

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED DEC 28 1979

DATE ENTERED

FEB 28 1980

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Braniff Building

AND/OR COMMON

Kerr-McGee Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

324 North Robinson St.

—NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

5

STATE

Oklahoma

— VICINITY OF

CODE 40

COUNTY

Oklahoma

CODE

109

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY** DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT**OWNERSHIP** PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION** IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS** OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE** YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO**PRESENT USE** AGRICULTURE MUSEUM COMMERCIAL PARK EDUCATIONAL PRIVATE RESIDENCE ENTERTAINMENT RELIGIOUS GOVERNMENT SCIENTIFIC INDUSTRIAL TRANSPORTATION MILITARY OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Kerr-McGee Building Corporation

STREET & NUMBER

123 Robert S. Kerr

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Oklahoma

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Oklahoma County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

320 Robert S. Kerr

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Oklahoma County Commercial Sites Survey

DATE

1978

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Shirk Collection, Oklahoma City University Library

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR
 DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Braniff Building is a ten-story buff-brick and limestone office building measuring 150' x 87'. The structure's architectural style is neo-classical. The lower two floors are sheathed with limestone and feature a series of engaged columns with quasi-corinthian capitals. The columns are terminated by a limestone architrave, ornate cornice, and dentil molding. The only modification is the curtain wall and glass added to the ground level in the 1950s.

The facade between rows of windows on the upper floors is filled in with buff-brick. Each bay has pairs of windows and limestone spandrels. The window units are aluminum and glass replacements. The top level is terminated by a series of limestone medallions, dentil molding, and projecting cornice, providing a sense of balance with the lower two floors. The limestone ornamentation on this structure is rarely used in modern construction.

The interior of the structure has been extensively remodelled. Today, the office complex is occupied by various commercial tenants.

6 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 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 checked="" 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 1923-1979

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Layton, Hicks, Forsythe

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1923 by Thomas E. Braniff, the Braniff Building is the legacy of one of Oklahoma City's most successful and influential businessmen. From his insurance and investment endeavors to his involvement in the growth of commercial aviation, Braniff affected the course of local, state, and national history. Moreover, the Braniff Building itself is significant architecturally, for its neo-classical design was the product of Solomon Layton, Oklahoma's foremost architect from 1902 to 1943.

Thomas E. Braniff was born in 1883 in Salina, Kansas, to a pioneering family which moved to Oklahoma City in 1901. One year later, at the age of eighteen, young Thomas entered the insurance business. Braniff slowly increased his earnings until 1917 when he organized a loan company to complement his insurance firm. Thereafter, his fortunes increased, extending more than \$7,000,000 in construction loans the first five years. In 1925 alone the total reached \$8,000,000, making him one of the leading financiers in Oklahoma City. The construction boom in downtown Oklahoma City from 1919 to 1931, which left the city with its most important structures, was thus promoted by Thomas Braniff.

In 1922 Braniff initiated plans for a multi-storied office building to house his varied business enterprises. He chose the corner of 3rd and Robinson as its location, which at that time was north of the Rock Island tracks and considered by most businessmen to be too far north of the main business district. Within ten years his decision was proven to be prophetic, for the business district shifted towards the north. To design his building, Braniff chose the architectural firm of Layton, Hicks, and Forsythe, for Solomon Layton was considered the foremost architect of public buildings in Oklahoma. To 1922 he had been responsible for several of the state's most attractive and efficient structures, most notable being the Skirvin Hotel (on the National Register), the Oklahoma State

(cont.)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Joseph B. Thoburn and Muriel H. Wright, Oklahoma: A History of the State and Its People (New York, 1929), pp. 99-100.

Roy Stewart, Born Grown: An Oklahoma City History (Oklahoma City: Fidelity Bank, 1974), pp. 185-189.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Circa 1 acre

UTM NOT VERIFIED

QUADRANGLE NAME Oklahoma City **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED** SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1, 4 6, 34 6, 60 39, 2, 60, 65

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the curb on the southeast corner of 3rd and N. Robinson, which is 12' northwest of the building, proceed 97' due east along (cont.)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Dr. Bob L. Blackburn, Project Director

ORGANIZATION

Oklahoma County Historical Society

DATE

August 6, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

3801 N. Shartel

TELEPHONE

405-528-5091

CITY OR TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

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

Bill Blackburn

TITLE

DATE

12/11/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Bill Bobovich

DATE

2/28/80

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Beth Grosvenor

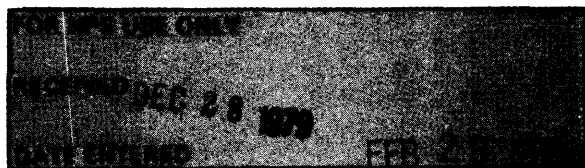
DATE

2/28/80

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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Capitol Building (on the National Register), Central High School (on the National Register), and sixteen county courthouses across the state. He would go on to design more than seventy-five public buildings in Oklahoma, earning him the distinction of being Oklahoma's most noted architect.

For the Braniff Building Layton chose a neo-classical limestone and brick design. The lower two floors were sheathed in limestone and ornamented with columns, capitals, and architraves. The facade of the upper eight levels consisted of rows of windows and buff-brick, which was terminated by a limestone cornice. It was a unique design combining a variety of building materials and architectural styles.

Braniff's business career expanded even more after moving into the new building. The most noteworthy accomplishment, and one which brought benefits to himself, Oklahoma City, and the nation, was his association with the development of Braniff Airlines. Begun with only one five-place Stinson-Detroiter, the first Braniff flight took off on June 20, 1928, bound for Tulsa. In less than one year the company expanded to thirty-two planes, twenty pilots, seventy-five support personnel, and 5,000 route miles. By the early 1940s the operations had increased to 270 employees, 10,000 route miles, and international flights.

This success story benefited Oklahoma City and the state as well as Braniff, for as the headquarters of this major commercial airlines, Oklahoma City grew into one of the nation's foremost aviation centers. By the late 1940s Oklahoma City hosted three airports, a major center of the Civil Aeronautics Administration, Tinker Airforce Base (the largest air depot in the U. S.), and several aircraft manufacturers. In 1973 a survey concluded that one of every six persons in Oklahoma City had direct relations with the aviation industry; this development was in large part due to Thomas E. Braniff.

Since 1954, when Braniff was killed in a plane wreck, the Braniff Building has changed hands several times. Presently, it is owned by Kerr-McGee Building Corporation. The building's significance, however, has not diminished, for Braniff's achievements and legacies remain as an important element in Oklahoma City's development. The building which he constructed stands as a monument to the man and the progressive philosophy he represented.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 2

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the curb to a point parallel with the east wall of the building, which abuts with a parking garage to the east. Turn south and proceed along the east wall 170' to the middle of the alley, which is approximately 10' south of the building. Then proceed 97' along the center of the alley to the curb on Robinson Avenue. Then proceed north 170' along the curb to the original point of departure.