

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places Registration Form****1. Name of Property**

Historic Name: Dripping Springs Downtown Historic District

Other name/site number:

Name of related multiple property listing: NA

**2. Location**Street & number: 100-500 blocks Mercer Street; 100 block Wallace Street; 100 block San Marcos Street  
101-103 Old Fitzhugh Road; 101 College Street

City or town: Dripping Springs

State: Texas

County: Hays

Not for publication: ☐Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☒ localApplicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official / Title

State Historic Preservation Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official\_\_\_\_\_  
Date\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register☐ determined eligible for the National Register☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.☐ removed from the National Register☐ other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

SBR DRAFT

Downtown Dripping Springs Historic District, Dripping Springs, Hays County, Texas

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

### Category of Property

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
19	9	buildings
1	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
21	9	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions:** COMMERCE/specialty store; DOMESTIC/single dwelling; EDUCATION/school; RECREATION AND CULTURE/theater; COMMERCE/restaurant; TRANSPORTATION/road-related (vehicular)

**Current Functions:** COMMERCE/business; COMMERCE/financial institution; DOMESTIC/hotel; DOMESTIC/single dwelling; COMMERCE/restaurant; COMMERCE/specialty store; COMMERCE/professional; SOCIAL/meeting hall; VACANT

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification:** Bungalow/Craftsman; Modern Movement/Other: Ranch Style; Romanesque

**Principal Exterior Materials:** Stone: Granite, Limestone; Wood

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 7-6 through 7-19)

Downtown Dripping Springs Historic District, Dripping Springs, Hays County, Texas

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>A</b>	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
	<b>B</b>	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>C</b>	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
	<b>D</b>	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations:** N/A

**Areas of Significance:** Architecture, Community Planning and Development

**Period of Significance:** 1872 -1941

**Significant Dates:** N/A

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked):

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion d is marked):

**Architect/Builder:** Turner, Wade (stone mason); Lyle, Leland (stone mason)

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 8-20 through 8-29)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheets 9-30 through 9-31)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ 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 (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository:

**Historic Resources Survey Number** (if assigned): NA

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Downtown Dripping Springs Historic District, Dripping Springs, Hays County, Texas

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property:** 13.5 acres

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 30.192252 Longitude: -98.092874
2. Latitude: 30.192889 Longitude: -98.093003
3. Latitude: 30.193113 Longitude: -98.091558
4. Latitude: 30.193484 Longitude: -98.090687
5. Latitude: 30.193488 Longitude: -98.090039
6. Latitude: 30.193695 Longitude: -98.090011
7. Latitude: 30.193700 Longitude: -98.089351
8. Latitude: 30.193365 Longitude: -98.089267
9. Latitude: 30.193356 Longitude: -98.088478
10. Latitude: 30.192707 Longitude: -98.088589
11. Latitude: 30.192664 Longitude: -98.088153
12. Latitude: 30.192106 Longitude: -98.088139
13. Latitude: 30.192096 Longitude: -98.089784
14. Latitude: 30.191664 Longitude: -98.089828
15. Latitude: 30.191626 Longitude: -98.090353
16. Latitude: 30.192072 Longitude: -98.090310
17. Latitude: 30.192068 Longitude: -98.090808
18. Latitude: 30.192625 Longitude: -98.090843
19. Latitude: 30.192177 Longitude: -98.092586

**Verbal Boundary Description:** See continuation page 10-32

**Boundary Justification:** See continuation page 10-32

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Terri Myers (with assistance from Marie Bassett and the Dripping Springs Historical Commission)

Organization: Preservation Central, Inc.

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Date: August 2, 2012

## Additional Documentation

**Maps** (see continuation sheet Map-33 through Map-34)

**Additional items** (see continuation sheets Figure-35 through Figure-49)

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Downtown Dripping Springs Historic District, Dripping Springs, Hays County, Texas

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## Photographs

Name of Property: Downtown Dripping Springs Historic District  
City or Vicinity: Dripping Springs  
County, State: Hays County, TX  
Photographer: Terri Myers  
Date Photographed:

**Final photo log pending.**

**For review purposes, photographs are included at the end of this document, beginning on page 35.**

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

## Narrative Description

The Dripping Springs Downtown Historic District is centered around Mercer Street roughly between Highway 290 on the west and RM 12 on the east. The district is approximately 13.5 acres in size and includes 30 resources. The majority of resources face Mercer, with additional resources on adjacent blocks. Of the resources, 21 (70%) contribute to the district. Nineteen of the resources are buildings, one is a structure, and one is a site. The district encompasses the earliest commercial core of this agricultural community. Because of this, diverse resources are found, including several in the commerce, education, industry, agriculture, and domestic categories. The majority of resources were built during the period of significance (1872-1941) and have good integrity. Most buildings are one-story in height. The most common building material is stone—both limestone and mixed-stone buildings are found. The city's namesake springs are also located within the district.

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The small incorporated town of Dripping Springs lies in northern Hays County, central Texas, at the edge of a fault line that separates the rich soil of the Blackland Prairie, to the east, from the limestone-carved hills, canyons, and creeks that characterize the Texas Hill Country, to the west. The early settlers in this part of central Texas found an uneven, rocky landscape pockmarked with springs and limestone bluffs. They did little to level the scenic terrain or impose a standard north-south/east-west axis on the landscape. As a result, early houses and paths through the village did not follow a strict grid layout but rather veered around natural obstacles such as ravines and springs. Neither did the town divide into like-uses with separate residential, commercial, and industrial zones.

The Austin to Fredericksburg Road passed through the heart of Dripping Springs along Mercer Street. In the 1930s, as auto tourism became popular, road-related resources such as gas stations, service stations, and tourist cafes were constructed on Mercer Street. Today, the street itself is largely unchanged and unimproved. It is two-lane asphalt street with no curbing along the majority of its length. The wide shoulders double as parking spaces for the businesses nearby. In some places it is difficult to differentiate between the road and the shoulder, or the shoulder and a driveway. A few of the buildings have short concrete sidewalks in front of them. Oak and pecan trees are found in several places along the road.

Today, Mercer Street reflects these historic free-form construction trends with uneven setback and randomly placed buildings. Houses lie across the street from industrial buildings and side up to shops and old garages. The most unifying elements found along Mercer Street are the use of stone in all types of construction, the small scale of its buildings, and the overall sense of history conveyed by its largely unaltered historic resources dating from at least 1872 to 1941, when World War II halted domestic construction throughout the country. A gap of more than ten years separates prewar from postwar construction within the district, with the newer buildings displaying different materials, massing, roof pitch, and stylistic qualities from their predecessors.

Shortly after construction resumed in postwar Dripping Springs, Highway 290 bypassed the old Austin to Fredericksburg Road. Because the new highway featured multiple lanes and a higher speed limit, much of the motoring activity along Mercer Street was diverted to the highway. This in turn drew new construction away from the former main street. Because of this, the Period of Significance for Downtown Dripping Springs extends from 1872 when the earliest resource was constructed, to 1941, when the United States entered the war. It is during these years that the highest concentration of intact historic resources were first constructed. The few

resources that postdate 1941 are considered to be noncontributing elements in the district. The district's contributing resources are those that date to the Period of Significance and display levels of integrity sufficient to convey their historic character and appearance. The noncontributing resources are those that have been significantly altered or those that were constructed after the end of the Period of Significance.

Historic downtown Dripping Springs lies immediately north of and adjacent to Highway 290. Mercer Street is just over a half-mile long and appears as a flattened semi-circle with its two ends intersecting with Highway 290. Within the semicircle between Mercer Street and Highway 290 is Wallace Street, a three-block long street with an east-west orientation. Intersecting Mercer Street are several north-south streets: RM 12, San Marcos Street, Old Fitzhugh Road, College Street, and Bluff Street, east to west. Old Fitzhugh Road does not continue south of Mercer but serves as a northerly route out of town. The other north-south streets continue south of Mercer and across Highway 290. In general, the resources north of the highway date to the earliest phases of the town's development, and the buildings south of the highway are of later construction. The majority of district resources face onto Mercer Street. The boundary includes the highest concentration of intact resources dating to the period of significance.

Today, there are 30 historic resources in the district, including buildings such as the Marshall-Chapman House (frame and stone), A.L. Davis commercial building (stone), the Baptist Academy (stone), and the Rinkey Dink Domino Parlor (frame and asphalt sheeting). The district also contains one structure—the bridge over the Dripping Springs Branch of Onion Creek (concrete and asphalt). Also within the district boundaries are the springs from which the town derived its name. Of undetermined age, the springs drew Native Americans to the bluff long before Anglo pioneers chose to settle at the site. Other resources in the Dripping Springs Downtown Historic District date to two distinct periods of development. The first is from 1872 to about 1920, when several stone commercial buildings and frame dwellings were constructed, and the second dates from about 1935 to 1941, when a number of small-scale commercial buildings and houses were built. Although several frame buildings are found along Mercer and College streets, stone is the predominant building material for all types of resources, and it is the stone construction that lends the district its unique character. Local limestone, both natural and dressed, is found in domestic properties, commercial buildings, education buildings, theaters, cafés, and historic garages and gas stations.

The integrity of the Dripping Springs Downtown Historic District is high. The commercial core of Dripping Springs grew in an ad hoc manner due to its rocky terrain and changing uses over the decades. It began as an agricultural hub where local farmers could visit a grocery, mill, or feed store, but grew up as a stop along a historic thoroughfare where travelers could access auto repair, cafes, and fuel. Remarkably, despite its diverse growth periods and loose physical organization, the district presents itself in a unified manner. This is in large part due to the consistency of scale and building material, and of the grouping of buildings primarily along the Mercer Street corridor. The district's integrity can be better understood by examining each of the seven aspect of integrity individually:

**Location** – Mercer Street and Onion Creek's Dripping Springs have long comprised the downtown core of Dripping Springs. Although a few of the buildings within the district have been moved, the overall arrangement of buildings along Mercer and its intersecting streets is much as it has been throughout the town's history.

**Design** – The layout of streets within the district have not changed since they were first platted. The setback, scale, and massing of the buildings along Mercer are consistent with their historic

configurations. Additionally, the design of individual resources within the district also show high integrity. Many of the historic buildings have excellent integrity, and others have small alterations such as side additions or window replacements that do not detract from their integrity of design.

**Setting** – Integrity of setting is high in the district. Mercer Street remains a small, largely unimproved street, with no curbing and wide shoulders used for parking. There are no stoplights. The Creek, the limestone ledges, mature trees, and the Dripping Springs also contribute to the integrity of setting. These elements are unchanged from the Period of Significance.

**Materials** – The district's widespread use of limestone and other stones provides great integrity of materials. Local stone is also found in rock walls at Resource #1. Other historic materials found in the district, such as frame buildings and short sections of concrete sidewalk, have not changed since the Period of Significance. The natural topography and vegetation is largely unchanged, as well.

**Workmanship** – Much like materials, the workmanship in the district is recognizable as dating to the Period of Significance. The masonry skills exhibited by the local settlers is still evident in the buildings and rock walls found in the district. Since very few of the buildings have significant alterations, this workmanship can be read clearly.

