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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

DATA SHEET

1 NAME

HISTORIC

**

Elgin Hotel (preferred)

AND/OR COMMON

Elgin House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Third and Santa Fe

CITY, TOWN

Marion

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

No. 4 Dan Glickman

STATE

Kansas 66861

--- VICINITY OF

CODE

20

COUNTY

Marion

CODE

115

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

COMMERCIAL

___ EDUCATIONAL

___ ENTERTAINMENT

___ GOVERNMENT

___ INDUSTRIAL

___ MILITARY

___ MUSEUM

___ PARK

___ PRIVATE RESIDEN

___ RELIGIOUS

___ SCIENTIFIC

___ TRANSPORTATION

___ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Van Anderson

STREET & NUMBER

Elgin House

CITY, TOWN

Marion

--- VICINITY OF

STATE

Kansas 66861

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Marion County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Marion

STATE

Kansas 66861

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1971

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Kansas State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Topeka

STATE

Kansas

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" 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 Elgin Hotel is a three-story limestone building located on the corner of Third and Santa Fe streets in Marion. It has an L-shaped plan, measuring 115 feet along its main facade on Third street (east) and 100 feet along Santa Fe street (north).

Ordered formal articulation is confined to the two street facades. It is through the disposition of windows and doors, through the stone detailing, and through the treatment of the cornice that these facades are organized.

The fenestration (all two-over-two) is disposed regularly on each story of each facade, but each story is differentiated through the shape of the window opening. The windows of the first story are vertically proportioned arched openings, the windows of the second story are shorter than those of the first and have flattened arched heads, the windows of the third story are plain rectangular openings. On the ground floor the arched window openings are interrupted at irregular intervals by two arched door openings on the east and three arched door openings on the north.

Two types of stonework are used on the street facades. The walls are laid up in regular coursed rockfaced ashlar. The quoins, band course beneath the cornice, the vertical striping that frames the east wall's central pavilion, and the voussoirs and lintels of the windows and doors are articulated in smooth-faced stone. Key-stones provide an added embellishment to the voussoirs and lintels.

A bracketed metal cornice caps the two street facades. This feature draws attention to the main or east facade as it pushes up into a pediment form over the middle portion of the wall. This central focus is reinforced by two stone strips that flank the pediment running from cornice to ground level. As a result, the facade is broken up into three parts, one large central portion (four bays), and two slightly smaller flanking elements (three bays each). At the corners and flanking the pediment the cornice is surmounted by simple finials.

A simple one story iron veranda runs along the north facade and around the corner along the east wall, stopping short of the last three bays of this facade. At the second story level on each facade there is provision for access to the roof of the veranda through a door opening that is part of the line of window openings. The other walls of the hotel, except for the short wall on the south that is visible from Main street, have a rougher stone treatment than that found on the street facades. In these secondary areas, the walls are laid up in coursed shaped stone, but the individual stone blocks are of varying sizes and widths. The fenestration in these areas is all square-headed with simple stone lintels.

In the rear of the hotel, on the southern part of the lot, is a small one-story structure that reportedly once served as a laundry building.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1885-1886

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Elgin Hotel deserves public recognition today for the important role it played in local citizens' efforts to stimulate Marion's economic prosperity in the mid-1880s. In addition, the hotel is a valuable remnant of the town's architectural history, for it illustrates local architectural tastes as well as the manner in which architectural projects were handled in a small Kansas community during this period.

History:

On July 10, 1885, the Marion Record reported that the local real estate firm of Case and Billings would award \$1000, to which the citizens of Marion would add \$2500, to any "outsider" who would erect "a great hotel building" in Marion. It is apparent from the local newspaper accounts of this period that the need for a large hotel had for some time been a topic of frequent discussion in Marion. But despite the advantage of Marion's two railroad lines, the small central Kansas community seems to have had trouble attracting a truly ambitious hotel enterprise, and thus interested citizens were forced to resort to offering a substantial financial incentive to prospective developers.

When no outsider immediately leaped at their proposition, Case and Billings, along with many citizens in town, took matters into their own hands and in late July formed a hotel company--160 shares of capital stock were sold at \$100 each to finance the project. By August, 1885, the company had commissioned an architect "in the eastern part of the State" to draw up plans and specifications for a three-story stone structure. Contracts were let in September and October and work commenced soon after. According to the October 9, 1885, Marion Record, the contract for the stone work was awarded to Harper and Rhind of Marion, that for provision of sand to E.L. Snider, that for provision of stone to a Mr. Kellett, and the contract for the carpentry work was awarded to Henry Kable, reportedly "one of the best workmen in Kansas." Other sources identify Simon Weidenbener and Fred Frobenius as stonecutters for the project.

The hotel was completed by September, 1886. W.W. Case and his brother, L.L. Case, relatives of A.E. Case, who was one of the hotel's chief promoters, were brought into town to run the hotel.

The grand opening was held on September 15, 1886, with a banquet and ball that were the most splendid the city had seen. Programs that have survived detail an elaborate menu. All the principals in the hotel project were on the program and music was provided by the Marion Silver Cornet Band.

