

1539

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name State Epileptic Colony Historic District
other names/site number Abilene State Hospital, Abilene State School

2. Location

Roughly bounded by S. 24th, Lakeside & Plum. Discontiguous
street & number element roughly bounded by SH 322, FM 1750 & Indus- N/A not for publication
city, town Abilene trial Blvd. N/A vicinity
state Texas code TX county Taylor code 441 zip code 79604

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>15</u>	<u>8</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>17</u>	<u>9</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Curtis D. Russell 10 Sept 1991
Signature of certifying official Date
State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Autawietta Lee 10/20/91
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:)

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Health care: SanitariumHealth care: Hospital

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Health care: Mental hospital

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)Classical RevivalPrairie School

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick, limestonewalls Brick, sandstone

roof Asphalt, slateother Sandstone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The State Epileptic Colony Historic District exhibits a cohesive collection of health care resources and includes approximately 35-acres in two parcels about 2 1/2 miles southeast of Abilene's central business district. Rough confines for the district are the city's South 24th Street on the north, Lakeside Drive on the east, which curves around to serve as the south boundary as well, and Plum Avenue on the west. The colony's cemetery, a discontinuous element of the district, is southeast of the main grounds. Constructed in phases over a span of more than 40 years, the majority of Contributing buildings in the district are masonry and reflect classical and Prairie School influenced design. The district retains a high degree of integrity: all of the resources remain in use and only a few have experienced slight alterations. Minimal new construction exists within the district's perimeter. A total of 17 resources (15 buildings, one site, and one structure), comprising 68 percent of the district, are classified as Contributing elements. Nine resources are considered Noncontributing.

Abilene sits on the Callahan Divide, which crosses Taylor County from east to west, and separates the Brazos and Colorado river basins in central west Texas. Most of the county's terrain is relatively flat. Several small waterways flow across the grassy prairies surrounding the historic district. Lytle Lake is approximately one-half mile east of the grounds. In the district are native live oak, post oak, mesquite and cedar and non-native black locust, pecan, and alberta peach trees. Despite the city's expansion, the Abilene Epileptic Colony retains a rural setting.

The modern campus lies between State Hospital Road (Maple Street) and FM 1750, two north-south thoroughfares, and South 21st and South 27th streets, which extend eastward from Abilene. [See attached Continuation Sheet 7-6.] At the core of the existing grounds is the 1903 campus configuration, a bullet-shaped circulation plan. [See attached Continuation Sheet 7-7.] The curved side of the bullet, to the east, forms a large half circle connecting five equidistant streets radiating as spokes from its center point. One spoke, Main Avenue, running northeast from the 1903 Administration Building at the center point, connects with Lakeside Drive and was the original entrance to the colony. West of the half circle was a large square commons bounded by Pecan Street on the east, 7th Street on the south, Service Avenue on the west and 2nd Street on the north. The square is now divided into narrow east-west rectangles by 3rd through 6th streets, all connecting on the east with Walnut Street, which runs one-building-depth west of and parallel to Pecan. Outside of the bullet-shaped plan, farther to the west, is a cluster of utilitarian buildings, some of which are of more recent construction on newer streets with random placement.

The historic campus retains six resources that were part of the colony's initial phase of construction. Sited prominently, the Administration Building

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(1903, Site Number 4) is at the highest point of the campus and anchors the east side of the district. To its north is the Water Standpipe (the original was constructed in 1903, the extant standpipe was constructed in 1910, Site Number 3); to its south is the Superintendent's House (1904, Site Number 8). This line of imposing structures firmly establishes the eastern edge of the campus with the colony's most architecturally distinctive resources. Utilitarian buildings lined the outer rim of west side of the square, including a Power House (Site Number 21), a Laundry (Site Number 22), and a Bakery (Site Number 23), all constructed in 1903. These buildings were simply designed and embellished with only slight architectural ornamentation. The original hospital building, now demolished, stood on the north side of the square; no historic photographs of this building have been discovered to date. Cottages--early housing for the epileptic patients--were positioned on the south side; these are no longer extant.

Dormitories constructed in the 1920s and 1930s took the place of the patient cottages. They are on the north and south sides of the square, facing the commons between. At one time three rows of dormitories were on the south side, and two rows were on the north side. The dormitories (Site Numbers 10, 11, 13, 14, 24, and 25) are all 2-story, brick rectangular buildings with flat roofs. The entrance treatments have some variation, but most have 1-story entry porches with flat roofs. Windows are symmetrically spaced and typically have 1/1 wood frames. Decorative bands of brick or cast stone encircle each building, usually just above the second level windows. Several of the dormitories also have embellished cast stone panels above the second level windows. Parapet copings are cast stone and add ornament to the buildings. The chapel (Site Number 19), also constructed in the 1930s, resembles the design of the dormitories.

The 4-acre cemetery is a discontinuous but Contributing feature. [See attached Continuation Sheet 7-6.] Detached from the campus, the cemetery contains the graves of more than 1,337 patients dating from 1904. Most of the graves are unmarked, some have very simple tombstones. Visual continuity is not a factor for this discontinuous site since it has always been separated from the campus. The cemetery is geographically isolated from the district and the intervening space lacks significance. In addition, recent highway construction segregates the site from campus. This detached parcel has strong historical associations with the district; however, since it is not the focal point of the district, Criterion Consideration D is not applicable.

Eight resources in the original campus are of recent construction and are considered Noncontributing. [See attached Continuation Sheet 7-7.] Constructed in the 1960s and 1970s, these resources are typical to the era in terms of their scale, materials, detailing, and siting. Most are 1-story brick buildings and appear long and unarticulated in comparison to the historic buildings on the campus. These buildings are generally void of detailing.

District boundaries were selected based on the area within the campus that best represents the historic period of the State Epileptic Colony. Contributing elements to the district retain their integrity to a high degree. Resources that were more than 50 years old were evaluated based on their

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historic and architectural contributions to the campus. They were also evaluated for their historic and architectural integrity, which represents both physical and aesthetic relationships with location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Furthermore, the district as a whole maintains these attributes and the relationships among the district's components are substantially unchanged since the period of significance 1903-1941. The district has been well maintained; its plan and the resources within are virtually unaltered since construction.

