Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

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# PHOSO0747 DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 1 2 1977

DATE ENTERED

JAN 3 0 1978

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

#### NAME

HISTORIC Occidental Life Building

AND/OR COMMON

# LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 119 Third Avenue, S.W.

		NOT FOR PUBLICATION		
CITY, TOWN		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT		
	Albuquerque	VICINITY OF	01	
STATE	New Mexico	CODE 035	COUNTY Bernalillo	CODE

# **CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRES	ENTUSE
DISTRICT _XBUILDING(S)	PUBLIC X private		AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM PARK
	BOTH	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDENCE
SITE OBJECT	PUBLIC ACQUISITION		ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT	RELIGIOUS
	BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED		TRANSPORTATION
		NO	MILITARY	OTHER:

#### **OWNER OF PROPERTY**

Santa Fe

NAME Albuquerque Production Credit Ass	sociation
STREET & NUMBER 119 Third Avenue, S.W.	
CITY, TOWN Albuquerque	OF New Mexico
LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTI	ON
COURTHOUSE, Bernalillo County Courthouse REGISTRY OF DEEDS,ETC.	
STREET & NUMBER	
CITY, TOWN	STATE
Albuquerque	New Mexico
<b>REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING</b>	
DATE March 2, 1973	FEDERAL X_STATECOUNTYLOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS State Planning Office	505 Don Gaspar
CITY, TOWN	STATE

CITY, TOWN

New Mexico

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONI	DITION	CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X <sub>EXCELLENT</sub> GOOD FAIR	DETERIORATED RUINS UNEXPOSED	UNALTERED	X.ORIGINAL SITE MOVED DATE

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Occidental Life Building, "the most artistic building ever erected in Albuquerque," was opened to the public at a reception given by the Occidental Life Insurance Company on August 1, 1917. The one-story 100' x 142' building was constructed to house the offices of the insurance company founded in Albuquerque in 1906, the company's second headquarters building in the city. It is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Third Street and Gold Avenue, one block south of the main business street in downtown Albuquerque.

The building was designed by architect Henry Charles Trost (1860-1933) of Trost and Trost of El Paso, an adaption of the Doge's Palace in Venice, the design motif suggested by A.B. McMillan, one of the founders of Occidental Life and its president when the new headquarters was built, following an European tour. The building was of masonry construction with the south and east facades fronting the two streets faced with glazed white terra cotta supplied by the Denver Terra Cotta Tile Company which also did the marble work in the building. An arcade, said to have been nine feet deep, extended along the two streets with plate glass windows and double doors set back from the columns. The counterthrusting arches rose from Corinthian columns with the triangular spaces between the pointed arches ornamented with bas-relief terra cotta. Above the arches was a belt of quatrefoils pierced with windows. A simple cornice projected approximately four feet beyond the unadorned terra-cotta faced wall above the band of foils. Each of the three corners of the building visible from the street was adorned with a plaque inscribed with the name of the building.

In the early morning hours of April 24, 1933, a fire completely destroyed the interior of the building. The fire was believed to have started between the ceiling and the roof at the northeast corner of the building, since a patrolman on his beat first noticed flames shooting from the roof at that corner. At the time of the fire, the building was valued at \$125,000 with the damage to it and its contents estimated at over \$100,000. The projecting cornice was destroyed and the tops of the walls were damaged by the collapsing roof. The terra-cotta arches and band of foils remained intact. On the day after the fire, "twenty men were given work...clearing debris from the fire-gutted... building." The Occidental Life Insurance Company considered replacing the building, but it was rebuilt shortly after the fire from plans drawn by W. Miles Brittelle, Sr.(1894-1970), a prominent Albuquerque architect.

In the remodeling of the building the arches of the original facade were retained, but the arcade was partially enclosed with windows set under some of the arches and recessed entrances located on both sides of the building and at the corner. The band of quatrefoils remains, although the clerestory windows were closed. The only obvious change in the facade was made in the treatment of the parapet. The projecting cornice was replaced by a more ornate one supported by small brackets, the materials supplied by the Denver Terra Cotta Tile Company. The embrasures of the crenelated parapet are ornamental with small finials and the three corners of the building are topped with conical acroterions. The remodeled building resembles the Doge's Palace more closely than the original. The corners retain the original plaques although the name of the building, no longer owned by the Occidental Life Insurance Company, is not now inscribed on them.

The roof of the building is supported by steel columns which has permitted the interior to be changed frequently. This flexibility and the generally sound condition of the building have allowed its continued use while many other buildings of architectural significance and individuality in Albuquerque's central business district have been razed or severely altered. The building now houses Offices of the Albuquerque Production Credit Association and the Albuquerque Title Company.

