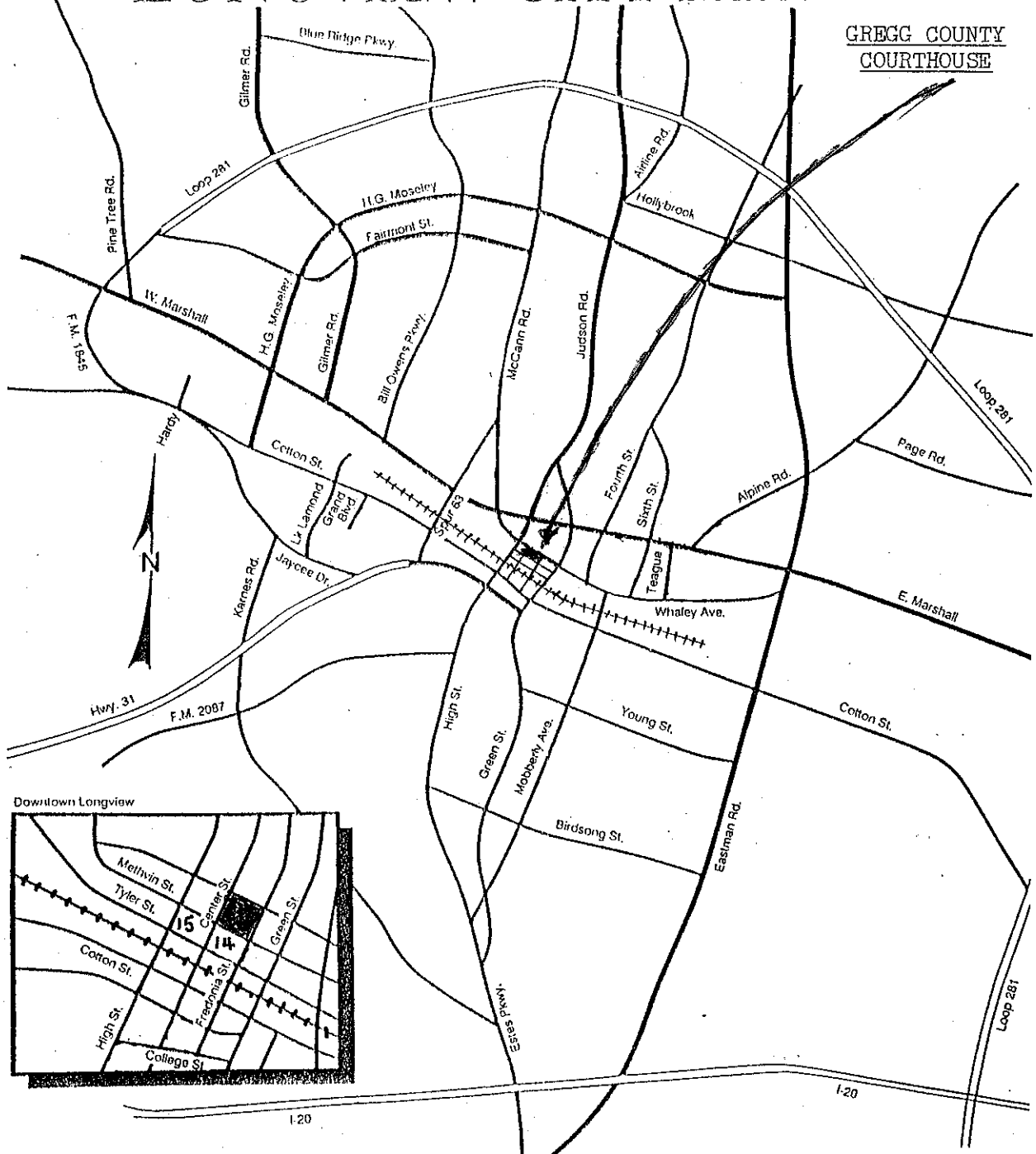


# GREGG COUNTY



# LONGVIEW CITY MAP

GREGG COUNTY  
COURTHOUSE



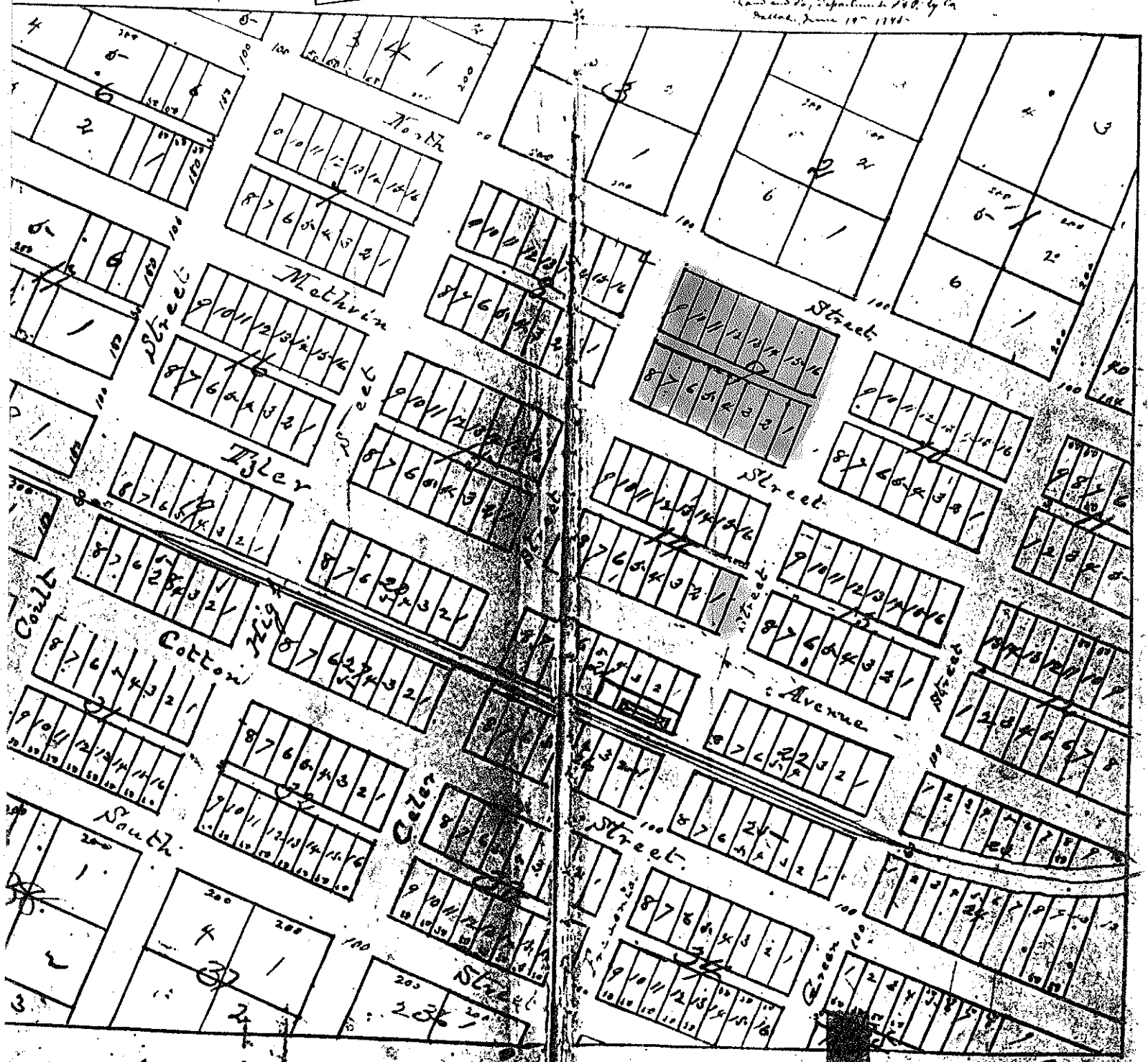
BLOCK NUMBERS 9 (Courthouse)  
14 (first temporary courthouse)  
15 (second temporary courthouse)

**GREGG COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
417 Mobberty Avenue  
Longview, Texas 75602  
903-757-2261

# LONGVIEW

Scale, 1 Inch = 400 Feet

W. H. & Co., Draftsmen & P.L.S. by C.A.  
Dallas, June 19th 1895

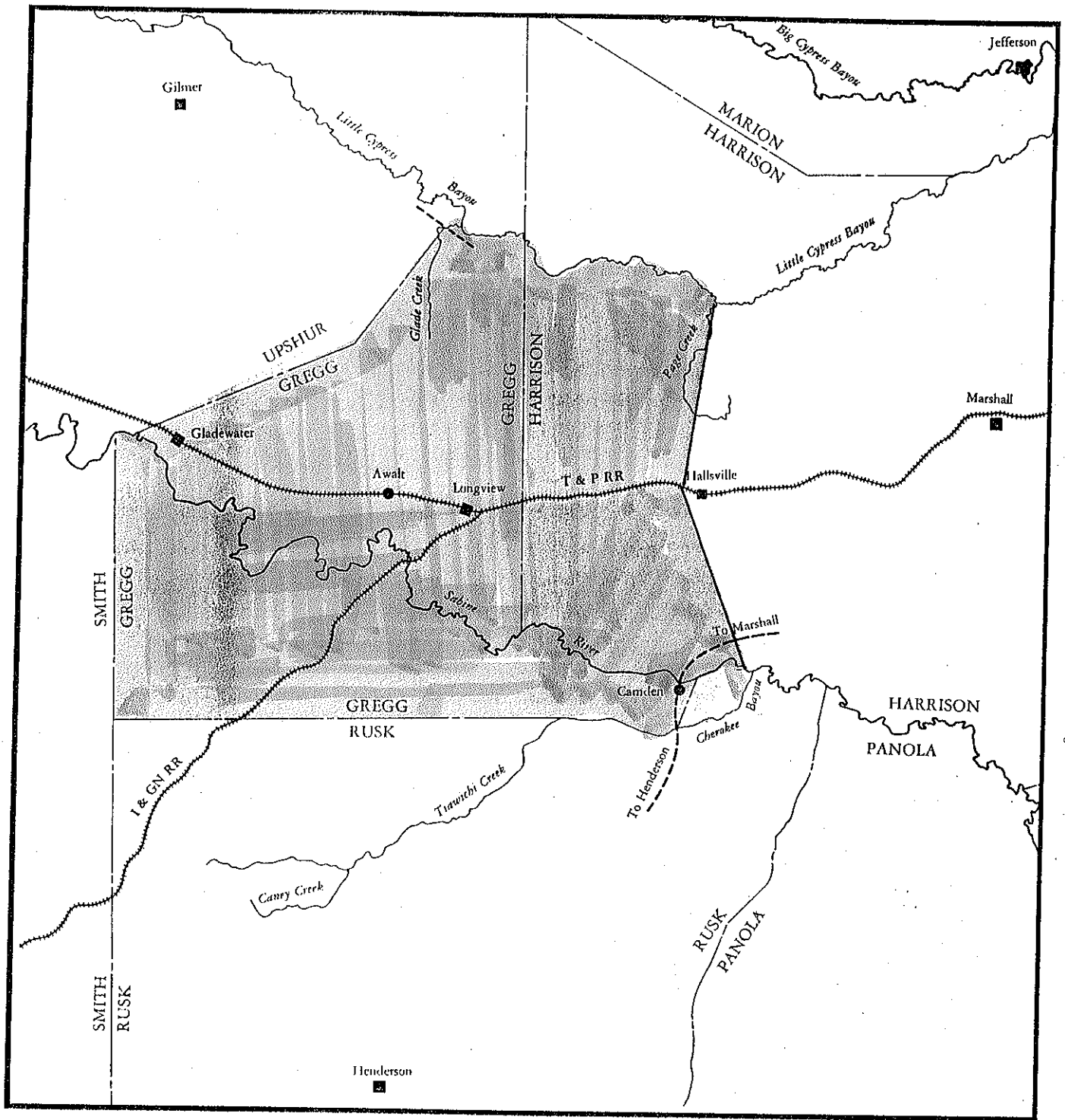


Certify the above is a true and correct map of the town of Longview, Texas, as shown by the records of the City of Longview, Texas.