**Feeling** – The Downtown Dripping Springs Historic District has exceptional integrity of feeling, due in large part to the new Highway 290 bypassing Mercer Street in favor of a straighter route nearby. Because of this, Mercer Street escaped widespread infill and other alterations that would have altered its feeling. The district still feels very much like an agricultural hub and a stopping place where one might grab a cup of coffee or fill up the gas tank. The presence of the springs, the trees, and the multiple small-scale stone buildings adds to this effect.

**Association** – The property types found in the district are strongly associated with both the early days of the community (Dripping Springs Academy, A.L. Davis Store, historic residences) and the years serving as a stop along the Austin to Fredericksburg Road (gas stations, repair garages, cafes). Because these building types have high integrity of design and feeling individually, together they create a definite association to the history of the district.



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Dripping Springs Downtown Historic District, Dripping Springs, Hays County, Texas

**Inventory Table – ID numbers correspond to the sketch map on page 34.**

<b>I D</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Resource Name</b>	<b>Date of Orig. Construction</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Contributing Status</b>
1	500 Mercer St.	Marshall-Chapman House	ca. 1855	Building	Contributing
1a	200 Mercer St.	Log Cabin	ca. 1860	Building	Noncontributing
2	West end of Mercer	Dripping Springs	N/A	Site	Contributing
3	West end of Mercer	Bridge	ca. 1950	Structure	Contributing
4	404 Mercer St.	Bill Garnett House	1940	Building	Contributing
5	402 Mercer St.	Bill Garnett House (Bungalow)	ca. 1925	Building	Contributing
6	400 Mercer St.	Garnett's Garage (now Terry Garnett's Propane Co.)	1925	Building	Noncontributing
7	330 Mercer St.	Sunrise Café	ca. 1965	Building	Noncontributing
8	310 Mercer St.	F.W. Miller Texaco (now The Big Drip Coffee Shop)	1940	Building	Contributing
9	304 Mercer St.	F.W. Miller Rock Café	1940	Building	Contributing
10	302 Mercer St.	J.L. Patterson Building (now Allen Real Estate)	1906	Building	Contributing
11	300 Mercer St.	Glosson Grocery (now Gracy Title)	1952	Building	Noncontributing
12	300-B Mercer St.	McQuistion Drug (now storage)	1901	Building	Noncontributing
13	300-C Mercer St.	Rinkey Dink Domino Hall	1939	Building	Contributing
14	101 Old Fitzhugh Rd.	Stephenson High School (now community center)	1939	Building	Contributing
15	103 Old Fitzhugh Rd.	Dripping Springs Academy (now a Masonic Lodge)	1881	Building	Contributing
16	222 Mercer St.	C.S. Graham-Goslin House	ca. 1910	Building	Contributing
17	206 Mercer St.	House	ca. 1940	Building	Contributing
18	105 Mercer St.	DisTex Theater (now Wells Fargo)	1937	Building	Contributing
19	207 Mercer St.	Crenshaw's Garage/Texaco (now Barber Shop Brew Pub)	1926	Building	Contributing
20	316 Mercer St.	Goslin's Drug Store (now Bassett Machine Works)	1941	Building	Contributing
21	211 Mercer St.	Senior Citizen's Thrift (now The Dudley's Wine Bar)	ca. 1996	Building	Noncontributing
22	299 Mercer St.	Haydon Central Garage (now Dripping Springs Rental Center)	1937	Building	Contributing
23	301 Mercer St.	A.L. Davis Store (now Lone Star Gifts)	1891	Building	Contributing
24	305 Mercer St.	Spaw Barbershop/Post Office (now Sacred Moon Herbs)	1937	Building	Contributing
25	204 Mercer St. (but on the 300 block)	Will Crow Wool and Mohair Building (now Rippy Ranch Supply)	ca. 1939	Building	Contributing
26	381 Mercer St.	Billie Garnett Store (now Rogers Music)	ca. 1950	Building	Noncontributing
27	101 College St.	W.G. McKellar "Short Mama" House	ca. 1900	Building	Contributing
28	100 block San Marcos St.	Unknown (residential or office building)	ca. 1945	Building	Noncontributing
29	200 block Wallace St.	Unknown (large metal barn)	ca. 1960	Building	Noncontributing

## Resource Descriptions

### **1. 500 Mercer Street. Marshall-Chapman House, ca. 1855, moved and enlarged ca. 1872. Contributing.**

The Marshall-Chapman House is a frame and limestone side-gabled dwelling with a front-gabled porch that lies at the far west end of the district on the north side of Mercer Street. The house has both wood and limestone segments that indicate early alterations. It features a front-gabled Folk Victorian partial façade front porch. The site includes a cistern, dry-stack rock walls, corrals and other features of a frontier homestead. The Marshall-Chapman House may have been built over a period spanning the initial settlement of the area (ca. 1854) to the early 1890s when the porch was probably added. All major changes date to the period of significance and the house reflects the development and growth of a frontier homestead. It contributes to the historic district.

The dwelling was likely the home of John and Indiana “Nannie” Moss who were among the first three families to settle in the vicinity of the springs about 1854. Nannie Moss named the area “Dripping Springs” to satisfy a requirement of the postal service that an official post station have a unique name. Her house was both post office and stage coach stop until the family moved on after the 1860 census. The place was purchased by Burrell J. Marshall about 1870 and moved from the rear pasture to front onto Mercer Street. Marshall died about 1872 and W.T. Chapman married his widow. Chapman was one of the town’s most enterprising citizens and is responsible for platting the townsite into lots and blocks and for developing several commercial endeavors in the town.

### **1a. 500 Mercer Street. Log Cabin, ca. 1860, moved to site in 2006. Noncontributing.**

This small side-gabled log cabin is located slightly behind and east of the Marshall-Chapman House, near the site’s dry-stack rock walls. The cabin was constructed in the late-1800s but moved to this location in 2006 from a site four miles away. It features walls made of hewn logs and chinking material and a single entry door on its front elevation. A shed-roofed porch supported by log piers spans the façade. The roof and porch roof are standing seam metal. Due to the fact that the log cabin was recently moved to the site, it is considered a noncontributing resource.

### **2. West End of Mercer Street. Dripping Springs. Contributing.**

The town’s namesake springs are located near Mercer Street approximately 650 feet east of its westernmost intersection with Highway 290. The dripping springs are natural springs sheltered by a limestone ledge on the Dripping Springs Branch of Onion Creek. On the north side of Mercer are the main springs. Here the springs lie in a natural setting as they have for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years. Overgrowth, rocks, and a slope make the springs difficult to reach in this location. The limestone ledges above the creek shelter small, clear pools of spring water. Nearby, water trickles down the limestone ledge between hanging ferns. On the south side of Mercer are additional, smaller springs. These are now accessible via a path and nonhistoric stone pedestrian bridges on the Spring Bluff Center property. The springs contribute to the history and appearance of Dripping Springs and contribute to the historic district as a site.

### **3. West side of Mercer Street. Bridge over Dripping Springs Branch, ca. 1935. Contributing.**

This was the site of a circa 1880 wood and iron bridge over Onion Creek’s Dripping Springs Branch. The current structure was likely built in the 1930s, possibly as a W.P.A. project. As such, it dates to the most prolific building period along Mercer Street when numerous garages and cafés catered to tourists and truck drivers stopping along the road. The bridge spans the creek as a large concrete box culvert. A tall box-shaped tunnel

passes under Mercer Street. On either side of the street, the culvert's sides are angled in to direct water toward the tunnel. The culvert's construction method is board-form concrete. This is still visible inside the tunnel, whereas the outsides have since been covered in a cementitious coating. Atop the culvert is the bridge deck. It is constructed from asphalt atop layers of modern wood decking material. Low metal guard rails on each side are supported by stout wooden posts. It contributes to the historic district as a structure.

**4. 404 Mercer Street. Bill Garnett House, 1940. Contributing.**

Bill Garnett built the basic, stone-veneer Ranch Style house in 1940 and added a wing onto the side of it a few years later. It is a side-gabled, multicolored flagstone house with a matching side-gabled flagstone addition. The house has long, low proportions. A shallow inset porch runs the length of the front elevation. The porch is supported by 4x4s. The rectangular window openings have stone sills. The Garnett House conveys a good sense of the early Ranch Style, which differed greatly from the bungalows of an earlier generation. The Garnett House represents the early popularity of the Ranch Style with the added feature of stone veneer that was fashionable in the center of town from the mid-1930s to about 1941. Garnett family descendants still occupy the house. It is intact and contributes to the mixed use domestic and commercial downtown district.

**5. 402 Mercer Street. Bill Garnett Bungalow, ca. 1925. Contributing.**

Bill Garnett built this house ca. 1925 near other Garnett properties. The dwelling is a front-gabled frame bungalow with a front-gabled porch. Native honeycomb stone forms the porch piers and rock walls. Porch posts are tapered wood. The overhanging eaves feature exposed rafter ends and simple wood brackets in the gable ends. The Bill Garnett bungalow is exceptional for its use of native stone, honeycomb limestone, and petrified stone in the construction of the porch piers and rock wall. The house itself is remarkably intact with original porch, wood siding, and fenestration. It is noteworthy also for its whimsical use of native stone for piers and landscaping wall. It is still owned by members of the Garnett family. It contributes to the Dripping Springs Downtown Historic District.

**6. 400 Mercer Street. Garnett's Garage (now Terry Garnett's Propane Co.), 1925 with multiple modern alterations. Noncontributing.**

A livery stable occupied this site as early as 1884. In 1904, W.S. Garnett Sr. purchased the property and continued to operate a livery stable there with a blacksmith shop next door. About 1925, he built a Gulf Oil station and garage on the site. Bill Garnett Jr. ran the garage and eventually bought it by 1934. When Mercer Street was widened in the late 1930s, the outside driveway was eliminated. Garnett's Garage once appeared very much like the stone-piered garages on the south side of Mercer Street, but the open driving bays have been infilled with tinted glass and other nonhistoric materials. The highly-textured honeycomb stone piers and walls now support a low-pitched gable roof, and a fabric awning spans the façade. The front-gabled roof, infilled garage bays, and infilled windows were done in the 1960s. Due to the alterations, the building is considered a noncontributing resource.

**7. 330 Mercer Street. Sunrise Café, ca. 1960s. Noncontributing.**

This building was erected as a feed store and feed mill in the 1960s. It is a cavernous one-story frame building with wood and metal siding and a low-pitched metal roof. Its front façade has been reconfigured to serve as a cafe by the addition of a single entry door and two rectangular windows. This was once the site of Will Garnett's blacksmith shop in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. H.C. Carter owned the metal warehouse at the rear of the

property. The Sunrise Café postdates the period of significance and does not share the dominant architectural components of Mercer Street. It is a noncontributing resource in the historic district.

**8. 310 Mercer Street. F.W. Miller's Texaco Station, 1940. Contributing.**

This small gas station building on Mercer Street has random ashlar limestone walls. The building's hipped roof has wide overhanging eaves and a buff brick chimney in its center. On the front elevation is a wood, single entry door with a partially-infilled transom. The entry is flanked by wide wood four-light windows, each with a two-light transom. Smaller divided-light windows are found on the side elevations. A flat-roofed wood and metal porte cochere canopy extends from the front façade at eave level. A small, carved limestone block on the front corner of the building reads "F.W. MILLER 1940."