Site Number, Name, Category (Contributing or Noncontributing), Construction Date (estimated or factual), Description

- | | | | |
|------|---|-----------------|----------|
| 1 | Visitor Center | Noncontributing | c. 1960s |
| | This property is less than 50 years old and is not compatible with the scale, materials, siting, or detailing of the district. | | |
| 2, 9 | Dormitories | Noncontributing | c. 1970s |
| | These properties are less than 50 years old and are not compatible with the scale, materials, siting, or detailing of the district. | | |
| 3 | Water Standpipe (structure) | Contributing | 1910 |
| | The water standpipe is a circular metal structure 90 feet tall and 22 feet in diameter. | | |
| 4 | Administration Building | Contributing | 1903 |
| | The Administration Building is a 2-story, masonry Classical Revival style building with a rectangular plan and a hipped roof. The exterior walls are finished with deep red brick in a stretcher bond; the foundation is rock-faced red sandstone; the roof has slate shingles. The interior reflects classical influences. The Administration Building fronts east and is seated at the highest point of the campus, at the center point of the circular drive, and on axis with Main Avenue, the original entrance to the colony. | | |

The main facade (east) is punctuated with a 1-story, 3-bay portico. Sandstone steps, each eight inches thick, lead to the main entrance in the middle bay. The three bays originally had three sets of double paneled doors with glazed windows on the upper portions; four Roman Doric columns separate these original entrances. Semi-circular fanlights, now painted over, are above these original entrances. The middle door was replaced with a single metal frame door, while the two outer doors have each been filled in with paired 1/1 windows. Above each fanlight is decorative scagliola; a bracket decorated with acanthus leaves is at the peak of each fanlight. The entablature is Doric with large dentils on the cornice. Across the frieze the word "*TEXAS*" is symmetrically spaced, each character embraced in a circle; this sign was added sometime after construction, and the entire entry portico above the steps is painted white.

The remainder of the main facade has symmetrically placed 1/1 windows with flat lintels and plain sills, two on each side of the portico and seven that line the second level. The sandstone lintels and sills are painted white. Unpainted sandstone quoins mark each corner of the building. The roof has plain projecting eaves with exposed rafters.

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The north and south sides are identical, each with symmetrically placed 1/1 windows with flat lintels and plain sills, also painted white. The back (west) facade is similar to the front; however, in the place of the portico is a centered, circular, entrance turret. Sandstone steps lead to the back entrance, a single modern aluminum and glass door surrounded by quoins and topped with an entablature. The second level of the turret has three symmetrically placed 1/1 windows with flat lintels and plain sills painted white. Decorative corbelled brick is on the cornice of the turret. The remainder of the back facade has symmetrically placed 1/1 windows with flat lintels and plain sills, painted white.

The interior has detailed woodwork, slate stairs, and an open stairwell. The Administration Building remains generally intact. The sandstone steps, frequently used, are beginning to deteriorate. Its two fireplaces, a dumbwaiter, and two original entrances are sealed.

5, 7 Physician Living Quarters Contributing 1937
The Physician Quarters are 1-story, 5-bay brick rectangular buildings each with a flat roof. Each has a 1-story, wood entry porch at the fourth bay with a hipped roof covered with ceramic tile at the fourth bay. Windows are 9/9. Above the windows a brick soldier course encircles each building. Simple cast stone parapet coping is accentuated at the corners. The interior originally had oak floors except in the kitchen, which had linoleum flooring. The buildings face east.

6 Employee Apartments Contributing 1927-28
A 2-story, rectangular brick building with a flat roof, the Employee Apartments has a 1-story, wood central entry porch with a ceramic tile roof. Symmetrically placed windows are 1/1 and most are paired. Above the second level windows are decorative cast stone panels. Cast stone parapet coping adds ornament to the building. Interior floors were originally oak. The building fronts east.

8 Superintendent's House Contributing 1904
The Superintendent's House is a 2-story brick building with a modified rectangular plan. Influenced by Colonial Revival design, the main (north) facade has a centered front gable perpendicular to the side gable roof.

The main facade is symmetrically proportioned with a central entry porch that is supported by Roman Doric columns. The wide Doric entablature on the porch roof accentuates the front door, which has pilasters on either side. The eaves have exposed rafters. On each side of the front gable is a dormer with a hipped roof.

The east facade features a screened-in porch with a balcony above. Present occupants have partially restored the interior of the house, which retains its original woodwork.

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22 Laundry Contributing 1903/c. 1920
The Laundry, facing east, is 1-story square plan brick building with a flat roof and symmetrically placed windows. The entire building is painted. Originally constructed in 1903, it burned sometime before 1920 and was rebuilt about that year following the 1903 plan specifications. Several later additions are to the rear of the building.

23 Bakery Contributing 1903
The Bakery is a 1-story square plan brick building with a flat roof facing east. The entire building is painted. The main (east) entrance is centered on the main facade, accented by a corbelled brick stepped parapet; to each side of this single door are paired windows with segmental arches. The original windows have been replaced with aluminum frames. A band of corbelled brick, above the windows, encircles the building.

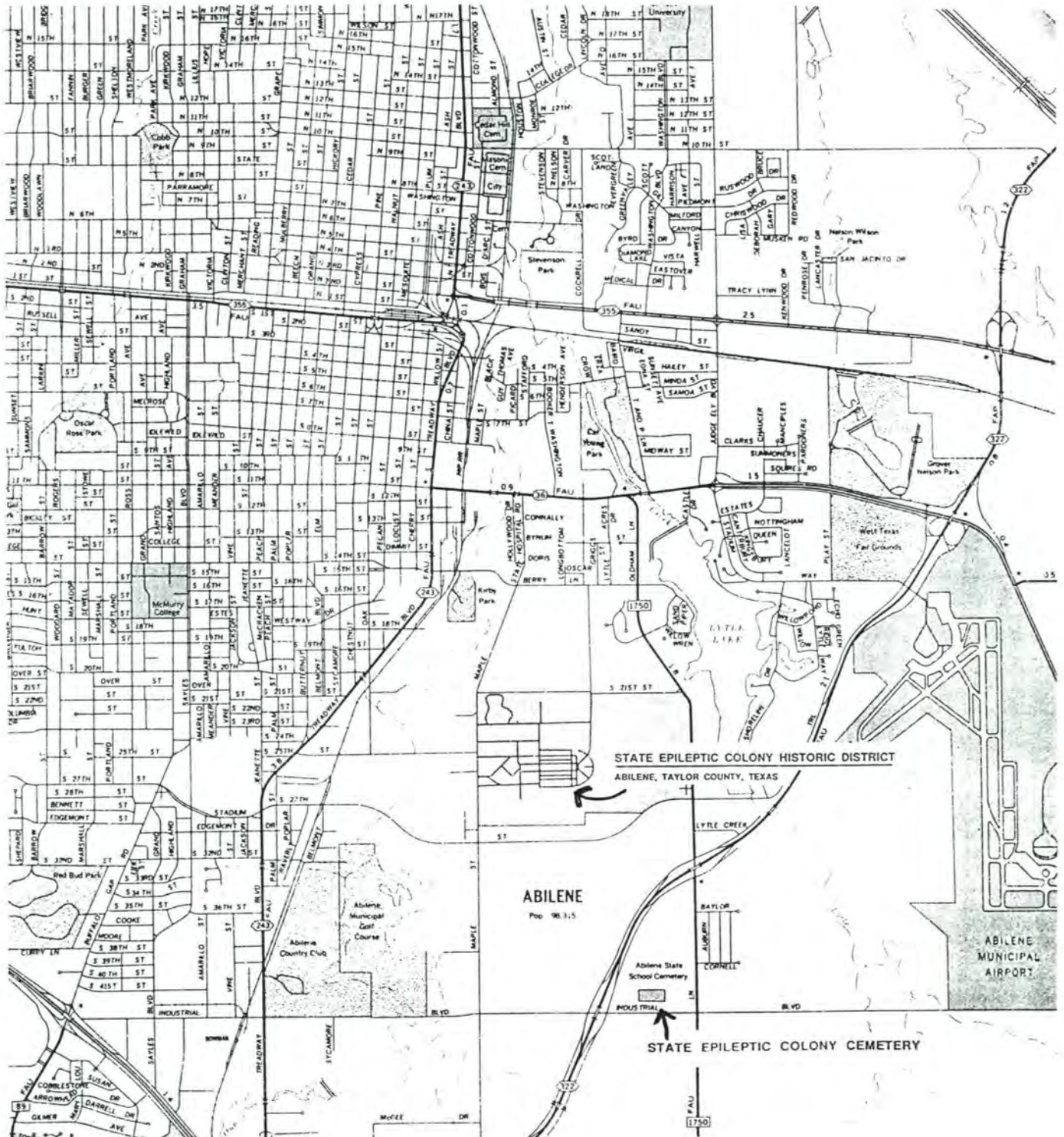
26 Cemetery (site) Contributing 1904
The 4-acre cemetery is a discontinuous but Contributing feature. Southeast of campus, and detached from it, the cemetery contains the graves of more than 1,337 patients dating from 1904. Obscured by underbrush, the cemetery is not visible from the nearest road, Industrial Boulevard. The cemetery itself is cleared of most growth, and the scant grass is closely clipped. No trees, shrubs, or plants landscape the cemetery. Most of the graves are unmarked, some have simple tombstones. The cemetery is still in use.