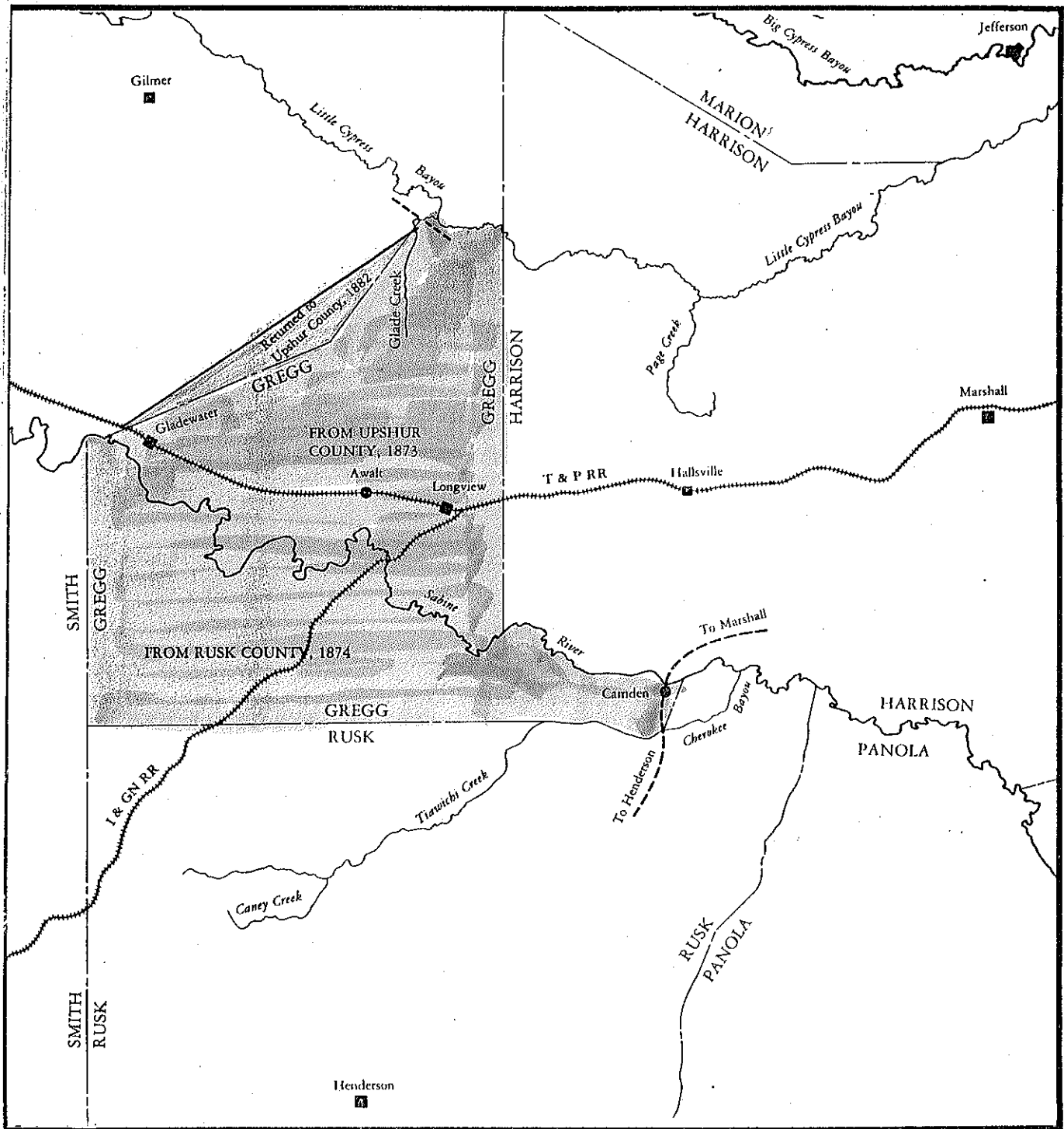
W. H. & Co. in company in the office of the  
and the Tax Commissioner at Dallas, Texas.

W. H. & Co.  
Tax Comm'r.

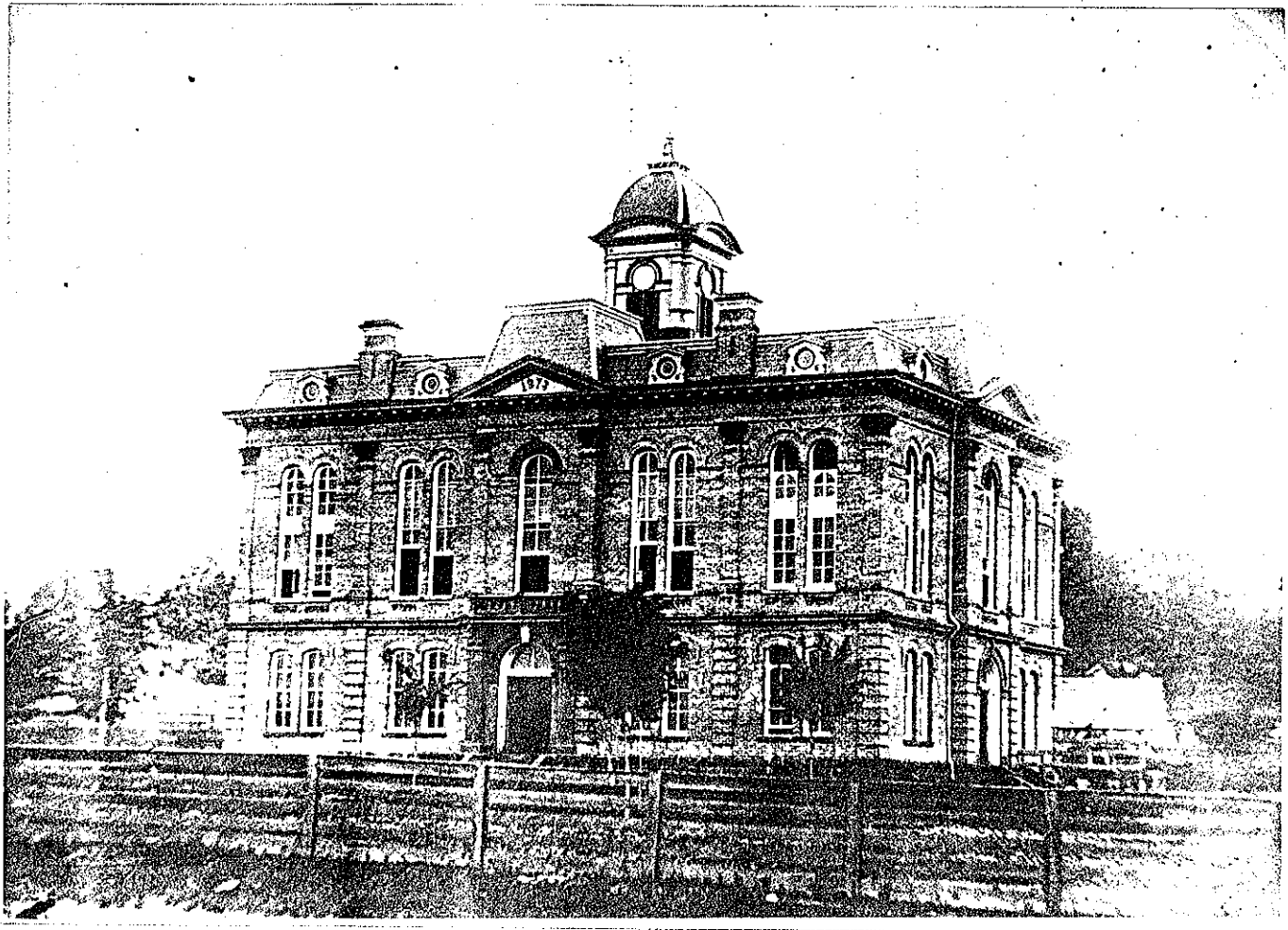
Given to the said Commissioner  
before me this 21st day of June 1895



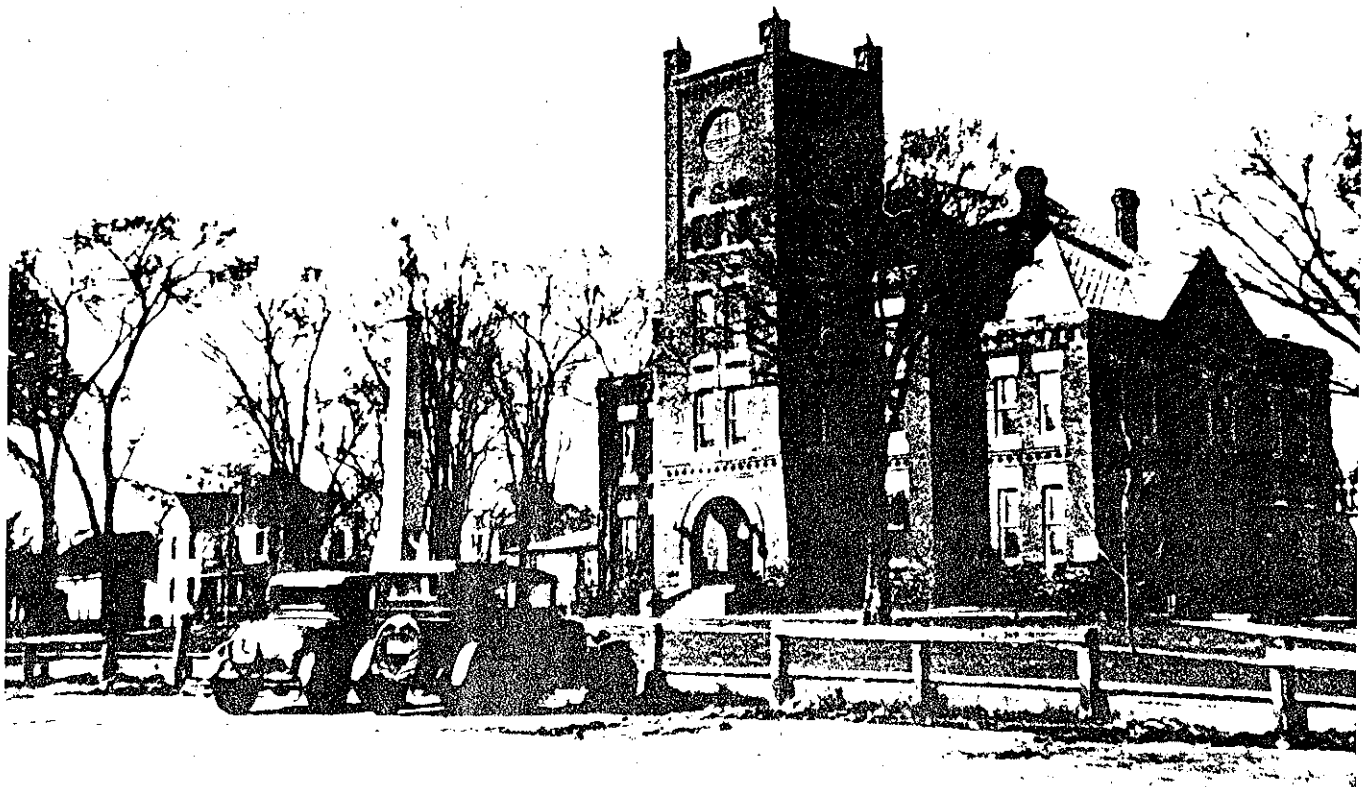
What Gregg County might have been. House Bill 23 of the Thirteenth Texas Legislature in 1873 proposed a new county called Roanoke, seated at Longview. The boundaries shown here reflect a minor adjustment of the prospective Harrison County line by the House Committee on Counties and County Boundaries. The depicted Upshur County line reflects the author's strict interpretation of a provision for 12 miles minimum distance from Gilmer. The proposed Rusk County line beyond Cherokee Bayou has not been located, but it could not be far from the approximation shown here. The framers apparently considered Cherokee Bayou to extend to the source of either Tawichi Creek or Caney Creek. The city boundaries shown are approximations within the modern limits. The north boundary of Harrison County reflects an addition to Marion County south of Big Cypress Bayou and west of Jefferson in the following year.



How Gregg County grew and shrank. In 1873, the proponents of the new county were able to get only the piece from Upshur County, and Longview had to contend with Awalt for the county seat. Gregg County's surveyor ignored the minimum 12 miles from Gilmer, laying out a straight line. In 1874, a much reduced piece was taken from Rusk County, but Harrison County held out successfully. Finally, in 1882, the Upshur County boundary was approximately corrected by staking a point 12 miles from the center of Gilmer, leaving Gregg County with its present 284 square miles.