At one time, a two-story frame hotel built by developer W. T. Chapman stood on this site. The hotel burned in the late 1930s; its lumber was used in the construction of the Rinkey Dink Domino Hall and the Ragland residence at 501 Old Fitzhugh Road. In 1940, F.W. Miller built this small stone building as a Texaco gas station. As a major oil company, Texaco stood to be competitive in the Dripping Springs market. Miller lived in nearby Kyle, Texas, and leased the building to local operators. In 1960, after Highway 290 siphoned off the Mercer Street business, the gas station closed. It has served many other uses since that time but has remained intact to its 1940 appearance, including its service station canopy, and is a contributing resource in the historic district.

**9. 304 Mercer Street. F. W. Miller's Rock Café, 1940. Contributing.**

This one-story limestone café building was built as a companion to the Texaco station next door (Resource #8). Because of this, its style and composition is almost identical. A single front entry door with transom is flanked by two wood four-light windows. Each window has a two-light transom. The side elevations have a mix of rectangular windows and smaller clerestory-type windows under the wide overhanging eaves. The roof is hipped. On the front corner of the building is a carved stone block that reads, "F.W. MILLER 1940."

F. W. Miller built this café a few months after the Texaco Station was finished. Pete and Naomi Glosson operated the café for a few years. Beginning in 1941, James W. "Jimmy" Glosson and his wife Tula operated Bonnie's Café, named for their daughter. The Glossons ran the café for fourteen years. In 1956, the Glossons moved several buildings to the east and took over the family grocery business. Bonnie's Café remained a restaurant for some years, but since 1965 it has been an office and even a residence. Bonnie's Café has changed very little since it was built in 1940 and is a contributing resource in the historic district.

**10. 302 Mercer Street. J. L. Patterson Building (now Allen Real Estate office), 1906, 1938. Contributing.**

Originally a one-and-a-half story building, the Patterson Building was rebuilt as a one-story building with parapet after a 1938 fire. The building is similar in appearance to its 1906 configuration. The building features rusticated, coursed limestone blocks that extend up the wall to the tall front parapet. On the front elevation are twin storefronts, each with narrow wood and glass double doors, sidelights, and tall divided-light transoms. Above the storefronts is a wood-framed awning supported by thin curved wood brackets. The awning has a corrugated metal roof.

J.L. Patterson moved to Dripping Springs from Hutto, Texas, in 1903. In 1906, he built a one-and-a-half-story limestone-block building similar to the substantial A. L. Davis Store across the street. Patterson opened a

general merchandise business on the ground floor; the half-story above the first floor was a mezzanine. The Pattersons sold the store to P.A. Glosson and his wife, Annie, in 1914. The store changed hands many times until O.S. Brumley Sr. took over the business as Brumley Cash Grocery, which operated through the 1930s. On July 21, 1938, a fire gutted the building. It was rebuilt later that year as a one-story building. It is a contributing resource in the historic district.

**11. 300 Mercer Street. Solon Glosson Grocery (now Gracy Title), 1952. Noncontributing.**

This large building has a low-pitched front gable roof and a front-gabled “false front” style parapet. The building is clad in nonhistoric limestone and has a rebuilt front façade. A nonhistoric shed-roofed porch spans the façade.

Solon Glosson ran the Red & White Grocery Store on the first floor of the A. L. Davis building, starting in 1942. When that building burned in November of 1951, Glosson obtained this lot built a cinder-block grocery store that opened in November of 1952. Glosson and then his son, Jimmy, ran the store until about 1970. A variety of businesses followed. In the 1980s, the building was covered with new limestone blocks and a metal roof was also added. In 1987, the Dripping Springs Post Office operated from the building. Because the building materials have been substantially altered, and because it dates from outside the period of significance, it is a noncontributing resource in the historic district.

**12. 300-B Mercer Street, McQuistion Drug, 1901, moved 1941, 1958, 1972, others. Noncontributing.**

Druggist George McQuistion bought a lot in block six on the south side of Mercer Street and built a frame drug store in 1901. He operated the drug store for five years before selling it to W. H. Crenshaw. In 1941, W. C. Goslin decided to build a rock structure on the original site of the drug store, prompting the building’s first move. It was relocated several times after that, notably in 1958 and 1972. It is currently located behind the grocery at 300 Mercer Street (Resource #11). Since its move, the building housed a lumber yard and now is used for storage. The one-story, front-gabled building has been altered significantly, particularly by the application of stucco after its last move in 1972. It has also suffered major changes in its fenestration. Because it has been moved from its context several times and has been altered significantly from its original appearance, the McQuistion Drug Store is a noncontributing resource in the historic district.

**13. 300-C Mercer Street, rear. Rinkey Dink Domino Parlor, 1939. Contributing.**

The Rinkey Dink Domino Parlor was originally built on Mercer Street between the Texaco Station (Resource #8) and the Rock Café (Resource #9). John Butler purchased the supplies for the building for about fifty dollars and El Felps and A.B. Cauthen erected the building. The resident of the Rock Café objected to the “gambling” going on, and the building was moved a block down the street to accommodate the complainant. It is currently located behind the grocery at 300 Mercer Street (Resource #11).

Although this building was constructed for use as a domino parlor, the design, door and window placement, and scale are domestic in appearance. It is, in fact, a “shotgun” house in size, type, fenestration and materials. It is sheathed in asphalt siding like many shotgun houses of the 1920s-1940s. Its low-pitched, front-gabled roof has very little eave overhang. On the front façade is a single door entry and one rectangular window. The door has been replaced but the building contributes to the small town atmosphere of Dripping Springs of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Though the diminutive building has experienced some alterations, it is still recognizable to its period of significance and has historic associations for the townspeople. It contributes to the historic district.

**14. 101 Old Fitzhugh Road. Stephenson High School, 1939. Contributing.**

Stephenson High School is a one-story limestone building with a rectangular footprint. It is located behind Dripping Springs Academy off of Old Fitzhugh Road, and is accessed by a wide curving driveway. The front, or east, elevation has four rectangular windows and an off-center inset entry porch. The building has a large metal hipped roof.

By the 1930s, Dripping Springs Academy was too small to accommodate students in the town and surrounding area. Under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), local laborers built a new building to be opened for the September 1939 school term. It was named for a popular student, Allen J. Stephenson, who died from complications of a broken leg. The building operated as a high school only eleven years when a new school building was completed in 1949. The Stephenson school building continued to serve the student body as an auditorium for graduation ceremonies and other meetings and has served various educational uses since that time. A window was added on the north wall and an entrance door to the superintendent's office on the south wall. Otherwise, the building is virtually the same as it was originally built. The school building is a contributing resource in the historic district

**15. 103 Old Fitzhugh Road. Dripping Springs Academy, 1881 with 1921 second story. Contributing.**

Dripping Springs Academy is a large two-story limestone building near Old Fitzhugh Road north of Mercer Street. Although accessed by a driveway off Old Fitzhugh, the building's front elevation faces south, towards Mercer. The building is comprised of two intersecting volumes arranged in a T-shape, with the "cross" section at the west and the "tail" wing pointing east towards Old Fitzhugh. The building is made from rusticated, coursed stone. All window openings have stone sills and shallow-arched stone headers.

The front elevation has two building planes—one containing the entry door, and the other projecting forward and containing windows only. The single entry door is located in a small shed-roofed enclosed porch where the two planes meet. To the east of the front door are four windows; above are five. The projecting wing has a symmetrical arrangement with a large first floor window flanked by two smaller windows, and four second floor windows. The building's east elevation, which faces Old Fitzhugh, has two windows on each floor. The wider west elevation has a second floor entry door reached by two attached staircases. Four windows are also found on this elevation. Several of the rear elevation windows have been infilled with plywood.

On the Academy property is a small stone outbuilding. It is located just northeast of the main building near Old Fitzhugh Road. It is a tiny flat-roofed building with stone walls in a random ashlar pattern. It sits on a concrete pad and has a thick concrete slab roof. It has a door opening that faces south and a small window that faces west. Its location is indicated on the district map but it is not counted as a resource.

William Thomas Chapman platted the Town of Dripping Springs in 1881 and donated land to the north of the townsite for the construction of an academy. He likely expected that students from around the countryside would be attracted to the school which would, in turn, be a selling point for his adjacent townsite lots. The one-story school was built to accommodate 150-200 students. Area residents provided most of the volunteer labor. In 1921, the school passed into the public school system and a second story was built above the one-story edifice. It remained a school until 1949. After a few years of vacancy, the Masonic Lodge purchased the

building and has essentially maintained it as they received it. The building is a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark and a contributing resource in the historic district.

**16. 222 Mercer Street. C. S. Graham-Goslin House, ca. 1910. Contributing.**

The C. S. Graham family built the original house on this site in 1884. Although never a business, the building was home to various local drugstore owners, at one time or another. A low stone wall borders the property along both Mercer Street and Old Fitzhugh Road. The house may have suffered a fire and was either demolished or completely rebuilt about 1910 as a frame Classical Revival bungalow with a massive hipped roof and hipped dormers on two elevations. The house features paired and tripled 1/1 double hung sash windows and a hipped, projecting front porch with classical box columns. Some part of the 1884 house may remain in the current house but, as it stands now, the house appears very much like a Classical Revival bungalow dating to about 1905 to 1915. Aluminum siding was added, likely in the 1970s. Despite the change in siding, the house retains exceptional integrity to the ca. 1910 rebuilding and is a contributing resource in the historic district.

**17. 206 Mercer Street. House, ca. 1940. Contributing.**

Similar to the Felix Miller rock buildings (Resources #8 and #9), this small random ashlar limestone building dates from ca. 1940 and retains its original appearance, roof form and pitch, and fenestration to an exceptional degree. It is a one-story, pyramidal roofed dwelling with a corner inset porch supported by one squat post. A single entry door and window are located on the porch, and one set of paired windows is found on the front elevation. It is a contributing resource in the historic district.

**18. 105 Mercer Street. DisTex Theater (Wells Fargo Bank), 1937. Contributing.**

In 1937, when many other buildings were being built on Mercer Street, D. Waite Crenshaw and James Ferrell erected the DisTex movie theater at the east end of the street. The theater reportedly seated as many as 300 patrons. Wade Turner and Leland Lyle worked as rock masons on the large stone building with round-arched entrances. The theater was generally open only on Friday and Saturday evenings. The theater depended on the state of the economy and occasionally had to close its doors for a few years. Since the late 1940s, the building has housed other businesses, including banks. Currently it is a Wells Fargo bank.

This unusual theater building was designed with domestic proportions and natural stone cladding. Because of this, it is similar in scale and appearance to its contemporary buildings in downtown Dripping Springs from the mid-1930s to 1941. The theater is a one-story, T-shaped building with a long windowless elevation along San Marcos Street. The front gabled portion facing Mercer Street contains the doors. The front elevation has a nearly symmetrical arrangement, with two large segmental arched openings leading to inset entries. Between the arched openings is a low wood window. The façade features multicolored random ashlar stones, with darker colors used to trip the entry arches. The ticket booth has been converted to a bank entry but the interior is open and slopes slightly to the rear as did the original theater. The only major change to the exterior of the theater is the annex on the east side that houses the vault. The roof pitch and form, stone siding, and finely-wrought window openings are all intact from the building's days as a theater. The former movie theater contributes to the historic character of the district.