#### PERIOD AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW -PREHISTORIC \_\_ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC \_\_COMMUNITY PLANNING \_\_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE RELIGION \_\_1400-1499 \_\_\_ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC \_\_CONSERVATION \_\_LAW \_\_\_SCIENCE \_\_1500-1599 \_\_AGRICULTURE ECONOMICS \_\_LITERATURE \_\_\_SCULPTURE \_\_\_1600-1699 XARCHITECTURE EDUCATION \_\_\_MILITARY \_\_SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN \_\_\_ART \_\_1700-1799 \_\_ENGINEERING \_\_\_MUSIC THEATER XCOMMERCE 1800-1899 \_\_EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT \_\_\_PHILOSOPHY \_\_\_TRANSPORTATION <u>X</u><sub>1900</sub>. \_\_\_COMMUNICATIONS \_INDUSTRY \_\_\_POLITICS/GOVERNMENT \_\_OTHER (SPECIFY) INVENTION BUILDER/ARCHITECT Henry C. Trost, architect, 1917

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

1917

SPECIFIC DATES

8 SIGNIFICANCE

The Occidental Life Insurance Company was organized in Albuquerque in 1906. Incorporators and directors of the Company were Joshua S. Raynolds, president of the First National Bank of Albuquerque and the First National Bank of El Paso; Rufus J. Palen, president of the First National Bank of Santa Fe; Salomon Luna, president of the Bank of Commerce of Albuquerque; Alonzo B. McMillen, attorney for the First National Bank of Albuquerque; and Joseph O'Reilley, an Albuquerque insurance man. At the time the company was organized it was the only insurance company headquartered between Kansas City and Los Angeles and it was regarded in insurance circles as an experiment of doubtful success. Organized with capital of \$100,000 by 1917 when its new headquarters was constructed it had \$10,000,000 of insurance in force with assets of \$850,000.

W. Miles Britelle, Sr., architect 1933 remodeling

In 1917 only A. B. McMillan, then president, remained actively connected with the company. Raynolds was retired, Palen and Luna were deceased, and O'Reilly was engaged in other business. George Roslington, then vice-president and secretary, was the manager of the company with the directorate composed of McMillen, Roslington; C.N. Blackwell, a banker from Raton; John W. Poe, a banker from Roswell; and Dr. James H. Wroth of Albuquerqu General agencies were maintained in New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Kansas, Nebraska, and Texas, with another being established in Missouri at the time. In the mid 1920's the company moved its headquarters from Albuquerque to Raleigh, North Carolina and it is now known as the Occidental Life Insurance Company of North Carolina.

Henry Charles Trost of Trost and Trost of El Paso, the designer of the building, was a successful and influential force in the architectural development of the Southwest in the early twentieth century. The Occidental Life Building was designed toward the end of his career and is an interesting example of his attitude toward historic styles. Trost. seemingly not compelled to develop an identifiable personal style, was freer than many architects to use any stylistic vocabulary he pleased. While he is recognized particularly for his work in the Sullivanesque, Prairie Style, and later the Pueblo Revival, he also designed buildings such as the 1915 El Paso County Courthouse, in El Paso, Texas, modeled after a public building in Dallas, and the first four buildings of the new campus of the Texas Western School of Mines and Metallurgy, now the University of Texas at El Paso, patterned after the architecture of Bhutan. Because of his stylistic freedom he was able to successfully design the Occidental Life Building after the design motif of the Venetian Doge's Palace was suggested by A.B. McMillan, president of the company.

Even though the original design was certainly derived from the Doge's Palace, elements of it were similar to other Trost buildings. The projecting cornice, subsequently destroye by the fire, was reminiscent in detail and proportion of the one topping the Anson Mills Building in El Paso designed by Trost in 1910. The arcade of the Occidental Life Building is similar to that in one of Trost's earlier works, the First Owls Club in Tucson, commissioned in 1899.

#### **9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Albuquerque Journal, April 26-27, 1933.

Albuquerque Morning Journal, August 1, 1917.

Engelbrecht, Lloyd C. "Henry Trost: the Prairie School in the Southwest." Prairie School Review VI, 4 (1969) pp. 5-31.

"Portrait of an architect: W. Miles Brittelle, Sr." <u>New Mexico Architect</u> I,1 (March 1959) p. 6.

#### **10**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY <u>less than one a</u>cre UTM REFERENCES

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING	ZONE EASTING NORTHING
VEDDAL DOUNDARY DESCRIPTION	

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property nominated consists of a 100' x 142' building located on lots 13-16 of block 17 of the original townsite of the City of Albuquerque, bounded on the north by the alley between Central and Gold Avenues, on the east by Third Street and on the south by Gold Avenue.

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE	
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE	
FORM PREPARE	D BY			
NAME / TITLE				
Sylvia L.	Cook, Architectural	l Historian		
ORGANIZATION			DATE	
	lanning Office			
STREET & NUMBER			TELEPHONE	
CITY OR TOWN	Gaspar		505-827-5191 STATE	
	'e, A		New Mexico	
		. /		
NATIONAL	STA			
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#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Also like the Owls Club, the Occidental Life Building had a row of clerestory openings above the arches, a row of quatrefoils, while those in the Owls Club are oval. The arches of the Owls Club are embellished with Sullivanesque ornament; those of the Occidental Life Building are more organic. While the arcade was stylistically correct, the arches also reflect a vernacular tradition in Southwestern architecture.

The remodeling of the building following the 1933 fire was the work of W. Miles Britell Sr., a prominent Albuquerque architect whose work includes the Grant County Courthouse in Silver City, <u>several</u> buildings at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology in Socorro, and the Coliseum at the New Mexico State Fairgrounds. His remodeling of the Occidental Life Building more closely resembles the Doge's Palace than the original building.

The building is significant partly because of the successful, locally organized insurance company which built it. Begun as an operation of unlikely success, because of the high personal and financial characters of the persons involved, it was a successful operation which continues today. It is also significant because it was designed by the highly regarded architect Henry Trost, and is one of several of Trost's designs extant in the state. It is important to the central business district of Albuquerque as a building of beauty and architectural individuality which continues as an important landmark in the city.