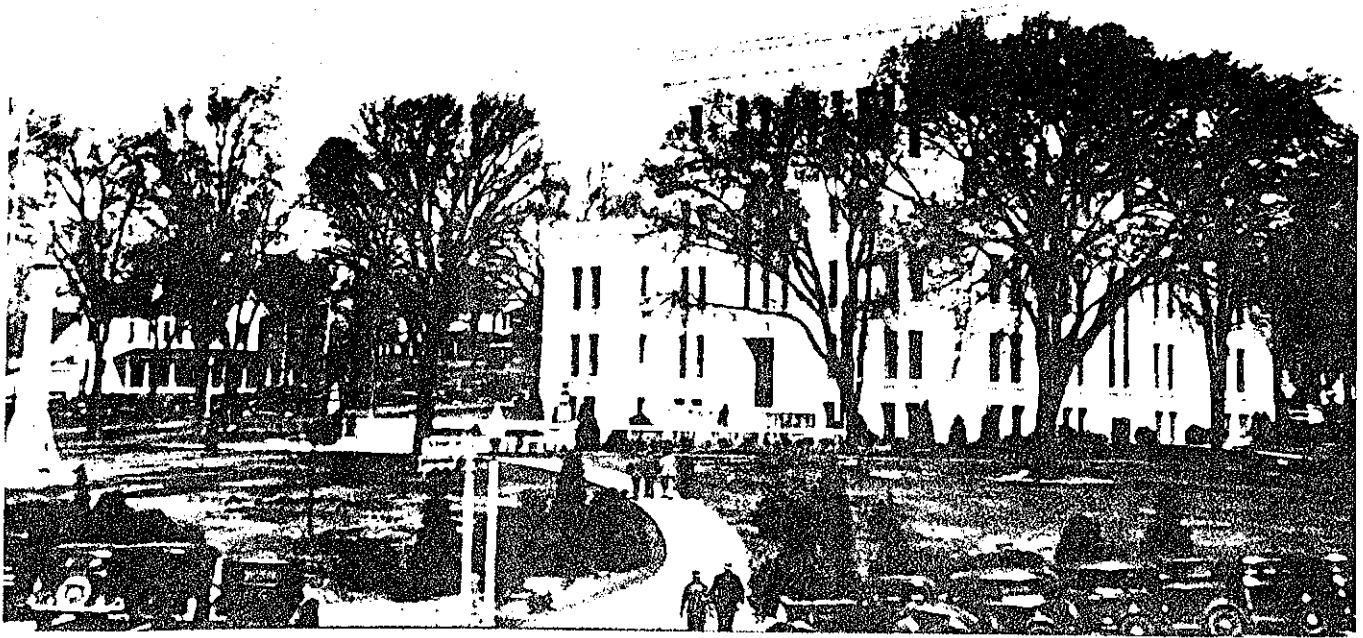


Gregg County, Texas  
Court House, 1879  
Longview



Gregg County, Texas  
Court House, 1897  
Longview

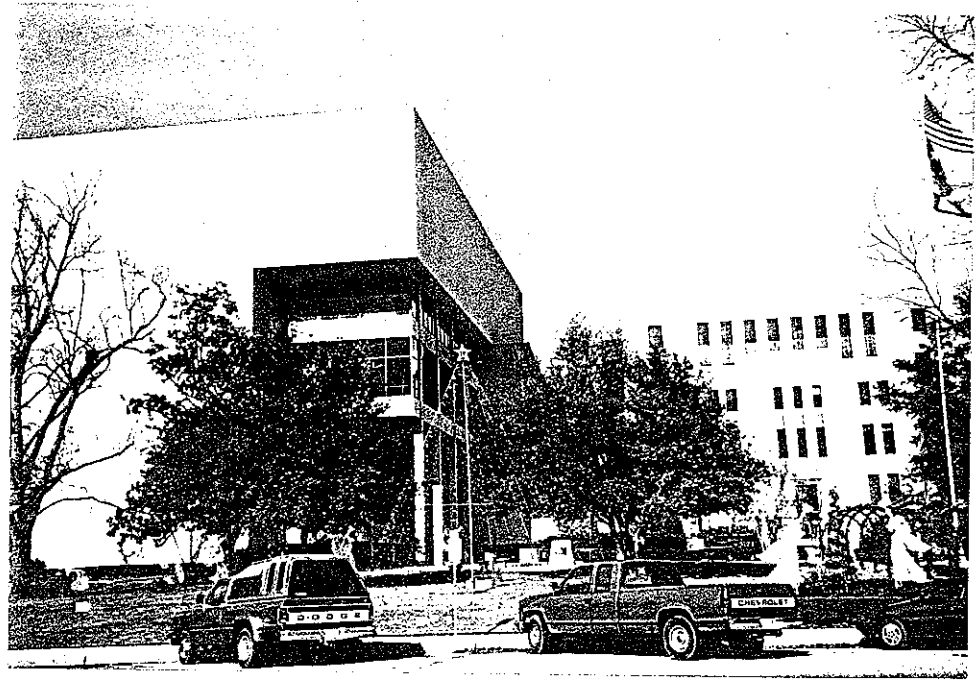




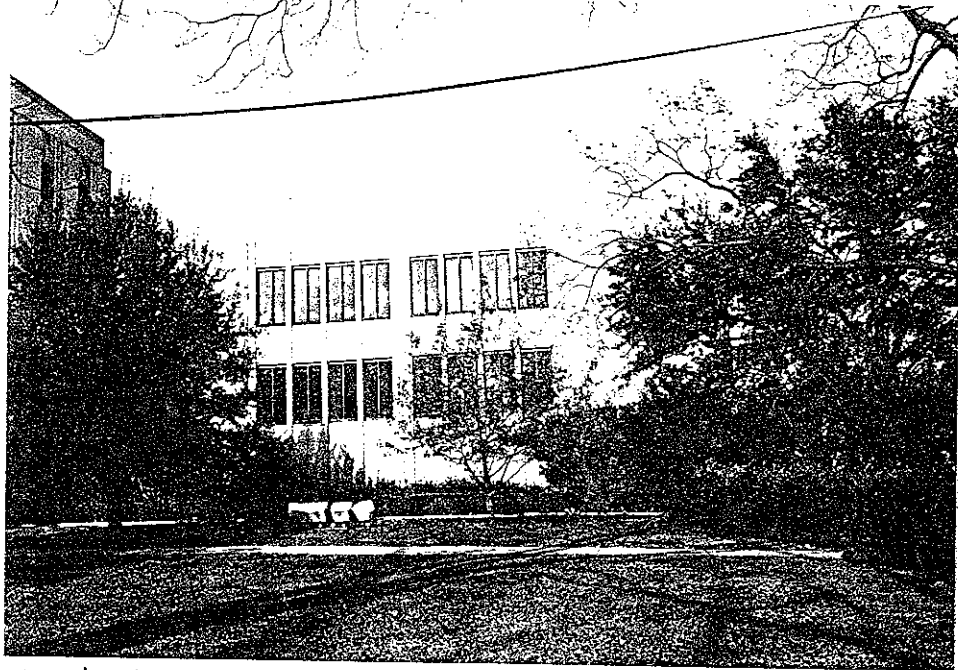
Gregg County, Texas  
courthouse, 1932  
Longview



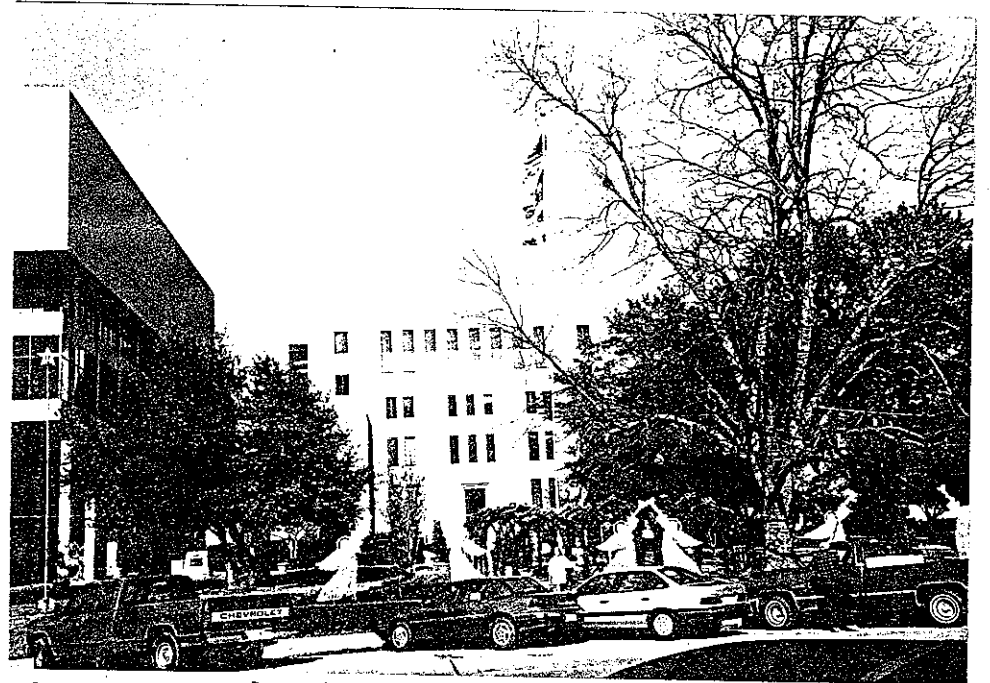
Gregg County Courthouse, West Annex (1982)  
South side  
Dec. 2, 1996



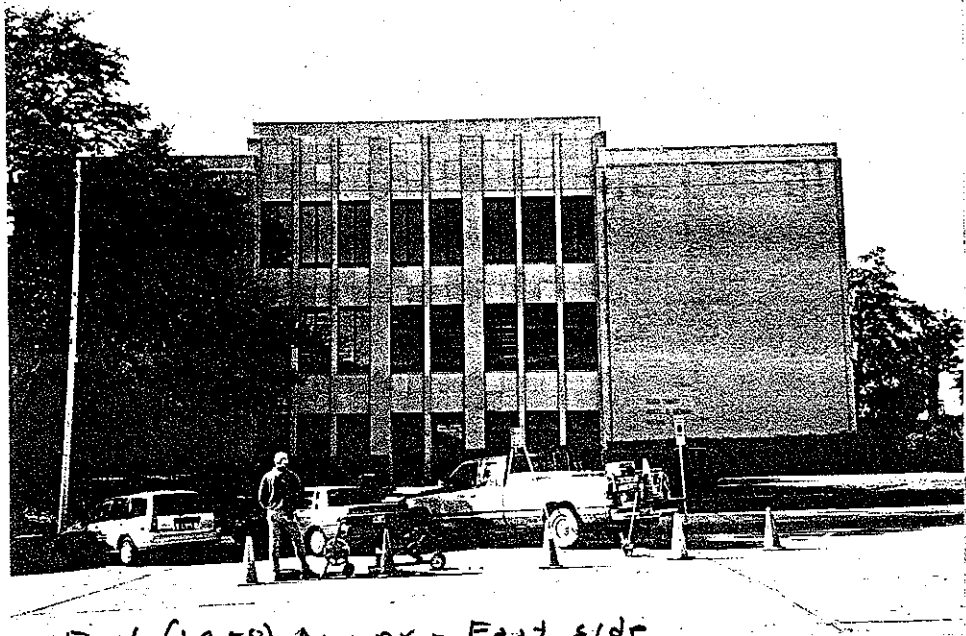
South side



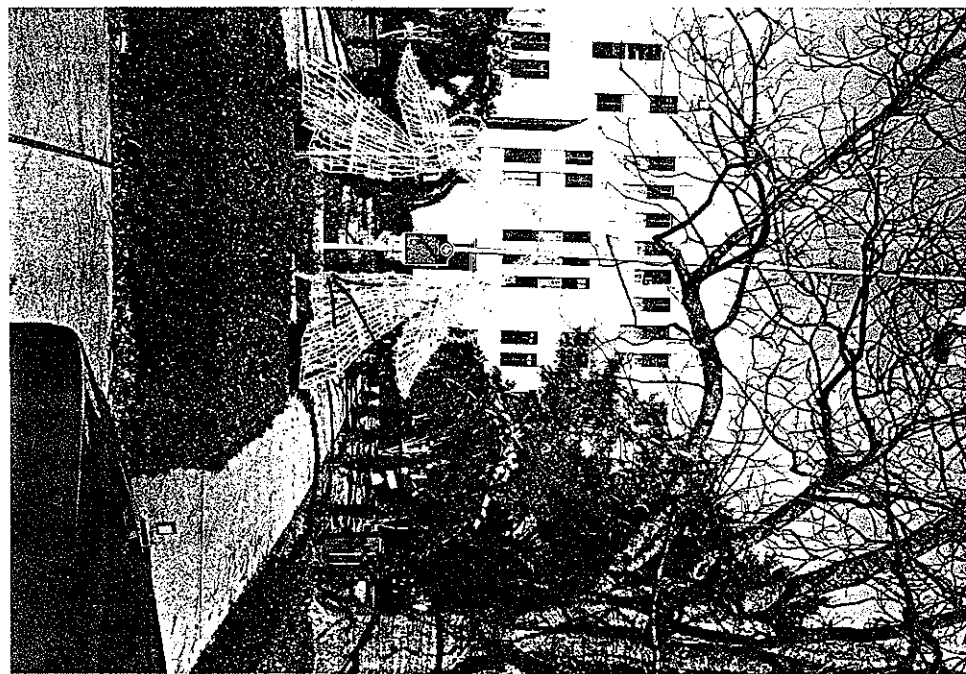
West Annex - south side (1958)



Main, 1932 Building - south side



East (1958) Annex - East side



Gregg County Courthouse, Longview, Texas, Dec. 2, 1986  
⊗ Proposed site of Historical Marker  
behind hedge.

Main (1932) Building.  
South side.



**Gregg County Historical Commission**

Norman W. Black, D.D.S.  
Chairman

417 Mobberly Avenue  
Longview, Texas 75602

December 12, 1996

Phone  
903-757-2261

FAX  
903-753-5337

Cynthia J. Beeman, Administrator  
Texas Historical Marker Program  
Local History Programs  
Texas Historical Commission  
P. O. Box 12276  
Austin, Texas 78711

Re: Historical Marker Application: The Courthouses of Gregg County.

Dear Cynthia:

Enclosed is the application packet for the above proposed Official Texas Historical Marker to be entitled: The Courthouses of Gregg County.

I cannot remember spending more time on research for one subject other than for the "Big-Inch" Pipeline H. M. But it certainly was fun. Cynthia, I discovered a temporary courthouse (the first one) that all the other historians missed.

Best wishes to you and the staff for the coming Christmas Holidays!

Sincerely,

Norman W. Black, D.D.S.

Enc.



## SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

In order to facilitate delivery of the marker, neither post office box numbers nor rural route numbers can be accepted. If the marker is to be placed on the highway right-of-way, it will be shipped directly to the district highway engineer.

Name: Dr. Norman W. Black  
Street address: 417 Mobberly Ave., Longview, Texas 75602  
Phone: 903-757-2261

**TYPE AND SIZE OF MARKER DESIRED** (Please check one only.)

### Subject Markers

This type of marker is solely educational in nature and conveys no legal restrictions to the property. Subject markers are appropriate for topics such as cemeteries, church congregations, businesses, persons, events, and institutions. These markers should not be attached to buildings. If the marker is to be attached to a surface other than the foundry-provided post, please provide the requested information in the space below.

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16" x 12" grave marker (comes with mounting bar) | \$250 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 27" x 42" marker with post            | \$850 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 27" x 42" marker without post (see below)        | \$800 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18" x 28" marker with post                       | \$550 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18" x 28" marker without post (see below)        | \$500 |

If not on post, to what (block of granite, gatepost, etc.) will the marker be attached? \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of material? (wood, stone, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

### Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Markers

Markers conveying the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) designation are reserved solely for historic structures deemed worthy of preservation for their architectural integrity and historical associations. The RTHL designation does carry a measure of legal protection for the structure (see Marker Policies 13 through 18) and for that reason we must have a legal description (lot and block numbers) for the property to be designated. The most commonly used marker for conveying this designation is the medallion and plate (also referred to as a building marker); however, the 18" x 28" or 27" x 42" size marker may be ordered for those who wish a greater amount of historical information to appear in the marker text. Careful attention should be paid so as not to damage historic building material if the marker is to be mounted directly onto the structure. The THC staff can provide alternate ideas for mounting upon request.