**19. 207 Mercer Street. Crenshaw's Garage/Texaco Station, 1926 with alterations in 1938. Contributing.**

This garage building has a rectangular footprint and multicolored random ashlar cladding. A large hipped roof covers both the building and a wide porte cochere. The porte cochere is supported by a single stout stone pier.

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At the base of the pier are low stone walls that presumably once supported gas pumps. The front elevation, under the porte cochere, has a central double entry door flanked by two windows on each side. The window sash has been replaced. On the east, San Marcos Street elevation, what was once a rear garage bay has been infilled.

The C. W. Crenshaw garage was built as a wooden and tin garage about 1926. At that time, the main road from Austin to Fredericksburg (Texas Highway 20) came down Wallace Mountain and took a right on San Marcos Street at Spring, and then a left onto Mercer. The driveway was designed to allow easy access and egress from either direction. Crenshaw advertised his business, especially to tourists on the Austin to Fredericksburg Road, in the April 1928 *Kyle News*. The ad touted their “Texaco Products,” “Mobil Oil,” and “Complete repair department” at a time when auto touring was just coming into fashion. By 1938, the route changed and owner D. W. Crenshaw altered the driveway to run parallel with Mercer Street. He also added a rock cladding similar to others found along Mercer Street. The garage changed hands many times until Highway 290 was re-routed to its present location, forcing the garages on Mercer Street to close their doors for good. In the 1980s, the building held a barber shop and is currently is a brew pub called Barber Shop Brew Pub. The building is a contributing resource in the district.

**20. 316 Mercer Street. Goslin’s Drug Store, 1941. Contributing.**

W. C. Goslin built this drug store about 1941. Goslin ran the drug store until his death in 1944. The building continued to serve as a drug store until it was apparent that Highway 290 would be drawing business away from Mercer Street. The Wiests, who operated the business at that time, built a new drug store on the highway in 1960 and the old drug store was left to serve other purposes including offices and specialty stores. It currently serves as Bassett Machine and Brass Works.

This limestone building has a narrow rectangular footprint and a front-gabled façade facing Mercer Street. The front elevation contains a central single entry door flanked by two rectangular storefront windows. Above the door and windows are narrow concrete headers. Spanning the front façade is a shed-roofed porch supported by metal lally poles and roofed with corrugated metal. Although this building was built of stone like others in the mid- to late-1930s, it is less rustic in appearance and simpler in form, reflecting a change in style between the rustic materials and textures of the 1930s and the plainer, more clean-cut lines of the 1940s. The window openings are much larger than those seen in the 1930s. The porch posts may be replacements. A cinder-block addition was built on the south side of the building in 1959 but it is not visible from Mercer Street. Despite some changes in the building, it is largely in keeping with other modest stone buildings built in 1940, particularly the F. W. Miller buildings across the street.

**21. 211 Mercer Street. Senior Citizens Thrift Store (now Dudley’s Wine Bar & Tap), ca. 1996. Noncontributing.**

This front-gabled limestone building was constructed in 1996 as a thrift store by a local senior citizen’s organization. It sits on the site of the former Breed’s meat market. That original building was also used variously as a drugstore, café, radio and TV business, clothing store, cleaners, and office space. It was demolished to make way for the thrift store. Dudley’s Wine Bar and Tap Room opened here in 2012. The current building does not date to the period of significance and therefore does not contribute to the historic district.



**22. 299 Mercer Street. Haydon Central Garage (Dripping Springs Rental Center), 1937 with 1954 addition. Contributing.**

This garage building is located at the southeast corner of Mercer and College Streets. It is a front-gabled stone building with a pyramidal-roofed front porte cochere. The building is clad in a variety of rock types including limestone, crystallized rock, and petrified wood. The result is colorful and highly textured. The porte cochere is supported by three battered stone piers and topped with a jagged decorative stone parapet. Under the porte cochere is the building entrance, which has a central double entry door and four storefront windows. The west, College Street, elevation has two single-width entry doors. Approximately two-thirds of the way down this side elevation is a rectangular garage bay that passes through the width of the building and out the other side. About 1954, a cinder-block addition was built onto the side of the original building to shelter those working on cars. The parking bay has its original pressed-tin ceiling. The decorative rustic construction with limestone, crystalized rocks, and petrified wood stands out even in a town known for its stone buildings. The Haydon Garage is exceptional for its architecture and is a contributing element in the historic district.

Charlie C. Haydon bought the lot in 1925. An old wooden building on the site served hamburgers and had a barber shop. Haydon first moved the roof to the site and then built the building around the roof, beginning about 1935. Haydon's goal was to build the rock building that occupies the lot now. Rocks from nearby cities Llano and Marble Falls, and petrified wood from McDade, were collected for the construction. Masons Wimberley and Hughs completed the rockwork which was finished in 1937. Called the Central Garage, the building was a Magnolia (Mobil) Gas station and garage. Leroy Roberts ran the service station and his wife ran a café in the east end of the station. The business had a good truck trade along Mercer Street. At one time, the station operated 24 hours a day. After the highway bypassed Mercer Street, Alva Haydon realized that he needed to move his business to Highway 290 and did so in 1964. In 1967, Jake Spears leased the garage building for his repair shop. Today it houses the Dripping Springs Rental Center.

**23. 301 Mercer Street. A. L. Davis Store (Lone Star Gifts), 1891 with 1951 alterations and 1971 addition. Contributing.**

Built in 1891 by A. L. Davis, one of the wealthiest men in Dripping Springs, this store marked the maturation of Dripping Springs from a settlement consisting of a few frame storefronts to a town with a more substantial mercantile district. A. L. Davis bought four adjacent lots in Block 7 in 1891 and built a two-story rock structure on Lot 6. The bottom floor was used as a store and the upper story was let to various community organizations such as the Masonic Lodge. The W. T. Chapman Firm, comprised of Chapman, his son Mercer, and son-in-law Thomas Egerton, bought the business in 1901 and operated the general merchandise store until 1920. By 1951, Solon Glosson leased the building, where he ran the Red & White Grocery until a fire nearly destroyed the building on November 19, 1951. Only the rock walls were left intact; the two-story stone front façade is all that remains of the second story. A larger limestone addition was constructed on the building's west elevation in 1971.

The long rectangular building has a front-gabled roof. The roof is not visible from the front, Mercer Street, elevation, since here the original two-story façade is intact. The upper portion of the façade is a false front, rising above the building's current one-story roof height. The three arched upper floor windows are enclosed. On the first floor, however, the façade features three large arched openings, each with limestone voussoirs and keystone. The central arch contains a single entry door, sidelights, and transom. The other two arches contain storefront windows. The building is of coursed ashlar construction and features blocky quoining at the corners.

The east, College Street, elevation is long and does not have windows. Toward its end is a small shed-roofed stone addition. The A.L. Davis Store is one of the more noteworthy buildings in Dripping Springs and is a contributing resource in the historic district.

**24. 305 Mercer Street. Spaw Barbershop/Post Office (Sacred Moon Herbs), 1937. Contributing.**

This stone building, with its distinctive jagged roofline, was built in 1937 by Johnny Spaw. The front-gabled building is clad in multicolored random ashlar stones, some of which are laid in a jagged tooth-like pattern along the top of the parapet. The recessed single entry is flanked by two 4/4 wood windows. A wood and metal awning spans the front façade.

Spaw ran a barber shop on one side, and his wife ran the post office on the other side. It remained a barber shop until 1981 when it became a hair salon. Currently it is a natural herbs store. Like many other small commercial buildings on Mercer Street, this diminutive stone building was erected in a compact period of time between 1935 and 1941. It looks virtually the same as it did when built in 1937 and contributes to the Dripping Springs historic district.

**25. 204 Mercer Street. Will Crow Wool and Mohair Building (now Rippy Ranch Supply), ca. 1939 with 1946 addition. Contributing.**

This frame store and warehouse building is addressed 204 Mercer Street despite being located in the 300 block of Mercer. The building consists of a frame, one-story front-gabled portion connected to a frame addition by a short hyphen. The older front-gabled building volume has a partial-width wooden front porch with a shed-roofed porch roof. A single entry is located on the porch. The later wooden addition has a concrete porch with a shed-roofed porch roof. This building volume has a nonhistoric second floor addition clad in corrugated metal.

Will Crow built a wooden building in 1937 for wool and mohair which were popular agricultural products at that time. Crow also sold hardware from the building. In 1939, the building burned down but Crow soon built a similar structure in its place. He added a wooden addition that faced Mercer Street and outfitted it as the town's first hardware store in 1946. Despite changes over the years, the Will Crow Wool and Mohair building is recognizable to its period of significance.

**26. 381 Mercer Street. Billie Garnett Store (now Rogers Music), ca. 1950s. Noncontributing.**

This cinder-block building was built by Billie and Alma Garnett as a grocery store in the 1950s. The one-story building has a low, wide front-gabled roof and a shallow front porch that spans the façade. A central double entry door is flanked by horizontal aluminum windows. It is not in keeping with the historic buildings in the district and postdates the period of significance. It is therefore noncontributing in the historic district.

**27. 101 College Street. W. G. McKellar "Short Mama" House, ca. 1900 with 1929 addition. Contributing.**

The W. G. McKellar House is on College Street between Wallace Street and Highway 290. The house is two stories in height. It is of frame construction and is clad in board and batten siding. The front elevation has a five-bay arrangement. On the first floor, the central single entry door is flanked by narrow sidelights. Two windows are found to either side of the entry. On the second floor are four matching windows and a central second-floor entry leading onto the upper porch. An attached limestone chimney is located on the south elevation. Immediately northwest of the house, along Wallace Street, is a historic frame garage. The front-

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gabled garage has two garage bays with wooden doors and three small 4/4 windows in its gable end. Both the house and garage are in excellent condition.

McKellar purchased the land in 1899 and likely built the house shortly thereafter. It is a symmetrical side-hipped frame house that once had a two-story gabled entry porch and balcony. In 1929, Lou Breed and her brother-in-law replaced the gabled porch with a two-story full-façade porch that stretches the length of the front façade. It is a landmark in Dripping Springs and contributes to the district.

**28. 100 block San Marcos Street. Unknown residential or office building, ca. 1945. Noncontributing.**

This frame one story building faces San Marcos Street. It has a low roof pitch and a shed-roofed porch that spans the length of the front façade. The porch posts, windows, and entry door have been replaced. Since it was built after the period of significance, it is considered a noncontributing resource.

**29. 200 block Wallace Street. Unknown barn building, circa 1960. Noncontributing.**

This tall storage or equipment barn is located on the north side of Wallace Street between Bluff and College Streets. It is a frame building clad in corrugated metal. It has three windowless walls and is open along its entire front elevation. Four large bays between supporting columns provide access for vehicles, hay, and equipment. The barn was built after the period of significance is considered a noncontributing resource.

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### **Statement of Significance**

The small Hays County city of Dripping Springs lies at the eastern edge of the Texas Hill Country, about twenty-five miles west of the state capital at Austin. Founded by a few intrepid families in the 1850s, Dripping Springs grew to be a sparsely settled community of far-flung farms and ranches along the Little Barton and Onion creeks by the outbreak of the Civil War. From scattered log homesteads, a more compact community emerged along the Austin to Fredericksburg Road, also known as Mercer Street. Though Dripping Springs offered virtually nothing in the way of hometown goods and services to early-day travelers, it was nonetheless a good way-station with its reliable source of water on the Austin to Fredericksburg road. Eventually, a small village consisting of modest frame and stone houses and stores emerged in a haphazard fashion near the springs.