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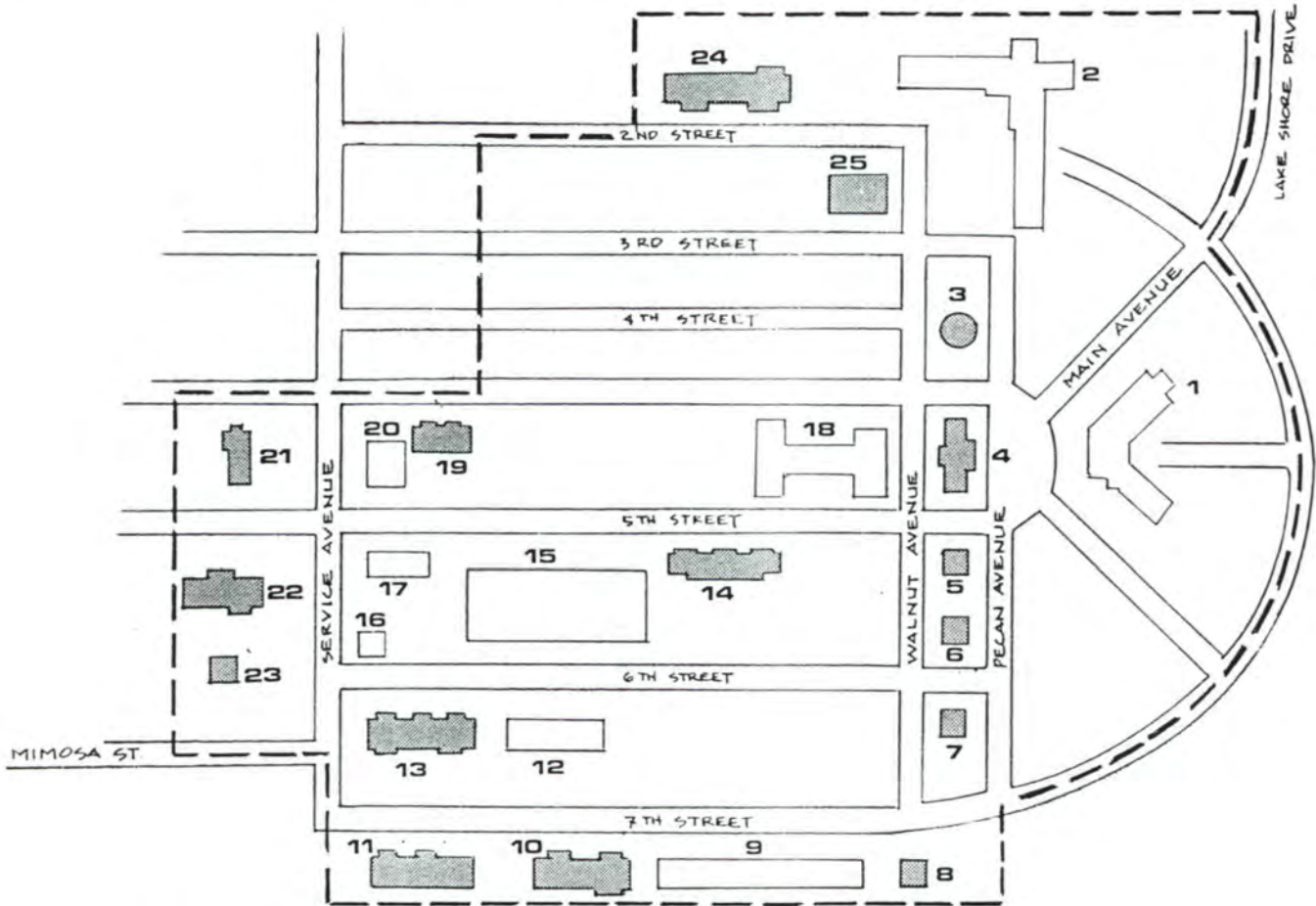
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STATE EPILEPTIC COLONY HISTORIC DISTRICT
ABILENE, TAYLOR COUNTY, TEXAS

-  CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS
-  NONCONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS
-  DISTRICT BOUNDARY

NOT TO SCALE



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Photograph Log

Administration Building
State Epileptic Colony
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographed by Steven T. Ellinger
January 1990
Negative with Abilene State School, P.O. Box 451, Abilene, 79604
East facade of Administration Building, camera facing southwest.
Photo 1 of 11

Physician Living Quarters
State Epileptic Colony Historic District
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographed by Steven T. Ellinger
January 1990
Negative with Abilene State School, P.O. Box 451, Abilene, 79604
East facade, camera facing northeast
Photo 2 of 11

Employee Apartment House
State Epileptic Colony Historic District
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographed by Steven T. Ellinger
January 1990
Negative with Abilene State School, P.O. Box 451, Abilene, 79604
East facade, camera facing southwest
Photo 3 of 11