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medallion and 16" x 12" plate with post                | \$400 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medallion and 16" x 12" plate without post (see below) | \$350 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 27" x 42" marker with post                             | \$850 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 27" x 42" marker without post (see below)              | \$800 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18" x 28" marker with post                             | \$550 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18" x 28" marker without post (see below)              | \$500 |

If not on post, to what (building, gate, etc.) will the marker be attached? \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of material? (wood, stone, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

**Legal description of property (lot and block number; metes and bounds):**  
Block No. 9, City of Longview, Texas

*Before forwarding your material to the Texas Historical Commission, please check to make sure you've included the following items. Incomplete applications cannot be considered and may be returned to the applicant.*

- ✓ completed application form signed by the county historical commission chair or marker committee chair
- ✓ narrative history with reference notes and bibliography
- ✓ photograph of the proposed marker location (do not use instant/Polaroid photos)
- ✓ map indicating marker location and other sites related to the marker topic
- ✓ historic photo of property and current photographs of all elevations (RTHL markers only)
- ✓ legal description of property (RTHL markers only)
- ✓ floor plans (RTHL markers only)
- ✓ site plan (RTHL markers only)

**Mail completed applications to:**

**Local History Programs, Texas Historical Commission, P.O. Box 12276, Austin, Texas 78711-2276 512/463-5853**

Additional items, including directional signs and replacement parts for 1936 markers, are available. Please contact the Local History Programs office for a separate order form.



TEXAS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION

George W. Bush • Governor

John L. Nau, III • Chairman

Curtis Tunnell • Executive Director

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

December 23, 1996

Dr. Norman Black, Chair  
Gregg CHC  
417 Mobberly Ave  
Longview, TX 75602

RE: THE COURTHOUSES OF GREGG COUNTY  
27" x 42" marker w/ post  
Job # 10297; Received: 12/17/96

Dear Dr. Black:

We have received the above-referenced marker application. The application will be reviewed and evaluated by the Texas Historical Commission staff in the order in which it was received. Currently, there is about a 30-45 day wait between the time subject marker applications are received and evaluated. Should additional information be needed for the review, we will contact you and any parties listed below at that time. After any deficiencies have been corrected, we will send copies of the application to the members of the State Marker Review Board, who will make the final determination of the topic's acceptability for marking.

We will notify all parties as soon as the Board makes its decision. If the topic is approved for marking, payment will be requested at that time. If not approved, the application will be returned along with a letter of explanation.

Because of the variables involved in the marker process, and because we must coordinate our orders with the schedule of the contracting foundry, we suggest that the date of the marker dedication not be set until the completed marker is received.

We appreciate the effort made to record this topic. Should there be any questions about the status of this marker application, please contact me at 512/463-5853.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Egina G. Reyes".

Egina G. Reyes  
Office Manager  
Local History Programs

pc:



TEXAS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION

George W. Bush • Governor

John L. Nau, III • Chairman

Curtis Tunnell • Executive Director

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

January 29, 1997

Dr. Norman Black, Chair  
Gregg CHC  
417 Mobberly Avenue  
Longview, TX 75602

RE: THE COURTHOUSES OF GREGG COUNTY  
27" x 42" marker w/ post  
Job # 10297, Gregg County

Dear Dr. Black:

I am pleased to notify you that the State Marker Review Board has reviewed and approved the above-referenced topic for an Official Texas Historical Marker.

Payment for the marker, in the amount of \$850.00, is now due. Please complete and return the enclosed payment form at your earliest convenience. Once payment for the marker is received, the application will be placed in line to have the marker inscription written. The inscription will not be written until after funds have been received. When the text is prepared, a copy will be sent to you and any parties listed below for review and approval.

The Texas Historical Commission congratulates you on your efforts to record and preserve Texas history.

Sincerely,

Cynthia J. Beeman, Administrator  
Official Texas Historical Marker Program





## Gregg County Historical Commission

Norman W. Black, D.D.S.  
Chairman

417 Mobberly Avenue  
Longview, Texas 75602

February 4, 1997

Phone  
903-757-2261

FAX  
903-753-5337

Cynthia J. Beeman, Administrator  
Official Texas Historical Marker Program  
Texas Historical Commission  
P. O. Box 12276  
Austin, Texas 78711-2276

RE: THE COURTHOUSES OF GREGG COUNTY  
27: x 42" marker w/post  
Job # 10297, Gregg County

Dear Cynthia:

Thank you for the notice of approval of the above referenced topic for an Official Texas Historical Marker.

As I explained to you on the telephone a few minutes ago, normally, the county (Gregg, anyway) pays its bills upon the receipt of the invoice accompanied by the signed (by me) purchase order. This is done twice monthly after the commissioners court approves payment of bills due at the regular meetings of the commissioners court.

I really don't know what to do in this situation. If you have any suggestions as to how to resolve this in keeping with your rules I would appreciate your telling me.

Thanks, once again, for the speedy approval of this project.

Sincerely,

Norman Black, D.D.S.

Enc. - 2.



TEXAS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION

George W. Bush • Governor  
John L. Nau, III • Chairman  
Curtis Tunnell • Executive Director

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

LOCAL HISTORY PROGRAMS

512/463-5853

PAYMENT FORM

MARKER TITLE THE COURTHOUSES OF GREGG COUNTY

COUNTY GREGG JOB NUMBER 10297 AMT. ENCLOSED P.O.

Please specify method of payment:  Check enclosed  Visa  Mastercard  
Gregg County Purchase Order

Credit Card number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: Norman V. Black, D.D.S.

Checks should be made payable to the Texas Historical Commission.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Remittance #: \_\_\_\_\_

Check #: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

TAX EXEMPTION  
NO. 1-75-6000971-8

PURCHASE ORDER  
GREGG COUNTY, TEXAS  
101 E. METHVIN SUITE 115  
LONGVIEW, TEXAS 75601

ALWAYS REFER TO  
PURCHASE ORDER

P. O. Number: 97- 3063

72681 TEXAS HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION  
P O BOX 12276  
AUSTIN, TX 78711

BID NO.: Date: 2/04/97  
Department Number: 10-936

Account Item	Quantity	Unit	Description of Articles / Services	Unit Price	Extension
36309	1	1.00 EA	HISTORICAL MARKER / COURTHOUSE	850.00	850.00 Y
				Total:	850.00

JOE L. ALVAREZ  
Purchasing Agent

Requested By: N. BLACK      Comments:

=====

F.O.B. DELIVERED ADDRESS UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED  
INSTRUCTIONS

This order confirms acceptance of your bid to furnish items listed hereon. ORIGINAL and 2 copies of YOUR INVOICE, supported with the original bill of lading MUST BE MAILED TO THE DEPARTMENT RECEIVING THE GOODS AS SPECIFIED ON THIS ORDER. The above purchase order number MUST be shown on tag, box, bill of lading or express receipt and INVOICE. No responsibility will be assumed for verbal orders given by employees outside of Purchasing Department. If unable to ship material when and as promised, please advise when shipment can be made. The right is reserved to cancel all or any part if not shipped as specified. IT SHALL BE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE CASH DISCOUNT PERIOD WILL DATE FROM THE RECEIPT OF THE INVOICE OR FROM DATE OF RECEIPT OF GOODS AT DELIVERED DESTINATION, WHICHEVER IS LATER, AND NOT FROM DATE OF INVOICE. ALL PURCHASES SUBJECT TO STANDARD TERMS & CONDITIONS, AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

=====

RECORD OF MATERIAL RECEIVED      (For County Use)

To: County Auditor  
From: HISTORICAL:

Requisition No.: 97- 3063  
Purchase order : 97- 3063

I certify that I personally received for the County the items as listed on this Purchase Order (unless otherwise stated below) by means of delivery, and in the condition recorded by me hereon; and, I request that payment be approved pursuant to the terms and conditions relating to this purchase.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Received

\_\_\_\_\_  
Received By

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approved

\_\_\_\_\_  
Invoice Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Invoice Number

Bill To: GREGG COUNTY HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION  
C/O DR NORMAN BLACK  
417 MOBBERLY AVE  
LONGVIEW, TEXAS 75602

Deliver To: GREGG COUNTY HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION  
C/O DR NORMAN BLACK  
417 MOBBERLY AVE  
LONGVIEW, TEXAS 75602

Fund Name: GENERAL  
Department: HISTORICAL  
Account: COMMISSION

00970350130932



TEXAS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION

George W. Bush • Governor  
John L. Nau, III • Chairman  
Curtis Tunnell • Executive Director

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

FACSIMILE

*The Texas Historical  
Commission is the  
state agency for historic  
preservation. Its staff  
administers a variety of  
programs to preserve  
the archeological,  
historical, and cultural  
resources of Texas.*

To: Dr. Norman Black

From: Cynthia J. Beeman *CJB*

Date: July 5, 1997

Fax Number: 903/753-5337

Number of pages (including cover sheet): 2

Comments:

Sorry about the mix-up with payment on this one. Here's a quick first draft. We'll try to get it to the foundry as soon as possible. Let me know if you want to make any revisions.

Texas Historical Commission Staff (CJB), 7/5/97

27" x 42" Official Texas Historical Marker with post  
Gregg County (Job #10297)

Location: 101 E. Methvin Street, Longview

**THE COURTHOUSES OF GREGG COUNTY\***

GREGG COUNTY WAS FORMED IN 1873, AND LONGVIEW WAS CHOSEN AS COUNTY SEAT. THE FIRST TEMPORARY COURTHOUSE WAS A SMALL BUILDING AT THE CORNER OF FREDONIA AND TYLER STREETS. IT SOON PROVED INADEQUATE, HOWEVER, AND ANOTHER TEMPORARY COURTHOUSE WAS SET UP ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE 2-STORY W.G. NORTHCUTT HARDWARE STORE, THE ONLY BRICK BUILDING IN TOWN. THE NORTHCUTT STORE WAS ALSO THE ONLY STRUCTURE TO SURVIVE A DEVASTATING DOWNTOWN FIRE IN 1877.

THE COUNTY BUILT A JAIL ON THE TOWN SQUARE IN 1874, AND LEVIED A SPECIAL TAX TO FINANCE CONSTRUCTION OF A PERMANENT COURTHOUSE, DESIGNED BY F.E. RUFFINI AND COMPLETED IN 1879. THE FRENCH SECOND EMPIRE STYLE BUILDING FEATURED A MANSARD ROOF AND A CENTRAL CLOCK TOWER. STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS WERE SOON EVIDENT, HOWEVER, AND BY 1896 THE BUILDING WAS CONDEMNED AND DEMOLISHED. A NEW RED BRICK ROMANESQUE REVIVAL COURTHOUSE, DESIGNED BY FORT WORTH ARCHITECT MARSHALL R. SANGUINET, WAS COMPLETED ON THE SQUARE IN 1897.

THE EAST TEXAS OIL BOOM OF THE 1930s RESULTED IN OVERWHELMING BUSINESS AT THE COURTHOUSE. AND BY 1932 THE COUNTY HAD REPLACED THE RED BRICK COURTHOUSE WITH A MODERN ART DECO BUILDING, ENLARGED OVER THE YEARS WITH SEVERAL ADDITIONS, IT STILL SERVES THE COUNTY.\*\*

(1997)\*\*\*

\*3/4 inch lettering  
\*\*1/2 inch lettering  
\*\*\*1/4 inch lettering

**PLEASE CHECK ONE AND SIGN:**

- I approve this text as written.
- Please consider the revisions as noted on this copy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

Texas Historical Commission Staff (CJB), 7/5/97

27" x 42" Official Texas Historical Marker with post  
Gregg County (Job #10297)

Location: 101 E. Methvin Street, Longview

### THE COURTHOUSES OF GREGG COUNTY\*

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(1997)\*\*\*

\*3/4 inch lettering  
\*\*1/2 inch lettering  
\*\*\*1/4 inch lettering

**PLEASE CHECK ONE AND SIGN:**

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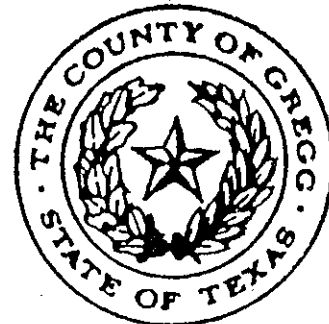
Norman H. Mack, D. D. S.  
(signature)

The jail was 2 blocks west.

# A Fax Is Coming!

TO: Cynthia J. Beeman, Administrator  
Official Texas Historical Markers  
Texas Historical Commission  
Fax 512/475-4872

FROM: Norman Black, D.D.S.  
Gregg County Historical Commission



FAX #: (903) 753-5337                      PHONE: (903) 757-2261

RE: THE COURTHOUSES OF GREGG COUNTY  
Historical Marker Application, (Job No. 10297)

TOTAL PAGES: 2  
(INCLUDING THIS PAGE)

DATE: July 6, 1997

Cynthia,

Thanks for working Saturday on this.