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a nucleus of domestic, commercial, civic, and industrial buildings and structures clustered along four or five blocks of Mercer Street. The road continued to draw from the traffic between Austin and Fredericksburg, and a traveler might find blacksmith services, a home-cooked meal, and an abundance of water at Dripping Springs. Possibly the greatest period of development in downtown Dripping Springs was the short growth spurt that took place between 1935 and 1941. After that, growth was minimal. Mercer remained the main street until 1958 when Highway 290 bypassed the historic downtown to the south. Although several newer buildings have been constructed on the street, Mercer retains its historic character to a good degree. The majority of properties within the district date to the historic period and largely retain their original architectural details, including window openings and patterns, roof pitch and form, siding materials, and character-defining features. Stone construction in the town is particularly noteworthy and persisted from the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the 1930s.

Downtown Drippings Springs, centered along and around Mercer Street, contains the greatest concentration of historic resources in the town of Dripping Springs. It is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Community Development and Planning, as well as under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. Its period of significance is 1872 to 1941.

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### **Dripping Springs: Early Inhabitants**

The first known inhabitants at Dripping Springs were Native Americans who established seasonal campsides at the many springs and creeks in Central Texas for more than 10,000 years. Spain's only attempt to build a permanent settlement in present Hays County was at San Marcos de Neve (nearly 30 miles southeast of Dripping Springs) in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Plagued by disastrous floods and repeated Tonkawa Indian attacks, the mission was abandoned after a few years. The experience at San Marcos de Neve may have dissuaded the Spanish from further settlement attempts in present Hays County. Neither did the Mexicans make inroads into the area. It was only after Texas won its independence in 1836 and offered land grants to new settlers that a handful of individual stakeholders ventured into the wilderness.

Even then, a land grant did not guarantee success because Native Americans—particularly the Tonkawa—discouraged would-be settlers from encroaching on their traditional hunting and camping grounds in northern Hays County. Phillip J. Allen attempted to found a homestead on his 1835 land grant, north of present Buda, but was forced to retreat in the face of unrelentingly harassment. After Texas became a state (1845) and fell under the protection of the United States Army, the Allens returned to the land, becoming among the earliest settlers in northern Hays County.

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Others followed the Allens' lead and soon new families – largely from the southern United States – came to occupy the unsettled portions of northern and northwestern Hays County. In fact, a good many of Hays County's 41 families, 259 free inhabitants, and 128 slaves lived north of San Marcos as reported in the 1850 census. Soon a few intrepid souls ventured further west to the area now known as Dripping Springs, but the Tonkawa and Comanche remained a threat to permanent settlement. Perhaps the first to brave the dangers and occupy the land around Dripping Springs was Willis Fawcett, who bought a large parcel of land (containing the dripping springs) out of the Philip A. Smith Survey on November 13, 1853.<sup>1</sup> Fawcett is said to have built a log house on Little Barton Creek where he lived a solitary life.<sup>2</sup>

### First Permanent Settlers

Fawcett's self-imposed isolation ended by 1854, when the three families considered to be the founders of Dripping Springs arrived in the area. They were the Mosses, the Pounds, and the Wallaces.

John Moss ultimately proved to be a rolling stone, a perpetual wanderer to new places and adventures. In his youth, he had moved from Georgia to Mississippi where he established a small plantation with thirteen slaves.<sup>3</sup> While living in his adopted state of Mississippi, Moss married Indiana "Nannie" Ward, a girl of about fourteen. They struck out for Texas in 1853 with their eight-year-old son and thirteen slaves. They embarked upon what appeared to be a joint-venture to Hays County with Nannie's younger sister Sarah Ward Pound and her husband Dr. Joseph M. Pound. Pound was a 28-year old physician and farmer from Kentucky.<sup>4</sup> Moss appears to have been the first of the men to purchase land near the dripping springs. On January 23, 1854, he bought 1,107 acres<sup>5</sup> of land from Fielding S. Roy out of the northwest quarter of the P.A. Smith Survey. On the same day, Joseph Pound signed a contract for 150 acres fronting onto Archer's Fork of Onion Creek, near present Henly, 10 miles west of the Moss property.<sup>6</sup> About six months later, in the summer of 1854, John Lee Wallace purchased the last of Fawcett's original Phillip A. Smith league. It totalled 377 acres out of the quarter-league. Wallace was a 32-year-old farmer from Kentucky. He came to Texas with his wife Malvina, infant daughter Caroline, and a two slaves.<sup>7</sup> By the end of the year, the Pound family decided to relocate and bought from Willis Fawcett 700 acres on Onion Creek, just north of John Wallace. This he chose for his homestead and built

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<sup>1</sup> A month earlier, land speculator Fielding S. Roy had sold the southern half of the Smith league to Dr. William H. Howard who never lived there but who probably purchased it as an investment. In 1873, nearly 20 years after a community began growing up around the springs, Howard began selling off portions of the league's southern half. (Bassett)

<sup>2</sup> Ramage claims that Fawcett lived near the Dripping Springs as early as 1849 and that he purchased the northeast quarter of the Smith league in 1853. The northeast parcel was apparently adjacent to his original property. David Lewis Ramage, "Dr. Joseph M. POUND" [http://hompages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/...davidlram/Web\\_Cards/PS18/](http://hompages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/...davidlram/Web_Cards/PS18/) .. last modified 10 Mar 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Waits, *The Complete History of Dripping Springs and the P.A. Smith Survey* (Austin: Nortex Publishing Company, 2003): 2.

<sup>4</sup> Pound had already been to Texas, having served with General Wool's army in the Mexican War. During that time, he spent a month in San Antonio where he found the drier climate beneficial to a respiratory condition from which he suffered.

<sup>5</sup> Some sources indicate that Moss purchased 1111 acres bought from land speculator Fielding S. Roy.

<sup>6</sup> Waits, 2003: 2. Since Pound went off to settle near Henly, and Wallace was not yet there, Moss and his entourage were first of the group to actually settle at the springs.

<sup>7</sup> Their relocation appears to have been part of a family exodus from Kentucky to Central Texas as Wallace's brother and sister, Cornelia, along with her husband Samuel Redd and other relatives traveled the road about the same time. Ultimately, Cornelia and Samuel Redd settled nearby, in adjacent Travis County.

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a good log house on the site where it stands today.<sup>8</sup> Neighbors were boons to these earlier frontier homesteaders. Indian threats in that region were considerable and the parties seemingly deemed it wise to cluster their homesteads together for protection.

All three families built log houses on their lands near the dripping springs, where they had plenty of reliable water, timber for burning wood and building houses and fence posts.. They may have pooled their resources by living altogether at the first place while they and their slaves worked on the next place. Ransom Gwyn Blanton, who lived north of Dripping Springs when the founders arrived, recalled that families “lodged with a local resident while his farm was staked and his house built.”<sup>9</sup> According to a Pound descendant, their slaves cut logs and made nails and shingles for the house.<sup>10</sup> Nannie Moss is credited with naming the community Dripping Springs, a unique name that was accepted by the postal authorities. John Moss was tapped as the community’s first post master on June 5, 1857.<sup>11</sup>

The 1850s in northwestern Hays County were fraught with enormous difficulty, including Indian raids, several years of grasshopper plagues, and a three-year drought beginning in 1856. Agricultural failure in 1857 was so devastating that both crop and seed were lost, and farmers had to start over by importing seed corn from outside the region. Many families relied entirely on their livestock for food and for sale to buy staples in the lean time. Conditions were so grave that the county extended tax payments and distributed corn to its most needy citizens.<sup>12</sup> If the early settlers had dreams of building plantations filled with cotton, as was common throughout the south, they were disappointed. The soil was generally unsuitable for large-scale cotton farming, though some farmers in the Dripping Springs area managed to get a few bales of cotton out of their hardscrabble land. The cost of hauling cotton overland to market was another deterrent. As a result of these factors, stock raising grew to greater importance than crop farming as the 1850s passed.<sup>13</sup>

According to the 1860 census,<sup>14</sup> the Pounds, Mosses, and Wallaces generally had more personal property and lived similarly in log houses and under frontier conditions as the newcomers to the area. Still, they had differences among themselves. Pound had only \$900 attributed to land, but \$2,500 in personal property; Wallace must have had more or more productive land, as he listed \$1,000 in real estate; and Moss owned \$1,500 worth of real estate but \$13,000 in personal property, no doubt due to his large number of slaves. While they all had log houses, rock or log barns, corrals, fences and slave houses, Moss may have had a better standard of living as a direct result of his slave holdings since he could rent their labor out, plow more acreage, and harvest more crops.

Despite his relative success at Dripping Springs, Moss placed an advertisement in the June 27, 1857, edition of the *State Gazette* to sell “1111 acres, including the Dripping Springs of Hays County, the present residence of Mr. Morse (sic) a portion of which is first rate land well timbered and watered. Situated in a fine stock country,

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<sup>8</sup> The Dr. Joseph M. and Sarah Pound Farmstead was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. It stands approximately 1 mile northeast of the nominated Downtown Dripping Springs Historic District.

<sup>9</sup> Marie J. Bassett, correspondence, July 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Frances Stovall, et. al., *Clear Springs and Limestone Legends* (Austin: Nortex Press, 1986): 436.

<sup>11</sup> Marie J. Bassett, correspondence, July 2012.

<sup>12</sup> Dudley Richard Dobie, *The History of Hays County, Texas*. Masters Thesis. University of Texas: Austin, 1932.: 47-48.

<sup>13</sup> Isham Jones Good Homestead, National Register nomination, 2003: 13.

<sup>14</sup> In 1860, Dripping Springs residents were enumerated as part of Cannonville.

160 acres under a fine fence and a high state of cultivation.” The article went on to describe Moss’s pioneer farm, a description that might apply be similar to other land tracts of pioneers at the time. The article indicated that Moss’s property was fine stock land but also had 160 acres of cultivated land dedicated to crops. The ad claimed that Moss had good water and plenty of timber, good buildings, consisting of a hewed log house, two rooms, passage between, stone chimney and kitchen, negro houses, scribes, stables and other amenities, for sale in exchange for money or stock.<sup>15</sup> Moss finally got a taker for his property in May of 1860, when he sold his farm to Phillip H. Railford and took his family and a dozen slaves west to Blanco, in the Hill Country. Though they had lived at the springs but a few years, John and Indiana “Nannie” made an indelible mark on the community.

### **Growth of the Community**

By 1860, scores of families were moving into central Texas, almost all of them listed their occupations as “farmer” or “stock raiser” in the 1860 census. Corn and beans were the mainstay of the frontier diet and Hays County residents were no exceptions. They put most of their arable land in corn and grew some garden vegetables, supplementing their diets with game and fish which were plentiful in the early days. In addition, virtually all of the farmers raised cattle and hogs.