Physician Living Quarters
State Epileptic Colony Historic District
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographed by Steven T. Ellinger
January 1990
Negative with Abilene State School, P.O. Box 451, Abilene, 79604
East facade, camera facing northeast
Photo 4 of 11

Superintendent's House
State Epileptic Colony Historic District
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographed by Steven T. Ellinger
January 1990
Negative with Abilene State School, P.O. Box 451, Abilene, 79604
North facade, camera facing southwest
Photo 5 of 11

Power House
State Epileptic Colony Historic District
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographed by Steven T. Ellinger
January 1990

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Negative with Abilene State School, P.O. Box 451, Abilene, 79604
Southeast facade, camera facing northwest
Photo 6 of 11

Bakery

State Epileptic Colony Historic District
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographed by Steven T. Ellinger
January 1990

Negative with Abilene State School, P.O. Box 451, Abilene, 79604
East facade, camera facing northwest
Photo 7 of 11

Dormitories

State Epileptic Colony Historic District
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographer unknown
Circa 1940

Negative with Abilene State School, P.O. Box 451, Abilene, 79604
Northwest facade, camera facing southeast
Photo 8 of 11

Dormitory

State Epileptic Colony Historic District
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographer unknown
Circa 1938

Negative with Abilene State School, P.O. Box 451, Abilene, 79604
South facade, camera facing north
Photo 9 of 11

Water Standpipe

State Epileptic Colony Historic District
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographer unknown
Circa 1912

Negative with Abilene State School, P.O. Box 451, Abilene, 79604
West facade, camera facing east
Photo 10 of 11

Visitor Center (Noncontributing)

State Epileptic Colony Historic District
Abilene, Taylor County, Texas
Photographer unknown
Circa early 1960s

Negative with Abilene State School, P.O. Box 451, Abilene, 79604
Northwest facade, camera facing southeast
Photo 11 of 11

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Health/medicine
Architecture

Period of Significance

1903-1941

Significant Dates

1903-1905
1920s
1930s

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

O'Connor, J.L.; Preston, William Proctor;
Castle, David S.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Texas Legislature established the State Epileptic Colony at the turn of the century in response to an increasing governmental need to administer to serious illnesses. Placed in an undeveloped area of a west Texas town, the colony was designed around a formal plan. As a historic district, the colony meets National Register Criterion A significant at the state level in the area of Health/Medicine, for its associations with the state's evolving attitudes toward the treatment of epilepsy. The district also meets Criterion C at the state level in the area of Architecture, as an intact historic state health facility, featuring classical (1903-1905) and Prairie School (later building campaigns in the 1920s and 1930s) design. The Period of Significance, 1903 to 1941, encompasses initial construction of the facility and later building campaigns (1920s and 1930s as noted in Significant Dates), as well as the evolution of the epileptic colony through the National Register 50 year cut-off date.

For centuries doctors treated many persons bearing certain physical and psychological abnormalities with apathetic attitudes and ignorance, working only toward custodial care and not effective cures. By the late 19th century, technological advances in medicine began to dramatically increase control of various illnesses and to foster a better understanding of those, such as epilepsy, that could not yet be controlled. Concurrently, a 1901 reorganization of the American Medical Association thrust the medical profession into an era of reformation. A growing cadre of progressive doctors devoted themselves to the notion of further transforming modern medicine through public policy. As a result of this general reform, a new willingness to accept and confront epilepsy took place from 1893 to 1904 when six states, including Texas, established institutions for the care of epileptics.

During this period a progressive doctor in Abilene, T.B. Bass, recommended building an asylum in the community. Receptive civic leaders adopted his advice as part of their efforts to stabilize the community's economy in 1897. Two Abilenians, Henry A. Tillett, state senator and local builder, and Captain John Tucker, a former Confederate soldier, were instrumental in ultimately securing the epileptic colony for Abilene. Tillett, with the help of James F. Cunningham, prepared a legislative draft that created an epileptic colony.

Tillett was in Austin preparing the bill when he realized that, if the bill passed, Abilene would not be in the running for the colony due to its

9. Major Bibliographical References

Archives. Abilene State School. Abilene, Texas.
McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York:
Alfred A. Knopf, 1986.
Wiebe, Robert H. The Search for Order: 1877-1920. New York: Hill and Wang, 1967.
Wilson, William H. The City Beautiful Movement. Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1989.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)
has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings

Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering

Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State historic preservation office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Specify repository:

Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas
Abilene State School, Abilene, Texas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property see Continuation Sheet 10-1,

UTM References

A
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See Continuation Sheet 10-1.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See Continuation Sheet 10-1.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Amy E. Dase, THC Historian (with research by Joy Ellinger, Abilene State School)

organization Abilene State School

date January, 1990; February, 1991

street & number P.O. Box 451

telephone 915/692-4053

city or town Abilene

state Texas

zip code 79604

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poor water supply. This realization prompted the founding of the Lytle Water Company (about 1898) and, consequently, Lytle Lake, to function as the primary water source for the colony. J.G. Lowden, an Abilene banker, was chief stockholder of the water company; Judge Fred Cockrell and S.P. Hardwicke also held major interest in the company.

Tucker and W.P. Sabastian sponsored a bill in the 1899 session of the state legislature that authorized the construction of a colony for epileptics. On February 3, 1899, Lowden received a telegram from Abilenian W.J. Bryan: "Bill passed to engrossment in the House by a vote of 100 to 19." The bill authorized the building of an asylum and passed the Senate with the added provision that the chosen city donate 640 acres of land within three miles of that city. The bill also stipulated that the colony site be centered in "northwest" Texas, west of Fort Worth and north of Brownwood.

Once the bill passed, Abilenians began actively lobbying for the colony. Cockrell and Lowden sold the necessary 640 acres to a group of unidentified purchasers who donated the property to the city, which in turn, offered the land to the state.

On February 9, 1899, Governor Joseph D. Sayers appointed a 3-member commission to examine other epileptic facilities in the nation and to search for a suitable location for the colony. The commissioners, Charles Ragan, H.M. Rainboth, and Dr. John Preston, examined colonies in Sonyea, New York, Oakburn, Pennsylvania, and Palmer, Massachusetts, to gain a comprehensive overview of these facilities. They arrived in Abilene on March 14, 1899, to investigate the feasibility of establishing the colony. Following their 3-day visit, the commission sent a letter to Governor Sayers requesting that a committee of local citizens assist in their investigation. Mayor A.M. Robertson, George L. Paxton, and J.F. Buck represented Abilene's city council; W.J. Bryan, J.F. Cunningham, Fred Cockrell, T.O. Anderson, J.G. Lowden, D.G. Hill, and J.W. Red represented the citizens of Abilene. Unanimously, the commission decided that the 640 acres the City of Abilene offered was "...by far the most suitable for asylum purposes." The commission considered Abilene "...a most enterprising town..." with the proximate Texas and Pacific Railroad offering additional advantages.