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Kansas	
COUNTY Marion	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
040-15-0008	

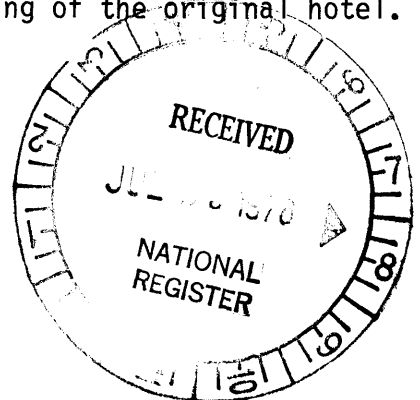
(Number all entries)

7. Alterations:

The present exterior appearance of the Elgin Hotel is very similar to the exterior appearance of the building when it was first constructed. Certain alterations, however, have been made over the years:

1. The roof has been resurfaced with tar and gravel.
2. The second story access door to the roof of the veranda on the north facade has been made into a window.
3. The veranda has been rebuilt, and a balustrade that edged the roof of the veranda has been removed.
4. Three finials are missing.
5. The inscription originally located within the east pediment has been removed.
6. The entranceways on the ground story of both east and north facades have been altered, the original doors having been replaced with modern doors.
7. Fire escapes have been added to west and south walls, while roof-top egress for an interior fire stair has been provided on the north wing.
8. The exterior stone walls have been sandblasted and siliconed.
9. The veranda originally located on the inside of the west ell was removed many years ago.
10. The cornice has been repaired and painted brown.

The most outstanding alterations to the hotel have occurred on the interior--this has been entirely renovated and, except for the fact that some of the original hallways are still located in the same place, the interior does not convey the appearance or feeling of the original hotel.



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8. The Elgin served the community from its opening in 1886 until the late 1950's when it was closed. In 1974 it was acquired by an organization that wanted to demolish it and reuse the stone. But those plans fell through. The structure remained empty until 1976 when it was renovated, opening once again in 1977, but this time as an apartment house rather than a hotel. It is interesting to note that, like the construction of the hotel, the renovation of the Elgin in the 1970's also relied to a large extent on capital generated by investments in the project made by local citizens.

Significance:

Shortly after the Elgin Hotel opened, the Marion Record observed, "We get prouder and prouder of the Elgin Hotel. It is indeed a 'big thing' for the town." Its impact on the county scene is indicated by the fact that the hotel occupied the cover of the 1888 "Handbook of Marion County, Kansas," for it was the largest hotel in the county at that time.

Built to stimulate an economic boom, the hotel was a symbol of the town's aspirations more than an index of its actual achievements. Enthusiastic newspaper accounts accompanied the hotel's construction. Just as work on the hotel was getting underway in late August, 1885, one reporter stated that the Elgin would be a "monster three story stone hotel" executed in "the most elaborate style of modern architecture" with "first class" interior appointments. It would be "a monument to Marion's glory and a common pride to citizens and its enterprising builders. This will be the finest hotel west of Topeka."

In comparison with the hotel facilities in larger places like Wichita and Garden City, each of which boasted one or more new hotels during this period, the Elgin was a modest structure (the Windsor Hotel in Garden City had four stories, cost \$100,000 and had 125 rooms; the Carey House in Wichita had five stories and cost \$100,000.) Yet, for its location and available resources it was an impressive project, providing seemingly lavish accommodations with "forty airy, cozy sleeping apartments, an elegant double parlor, bath room, an unusually fine dining room, sample room, wash room, tonsorial room, reading room, etc., all neatly and comfortably furnished, and supplied with modern appliances for the comfort of the guests." To those who recalled A. E. Case's "Hotel Commercial" which opened in the late 1860s, and offered sleeping accommodations in the attic, this new hotel must have seemed a satisfactory improvement.

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8. The architectural style chosen for the Elgin was one of the most popular modes of the "commercial palace style," a phenomenon discussed extensively by the modern historian, Winston Weisman (1954). As Weisman notes, the palace style first appeared in America in the mid-1840s, most notably with construction of the A.T. Stewart Store in New York. The style called into play rich ornamental treatments for regular, multi-story commercial structures. To the citizens of Marion, this was considered the "most elaborate style of modern architecture." But if the palace style was considered elaborate, the particular application of the style at the Elgin was quite restrained. Embellishment was confined to the provision of key stones for lintels and arches, stone quoins and a bracketed cornice with pedimented projection and surmounted by rhythmically disposed finials. Certainly, its detailing was more restrained than that provided for Beaston's Market, another commercial palace style structure in Marion built in 1882.

While employment of a specific type of detailing was not mandatory, the most popular commercial palaces throughout the long period of the style's popularity (late 1840s-1890) were the ones that utilized Italian Renaissance-inspired detailing, either the Tuscan (wall and decorated windows) or the north Italian (multi-story arches) modes. The Elgin is an excellent example of the Tuscan commercial palace type, appearing here in Kansas in the mid-1880s after the style had enjoyed 40 years of popularity.

An important aspect of the style's appeal to businessmen was that its "palace" association was highly attractive to the public. With respect to the Elgin, it seems likely that employment of the style encouraged the romantic thought that the hotel would be in essence a "palace resort for the traveller."

The accounts make clear that the Elgin was constructed by local craftsmen according to plans and specifications provided by an unnamed architect from the eastern part of Kansas. It may be suspected, in fact, that the design was a stock one selected by the hotel company from a pattern-book, and that the architect, who receives very little attention in the accounts, performed only the service of providing the final details necessary to adapt the plans to the Elgin. Such an arrangement would help account for how rapidly construction was initiated after the hotel company was formed. Once the Elgin was completed, the stoneworkers, Harper and Rhind, constructed the Bowron Building in the same style, with very similar detailing-perhaps as a testimony of the fine reception accorded the visual appearance of the Elgin.

Note: The above statements are based on current information and understanding. If additional material relevant to the property becomes available in the future, revisions to this statement may be necessary.

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COUNTY	Marion	
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9. Bibliography

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