Those who put down roots in the Dripping Springs area were true pioneers, breaking the land for the first time and relying on their own skills and hard work to support their families. Typically, the adults were in the prime of life, the men ranging between their late twenties to their early forties in age. They would have been able to clear a home site, build a house, fence a garden, and shelter some livestock with the aid of their neighbors and a few slaves. Most – with the exception of the Moss, Pound, and Wallace families – were land rich and cash poor, with the bulk of their wealth invested in real estate rather than personal property

Though most Dripping Springs men identified themselves as farmers for the census, many held other occupations, as well. About 1860, Hector McKellar erected a small store and mill – possibly the area’s first – on the Austin to Fredericksburg Road to take advantage of travel between the two towns. Fredericksburg was a thriving little town further west and there was regular traffic between the town and the Texas capital at Austin. Several others tried their hands at milling; Tom Manor built a second one in the 1860s, and Tom Voigt established a third in 1877.<sup>16</sup> Cypress trees in the area were particularly valued for their shingles, not just in local construction, but for sale to growing towns like Austin and San Marcos. Other men likely possessed valuable building skills like carpentry. Blacksmithing was yet another sought-after trade. Early pioneers in Dripping Springs likely bartered their special skills in exchange for goods and services of similar value.

### **Civil War**

Less than a decade had passed at Dripping Springs when its citizens became concerned by the growing tension between the North and the South. Many area settlers owned slaves, most having brought them from their home states in the South. Slaves were considerably valuable as reflected in the county tax and census records. With the majority of Hays County’s inhabitants having roots in the southern states, it is not surprising that they favored secession. In all, at least 125 men from Hays County served the Confederate cause during some part of

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<sup>15</sup> *State Gazette*, June 27, 1857, “1111 Acres.”

<sup>16</sup> Mary Starr Barkley, *A History of Central Texas* (Austin: Austin Printing Co., 1970): 119.

the war,<sup>17</sup> with the Dripping Springs area well-represented. Development in Hays County ground to a standstill during the conflagration as manpower and materials were consumed by the war effort. By the end of the war, the county accepted corn and other farm products as payment for taxes.<sup>18</sup>

### **New Beginnings**

The result of the war was humbling and costly to the residents of Dripping Springs. Former Confederates lost stature under the Reconstruction government. John Wallace, who had served as postmaster before and during the war, was stripped of his position after the war. Perhaps the most significant occurrence at the close of the war was the emancipation of slaves. Many stayed with their masters through the harvest but afterwards they left the country in droves, taking with them their skills and labor. Most residents of Dripping Springs busied themselves with their farms, ranches, and small businesses in the postwar era. While most continued to claim their occupations as “farmer,” others identified themselves as “stock raisers” or stock breeders, reflecting the agricultural diversification that began in the postwar era. For a brief time, the U.S. Government re-opened Fort Martin Scott as a frontier fort near Fredericksburg and military travel resumed on the Austin to Fredericksburg Road which ran through the community.

The community had few amenities in the 1870s. Hector McKeller was listed as the only merchant in the 1870 census, but he would soon be followed by a handful of others and within a few years of the census, a number of one- and two-story business buildings cropped up along Mercer Street from Fitzhugh Road, near the Pound place, to where the road dropped off near the Dripping Springs. That 3-4 block span served as “downtown” Dripping Springs for nearly a hundred years, until Highway 290 from Austin bypassed the historic town center and drew new businesses away from Mercer Street in 1959. The 1870 census showed that several residents in the area worked in construction trades, reflecting a new era in development. F. S. Roy and his son Abner were listed in the census as stone masons, the first in the area. Thomas Voigt, a young man who boarded with the Pound family and later became a long time resident of Dripping Springs, listed his occupation as a carpenter.

In 1870, Burrell J. Marshall purchased the land first held by John and Nannie Moss. The following year, he moved the frame section of the old Moss house to its present site above the Dripping Springs (Resource 1). At that time, he added a rock portion to the house. Marshall became the community’s postmaster and used part of his home as the postal station. Because the mail arrived by stage, the Marshall House was also the stagecoach stop for the Austin to Fredericksburg postal route. Marshall died two years after purchasing the house but his will left his widow, Martha Ann, heir to the house and 260 acres. Martha Ann subsequently married Confederate veteran W.T. Chapman, an ambitious town-builder from Coweta County, Georgia, who had come to Hays County about 1872. He quickly became involved in all aspects of Dripping Springs’ civic life and shortly platted the town of Dripping Springs after obtaining power of attorney from his new wife. The couple had two children together and Chapman named the main street of the townsite “Mercer,” for their son, who was named after Chapman’s great-uncle Jesse Mercer, founder of Mercer University in Penfield, Georgia.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Dobie 1932: 65-69.

<sup>18</sup>Dobie 1932: 14.

<sup>19</sup>Charlie Haydon, “Homestead at the Dripping Springs.”



Chapman took up Marshall's charge as postmaster, an occupation he held until 1889. After that, his son Mercer held the position from 1906 until 1919. In 1881, Chapman and his partner, A.L. Davis Dr. purchased part of the southeast quarter of the Phillip A. Smith Survey from the heirs of Dr. W.T. Howard. Two years later, they sold it with the following stipulation, "... less the following reserve made by Chapman and Davis, one acres (or a sufficiency) of land on top of the mountain known as Wallace Mountain for a Public burial ground for the Neighborhood."<sup>20</sup>

Chapman was also involved in promoting education in the area. In 1876, several public schools opened in northern Hays County communities. Collins School lay on Barton Creek about five miles northwest of Dripping Springs. It had thirteen pupils. At the same time, Barton Springs School, also about five miles from the town taught twenty-three pupils. Dripping Springs parents successfully petitioned the County School Board to build a school closer to home and by the end of the year, Dripping Springs School District #10 opened its doors to a large class of thirty-nine students. Reportedly, W.T. Chapman donated land and money to start the school and he, along with A.L. Davis, and J. L. Wallace, served as its first trustees.<sup>21</sup>

#### **Definition and Growth of the Town: 1880s**

In keeping with his ambitions for Dripping Springs, W. T. Chapman filed a plat for the Townsite of Dripping Springs on September 24, 1881. He laid out three east-west streets, Wallace, Spring, and Mercer, and three north-south streets, Bluff, College, and San Marcos. No doubt, Chapman's townsite overlay numerous existing properties but set the pattern for future growth with Mercer Street as the main thoroughfare through town. All streets were 50 feet wide except Mercer, which Chapman intended to be the town's main street, at 75 feet wide. It likely reflected the road's historic role in the village. A block was set aside for a substantial academy just north of the townsite. By 1885, Chapman increased his townsite with a second, and then a third, addition which identified individual lots and blocks.<sup>22</sup> Chapman's 1885 map clearly showed a bridge over Dripping Springs Branch. In the 1880s, William Chapman laid out a regular townsite with lots, blocks, and streets.

The new townsite plat coincided with increased development in the village. The Methodist Church started a new building and cemetery on land given by J. W. Phillips and his wife for five dollars.<sup>23</sup> In 1881, civic-minded citizens started the Dripping Springs Academy, and Dr. Pound helped the building fund by canceling the bills of patients who contributed stone for the structure. Farmers quarried rock from the nearby hills and constructed a lime kiln where they burned rock for mortar. A skilled mason was hired to supervise the work and the cornerstone was laid on August 6, 1881. Although the mason was in charge of the bulding, the men of the community supplied the labor for its construction. Lumber and other materials came from Austin. After a few months of concentrated work, a substantial one-story stone building was erected in time for school to open in September 1881. Supporters intended for the Academy to be a first-rate educational facility, surpassing the typical rural schools scattered throughout the county. Almost from the first, however, the Academy failed to live up to its aspirations. It lacked outside support and suffered from disputes regarding the school's direction and curriculum. For a time, the Pedernales Baptist Association, an outgrowth of the Baptist Church at Dripping Springs, subsidized the Academy. About 1889, the Academy became a public school, a role it assumed for more

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<sup>20</sup> Marie J. Bassett correspondence, July 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Barkley, 119; (Clear Springs).

<sup>22</sup> Stovall, 442.

<sup>23</sup> Stovall, 440.

than half a century. The building took its present appearance in 1920 when a second story was completed.<sup>24</sup> A new public school built in 1949 replaced the Academy and the Masonic Rambo Lodge #462 purchased the building in 1952.

Following the construction of the Academy, other buildings filled in the town's lots and blocks, particularly those fronting onto Mercer Street. C. S. Graham built a house at the corner of Fitzhugh and Mercer streets, adding a residential use along with the commercial enterprises along Mercer Street. In the 1880 census, W. T. Chapman was listed as both a farmer and a grocer, with a store apparently on Mercer Street. A few other occupations were represented. James Rowe worked as a blacksmith, and Texana Shroud and Albert Everett were fence builders. Willie Collins, William Daniel, and Jeff Davis identified themselves cowboys, an occupation arising from the surfeit of cattle caused by neglect during the Civil War and leading to the great cattle drives north to satisfy the hunger for beef. Farming, however, continued to be the main occupation in 1880 and numerous men in and around Dripping Springs identified themselves as "farmers."<sup>25</sup>

Businesses sprang up along Mercer Street through the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the north side of Mercer, from the bridge east, was a one-story rock-walled livery stable with a wooden hayloft above it. There were rock pens to the west and north, and stalls inside where travelers could leave their teams overnight for a rate of 24 cents a night. When W. S. Garnett bought the property in 1904, he continued to rent out horses and buggies and sell feed. Known as Crampy Garnett, he also had a blacksmith's shop. Garnett was a craftsman and artist, who also sold caskets and had a funeral coach. A two-story hotel was built on the north side of Mercer Street. A drug store operated by Mr. Crenshaw lay nearby. It was eventually moved to the north side of the street. A two-story frame building housed Applewhite's general store on the south side of the street. Further west was the A.L. Davis store, built in 1892. It was built as a two-story stone building with large, round-arched windows. At one time, the post office occupied the store and the Rambo Lodge met upstairs for many years. A gin also lay along the south side of the commercial row.<sup>26</sup>

### Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Between 1881, when Chapman drafted the Dripping Springs townsite plat, and 1900, Mercer Street was well-established as the commercial hub of the community. Several general mercantile stores, groceries, blacksmith shops, a cotton gin, a dentist's office, a drug store, and a doctor's office lay on one side or the other of Mercer Street. William T. Chapman, himself, was a merchant and his son, Mercer, worked as a salesman in the general store. Walter McKeller operated a cotton gin and George Mc Quiston had a drug store on the street. David Hughes was both a merchant and grocer, and his daughter, Sadie May, worked for him as a saleslady. David Jones was yet another grocer.<sup>27</sup> A number of professionals were drawn to the community at the turn of the century. Most were school teachers, likely at the Academy. Joe Parker was a preacher, and Hiram Graham was a minister, according to the 1900 census. William C. Stewart was a dentist. Joseph M. Pound continued his service to the community as a physician but by 1900, the town supported another doctor, Edgar Poe Shelton, as well. Craftsmen included R. Raines and his son, Russell, who worked as blacksmiths, likely on Mercer Street. William Dye and William Collinbeck were rock masons, indicating that the community's construction activity

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<sup>24</sup> Barkley, 119.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1880.

<sup>26</sup> Stovall, 453.