Texas Historical Commission Staff (CJB), 7/5/97

27" x 42" Official Texas Historical Marker with post  
 Gregg County (Job #10297)  
Location: 101 E. Methvin Street, Longview

### THE COURTHOUSES OF GREGG COUNTY\*

GREGG COUNTY WAS FORMED IN 1873, AND LONGVIEW WAS CHOSEN AS COUNTY SEAT. THE FIRST TEMPORARY COURTHOUSE WAS A SMALL BUILDING AT THE CORNER OF FREDONIA AND TYLER STREETS. IT SOON PROVED INADEQUATE, HOWEVER, AND ANOTHER TEMPORARY COURTHOUSE WAS SET UP ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE 2-STORY W.G. NORTHCUTT HARDWARE STORE, THE ONLY BRICK BUILDING IN TOWN. THE NORTHCUTT STORE WAS ALSO THE ONLY STRUCTURE TO SURVIVE A DEVASTATING DOWNTOWN FIRE IN 1877.

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(1997)\*\*\*

\*3/4 inch lettering  
 \*\*1/2 inch lettering  
 \*\*\*1/4 inch lettering

**PLEASE CHECK ONE AND SIGN:**

- I approve this text as written.
- Please consider the revisions as noted on this copy.

Norman H. Hall, D.D.S.  
 (signature)

The jail was 2 blocks west.





TEXAS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION

George W. Bush • Governor

John L. Nau, III • Chairman

Curtis Tunnell • Executive Director

*The State Agency for Historic Preservation*

July 7, 1997

Dr. Norman Black, Chair  
Gregg CHC  
417 Mobberly Avenue  
Longview, TX 75602

RE: THE COURTHOUSES OF GREGG COUNTY  
27" x 42" marker w/ post - Job # 10297  
Shipment information: above address

Dear Dr. Black:

We have ordered the above referenced marker for casting. The foundry is currently taking about 10 to 12 weeks to cast markers, but since the marker is wanted as soon as possible, we have labeled it a RUSH order and have asked that it be placed ahead of all other non-RUSH orders. A copy of the final inscription as it was sent to the foundry is enclosed for your files.

Though you have already been planning the dedication ceremony and have set the date, if you should need further assistance, a guide to planning your dedication ceremony is available from our office upon request.

We will contact you again once we are notified that your marker has been shipped.

Thank you for your interest in the Local History Programs; we greatly appreciate your support in the preservation of the history of our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Egina".

Egina G. Reyes  
Office Manager  
Local History Programs

Texas Historical Commission Staff (CJB), 7/5/97; revised 7/7/97

27" x 42" Official Texas Historical Marker with post  
 Gregg County (Job #10297)  
Location: 101 E. Methvin Street, Longview

### THE COURTHOUSES OF GREGG COUNTY\*

GREGG COUNTY WAS FORMED IN 1873, AND LONGVIEW WAS CHOSEN AS COUNTY SEAT. THE FIRST TEMPORARY COURTHOUSE WAS A SMALL BUILDING AT THE CORNER OF FREDONIA AND TYLER STREETS. IT SOON PROVED INADEQUATE, HOWEVER, AND ANOTHER TEMPORARY COURTHOUSE WAS SET UP ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE 2-STORY W.G. NORTHCUTT HARDWARE STORE, THE ONLY BRICK BUILDING IN TOWN. THE NORTHCUTT STORE WAS ALSO THE ONLY STRUCTURE TO SURVIVE A DEVASTATING DOWNTOWN FIRE IN 1877.

THE COUNTY BUILT A JAIL IN 1874, AND LEVIED A SPECIAL TAX TO FINANCE CONSTRUCTION OF A PERMANENT COURTHOUSE, DESIGNED BY F.E. RUFFINI AND COMPLETED IN 1879. THE FRENCH SECOND EMPIRE STYLE BUILDING FEATURED A MANSARD ROOF AND A CENTRAL CLOCK TOWER. STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS WERE SOON EVIDENT, HOWEVER, AND BY 1896 THE BUILDING WAS CONDEMNED AND DEMOLISHED. A NEW RED BRICK ROMANESQUE REVIVAL COURTHOUSE, DESIGNED BY FORT WORTH ARCHITECT MARSHALL R. SANGUINET, WAS COMPLETED ON THE SQUARE IN 1897.


THE EAST TEXAS OIL BOOM OF THE 1930s RESULTED IN OVERWHELMING BUSINESS AT THE COURTHOUSE, AND BY 1932 THE COUNTY HAD REPLACED THE RED BRICK COURTHOUSE WITH A MODERN ART DECO BUILDING, ENLARGED OVER THE YEARS WITH SEVERAL ADDITIONS. IT STILL SERVES THE COUNTY.\*\*

(1997)\*\*\*

\*3/4 inch lettering  
 \*\*1/2 inch lettering  
 \*\*\*1/4 inch lettering

PLEASE CHECK ONE AND SIGN:

- I approve this text as written.  
 Please consider the revisions as noted on this copy

  
 (signature)

GREGG COUNTY  
**COMMISSIONERS' COURT**  
**AGENDA**

Thursday, October 30, 1997 @ 10:00 a.m.  
Commissioners' Courtroom - 3rd Floor - Courthouse

*Presentation of service awards to county employees*

- 1) Approval of payroll and transfer of funds.
- 2) Approval of bills payable, a special bill and interbudget transfers.
- 3) **Road & Bridge**
  - a) Request approval for Southwestern Bell Telephone Company to place a buried line within the right of way of East Mountain Road in Precinct #3. (Pct. #3)
  - b) Request approval for H D Construction to place a water line within the right of way of Mt. Pisgah Road in Precinct #3. (Pct. #3)
  - c) Request approval to assist White Oak Independent School District in repairing a bus turn-around at the end of Steamboat Road in Precinct #3. This project will not exceed the \$3,000.00 limit. (Pct. #3)
  - d) Request approval to assist the City of Lakeport in cleaning out drainage ditches on Peach Orchard; in addition, clear brush that is hanging over the road way on Ben Mitchell Road and patch potholes on Tracy Road in Precinct #4. The City of Lakeport will furnish all materials necessary and the project will not exceed the \$3,000.00 limit. (Pct. #4)
  - e) Request approval for Southwestern Electric Power Company to place four lines within the right of way of Knox Lee Road in Precinct #4. (Pct. #4)
- 4) **County Judge**
  - a) Discussion with possible action on Gregg County's Contract with CCRI.
- 5) **Auditor**
  - a) Acknowledge that Gregg County is making no plan changes in the Texas County and District Retirement System *Annually Determined Contribution Rate* plan for 1998; approve submitting the "No Plan Change Notice".
- 6) **Constable, Precinct #3**
  - a) Request approval of payment to 360° Communications in the amount of \$23.43, which includes business related calls of \$3.23 in excess of the \$16.00 limit and reimbursed personal calls in the amount of \$4.20.

7) ***Health Department, Litter Officer***

- a) Request approval of payment to 360° Communications in the amount of \$75.37, which includes business related calls of \$29.37 in excess of the \$16.00 limit and reimbursed personal calls in the amount of \$30.00.

8) ***Juvenile Services***

- a) Request approval of payment to 360° Communications in the amount of \$22.85, which includes business related calls of \$6.85 in excess of the \$16.00 limit.
- b) Request approval of Utility Services Agreement between Liberty City Water Supply Corporation and the Marvin A. Smith Regional Juvenile Center.

9) ***Purchasing***

- a) Request approval of RFB #98-012, Contract for the Purchase of Gravel for the Marvin Smith Juvenile Facility.
- b) Request authorization to sell county inventory at the next scheduled auction and the deletion of specified county inventory, as indicated on lists.
- c) Request approval of RFB #97-035, Professional Auditing Services.

10) ***Sheriff***

- a) Request acknowledgment of payment of officer match for two grants from Asset and Forfeiture account for the year 1997-1998.

11) ***Tax Assessor-Collector***

- a) Request approval of the 1997 Gregg County Tax Roll.

12) ***Alvin G. Khoury, 124th District Judge***

- a) Request approval of payment to 360° Communications in the amount of \$22.04, which includes business calls in the amount of \$11.75 and reimbursed personal calls in the amount of \$10.29.

13) ***Robin D. Sage, 307th Family District Court***

- a) Request approval of a grant received by the 307th District Court for the training of Attorneys Ad Litem who represent children in Child Protective Services Cases in the amount of \$4,000.00.

14) ***9-1-1 Addressing Coordinator***

- a) Request permission to attend the Texas Communications and Criminal Justice Fall Conference to be held November 10-13, 1997 in Corpus Christi, Texas.

15) *General Services Commission*

- a) Request approval of a Resolution regarding the Sheriff's Office and Juvenile Probation Board's Participation in the State of Texas Contract Airline Fares.

16) *Gregg County Historical Commission*

- a) Request permission to use the courthouse lawn and veranda for a historical marker dedication service on November 18, 1997 at 12:00 noon; also request the use of a podium, PA system and thirty folding chairs, plus request of the removal of 24" of the north side of the hedge on the south side of the courthouse (where the historical marker will be placed).

17) *National Association of Counties*

- a) Request payment of 1998 dues, in the amount of \$1799.00.

18) *Robert G. Schleier, Jr.*

- a) Request approval of an Exchange Deed by and between Gregg County and the City of Kilgore concerning the Dansby Village project.

19) *Public Comments*

20) *Adjourn*





TEXAS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION

George W. Bush • Governor  
John L. Nau, III • Chairman  
Curtis Tunnell • Executive Director

The State Agency for Historic Preservation



MARKER DEDICATION ANNOUNCEMENT

This form may be used to announce your marker dedication in the Texas Historical Commission's newsletter, *The Medallion*; in the THC's marker dedication calendar, which is distributed to agency commissioners and staff; and in the monthly *News for County Historical Commissions*.

To announce your dedication to THC commissioners and staff in the agency's marker dedication calendar, this form should be received approximately three weeks prior to the dedication. The announcement will be listed in the next calendar issued after its receipt. To include your announcement in *The Medallion*, please submit this form at least two months before the marker dedication.



Title of Marker THE COURTHOUSES OF GREGG COUNTY  
27" x 42" marker w/post - Job # 10297

County GREGG

Community or nearest town Longview

Date of dedication November 18, 1997  
12:10 P.M.

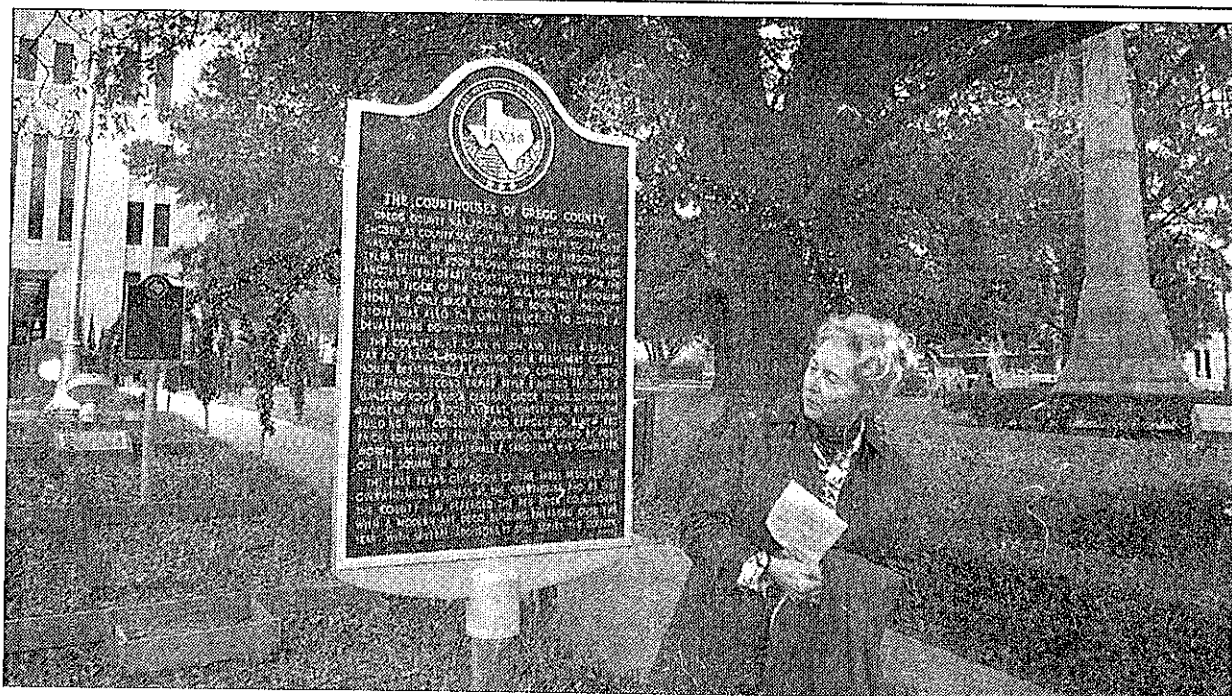
Contact person Dr. Norman Black

Address 417 Mobberly Ave.

City, state, zip Longview, Texas 75602

Area code & telephone number 903-757-2261  
Fax: 903 753-5337

Please return this form to:  
**Local History Programs**  
at the address below



Kevin Green/Staff Photographer

Beth Holloway Dodson, a member of the Gregg County Historical Commission, takes a look at Gregg County's newest of 102 historical markers during unveiling ceremonies Tuesday on the courthouse lawn.

# Gregg unveils historical marker

## County courthouse receives permanent place in Texas history

By Beth McPherson  
Staff Writer

Standing in front of the courthouse that has been the focus of his research in recent months, Dr. Norman Black on Tuesday presided over the unveiling of a Texas historical marker dedicated to Gregg County's courthouses.

The marker, which was sponsored by the Texas Historical Commission and the Gregg County Historical Commission, is the 102nd historical marker to be placed in Gregg County.

"A lot of times we forget about the past, which is what we build on for the future," said County Judge Mickey Smith, one of several past and present county officials who spoke at Tuesday's ceremony on the front lawn of the Gregg County Courthouse.

