

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 10 1978  
DATE ENTERED NOV 17 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

First National Bank

AND/OR COMMON

Bidgood Stationery Corporation

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

68 St. Francis Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

Mobile

VICINITY OF

1

STATE

Alabama

CODE

01

COUNTY

Mobile

CODE

017 97

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

\_\_\_DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

\_\_\_STRUCTURE

\_\_\_SITE

\_\_\_OBJECT

\_\_\_PUBLIC

PRIVATE

\_\_\_BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

\_\_\_IN PROCESS

\_\_\_BEING CONSIDERED

\_\_\_OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_\_YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_\_NO

\_\_\_AGRICULTURE

\_\_\_COMMERCIAL

\_\_\_EDUCATIONAL

\_\_\_ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_\_GOVERNMENT

\_\_\_INDUSTRIAL

\_\_\_MILITARY

\_\_\_MUSEUM

\_\_\_PARK

\_\_\_PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_\_RELIGIOUS

\_\_\_SCIENTIFIC

\_\_\_TRANSPORTATION

OTHER UNOCCUPIED

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Estate of Marvin C. Altmayer

c/o Jay P. Altmayer and the First National Bank Trustees

STREET & NUMBER

75 St. Michael Street

CITY, TOWN

Mobile

VICINITY OF

STATE

Alabama

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Mobile County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

101 Government Street

CITY, TOWN

Mobile

STATE

Alabama

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

\_\_\_FEDERAL \_\_\_STATE \_\_\_COUNTY \_\_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

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

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The old First National Bank/Bidgood Building located at 68 St. Francis Street in Mobile, Alabama was designed by the architectural firm of Watkins, Hutchisson and Garvin after March, 1905, constructed by Charles H. Owen<sup>1</sup> and occupied in July, 1906. It was erected on the site of two mid-nineteenth century buildings occupied by the bank that were demolished to make room for the new and much more impressive two story, white glazed brick Neo-Classical Revival structure with handsome glazed terra cotta Baroque decorative elements.

Fronting fifty feet on the north side of the street, this building was within a row of attached earlier buildings now demolished leaving it detached. Basically rectangular in shape there is a small ell on the northeast rear and the side walls are not perfectly straight. Formerly party walls, they no doubt conformed to the adjacent buildings' shape.

The facade retains most of the original features, the exceptions being the original handsome mahogany framed doors, ground floor central window with beveled French plate and the heavy granite sill and base. The facade has three vertical divisions. The central pavilion is accented by a strong pediment with block modillions, dentil, and egg and dart moldings and an oculus with laurel wreath enframing molding in the tympanum. Paired giant order colonettes with Ionic capitals elaborated with tassels on each side of the volutes rise beside pilasters with a simple capital of abacus block with a crown molding and the egg and dart molding. The astragal molding on the pilaster is broken by a small semi-circular headed panel with decorative scroll base that somewhat resembles a cartouche. These frame the large ground floor window and the second story triple windows that are double hung with one over one glazing.

Behind the pediment is a stepped glazed brick parapet extending the width of the building. The entablature has a string course of dentil and egg and dart moldings. Block modillions support the cornice. The bank's name is inscribed in the deep frieze above the taenia molding.

Straight arches are accented by keystones on all the windows. The keystone on the central ground floor window is scrolled. This window formerly had a paneled granite sill and base. That base also extends to support the colonettes and pilasters. A newer metal framed window now fills the base area. The entrance doors on either side of the pavilion are now framed in metal also. Above these doors the original architrave consists of a panel flanked by decorative floriated scrolled corbels supporting a broken segmental arch pediment. Above the pediments of the doors and beneath the sills of the windows above are eared panels with floral and ribbon swags.

The east side of the building has been stuccoed to seal the former party wall. On the west side of the brick wall is still exposed but in need of repair and sealing.

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The rear of the building is of red brick, five rows of stretchers between headers. The double hung windows are metal framed with fire proof glass. This appears to match the original description. The lights are four over four. Segmental arch architraves have either double or triple rows of header brick voussoirs. Small enclosures on the rear for mechanical equipment have been added also.

The interior is in a much altered and deteriorated condition. The bank quarters occupied the ground floor that was divided into the large open banking room with lobby and counter area at the front, storage rooms, private office and vaults in the rear, rooms for the customers' convenience on the side beneath the staircase and in the ell were lounge and bathroom facilities for the staff.

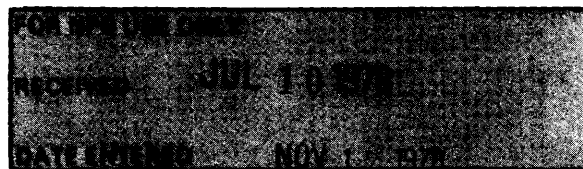
Square concrete columns faced with marble support the beams of the 17 foot high reinforced concrete ceiling. Plaster crown moldings embellish the beams creating a coffered effect. Fragments of the original cast bronze moldings that decorated these columns remain as well as some portions crowning the remaining original seven foot high wainscot of English veined marble over verd antique marble on the walls. What appears to be fragments of the original burlap wall-covering now covered with paint are still above the wainscot. Two of the original four wrought iron heating system grills remain in the wainscot. The decorative wrought iron and steel grill separating the banking room from the staircase vestibule remains also. The original mosaic tile floor has been covered or replaced by square tiles. The interior divisions have been removed and the rear half of the ground floor has an added mezzanine floor reached by another staircase on the west side. The employees' lounge and bathroom in the ell have been stripped and only the deteriorated tile floor remains.