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1900.

was sufficient to support two full-time rock masons. It also pointed out the importance of stone in local construction as no carpenters or other builders were listed in the census for this area. Farming continued to be the main occupation in the region around Dripping Springs, with stock raising a vital industry, as well. Reflecting the changing technology was Emma McGalin, the telephone messenger.<sup>28</sup>

### **Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

An interesting notation in the 1910 census records identified the “Village of Dripping Springs” as a distinct entity in the precinct for the first time. This notation indicates who actually lived in what was considered, at least by the census taker, as “Dripping Springs.” Among those who lived in the “village” were longtime residents W. T. Chapman and his son Mercer, who was a merchant at a general store. New faces included Joel Patterson who built a stone building across from the A. L. Davis store in 1906. James Glosson, whose family would become a mainstay on Mercer Street, worked as a salesman in a store. Thomas Boyd was a machinist at the gin, and William Crenshaw ran the drug store. A Mr. Applewhite was yet another merchant on Mercer Street. James Harvey and William Garnett were blacksmiths. William Connolly, L. Davis, Lizzie Garnett, and Georgia Pound Cavett were public school teachers while Annie Stubb and Agatha Glosson taught music. Mattie McLendon was the town telephone operator.<sup>29</sup>

About 1910, the Graham House at the corner of Mercer and Fitzhugh was either entirely rebuilt or demolished, and a new house erected on the site. No longer addressing Fitzhugh, the house fronted on Mercer Street. About fifteen years later, another house belonging to the Garnett family was built at the western end of Mercer Street near the family blacksmith shop and automobile repair business. It was a Craftsman-influenced bungalow with native stone piers and landscaping wall.

Despite some development along Mercer Street, life in Dripping Springs continued to revolve around farming and raising livestock in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most heads of household were farmers or stock raisers. Those who didn't work full time as farmers or ranchers generally worked in one of the Mercer Street shops. In 1930, Billie Garnett was the proprietor of an auto repair shop, but his father William Garnett still owned and operated a blacksmith shop on Mercer Street. William H. Kitchens and David G. Jones were proprietors of retail grocery stores on the street, and David Crenshaw was a merchant in a general mercantile establishment. William P. Crow was a salesman in one of the retail grocery stores. Tom Cavett was a building contractor, and Lou Breed was the proprietor of the hotel on College Street. Charlie Mae Seals, Missy Spaw, and Opal Brumley were school teachers. The advent of the automobile added another new occupation: truck driver. C. Glass and J. B. Spaw both drove long-distance trucks for a living. Despite new modes of life, agriculture reigned supreme and one of the town's important businesses was Charlie Haydon's cotton gin.<sup>30</sup>

### **Construction in the 1930s**

The town's larger, more substantial buildings like the Academy (1880), the A.L. Davis store (1892), the W. G. McKellar House (1899), and the J. L. Patterson Building (1906), date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and very early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These, however, were outnumbered by a spate of small-scale, one-story buildings that were built on Mercer Street from the mid- to late-1930s to 1941. This moderate construction boom occurred in spite of the

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<sup>28</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1900.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1910.

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1930.

economic hardships of the Great Depression which saw a decline in Dripping Springs' population. It was during this same time period that Texas Highway 20 (Mercer Street) was paved and widened, allowing for easier automobile travel between Austin and Fredericksburg and creating the impetus for new construction.

In general, the new buildings were small commercial venues, including garages and cafés that catered to automobile tourism and truck drivers on the Austin to Fredericksburg road. An exception was the DisTex Theater which maintained a one-story scale but seated as many as 300 patrons. All but one of the buildings erected on Mercer Street during this period are sheathed in native stone or cut flagstone, lending a rustic appearance reminiscent of Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) work during the Great Depression. They are typically front-gabled or have pyramidal roofs, except the Haydon Central Garage which has a jagged, natural stone parapet around the roofline.

Although Dripping Springs experienced an overall loss in population during the Great Depression, it nonetheless continued to be the principal town in northern Hays County throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mercer Street remained the town's principal commercial hub until 1959, when Highway 290 bypassed the town and drew business to the new thoroughfare. Since World War II, the town's population has grown steadily from more than 600 residents and twenty businesses in the mid-1980s, to more than 1,000 inhabitants in 1990. Sustained growth in Austin over the past twenty-five years led to the rise of northern Hays County as a suburban extension of the state capital. As a result, Dripping Springs' population continued to grow and in 2000 it reached 1,548.<sup>31</sup> Mercer Street, on the other hand, dwindled in commercial importance but maintained its historic building stock.

## Conclusion

More than 50 years have come and gone since Highway 290 bypassed Dripping Springs' small commercial district on Mercer Street. When the highway was completed in 1958, Mercer Street lost its role as the main connection between Austin and Fredericksburg. Filling stations, garages, cafes, and retail stores that once lined Mercer Street moved to the new highway, drawing tourists, travelers, and truck drivers away from the old downtown. Though the new highway drew much of the town's business away, its construction likely contributed to Mercer Street's preservation by attracting much of Dripping Springs' new construction and development. As a result of its secondary status, Mercer Street has not been redeveloped and remains largely intact since its heyday in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Today, historic buildings and structures in the 100-500 block length of Mercer Street, along with adjacent properties, reflect the history of Dripping Springs from its early settlement to its growth and development as a small agricultural hub and tourist stop-off in central Texas. The majority of the 30 identified resources are historic buildings that are largely intact in form, design, materials, roof pitch and form, and fenestration, and therefore contribute to the historic character of the district. One of the most distinctive characteristics of the district is the widespread use of native stone as the principal building material; stone is displayed in all types of resources, including dwellings, retail shops, garages, the theater (now Wells Fargo), schools, and landscaping. In addition to the buildings and structures, the dripping springs themselves are included as a contributing feature of the district due to their association with the historic settlement of the area.

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<sup>31</sup> Daniel P. Greene, "Dripping Springs, TX." Handbook of Texas online.

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Dripping Springs Downtown Historic District, Dripping Springs, Hays County, Texas

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The Dripping Springs Downtown Historic District contains the largest concentration of intact historic resources in the city of Dripping Springs. Closely associated with the pioneer settlement of Hays County, the district is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development as a good example of the growth of a pioneer settlement to a regional agricultural hub in Hays County, as well as for Mercer Street's role in the original town plat and its development as the community's main street. In addition, the district is nominated under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its broad use of native stone as the principal building material across all types of buildings and structures. The skill and craftsmanship invested in district resources are evident in their age, beauty, and excellent condition. The Dripping Springs Downtown Historic District is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The Period of Significance for the Dripping Springs Downtown Historic District extends from 1872, when the oldest extant dwelling (Marshall-Chapman House) was moved to its present location, to 1941 when the last of the properties in the district were built during the pre-war boom. The war halted domestic construction after 1941 and the construction of Highway 290 bypassed Mercer Street and drew business away from the town's historic main street the following decade. A gap of more than ten years separates prewar from postwar construction within the district, with the newer buildings displaying different materials, massing, roof pitch, and stylistic qualities from their predecessors.

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## **Section 10: Boundary Continuation Sheet**

### **Verbal Boundary Description:**

Begin on the north side of Mercer Street, in Dripping Springs, Hays County, Texas, at the property addressed 500 Mercer Street and identified in the Hays County Appraisal District online records as R17996. From the southwest corner of this property, proceed north along the western boundary approximately 240 feet, at which point the boundary fence makes a turn to the east-northeast. From this point, proceed approximately 470 feet to the northeastern-most point of the property identified as R17894. This corner coincides approximately with a north-south unpaved driveway. Proceed northeast approximately 300 feet to the northwestern-most corner of the property identified as R23562 (addressed 300 Mercer). Follow this northern boundary east, paralleling the warehouse building, until it reaches the western boundary of the Stephenson School Memorial Building property (described as WT Chapman #2 9-2210-02-08 BLK PT OF 4). Follow this western boundary north to the northwest corner of the property, and then proceed east, following the boundary, to its intersection with Old Fitzhugh Road. Proceed approximately 120 feet south along the west side of Old Fitzhugh Road, then turn east to the northwestern-most corner of the property identified as R23566 (addressed as 222 Mercer Street). Follow this northern boundary east, continuing along the northern boundary of the property identified as R23567 (addressed 206 Mercer Street), and then directly south along the eastern boundary of the same property until it reaches Mercer Street. Continue to the south side of Mercer Street and proceed east approximately 112 feet. Proceed south, on the approximate center line of the property identified as R26680 (addressed 105 Mercer; historic DisTex Theater), to Wallace Street. Proceed west along the north side of Wallace Street to the northwest corner of Wallace and College streets. Proceed south along the west side of College Street to Highway 290. Proceed west along the north right-of-way of Highway 290 approximately 166 feet to the southwest corner of the property identified as R26706 (addressed 101 College). Follow the western boundary of this property north to Wallace Street. Proceed north across Wallace, then turn west to Bluff Street. Proceed north along the east side of Bluff Street to Mercer Street. Follow the south side of Mercer Street approximately 650 feet until a point which is parallel to the starting coordinate and proceed north to close the boundary.

### **Boundary Justification:**

The boundaries of the Downtown Dripping Springs Historic District contain the largest collection of well-preserved historic resources that well-represent the founding, growth, and development of Dripping Springs. They include the springs for which the town was named, historic houses dating from throughout the town's history, and commercial buildings which represent the retail and service-oriented businesses that have historically lined the old Austin to Fredericksburg Road (Mercer Street).



Dripping Springs Downtown Historic District, Dripping Springs, Hays County, Texas

Map 1: Hays County (shaded) is located in central Texas.