Former county judges R.E. "Peppy" Blount, Henry Atkinson and Kenneth J. Walker, all thanked Black for his work and stressed the importance of preserving the past. Also on hand were the Kilgore College Ranger band and the Rangerettes, who performed for an audience of several county officials, historical society members and history buffs.

During his speech, Black dedicated the new marker to the memory of three men who shaped the future of Gregg County: tavern owner Britton Buttrill, Killingsworth preacher Blueford W. Brown and Gen. John Gregg.

While Brown and Gregg are two of the more famous residents of Gregg County, Black's research revealed that the lesser-known Buttrill also had a hand in the creation of the county.

"Buttrill was sort of like Gregg County's Paul Revere," Black said. "At one point, the people of the county had to raise \$50 to pay for the creation of the county. Buttrill got on his horse and rode all over to collect that money, but he only raised about \$6. Someone donated the rest, and the county was formed. What he did, though, deserved to be recognized, and I wanted to include him."

The new marker was unveiled by Beth Holloway Dodson, who is a member of the Gregg County Historical Commission and a direct descendant of Longview founder O.H. Methvin.

It took Black two months of research to piece together the

history of Gregg County's many courthouses. After the county was founded in 1873, the commissioners court used three temporary locations to house county records before the first major courthouse was built in 1879.

The first courthouse lasted for little more than a decade before it began to deteriorate. In 1896, the structure was found unsafe for use, and all the court documents and proceedings were temporarily moved to a schoolhouse.

In 1897, the first courthouse was torn down, and a red-brick Romanesque-style courthouse was built in its place. The second courthouse lasted until the oil boom of the early 1930s sparked frantic legal activity in Gregg County, overwhelming the existing facilities.

With the second courthouse still standing in the center of the downtown lot, the third courthouse was built at the back of the lot, leaving 4 or 5 feet of space between the two. The third courthouse still stands today, though additions were later built onto the structure to house the records division and a larger jail.



Gregg County formed from the southern part of Upshur County.

After Longview was chosen as the county seat, county officials organized and appointed a citizens' committee to find a place where the commissioners court could meet at no cost.

"Basically, what they found was a shack," said Black. "Officials began to worry that anyone could kick down a wall and steal the county records, and the sheriff complained that the walls leaked so much that the records were getting wet."

A short time later, the county courthouse was moved a block away to the second floor of the W.G. Northcutt Hardware Store, which stood at what is now 103 W. Tyler Street. It cost \$25 per month to rent the building.

The courthouse stayed in the Tyler Street location for about two years, and was apparently moved on Sept. 30, 1875, to another temporary location, which Black did not know about when he applied for the marker.

"I was cleaning out files and found a single sheet of paper listing events that had happened in Gregg County. They had the wrong date, but the courthouse did move," he said. "It's not on the marker, but they apparently moved the courthouse into the Caroll and Methvin Building. Unfortunately, no one knows where that was. The courthouse stayed there until the first permanent structure was put up in 1879."

In 1879, a two-story courthouse was built in the center of the downtown square. It cost less than \$14,000 to build the courthouse, which had a clocktower and a bell that rang each hour.

"They took great pains to lower the bell and take it to the second courthouse, but no one knows where the bell is now," Black said. "One

of these days, I hope to find it."

In his research, Black also discovered that the first courthouse had a fence around the perimeter of the property so county officials' cattle could safely be kept on the grounds. Children played ball on the courthouse lawn, and dances were held inside until the sheriff decreed in 1885 that "there will be no dancing or festivals held in the courthouse."

"The sheriff felt it would be safer that way," Black said.

Although construction of the first courthouse was uneventful, the building began to rapidly deteriorate. In 1896, an architect proclaimed the courthouse unsafe for use, and court proceedings were moved into a vacant school building.

In 1897, the first Gregg County courthouse was torn down and a second was erected in its place. This time, the county prepared a 15-page list of specifications and the courthouse was built for about \$30,000. The second courthouse was a red brick, Romanesque-style building that was two stories high and had a three-story rectangular tower.

The Texas oil boom of the early 1930s spurred furious legal activity in Gregg County that overwhelmed the second courthouse, which was deemed too small for the amount of business handled there on a daily basis.

The third, modern courthouse, which stands in the middle of the downtown area today, was built in 1932 for less than \$200,000. It had seven stories, three of which were used to house the jail.

But while the other two courthouses were built in the exact center of the lot, the final

courthouse was built cater-cornered on the lot, leaving a large lawn out front. The mystery of the unusual location was solved by Black, who discovered in his research that the reason was one of practicality:

"The first and second courthouses were in the middle of the lot, but during the oil boom of the 1930s, business was so frantic at the (second) courthouse that lawyers spread tables out on the front lawn and conducted business right there in the sunshine," he said. "It was too busy for them to tear down the second courthouse, so they simply built the new (current) courthouse right next to the existing one. They were literally about three or four feet apart."

Once the third and final courthouse was complete, the second courthouse was demolished and sold as scrap for \$1,000.

In 1958, a court and records annex was added to the existing courthouse. In 1958, an annex was built on the west side of the courthouse, the top two floors of which were made the county jail.

Although the bulk of Black's research is complete, he is still working to solve some of the smaller mysteries of the courthouses — such as where the bell went after the second courthouse was torn down, or where an old brass cannon that once stood on the grounds ended up. He is the first to admit that his search is far from over.

"I just know someone has that bell tucked away in a garage somewhere," Black said. "I've talked to some people who remember those times, but no one seems to know where it might be. It's just a matter of finding the right person, though, and I'm not going to stop until I find it."

# Mauro

From 1A

1998, election were held today, Mauro would receive just 16 percent of the vote against Bush's 68 percent. Another 14 percent are undecided.

The Scripps Howard Texas Poll of 700 registered voters was con-

spokesman said of the latest survey.

"This campaign begins in earnest now, and Garry will lay out a bold vision for this state that will sharply define the difference in both his life experiences and

polls, she said, "He won't take a single vote for granted. Gov. Bush intends to campaign aggressively and work very hard."

Hughes also rejected the notion that Mauro's views are those of most Texans. "The philosophical

## Lottery

One ticket sold in Austin correctly matched all six numbers to claim the \$10 million jackpot in Saturday's Lotto Texas

*Inserted - Nov. 25, 1987*

## ADDENDUM

The following paragraph should follow the first paragraph on p. 20.

On pages 303-4, Vol. A, Minutes of the County Court of Gregg County the following reference to another temporary courthouse appears:

It is ordered by the Court that Jno. Witherspoon, Presiding Justice - draw up a Lease for the rent of the upper story of the Carroll and Methvin building for One year - with the privilege of the County for two years at (\$550.00) five hundred and fifty dollars per year - binding the owners Carroll & Methvin to put up partitions cutting off two small rooms from each end of said room leaving a Court room in the Center with doors Locks & - said lease to be paid monthly.

Court adjourned until tomorrow morning September 30 AD 1875 - at 9 o'clock.

Thus, there were at least three temporary courthouses used by the young County of Gregg before the first permanent building was constructed.

second floor of the W. G. Northcutt Hardware Store, served in this capacity until January 16, 1879, when the first courthouse on Block Number 9 in Longview was completed. The Northcutt Hardware Store was an impressive building: it was the only structure in downtown Longview to survive the devastating fire of 1877 and the only brick building in town. The store, when established in 1870, was one of the tallest and finest in East Texas. People came from miles around to admire the fine brick structure and to shop in the well-stocked store.<sup>23</sup>

The first building constructed by Gregg County was not the courthouse, in 1879, but a new jail located at the corner of Court and Methvin Streets. It was completed on September 12, 1874.<sup>24</sup>

A special tax to erect a courthouse and jail in the County of Gregg, was authorized to be levied for the years 1876, 1877 and 1878, by Act of the Fifteenth Legislature and was approved August 21, 1876.<sup>25</sup>

The architect for the first courthouse to be built on Block 9 was Frederick Ernst Ruffini of Austin. The Ruffini brothers, Oscar and Frederick, came to Austin from Cleveland, Ohio. Both were responsible for many jails, court houses, homes, banks and stores all over Texas.<sup>26</sup>

On March 27, 1878, the Commissioners Court awarded the bid for the new courthouse to John McDonald whose bid of \$13,447.00 was the lowest of five bids.<sup>27</sup>

Apparently construction of the courthouse proceeded

smoothly and was uneventful and on January 16, 1879, Gregg County Judge L. G. Jackson, acting for the Commissioners Court accepted the courthouse as being complete.<sup>28</sup>

A search of the Minutes of the Commissioners Court during this time period revealed no specifications for the new courthouse. Much can be learned from a photograph of the building and from a paragraph accompanying the photograph in the Ruffini Collection in the Archives Division, Texas State Library in Austin:

Built in a county organized only in 1873, this courthouse also displayed Second Empire features. Noteworthy details included both Roman and stilted arches, pilasters of colossal order with carved capitals, and cut stonework around the entrance. A strongly profiled stringcourse at the base of these pilasters created a base for the first story. Pilasters below this were rusticated, as if to create the effect of stone construction.<sup>29</sup>

Above the second story was a mansard roof and although there is no mention of an attic for storage, it appears there probably was ample space here. There were bullet or circular windows in the mansard roof. The structure was crowned with a phallic tower which housed four clock faces and a bell. The only mention of the bell is in the instruction for its careful removal by the contractor who demolished the courthouse in 1896-1897.<sup>30</sup> It is known that some native sandstone was used in the construction. This

sandstone probably came from "Methvin" or "Rock" Hill, which is in the adjacent block northwest of the courthouse block.<sup>31</sup> A paragraph on page 462 of Volume C of the Minutes of the Commissioners Court of Gregg County, states:

The Contractor Awarded the Contract Shall be entitled to all the materials in the present building Excepting the Bell which must be taken down Carefully and delivered to the County...and shall have the privilege of using any and all of the old material in the Construction of the New Building this is \_\_ fill the specifications and is sound and approved by the Architect as suitable. Care must be taken not to injure the trees fences etc. at present on the Court House Square. And should any fences be taken down for any purpose they must be replaced in as good a condition as at present at completion of the work and the gaps properly guarded during construction.<sup>32</sup>

As beautiful and imposing as this edifice was and not withstanding the excellent reputation of its designer, something went wrong. Serious deterioration soon became apparent. There is no record concerning specific reasons for this deterioration but evidence of this must have been obvious to the occupants of the courthouse including the commissioners for on Friday, September 11, 1896, the Court ordered that a Ft. Worth architect named Sanguinet examine the court house, the

walls and the foundation to see if it is safe.

Mr. Sanguinet, in his report to the Commissioners Court:

"...in which he virtually condemned said Court House claiming in said report that said Court House is unsafe for occupancy."<sup>33</sup> At this time the Court employed Mr. Sanguinet to submit plans, etc. for a new Court House not to exceed \$30,000.00. In the May Term of 1897, this statement is recorded: It is ordered by the Court that the old school house building near the Opera House in Longview, Gregg County, Texas be and the same is hereby designated as the temporary Court House for the use of Gregg County, Texas.

This school house building was located on the south east corner of Tyler and Green Streets.<sup>34</sup> Whether the untimely deterioration of the 1879 courthouse building was due to faulty design<sup>35</sup> or poor construction is not known. Underground water systems have long plagued the north west part of Block 9 which possibly affected the foundation. In any case, the specifications for the next courthouse were very lengthy and in great detail, covering fifteen pages of the Commissioners Court Minutes.<sup>36</sup>

The second courthouse built on Block 9 was accepted on behalf of the Commissioners Court by County Judge John Tyson Smith on November 24, 1897. The Sanguinet designed structure was built by G. W. Donaghey and was of Romanesque style. It was a dark red brick, two-story building with a three-story rectangular tower contiguous with the extended entrance which had small square turret at each corner. The remainder of the roof was gabled. It utilized some of the native sandstone, re-finished, from the previous courthouse. It also had some of the white limestone from the earlier building above the windows and over the arched entrance. It had at least four chimneys. The courthouse was positioned in the center of Block 9 where the former courthouse stood.

The old red brick court house is fondly remembered by the citizens of Gregg County and was apparently adequate in size and function for the county for many years.

Furious legal activity generated by the discovery of the Great East Texas Oil Field overwhelmed this beautiful seat of local government and by early 1931 it became obvious that a larger and more modern courthouse was needed for Gregg County. Therefore, the Commissioners Court, on February 10, 1932, ordered that bids for the construction of a new courthouse be presented to the court as soon as possible.<sup>37</sup> No record of the bids was found in the Minutes. However, it is known that the architects for the new courthouse were Voelcker & Dixon of Wichita Falls,

Texas.<sup>38</sup> The contract for the construction was awarded to C. S. Lambie and Company. The cost of this courthouse was to be \$194,500.00.<sup>40</sup>

With all the aforementioned legal activity it was obvious that governmental business could not be interrupted nor could a temporary courthouse be found of sufficient size. Thus, it must have been determined that this new courthouse had to be built behind, to the north of, the existing courthouse. This was done. Contemporaries remember a small space of only a step or two to exit one building and enter the other in the late construction.<sup>41</sup>

The contract to demolish the 1897 courthouse was awarded Lambie for \$2,500.00 and the materials from the old courthouse were sold to Cyclone Johnson for \$1,000.00.<sup>41</sup>

The location of today's courthouse on the northern part of Block 9 provides a rather large campus or lawn on the front or south side of the building as a consequence of keeping the 1897 courthouse until its 1932 successor was completed.

This 1932 courthouse was built to house a modern jail in the top three of the seven stories. The structure is said to be of art moderne design with art deco features. It is faced for the most part with cream colored brick with some limestone trim. There is none of the red sandstone of the previous two courthouses in this building.