The site selected was two miles southeast of the Texas & Pacific Railroad depot and one mile from the city limits, an important attribute. Authorities believed that such institutions should be away from the noise and excitement of population centers. Rural acreage afforded a pastoral setting, and farming was considered a healthy occupation for patients, as well as an economical source of supplies for the colony. A half mile west of the site was Lytle Lake, assuring the colony of an adequate water supply. Four hundred of these 640 acres were already cultivated or cleared, and 200 acres were set aside for pasture. A small fruit orchard with 200 young trees occupied some of this acreage. The remaining 40 acres would become the campus, and included a new well, 30 feet in depth. The City of Abilene donated an additional two acres of gravel land for the colony's use.

After receiving the commission's report, the state legislature officially established the State Epileptic Colony in 1901 and appropriated

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\$50,000 to erect buildings and to equip and operate the facility. The institution was to house and provide care for epileptic persons residing in mental asylums, jails, overcrowded facilities, and other unsuitable locations. A further appropriation of \$200,000 was specifically for the construction of an administration building, a hospital, a superintendent's residence, and four cottages for epileptic patients. The legislature specified that the buildings be constructed of "...rock or Texas made brick."

The State of Texas hired two architects to design the epileptic colony. J.L. O'Connor was born in New Orleans, lived in Galveston, and eventually in Austin where he worked for architect A.O. Watson. O'Connor is recognized for designing Brackenridge Hall (1890) and the east wing of Old Main at the University of Texas, constructed in 1898 (neither building remains extant). He is also credited with drawing the blueprints for dormitories housing black patients at the Austin State School and for the Sam Houston State Teachers College Library in Huntsville (now known as Peabody Memorial Library) in 1902. William Proctor Preston attended the University of Pennsylvania's School of Architecture, one of only seven architecture schools in the country at that time. Little else is known of Proctor.

The institution's site plan had to focus on an unusual group of people with special needs: epileptics. Health care facilities in Texas had previously been custodial in nature and not curative and patients were housed in large hospital buildings divided into various wings and wards. A ward was a large room that accommodated a number of patients requiring similar treatment. Progressive doctors and administrators working towards reformations in medicine and health advocated a "cottage plan" and at the turn of the century this system was adopted around the country as well as in Texas. Physicians believed the "cottage plan" provided a more comfortable and relaxing setting and allowed patients to be more independent. Architects O'Connor and Preston merged the "cottage plan" with contemporary classical planning techniques to meet the colony's physical requirements.

The institution's plan reflected popular contemporaneous design elements. The 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago brought classical design to national attention, with dramatic colonnaded buildings arranged around a central court. At the time, college campuses frequently implemented such a plan, following the layout of a colonnaded "academical village" -- an open, rectangular lawn or green with large buildings anchoring one or both ends and modest living quarters lining the remaining perimeter. Physically similar to a college campus, the arrangement of buildings at a health facility also had to address planning, residential space, and tradition. The epileptic colony's architects pursued a classical theme, modeling their plan on this popular design for college settings with open space surrounded by functional structures. The State Epileptic Colony's original plan expressed such an arrangement with the most architecturally distinctive resources at one end of campus, the utilitarian buildings at the opposite end, and residential units along the perimeter.

To complement this plan, the buildings incorporated forms and ornamentation that reflected classical influences. The Columbian Exposition

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aroused interest in reviving classical styles that became prevalent throughout the country during the first half of the 20th century. These styles "...emphasized the greatness and the republican legacy of the United States by adapting the architecture of past republics" and represented America's awakening interest in patriotism during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Wilson, 90). "...[I]deally suited to any building requiring easy public access to a few floors, controlled vertical movement, and a high degree of functional utility...", architects considered such design suitable for handling entirely new building types (Wilson, 88). Symmetrical plans (often rectangular), broad expanses of plain, smooth wall surfaces, fenestration symmetrically arranged and defined with lintels (rather than porticos with arches or pediments), single columns (rather than coupled columns), pilasters, dentils and plain roof lines typify classical composition.

Most of the buildings at the State Epileptic Colony evoke simplified expressions of classical architecture adapted to popular trends and institutional design. The 1903 Administration Building was designed to be vertical, easily accessible, and utilitarian, attributes associated with Classical Revival architecture. The most elaborately detailed building at the colony, it features a rectangular plan, smooth wall surfaces, and symmetrical fenestration with accented lintels. The interior reflects classical influences with iron scroll work on the stairwell and intricate woodwork with dentils. The Bakery (1903), the Power House (1903), and the Laundry (c. 1920, rebuilt after a fire, using the 1903 plan specifications) are also vertical, accessible and utilitarian. They were constructed to serve practical functions and as a result are much less detailed. Each features a symmetrical plan, generally smooth wall surfaces, and balanced fenestration.

The Superintendent's House (1904) is unlike the other buildings at the facility. The only single family dwelling at the colony, it is a well executed example of Colonial Revival architecture. A popular style for domestic buildings after the turn of the century, Colonial Revival was the precursor to later revival designs for popular residences. Embellishments that reflect this stylistic influence include overall symmetry, the accentuated front entrance, and multi-pane glazing in double hung windows.

The initial construction of the colony, with the exception of the Superintendent's House, was completed in March 1904, six months after the predicted completion date. Just a few weeks later the colony's water tower collapsed. As described in a telegram to Governor Lanham, the wreckage was a mass of twisted iron. An elevated wood tank was installed to provide water temporarily. In 1910, a 90-foot steel standpipe was erected near the site of the original water reservoir for a cost of \$7,500.

A board of six governor-appointed managers directed this and all similar health institutions in the state. The San Antonio State Hospital had supervised planning and constructing the State Epileptic Colony until 1903 when Governor S.W.T. Lanham appointed Dr. John Preston to serve as superintendent. Previous to his appointment, Dr. Preston had served as the superintendent at the Asylum for the Insane in Terrell, Texas, and on the

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commission to secure the site for the State Epileptic Colony. The Governor appointed Dr. T.B. Bass and J.H. Eastland as Preston's assistants.

Superintendent Preston became responsible for all phases of the colony's operations and development. He initially hired 12 staff members and 18 nurses and attendants. Most of Preston's correspondence during his first year as superintendent dealt with patient admission requirements as outlined by the state legislature in 1903. Accordingly, only citizens of Texas in general good health that were not mentally retarded could be admitted, with the recommendation of a local county judge and physician. Patients classified as "state" received free board, medication, and treatment; patients classified as "private" paid five dollars per week for these services. The first 104 patients, as the legislature required, were epileptics transferred out of insane asylums. The first patient was admitted March 26, 1904.