The staircase leading from the west entrance vestibule to the second floor retains the mahogany handrail and lands at the original mosaic tile hall floor. Although a considerable portion of this tile remains, it is deteriorated. The fifteen offices' wall divisions have been removed. One office in the northwest corner is plastered and paneled but this apparently is later work. Fragments of the original wood office floors remain in poor condition.

The interior open court opening for the Lovell system skylight operated from the bank office is floored over and the skylight itself that illuminated and ventilated the banking room and inner offices on the second floor has been removed. The bathrooms remain in place but are deteriorated and altered.

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A description of the plan and elevation details of the original building has been preserved in a newspaper account of July 18, 1906, The Mobile Register, and in the architectural drawings of Mr. Hutchisson.

<sup>1</sup>According to the July 18, 1906, newspaper account, the Interstate Construction Company built the First National Bank building. Mr. C. L. Hutehisson, Jr., the architect's son, said that Charles Owen was the contractor and that Interstate was the Hennebique contractor mentioned in the same article. Mr. Owen is listed in City Directories for 1905 and 1906 associated with J. F. Barnes and Company Contractors. J. F. Barnes' residence is listed in Mississippi. Mr. Owen signed all the pages of the architectural drawings with Mr. Henry Hall, President of the bank. This indicates several contracting firms but is inconclusive as to which was the overall contractor and which were subcontractors.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The First National Bank was designed by the Mobile architectural firm of Watkins, Hutchisson, and Garvin in 1905. As one of the few remaining examples of their work, the building is architecturally important to the city. Additionally, it represents the financial growth and expansion of the Mobile banking institutions following the turn of the century.

With its impressive, white glazed brick Neo-Classical facade, the structure is a significant example of the style which was popular for public buildings in the early 20th century. It is among several important buildings in Mobile, including the Cawthon Hotel, the Temple Shaari Shomayim, and Pythian Castle Hall, designed by the architects during the same year. The firm is also known for several residences in Mobile and a number of public buildings in Mississippi which include a high school, a county jail, and St. Paul's Church in Meridian. The loss of most of the commercial structures in Mobile intensifies the need to preserve the bank building as a remaining example of the work of this prestigious firm.

Completed in 1906, the building was the third structure to be occupied by the First National Bank since it opened in May, 1865. It is the oldest continually operating bank in the state, and its federal charter (October, 1865) predates those of all other national banks in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi, and North and South Carolina. Its continuing importance to the economic growth of the state is visible in its role as the leading affiliate in the First Bancgroup-Alabama holding company and in the expansion of its main office into a 33-story tower, the tallest building in Mobile.

In November, 1915, the First National Bank moved into larger quarters when it acquired the business and building of the National City Bank. Since that time, only two establishments--the Alabama Power Company and Bidgood Stationery Corporation -- have occupied the old bank building, leaving the facade intact except for the installation of metal-framed plate glass display windows. Today it is vacant, but the present owner has begun restoration of the facade and remodeling of the interior for office space.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Mobile Public Library, Mobile Register microfilm, Overbey collection photograph negatives.  
 First National Bank of Mobile, Highlights of 100 Years in Mobile, 1865-1965.  
 Historic Mobile Preservation Society, William Wilson Photograph collection.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 1/9 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Mobile Quadrangle 7.5 minute series QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 6	4 0 0 3 4 0	3 3 9 5 9 0 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies city lots 68 and 70 in block 459 with 52.07' fronting St. Francis Street. The western boundary is 83.65', northern boundary is 83.37' and the eastern boundary forms an ell running 24.65' south then 29.8' west then 59.75 south

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Sally Moore and Iras Smith

ORGANIZATION

Alabama Historical Commission

STREET & NUMBER

725 Monroe Street

CITY OR TOWN

Montgomery

DATE

June 27, 1978

TELEPHONE

(205) 832-6621

STATE

Alabama 36130

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Wils B. Howard, Jr.*

TITLE

SHPO Alabama

DATE

June 30, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Charles Adams*

DATE

11-17-78

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

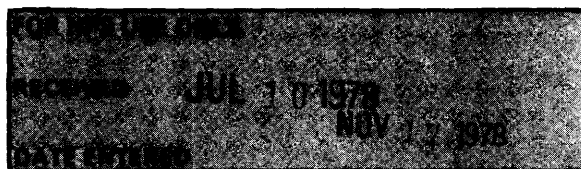
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

*Jann H. Gilmore*

11/16/78

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Mobile Historic Development Commission, maps.

Mobile Landmarks Inventory, Mobile City Planning Commission, 1969 Property Owner's Map.

Original architectural drawings and specifications, Watkins, Hutchisson and Garvin.

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to St. Francis Street.