The 1932 courthouse served Gregg County well but with the post World War II growth and development within the county more space was needed for all departments.



It was decided by the Commissioners Court that the space problems would be alleviated with the addition of a Court and Records Annex to be attached to and in the same or compatible style as the courthouse. In the regular meeting of the Commissioners Court on June 5, 1957 the Court selected the architectural firm of Smith, Warder & Yost to make plans and specifications for this annex to be attached to the east side of the courthouse.<sup>43</sup> The McClendon Construction Company was selected as general contractor.<sup>44</sup> This addition was accepted in 1958.

As more economic growth with its accompanying need for judicial activity and record keeping, it was soon seen that more space was again needed. The penthouse jail was very overcrowded. Therefore, the Court elected to build West on Block 9. On June 12, 1978, the Allen/Buie Partnership was chosen as architect for a large seven-story annex to adjoin the 1932 building on its west side. [The Court] "...authorized Robert E. Allen to proceed with preliminary plans and suggestions for a new building on the west side of the Court House and to report back the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in July being July 10, 1978."<sup>45</sup>

The cost was to be \$9,387,000.00. The general contractor was the J. A. Jones Construction Company, Inc., who was awarded the contract on October 30, 1979.<sup>46</sup> This annex is of a much more contemporary style but with similar cream colored brick to match its adjoining structure. The windowless top two stories constitute a jail. The

prisoners were moved from their accommodations in the sixth and seventh stories of the 1932 building to their new housing.

Although completed in 1982, the final payment to the architect was made on September 12, 1983.<sup>47</sup>

At present time there are no plans for more additions. Obviously, the need for more jail space continues; however, a very large, three story jail in the block immediately northwest of the courthouse is almost completed.

Considering the 1958 and 1982 additions to a 1932 building, the entire complex has proven to be a very attractive seat of Gregg County government. The wisdom of all the Commissioners Courts in not infringing on the beautiful lawn on the south part of Block Number 9 contributed to the pleasing appearance.

## The Courthouse Yard

The entire area of Gregg County was once a part of a vast pine forest and remnants of this forest remained in the town of Longview in the 1870s. At the time of the first courthouse building of Gregg County on Block Number 9, seventeen long-leaf pine trees remained on the north east corner of the courtyard. This block had been the community ball park where many games of all kinds were played. When the first courthouse was built in 1979, twenty-three red elms and three pin oaks were planted. One bois d'arc and many locust trees were present on the lawn.<sup>48</sup>

All these trees are gone today (1996). In 1919 Pecan trees were planted on the Jefferson Highway as a memorial to the soldiers who fought in World War I.<sup>49,50</sup> In 1920, these were transplanted to the courthouse lawn. Some of these large pecan trees stand today along with two holly trees, three magnolias, three flowering magnolias, a white oak, water oak, live oak and a dogwood tree. There are crepe myrtles, sculptured hedges, azaleas and roses making the courthouse lawn a most attractive campus.

At one time a gazebo and a brass cannon stood on the grounds. The cannon was donated to the World War II effort when citizens once brought items made of brass and made a pile of them on the south east corner of the lawn.<sup>51</sup>

A thirty-five foot Confederate Monument, erected in 1910 in Bodie Park was moved to the courthouse lawn about

January 15, 1932.<sup>52</sup> This monument was designed and built by Frank Teich of Llano, Texas.

A more recent bronze statue of a United States soldier, dedicated to the fallen men and women from Gregg County who died in all wars, also stands on the south lawn of the courthouse.

There is one Official Texas Historical Marker, a Texas granite marker with a topic on each side and two time capsules in addition to the monuments on the grounds.

A tall flag pole, lighted at night (as is the Confederate Monument), is in the center of the south walkway of the courthouse and flies the United States, Texas and Gregg County Flags.

As in many counties of Texas the courthouse was the center of social activity for the community. As church and Longview historian, Berenice Northcutt, wrote in 1930,\* "With the erection of the new building in 1897, came added dignity to the courtyard, though it was in the early days of the Twentieth Century before the Standard Club, a women's literary club of the city, began the task of beautifying the grounds.

"For many years the courtyard was a social center of the city and it was not an uncommon sight in the late evenings to see men and women in their best Sunday clothes making their way leisurely to the ice cream suppers and strawberry festivals which held paramount position in the community's society."<sup>53</sup>

\* Re-printed, Longview Morning Journal, May 3, 1970.

The courtyard has always been a center for patriotic celebrations. The Spanish-American War veterans marched underneath the trees to be welcomed by the citizens.

Northcutt writes: "For years the summer revival meetings on the lawn were a part of the life of the community, and religious union services have ever been held under the heavenly stars that twinkle down through the leaves of the widespread courtyard trees.

"Prohibition speakers from Cyclone Davis to Atticus Webb have spoken beneath those trees and one memorable day stands out in the annals of our history when the prohibitionists won the first local option election in the county.

"During the race riot of a number of years ago the national guards camped underneath the trees and many ludicrous and pathetic situations occurred as Brigadier General Jake Wolters and his men disarmed the citizens of Longview and Gregg County and stacked the guns and pistols on long tables beneath the elms."<sup>54</sup>

During the frantic times of the discovery of oil, in what became the world's largest oil field, conditions were so crowded that the inside of the courthouse was not large enough to contain all the lawyers, lease brokers and secretaries. Contemporaries remember that the courthouse lawn had to serve as "offices" for these people. During this oil boom all available rooms in Longview were rented and people were sleeping in any place available, including the courthouse lawn.

The social activities were not confined to the courthouse lawn. Community activities including dances were held in the court room.<sup>55</sup> It is not known why, but on May 13, 1885, the sheriff ordered that there will be "no dancing or festivals" held in the courthouse.<sup>56</sup>

In the early days the courthouse square was fenced with various kinds of fencing, according to photographs. Officers of the court kept some of their cattle and other animals within these fences. Other than a few unclaimed or stray animals within these fences, all the animals belonged to the officials of the county.<sup>57</sup>

Norman W. Black  
December 1, 1996

## REFERENCES

1 Journal of The House of Representatives of the State of Texas, Thirteenth Legislature, p. 52.

2 Richard B. Levy, History of the Creation of Gregg County, Texas, 1942, manuscript in files of Gregg County Historical Commission (GCHC).

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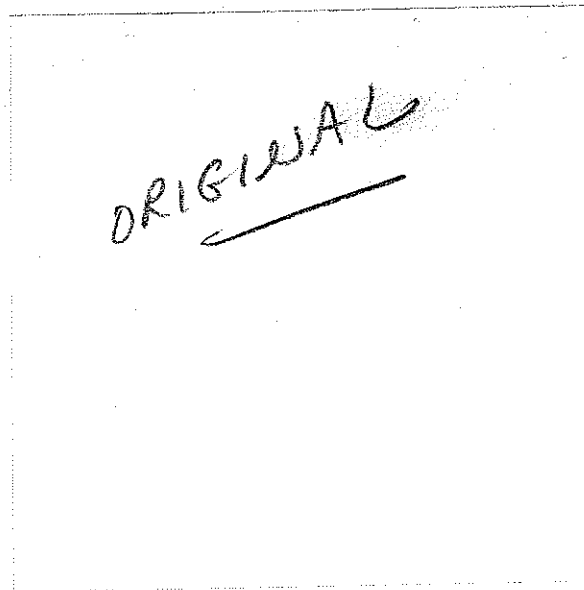
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THE COURTHOUSES OF GREGG COUNTY

Norman W. Black



## THE COURTHOUSES OF GREGG COUNTY

When Texas was still a province of Mexico it was divided into twenty-three municipalities. After the Battle of San Jacinto, April 21, 1836, and Texas had won her independence these municipalities became the first counties in the Republic of Texas. This occurred in October 1836 in keeping with the Constitution adopted by Texas voters at Washington-on-the-Brazos in March 1836. During the days of the Republic thirteen more counties were added by the subdivision of some of the original counties and a few created out of the districts to the west. Each county had a recognized town.

Under the Constitution of 1869 a new county had to have a minimum area of 900 square miles. This rule apparently was not strictly followed as evidenced by the several much smaller counties created before the new Constitution of 1876 was adopted. Before 1876 it was possible to create new counties and county seats by a routine act of the Legislature. The Constitutions of 1876 made this more difficult.

Gregg County is one of these small counties.\* It came

\* A study of the 1996 - 1997 Texas Almanac reveals that in total area, 274 square miles, Gregg County is the seventh smallest of the 254 counties in Texas. It is located between 32 degrees and 33 degrees latitude and 94 degrees and 95 degrees longitude.

out of Nacogdoches and Shelby Counties but in a roundabout way. In 1839, Harrison County was created out of Shelby County and in 1846, Upshur County was created from Harrison and Nacogdoches Counties. Rusk County was created out of Nacogdoches County in 1843. Gregg County was formed by the southern part of Upshur County in 1873 and a year later, in 1874, the northern part of Rusk County was added south of the Sabine River.

It was the intention of the legislature that the seat of Texas counties was to be in the central part of each county; and most of the time this was the case. This, of course, was designed so that the citizens would not have to travel excessively to conduct their legal business as well as to buy supplies and sell their produce and animals. As population increased smaller communities were developing away from the county seats often near the extremes of the counties. This was the case in the southern part of Upshur County by the 1970s.

Earlier settlers included Isaac Moody, who had already settled at Cherokee Trace and West Mountain and was joined by many others by 1844. James Earp came from Alabama in the 1840s and established the little town of Earpville. In 1850, Gideon Christian and his young bride, Carrie, brought their belongings and thirty-four slaves from South Carolina, and the community of Shiloh was developed, near White Oak.

There began to develop a sentiment in these citizens for a new county with a county seat closer and with easier

access than to Gilmer. The roads to Gilmer, the county seat, from these settlements were few, far between and primitive.

Mr. Bluford W. Brown, a state representative, who lived in the Summerfield community, introduced a bill to do just that.

The Journal of the Thirteenth Legislature contains the following statement concerning the introduction of the bill:

Mr. Brown, of Upshur, offered a bill to create the county of Roanoke and provide for its organization. Read and referred to Committee on Counties and County Boundaries.<sup>1</sup>

Roanoke was the place of Mr. Brown's birth but the Committee said any new county should have a name with a relationship with Texas. Dr. Ralph Widener, in a speech given September 21, 1978 before the Samuel Dinkins Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy related the following scene in the Committee meeting in Austin:

Steven B. Winkler of Navarro County suggested the name "Gregg" in honor of the late General John Gregg under whom Winkler served in Virginia [in the War Between the States]. Immediately the members rose to their feet in agreement. Mr. Brown rushed across the room, gave Winkler a bear hug and said: "I wish I had thought of him first because he was my commander, too". The name, Gregg, was approved on a voice vote.

General Gregg's men were collected and organized in East Texas.

On March 11, 1873, the Committee on Counties and County Boundaries reported the bill back to the House of Representatives, recommending its passage.<sup>2</sup>

The following is the act which created Gregg County on April 12, 1873 and which was approved by the Thirteenth Legislature of the State of Texas:

An Act to create and provide for the organization of the County of Gregg, (named in honor of the late General John Gregg).

Section 1. Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas, That a new county, to be called Gregg County, is hereby established out of the following portion of Upshur County, bounded as follows:

Beginning at the south east corner of Upshur County, in the center of Sabine River, thence to Little Cypress, thence up said Cypress to the mouth of Glade Creek, thence up said creek to the road running from Marshall to Gilmer, thence direct to the corner of Rusk and Smith Counties on the Sabine River, thence down said river with its meandering to the place of beginning, containing four hundred and twenty square miles; provided, the line of said new county shall not approach nearer than twelve miles of Gilmer. Section 2.

That John P. Witherspoon, T. A. Harris, William Welborn, Soloman Awalt, Britton Buttrill, John Page, H. G. Williams, are hereby appointed commissioners with full powers to organize said county; to employ a competent surveyor to run the lines of said county. One copy of said survey to be recorded in the office of the district clerk, at the county seat of said county, one copy to be filed with the Secretary of State in Austin. And said commissioners, or a majority of them, shall, as soon as practicable, after said survey has been made, meet in the town of Longview and proceed to divide said county into five precincts; said commissioners, or a majority of them, shall then order an election for a justice of the peace for each precinct, and for a sheriff, a clerk of the District Court, a treasurer, and surveyor, for said county of Gregg, who shall hold their term of office for four years, and until the next general election thereafter for county officers. Said commissioners shall give at least twenty days notice of said election by posting notices thereof in three prominent places in each precinct of said county. Said election shall be held in the town of Longview, and shall continue for four days, and shall be conducted in conformity with the laws regulating elections in this State. And said



commissioners shall make return of said election to the Secretary of State, at Austin, within ten days after the close of said election, and shall retain a copy of the same for record in the office of the district clerk at the county seat of said county of Gregg. Upon receipt of said returns by the Secretary of State, it shall be the duty of the Governor to issue, without delay, a commission to those receiving the highest number of votes for the several offices herein named, in accordance with said returns, after they have qualified according to law.

Section 3. That an election to be held at the same time and place, and to be governed by the same rules and regulations, as provided for in section (2) two of this bill, the people of said county of Gregg shall determine by ballot upon what point shall be the county seat, and should any one place so voted for receive a majority of all the votes cast at said election, the same shall be the county seat of said county, but should two or more places be voted for, and no one of said places receive a majority of all votes cast, then it shall be the duty of the aforesaid commissioners to hold another election. They shall give ten days notice of the same, at which said election the two places having received the

largest number of votes at the previous election shall be voted for, and the place receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared by said commissioners as the county seat until otherwise provided by law.