Bass, one of Preston's assistants, became superintendent of the colony in 1909. He conducted various tests to discover the causes of epilepsy. His earliest documented research consisted of injecting patients with crotalin, the venom of rattlesnakes. In 1913 he reported, "I have continued the crotalin or rattlesnake venom treatment; it is right severe, but seems to benefit some cases. I can't say at this time that any will be permanently helped." Bass and his colleagues generally used liminal Bromide as medication to help subdue epileptic convulsions. Until later discovery and use of anti-convulsant drugs, additional treatment for controlling epileptic seizures consisted of proper diet, light work, regimented schedule, and exercise.

The first examination of asylums in Texas took place in 1916 when investigators recommended that state health institutions be placed under the control of a central board. The Legislature responded in 1919 by organizing the State Board of Control, which replaced the Board of Managers. That same year, facilities across the state were renamed "state hospitals," a term suggesting treatment rather than guardianship and further indicating reform in the health and medicine professions; thus this institution became Abilene State Hospital. These changes created a more intensive system of monitoring such institutions and encouraged a general trend toward regulating health facilities, which reflected the growing acceptance of progressive attitudes.

The original patient population of 104 had grown to almost 1,000 by the 1920s, dictating a need for more buildings, in particular, residential space. The increased patient population made cottages less advantageous, and administrators chose to construct dormitories on the campus. Records do not reveal exactly when or how many were constructed, but Prairie School design influenced those dormitories built in the 1920s. The five extant dormitories constructed during this period are similar in form, exhibiting 2-story, modified rectangular plans. They share a horizontal emphasis and express nuances of classicism as seen in abstract ornamentation and embellishments that refer to classically derived motifs. Each building is slightly different but maintains plain, smooth exterior surfaces, balanced fenestration defined with flat lintels, pilasters, dentils, and plain roof lines.

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As the number of patients grew at the Abilene State Hospital, so did the need for employees and employee housing facilities. In 1927-28, the Employee Apartment House was constructed. David S. Castle, a prominent West Texas architect who practiced in Abilene from 1913 to 1956, designed the building, again following simplified themes of classicism, in a Prairie School influenced composition.

Largely self-sustaining, the campus had grown to include an ice plant, machine shop, carpenter shop, paint shop, barber shop, shoe shop, mattress shop, and garage. Patients worked in these facilities as part of their treatment. Several of these buildings were at the outer rim of the west side of the present historic district. Most of these buildings have been demolished or altered beyond recognition.

Continued growth of the hospital led to further expansion of the facility. Employees numbered 162 in 1931, more than quadrupling since the doors first opened at the hospital. By 1937, the need for more facilities required the construction of two Physicians Living Quarters that Gaskill-McDaniel Architects designed. These small buildings express very little stylistic influence, but modestly resemble classical forms, smooth exterior wall surfaces, balanced fenestration with lintels, and plain roof lines.

World War II diverted resources and attention away from health care in the 1940s. Many staff members joined the military to assist in the war effort or had to be dismissed because of lack of funding. The consequence of their departure decreased supervision at the facility and elevated opportunities for patients to escape. Several ran away to pick cotton, according to the institution's records. The inflation brought on by the war constrained the ability of the hospital to adhere to a budget. However, Bass managed to retain enough employees to keep the facility open. By the end of the war, the facility began to regain funding, the patient population had grown to 1,324, and the labor force included 202 workers.

Breakthroughs in medicine following World War II benefitted persons afflicted with epilepsy as effective anti-convulsant drugs became widely accepted. As a result, the need for institutionalized epileptic care gradually declined and, in 1955, the Texas Research Council suggested that the facility's purpose be changed to educate and care for the mentally retarded. This transformation became official in 1957 and the name of the institution was also changed to Abilene State School.

Presently the state school campus encompasses nearly 100 acres, serves approximately 750 mentally retarded patients, and employs 1,700. The historic buildings remain in use, some retaining their original function, such as the Superintendent's House and the Power House. The old dormitories now operate as rehabilitation workshops, storage space, and activity centers.

The State Epileptic Colony has, throughout its history, undergone dramatic philosophical change and physical growth. Founded in response to turn of the century health and medical needs, the institution moved away from curatorial care to treatment of epilepsy to a rehabilitation center for mentally retarded persons. Numerous recent buildings outside of the district

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boundaries reflect the growth of the institution since its founding. Although the physical plant has grown, it maintains its historic classical planning and design and is worthy of continued preservation efforts.

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Section number 10 Page 1 State Epileptic Colony HD Taylor Co., TX

Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Approximately 31 acres

UTM References:

A 14/432240/3587020 B 14/432700/3587020
C 14/432700/3586640 D 14/432240/3586640

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary includes a portion of the historic campus of the State Epileptic Colony consisting of approximately 31 acres that are within these parameters: starting at a point at the center of the intersection of Main Avenue and Lakeside Drive and following the center line of the curve of Lakeside Drive in a southerly direction to a point at the center of the intersection of Lakeside Drive and Pecan Avenue. Thence due south approximately 156 feet to a point aligned with the center of this intersection (and approximately 100 feet southeast of the southeast corner of the Superintendent's House). Thence due west approximately 913 feet, thence due north approximately 210 feet to a point that is aligned with the center line of Service Avenue, thence due west approximately 210 feet along the center line of Mimosa Street, thence due north approximately 444 feet, thence due east approximately 406 feet, thence due north approximately 331 feet to a point that intersects with the center line of Second Street continuing on due east to a point approximately 212 feet, thence due north approximately 112 feet to a point that is aligned with the center line of Second Street (and approximately 48 feet northwest of the northwest corner of domitory #24). Thence due east approximately 812 feet to a point that intersects with the center line of Lakeside Drive and following the center line of Lakeside Drive in a southerly direction to the point of origin.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary of the district includes the buildings and a structure that have historically been associated with the State Epileptic Colony and that retain historic integrity. Parcels of the original grounds outside the boundary have been excluded because they contain a substantial amount of new construction not in keeping with the historic or architectural character of the district.

Acreage of Discontiguous Element: Approximately 4 acres

UTM References:

A 14/433020/3585140 B 14/433220/3585140
C 14/433220/3585060 D 14/433020/3585060

Verbal Boundary Description:

Using the center of the intersection of FM 1750 and Industrial Boulevard as a point of reference the State Epileptic Colony Cemetery is a rectangle of approximately four acres within the following parameters: starting at a point that is approximately 738 feet due west and 144 feet due north of the point of reference, thence due west approximately 627 feet, thence due north approximately 140 feet, thence due east approximately 627 feet, thence due south approximately 140 feet, which is the point of origin.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary of the discontiguous element includes the area that has been historically associated with the State Epileptic Colony's cemetery. The area within the boundary retains its historic integrity.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: State Epileptic Colony Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Taylor

DATE RECEIVED: 9/17/91 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 10/01/91
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/17/91 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/01/91
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 91001539

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 10/30/91 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

The State Epileptic Colony Historic District is significant as a complex of buildings representing the State's evolving policies toward the treatment of epilepsy and both classical and prairie school design.