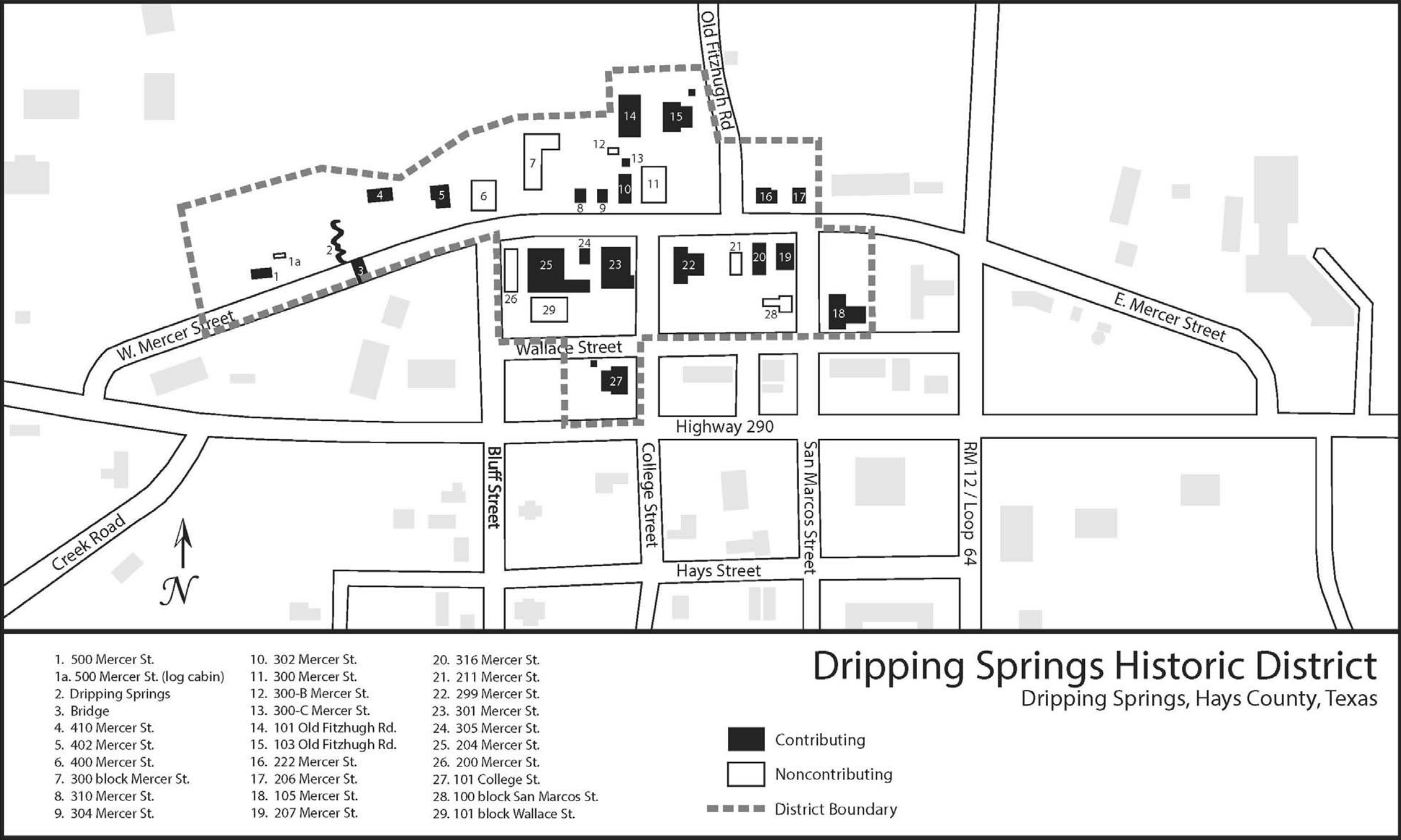


Map 2: Bing Maps aerial photo of district depicting approximate boundary lines. Map accessed November 9, 2012.



Dripping Springs Downtown Historic District, Dripping Springs, Hays County, Texas

Map 3: Sketch map of the Dripping Springs Downtown Historic District depicting contributing and noncontributing properties.

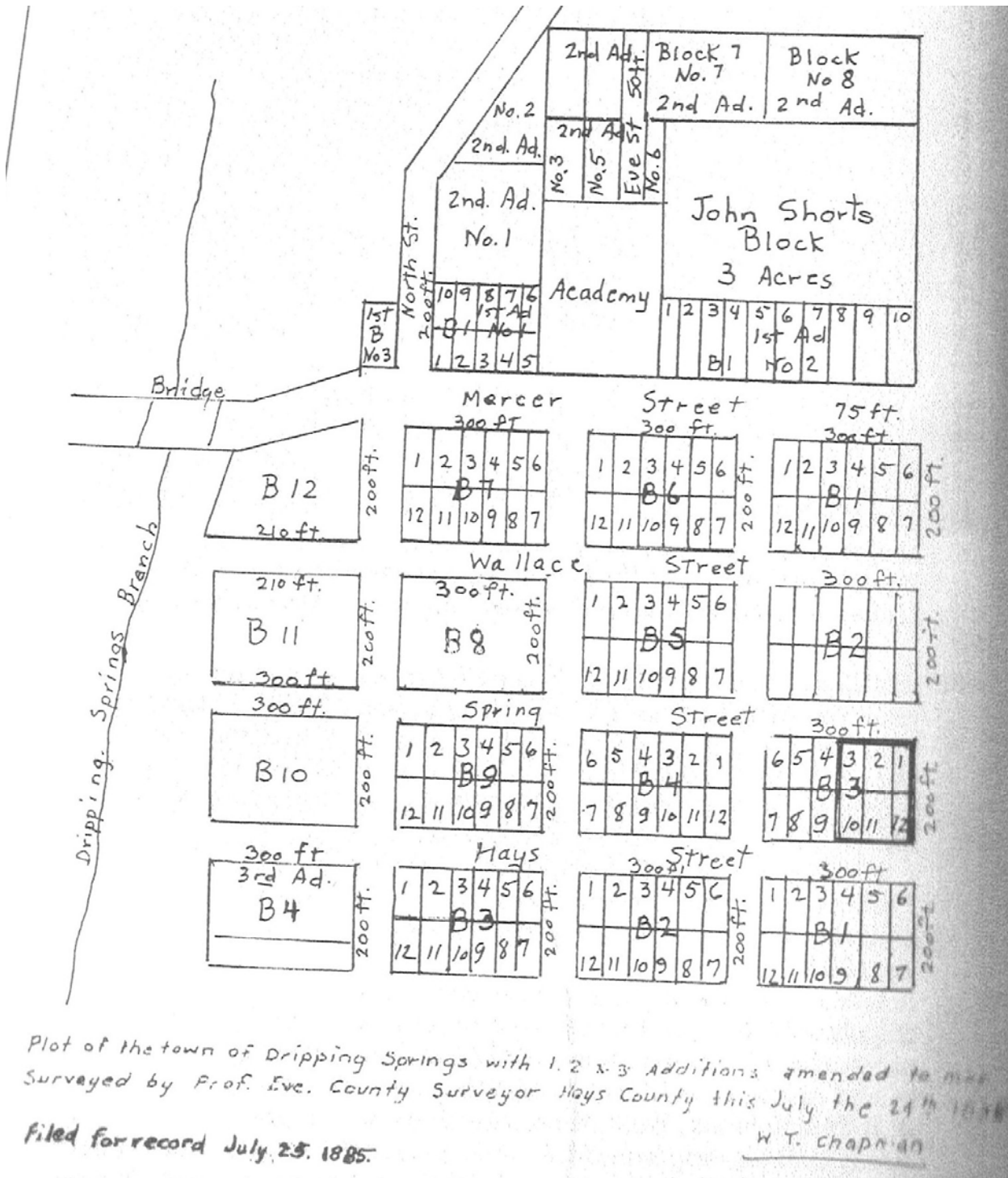




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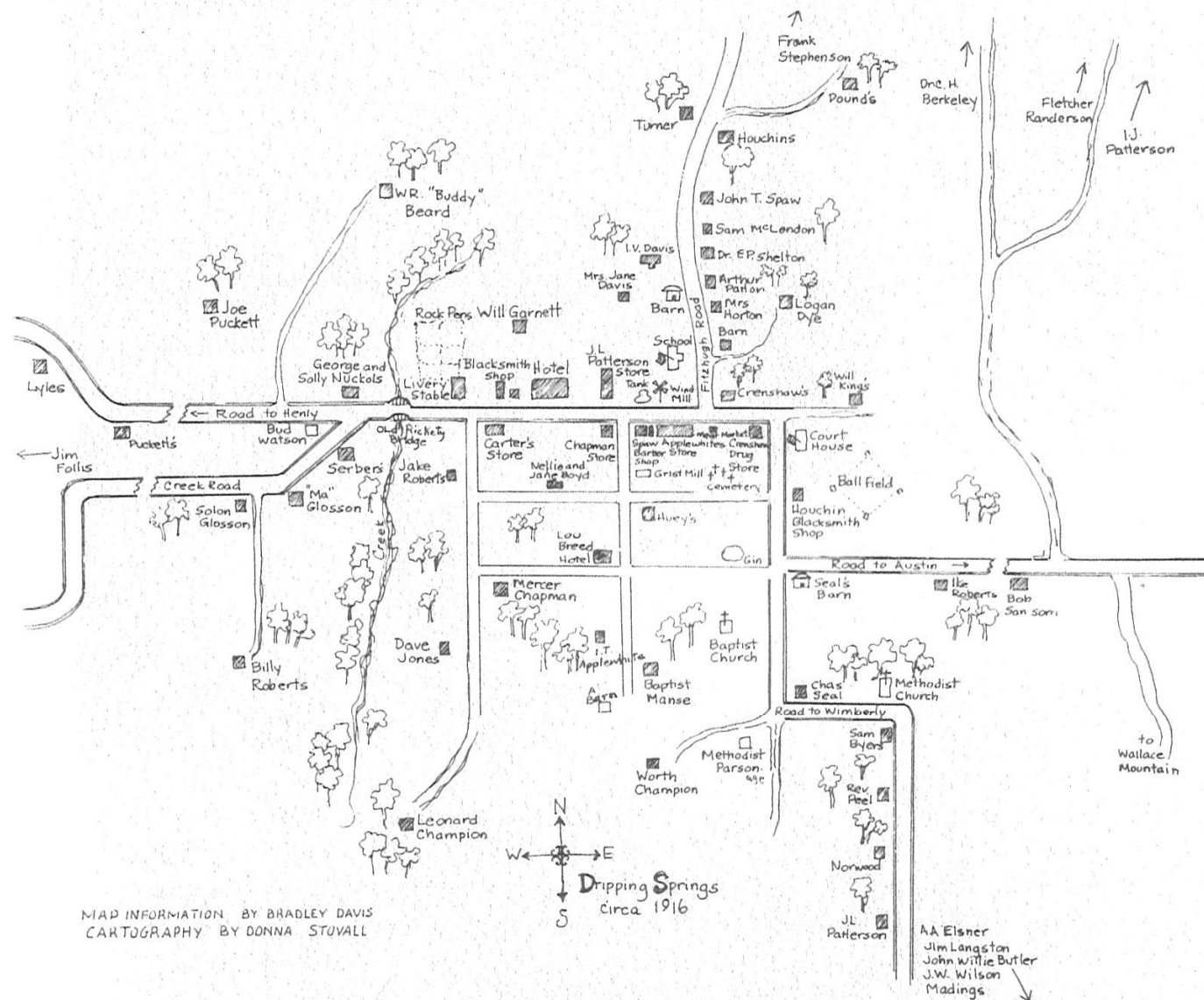
Dripping Springs Downtown Historic District, Dripping Springs, Hays County, Texas

Figure 1: Plat of Dripping Springs, filed in July 1885, as published on page 442 of *Clear Springs and Limestone Legends*.



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Figure 2: 1916 map of Dripping Springs, as published on page 449 of *Clear Springs and Limestone Legends*.



Map of Dripping Springs — circa 1916.

Resource 1: Marshall-Chapman House



Resource 3: Culvert bridge over the dripping springs.





Resource 4: Bill Garnett House



Resource 5: Bill Garnett Bungalow



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Resource 6: Garnett's Garage (noncontributing)



Resource 7: Sunrise Café (noncontributing)





Resource 8: F.W. Miller's Texaco



Resource 9: F.W. Miler's Rock Café





Resource 10: J.L. Patterson Building



Resource 11: Glosson Grocery (noncontributing)



Resource 12: McQuiston Drug (noncontributing)



Resource 13: Rinkey Dink Domino Hall





Resource 14: Stephenson High School



Resource 15: The Academy



Resource 16: Graham-Goslin House



Resource 17: House at 206 Mercer





Resource 18: DisTex Theater



Resource 19: Crenshaw's Garage/Texaco



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Resource 20: Goslin's Drug Store



Resource 22: Haydon's Central Garage





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Resource 23: A.L. Davis Store



Resource 24: Spaw's Barbershop



Resource 25: Will Crow Wool and Mohair Building



Resource 26: Billie Garnett Store (noncontributing)





Resource 27: W.G. McKellar “Short Mama” House



Mercer Streetscape