Section 4. That until the election and qualification of the officers herein mentioned, the business of the new county of Gregg shall be transacted at the county seat of Upshur County.

Section 5. That after their organization, the County Court of the said County of Gregg are hereby authorized to levy and collect a special tax, for the purpose of lots and erection of suitable public buildings for said county of Gregg, said tax to be collected in two annual installments.

Section 6. That this act shall take effect from and after its passage.<sup>3</sup>

The following note accompanied the above act:

(Note...The foregoing act was presented to the Governor of Texas for his approval on the first day of May, A. D. 1873, and was not signed by him or returned to the house in which it originated, with his objection thereto, within the time prescribed by the Constitution, and thereupon became a law without his signature...James P. Newcomb, Secretary of State.)<sup>4</sup>

About a year later, April 30, 1874, a large addition to Gregg County was made by the acquisition of the northern portion of Rusk County, south of the Sabine River. This area was relatively active, due in part to Sabine River commerce and two good river crossings. At least two Indian Villages had existed: Rabbit Village on Rabbit Creek and the Bid Head Village at Gum Springs (now Danville community). Big Head Village was still on maps as late as 1850. James Walling came to the area, probably in 1829, and his Walling's Ferry caused the town of Camden to come into being. Sam Houston spent the night there on December 10, 1829.<sup>5</sup> Thomas Elliot received a land grant in 1829. Haden Edwards, the former empresario, laid the groundwork for the town of Fredonia in an 1839 broadside which advertised 2000 lots for sale in the soon to be towns of Fredonia and Cotton Plant. The present Gregg County began to be sprinkled with many communities in the 1840s such as Rock Springs whose one-room school house still stands as probably the oldest structure in present Gregg County.

An act to extend the area and enlarge the county of Gregg.

Section 1. Be it enacted by the legislature of the State of Texas, That so much of the territory of Rusk county as lies between the Sabine river and the following described lines, that is to say, beginning at the south-west corner of the present county of Gregg, and continuing the western

boundary line between the counties of Smith and Rusk, to a point on the Cherokee Bayou, where the road leading from Camden to Henderson crosses said stream; thence north-east by a straight line to the town of Camden, on the Sabine river with its meanderings to the place of beginning, be, and the same is hereby detached from the county of Rusk and attached to and embraced within the county of Gregg.

Section 2. That within the thirty days after the passage of this act, the surveyor of the county of Gregg, and the surveyor of the county of Rusk, or either of them, shall run and mark the boundary lines as contemplated in section one of this act, and shall deposit a copy of said survey with the clerk of the District Court of the county of Gregg, and shall also forward a copy of same to the Secretary of State.

Section 3. That this act take effect and be in force from after its passage.

Approved April 30, 1874.<sup>6</sup>

This gave rise to a peculiar extension or panhandle at the southeast corner of the county. The reason for this is that the original intent of the legislature was to make the new county out of portions of Upshur, Rusk and Harrison Counties. However, there was much opposition to this, especially from residents of Harrison County. The most

plausible reason for this opposition was the fact that Harrison County had issued bonds to the Southern Pacific Railroad and the county did not want to lose money on the repayment of these bonds, which would have happened if the populous western portion of Harrison County were lost to Gregg County. The other two counties apparently had no such bonds. An earlier writer, Walter Jones, a staunch supporter of the Confederate cause, gave a popular opinion for the failure to complete the intended area of Gregg County in a brief history of Gregg County written in 1935:

It was during the administration of Edmond J. Davis as Governor that the legislature passed the bill authorizing the creation of Gregg County, and it is said that it was political "horse-trading" of the Harrison County representatives of the "scalawag Negro Legislature" that prevented the West end of Harrison County from joining Gregg County as was first planned.<sup>7</sup>

The matter of Harrison County was dropped from consideration and the almost final shape of Gregg County was decided April 30, 1874.

The board of commissioners of the newly created Gregg County, consisting of John T. Witherspoon, T. A. Harris, John Page, Soloman Awalt, William Welborne, Britton Buttrill and H. G. Williams, met in Longview on May 15, 1873, for the

purpose of employing a surveyor to survey the new county.<sup>8</sup> Twelve days later the commissioners saw the county diagram and heard the report made by the surveyor, Andrew S. Taylor. At the same time it was decided to divide the county into five precincts.<sup>9</sup> The commissioners ordered an election to be held in Longview, to begin on June 25, 1873, and to continue for four days, for the purpose of choosing a county seat and electing a justice of the peace for each precinct, a sheriff, a clerk of the District Court, a treasurer and a surveyor.

Longview and Awalt, which is now Greggton (part of western Longview now), were rival candidates for the county seat. Before the question of a seat of government for Gregg County came to a vote, however, the railroad's agent wrote to O. H. Methvin that his company would donate land for a courthouse site in Longview if that one were chosen. This information, no doubt, influenced the vote. The vote for the county seat was as follows:

Longview	524
Awalt	<u>125</u>
Total	649 <sup>10</sup>

In the same election the first officers of the new county were elected. There were R. B. Levy, clerk; M. S. Durham, Sheriff; Britton Buttrill, Treasurer; A. S. Taylor, Surveyor; T. D. Campbell, Peace Justice Precinct 1; J. M. Sparkman, Peace Justice Precinct 2; John W. Lawrence, Peace Justice Precinct 3; W. H. Payne, Peace

Justice Precinct 4, and W. P Victory, Peace Justice Precinct 5. These first Justices of the Peace served as the Commissioners Court and as tax collectors. The first school directors were appointed at this time.<sup>11</sup>

With Gregg now organized it was ready to get down to the business of starting the government. There was one large problem, however. The treasury did not contain a single dollar.<sup>12</sup>

This was temporarily alleviated by a personal loan to Gregg County of \$500.00 by T. D. Campbell.<sup>13</sup>

The Legislature had ordered Upshur County to turn over the tax rolls of that part of Upshur County which became Gregg County. The Commissioners Court of Upshur County refused to do this. The Gregg County Court in a letter to the Texas Comptroller General on August 5, 1873, asked for relief from this situation and it was granted by an order to the Upshur County Commissioners Court on August 9<sup>th</sup> to comply with the original directive.<sup>14</sup>

Much later the final shape of Gregg County came about after it was learned that the northwest boundary of the new county came closer to the twelve mile distance to Gilmer. Therefore, in August of 1882, surveyors from both Gregg and Upshur Counties re-surveyed this line to correct this oversight. This was done by keeping the two endpoints the same and, in effect, pushed the connecting line to a point exactly twelve miles from the Upshur County courthouse in Gilmer.<sup>15</sup>

The next item of business for the new commissioners was to find a suitable place to hold court: a temporary courthouse. At the meeting of the Gregg County Commissioners Court on July 22, 1873, the following was recorded:

The following bond was laid before the Court and ordered to be recorded: (recorded in Bond Book "A", pages 14 and 15.) Know all men by the presents, that we the undersigned acknowledge ourselves firmly bound unto the County Court of Gregg County State of Texas to furnish suitable building in the Town of Longview, for the purpose of carrying on & transacting the business of the County Court & District Court of said County such as the District Clerk Office Sheriff Office & good & spacious building for the purpose of carrying on & conducting the District Court free of all charges & for the purpose of freeing the citizens of said County from taxation, when & until there should be a Court house built & we further bind ourselves to furnish for the erection & building of a Court house in the Town of Longview a suitable lot of sufficient size & also fifty-thousand feet of lumber & twenty-five thousand shingles free from all charges & for the purpose of freeing the people of said County from taxation. To all of which we bind ourselves heir



executors administrators & assigns forever to carry out the provisions & obligations of the above described bond. In testimony whereof we have hereunto set our names & seals using scrawls for seals this the 17<sup>th</sup> day of June 1873.

[signed]

E. R. Davis, T. A. Flewellen, B. Buttrill,  
M. W. Harrison, W. F. Perry, Dock Pegues,  
T. S. S. Young, J. M. Cornes, M. S. Durham,  
J. H. Adams, J. C. Turner.<sup>16</sup>

Three days later, July 25, 1873, at the regular meeting of The Court, The Court ordered:

That James P. Holloway,  
be and is hereby appointed to visit the City of Marshall, Texas and confer with the General Land Agent of the Texas and Pacific Rail Road Company for the purpose of obtaining a deed to certain lots in the Town of Longview for the erection thereon of public buildings for the use of Gregg County as promised by said General Agent G. F. Mayer, by letter to O. H. Methvin, a citizen of Gregg County and bearing date of the 10<sup>th</sup> day of June 1873, of which the following is a copy to wit: (Delivered to County Clerk of Gregg County by O. H. Methvin ESQ., and ordered to be spread upon the Minutes.)<sup>17</sup>

"Office of the General Land Agent  
for Depot Towns

Marshall, Texas, June 10, 1873.

O. H. Methvin, Esq.  
Longview, Gregg Co.  
Texas.

Dear Sir,

Your esteemed favor of the 2<sup>nd</sup> inst. is at hand and could not received earlier attention owing to my absence from town. Block No. 9 (with the exception of lot 8 which has been sold) in the Town of Longview will be reserved from sale until the question of locating County Seat of Gregg Co. has been settled by the citizens thereof. In case Longview is regularly selected as such County Seat the ground above designed will be donated to the said County for County buildings, providing said buildings are erected on said Block No. 9. In accordance with the above I have notified Mr. Whiteman, local Agent at Longview for this dept. to reserve the ground referred to from sale until further instructions.

Very resp' yours

G. F. Mayer

Genl Agent<sup>18</sup>

Thus, the permanent site of the Gregg County courthouse was selected. It was not, however, until 1879 that the first masonry courthouse was built.

The Citizens Committee appointed July 22, 1873, to

furnish a building suitable for a courthouse was to report to the Court on July 25, 1873. They selected a house for this purpose. At the September 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Commissioners Court, it follows: "Whereupon the Court, in a body, accompanied by said Committee visited said building and after an examination of the same, returned and"

Ordered That the building located in the Town of Longview on part of lot Number one in Block Number fourteen (14) on Central Street and furnished by the Citizens of Longview to the County of Gregg as a Court-house and Offices for Court Offices, be and is hereby accepted and that said building on and after the 29<sup>th</sup> day of September, A.D., 1873, be and is hereby designated as the Court-House of Gregg County

And it was further

Ordered That M. S. Durham, Sheriff of Gregg County, be and is hereby appointed to superintend the arrangement of the Offices and Court room in the Court-house designated by the Court and to see that the same is made safe, secure and free from leaks, and that said Court-house is ready in all respect for occupancy and use on or before 29<sup>th</sup> day of September, A.D. 1873.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, on Monday, September 20<sup>th</sup> A.D. 1873, the Commissioners met for the first time in a designated courthouse.

## AUTHOR'S NOTE:

There is an error in the above statements concerning the location of the temporary courthouse, either in the recording of the Minutes of the Commissioners Court or in the Court's stating the names of two north-south streets. The original plat of the City of Longview (see Appendix) clearly indicates that Lot No. 1, Block 14, is at the corner of Fredonia and Tyler Streets, not, as the Minutes repeatedly state, as being on Central (now Center) Street and Tyler Street; this is Block 15, not Block 14. After discussing this with other knowledgeable people the author suspects that in those days of dirt streets it is quite possible that no adequate street signs had been erected. The earliest Sanborn maps are dated 1885 and are of some assistance in this research. As will be seen later in this paper the next temporary courthouse was located at Block 14, lot Number 1 (the old Northcutt Hardware Store). This discrepancy remains unresolved. (END OF AUTHOR'S NOTE)

In spite of the best efforts of the sheriff this first temporary courthouse proved to be inadequate. To quote from an entry in The Texas Courthouse, by June Rayfield Welch and J. Larry Nance\*,<sup>20</sup> "The sheriff was ordered to make the building free of leaks, but it was impossible, walls were a single layer of planks through which the rain came, and anyone who wished could kick his way inside."<sup>21</sup>

There appears no record that the fifty thousand feet of

\* The Texas Courthouse, GLA Press, 1971, p. 292.

lumber and the twenty-five thousand shingles were ever used or procured, either to repair the first temporary courthouse or anything else.

The Commissioners Court set about to find yet another building to use as a temporary courthouse until a permanent one could be built on the land to be donated to Gregg County by the Texas and Pacific Railroad. Thus, this document of the Commissioners Court follows:

Ordered by the Court. That the contract entered into on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of November 1874 between Jno. F. Witherspoon, Presiding Justice of Gregg County, for and in behalf of Gregg County of the one part and W. G. Northcutt of the other part, be and the same is hereby ratified and in all things therein confirmed,

And it is further Ordered by the Court that the County treasurer is hereby ordered to pay unto W. G. Northcutt, the sum of twenty five dollars, on the first days of December 1874, January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September & October 1875, for rent of Court Room as per Contract aforesaid, taking his receipt for the same the same to be paid out of any moneys not otherwise appropriated by existing law.

The following agreement is here presented, read, examined and ordered recorded, to wit,

I[, ] T.S.S. Young agree that the County of

Gregg shall have the privilege of removing all work such as Pigeon holes, desks, shelves, benches, stands, Platforms and everything except the Partitions in the Court Room and Sheriff's & Clerk's office in my brick building over the store now occupied by W. G. Northcutt whenever they desire to do so, upon payment of all rent that may be due, the partitions to remain, and I agree to pay the said County for the workmans help in putting up like partitions, doors and locks, except for the lumber therein.

Witness my hand this 26<sup>th</sup> day of October,  
A.D. 1874.

T.S.S. Young [sign.]<sup>22</sup>

The second temporary courthouse of Gregg County, on the