The cemetery is included in the historic district as an integral part of the resource's significance.

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept 1 or C
REVIEWER Antonette Lee
DISCIPLINE History
DATE 10/30/91

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y N

CLASSIFICATION

count resource type

STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

FUNCTION

historic current

DESCRIPTION

architectural classification
 materials
 descriptive text

SIGNIFICANCE

Period Areas of Significance--Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect
Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

summary paragraph
 completeness
 clarity
 applicable criteria
 justification of areas checked
 relating significance to the resource
 context
 relationship of integrity to significance
 justification of exception
 other

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage verbal boundary description
 UTM's boundary justification

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION/PRESENTATION

sketch maps USGS maps photographs presentation

OTHER COMMENTS

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to

Phone _____

Signed _____ Date _____



ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
STATE EPILEPTIC COLONY
ABILENE, TAYLOR COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 1 of 11



PHYSICIAN LIVING QUARTERS
STATE EPILEPTIC COLONY HISTORIC DISTRICT
ABILENE, TAYLOR COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 2 of 11



COMMUNITY
SERVICES

568

EMPLOYEE APARTMENT HOUSE
STATE EPILEPTIC COLONY HISTORIC DISTRICT
ABILENE, TAYLOR COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 3 of 11



PHYSICIAN LIVING QUARTERS
STATE EPILEPTIC COLONY HISTORIC DISTRICT
ABILENE, TAYLOR COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 4 of 11



SUPERINTENDENT'S HOUSE
STATE EPILEPTIC COLONY HISTORIC DISTRICT
ABILENE, TAYLOR COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 5 of 11



POWER HOUSE
STATE EPILEPTIC COLONY HISTORIC DISTRICT
ABILENE, TAYLOR COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 6 of 11



BAKERY
STATE EPILEPTIC COLONY HISTORIC DISTRICT
ABILENE, TAYLOR COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 7 of 10

~~7 of 10~~



DORMITORIES
STATE EPILEPTIC COLONY HISTORIC DISTRICT
ABILENE, TAYLOR COUNTY, TEXAS

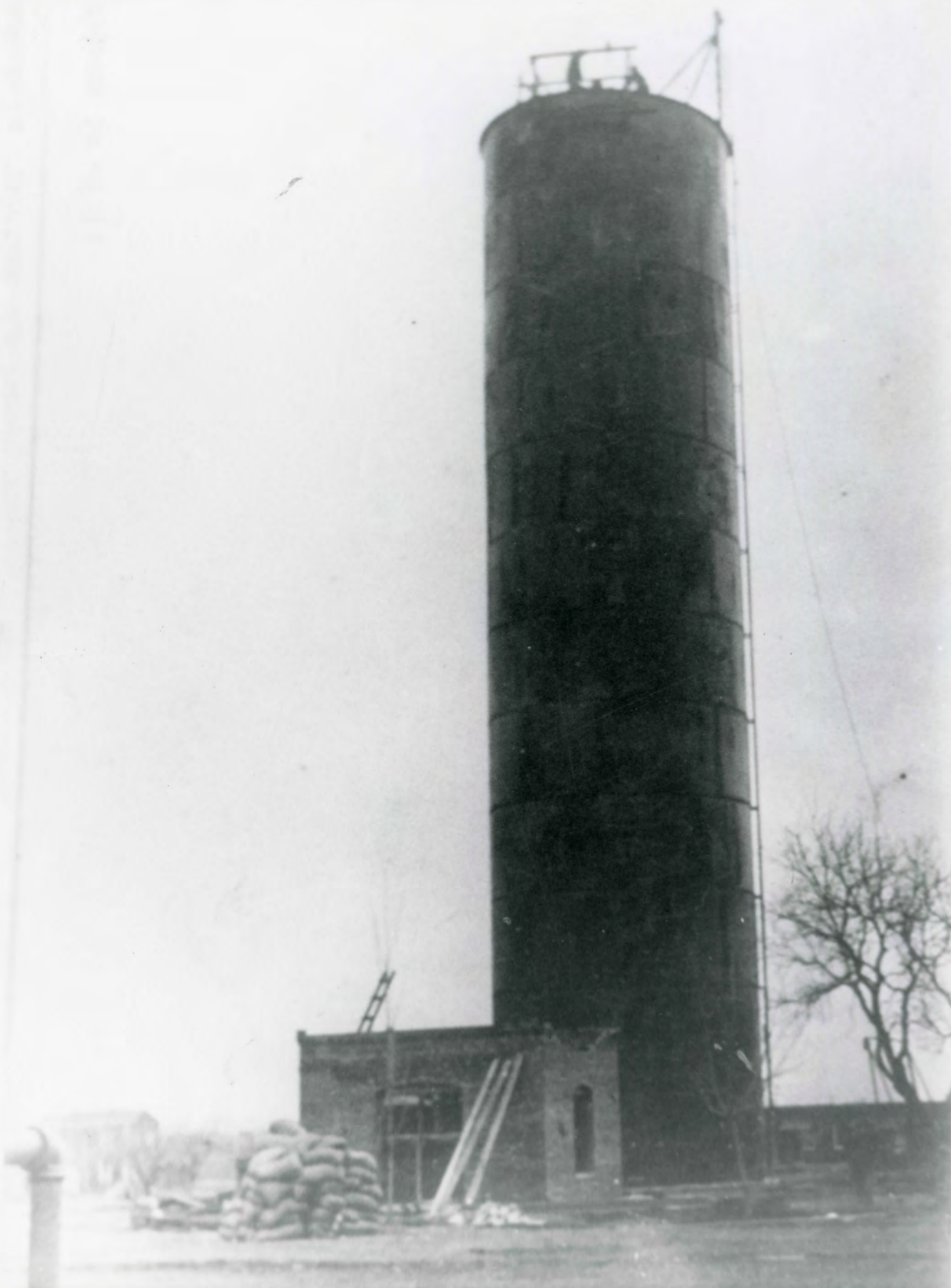
PHOTO 8 of 11



DORMITORY
STATE EPILEPTIC COLONY HISTORIC DISTRICT
ABILENE, TAYLOR COUNTY, TEXAS

PHOTO 9 of 11

81-01655.17



WATER STANDPIPE
STATE EPILEPTIC COLONY HISTORIC DISTRICT
ABILENE, TAYLOR COUNTY, TEXAS

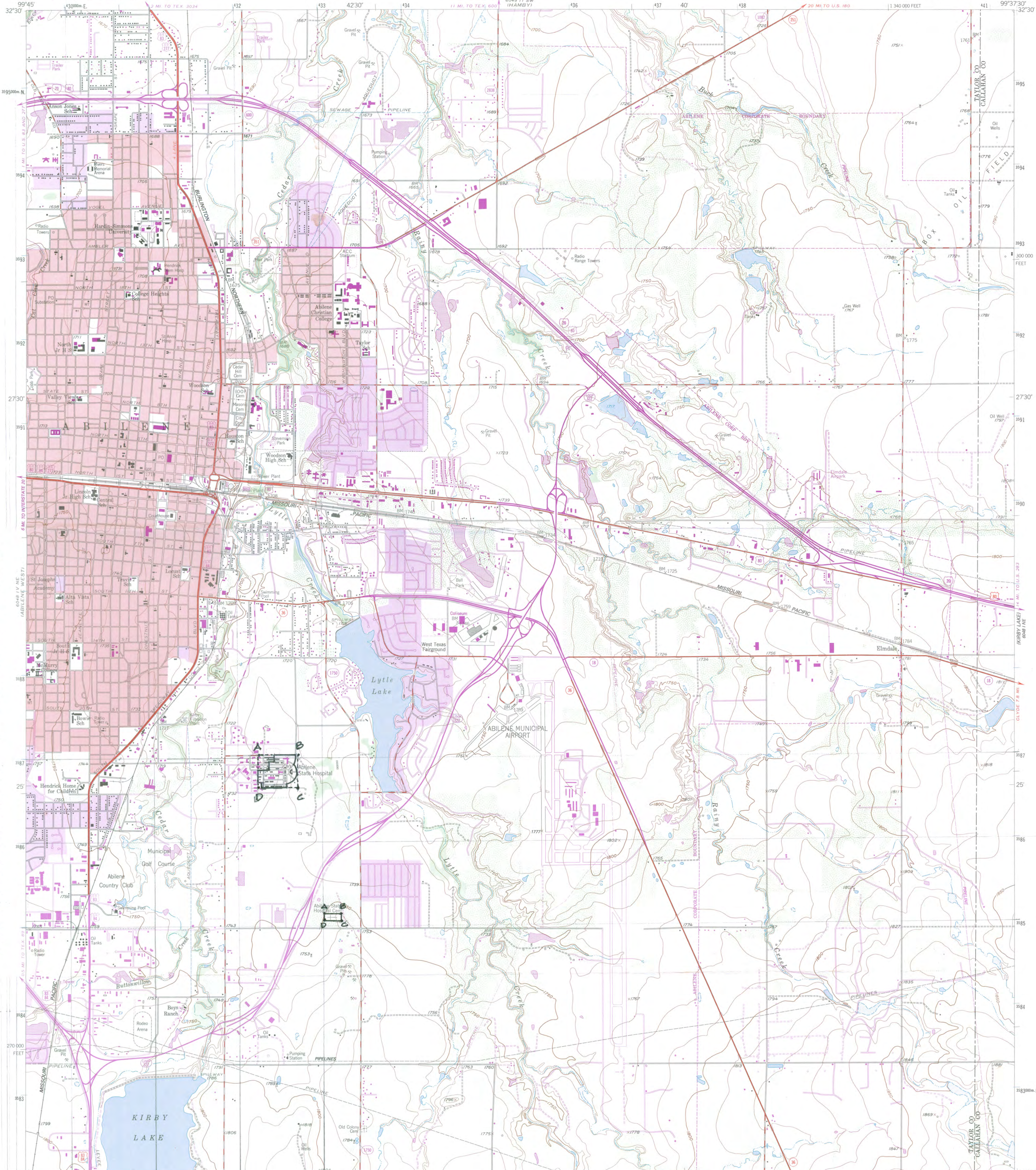
PHOTO 10 of 11

10 of 11



VISITOR CENTER (NON CONTRIBUTING)
STATE EPILEPTIC COLONY HISTORIC DISTRICT
ABILENE, TAYLOR COUNTY, TEXAS

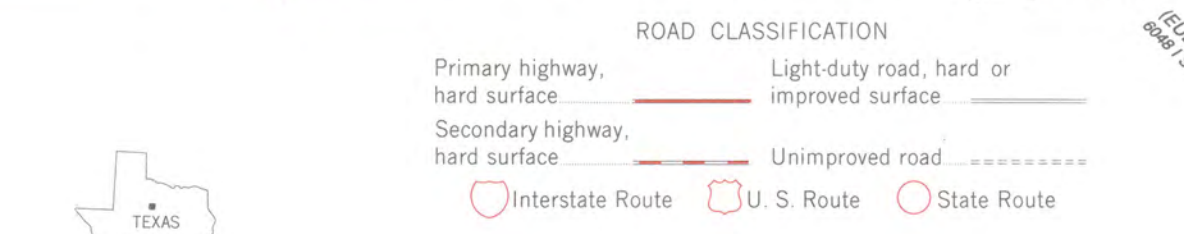
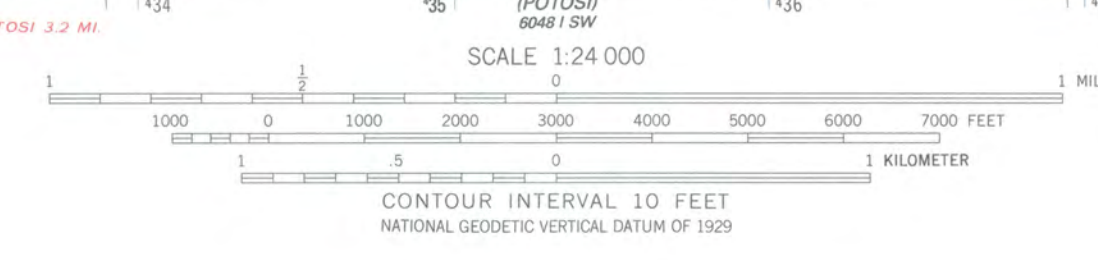
PHOTO 11 of 11



STATE EPILEPTIC COLONY HISTORIC DISTRICT
ABILENE, TAYLOR CO., TEXAS
UTM REFERENCES: REFER TO CONTINUATION SHEETS

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
Topography from aerial photographs by ER 55 plotter
Aerial photographs taken 1954. Field check 1957
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Texas coordinate system,
north central zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 14, shown in blue
Red tint indicates areas in which only
landmark buildings are shown
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983,
move the projection lines 10 meters south and
34 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial
photographs taken 1984 and other sources
This information not field checked. Map edited 1987
Purple tint indicates extension of urban area



ABILENE EAST, TEX.
NW/4 KIRBY LAKE 15' QUADRANGLE
32099-D6-TF-024
1957
PHOTOREVISED 1987
DMA 6048 I NW - SERIES V882