

563302

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building  
Other name/site number: Barfield Building  
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 600 S. Polk Street  
City or town: Amarillo State: Texas County: Potter  
Not for publication:  Vicinity: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  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer 11/26/18  
Signature of certifying official / Title 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] 11/11/2019  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

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

**Category of Property**

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

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

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

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions:** Commerce/Trade: Office Building

**Current Functions:** Vacant

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification:** LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS:  
 Skyscraper

**Principal Exterior Materials:** BRICK, STONE

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 7 through 10)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria: B, C**

**Criteria Considerations:** NA

**Areas of Significance:** Commerce, Architecture

**Period of Significance:** 1927-1931

**Significant Dates:** 1927

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked): Oliver-Eakle, Melissa Dora

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

**Architect/Builder:** Hedrick, Wyatt C., Architect

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 11 through 19)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheets 20 through 21)

**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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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreege of Property:** Less than 1 acre

**Coordinates** (either UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 35.207546°N      Longitude: -101.837446°W

**Verbal Boundary Description:** GLIDDEN & SANBORN, LOT BLOCK 0079, 1 AND 2; Amarillo, Potter County, Texas (Potter-Randall Appraisal District)

**Boundary Justification:** The boundary includes all property historically associated with the building.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Jay Firsching, Sr Historic Preservation Specialist & Emily Simon, Historic Preservation Specialist with assistance from THC staff  
Organization: Architexas – Architecture, Planning and Historic Preservation  
Street & number: 1907 Marilla  
City or Town: Dallas      State: Texas      Zip Code: 75201  
Email: [jfirsching@architexas.com](mailto:jfirsching@architexas.com)  
Telephone: 214-748-4561  
Date:

## Additional Documentation

**Maps**      (see continuation sheets 22 through 26)

**Additional items**      (see continuation sheets 27 through 53)

**Photographs**      (see continuation sheets 54 through 82)

**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.



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## Photographs

Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building  
Amarillo, Potter County, Texas  
Photos by Jay Firsching, Architexas  
6/11/2018

Photo 1  
Aerial view.

Photo 2  
Streetscape view – Polk Street facing south.

Photo 3  
Streetscape view – Polk Street facing north.

Photo 4  
Streetscape view – Sixth Street facing west.

Photo 5  
Northeast (primary) oblique. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 6  
Southeast oblique. Camera facing northwest.

Photo 7  
East (primary) elevation. Camera facing west.

Photo 8  
Northeast (primary) oblique. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 9  
West (rear) elevation. Camera facing east.

Photo 10  
South elevation. Camera facing north.

Photo 11  
Detail of cornice and parapet. Camera facing northwest.

Photo 12  
Detail of ornamentation. Camera facing west.

Photo 13  
General view in basement (typical). Camera facing east.

Photo 14  
Boiler, view in basement. Camera facing east.

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Photo 15

General view of first floor. Camera facing west.

Photo

First floor lobby. Camera facing south.

Photo 17

First floor primary lobby stair. Camera facing southeast.

Photo 18

Detail view of Caen stone plaster treatment fragment. Camera facing west at stair.

Photo 19

Second floor general view. Camera facing west.

Photo 20

Second floor detail of mosaic tile and terrazzo. Camera facing west.

Photo 21

Second floor wood austral window (typical). Camera facing north.

Photo 22

Second floor steel austral windows (typical). Camera facing southwest.

Photo 23

Third floor general view (typical). Camera facing west.

Photo 24

Third floor general view (typical). Camera facing south.

Photo 25

Ninth floor with fragment of original corridor. Camera facing west.

Photo 26

Tenth floor with fragment of original corridor. Camera facing east.

Photo 27

Tenth floor corridor. Camera facing east.

Photo 28

Elevator equipment in penthouse. Camera facing southeast.

Photo 29

General view of roof. Camera facing west.

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## Narrative Description

The 1927 Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building is a 10-story three-part vertical block Classical Revival skyscraper located at 600 S. Polk Street in downtown Amarillo, Texas. The building represents a 1920s commercial construction boom in Amarillo. Designed by architect Wyatt C. Hedrick, the building was constructed with commercial and medical offices on the upper floors and six individual retail spaces on the first. The building has a rectangular plan, poured-in-place concrete spread footings, and a reinforced concrete structural frame. Primary exterior facades are symmetrical and clad in buff, scratch-faced brick with cast stone ornamentation. Of special interest are the building's austral windows which remain in remarkably good condition with 1-over-1 wood sashes on the primary facades, and 2-over-2 and 3-over-3 metal sashes on the secondary. While the first-floor storefronts have been removed, the remainder of the building exterior, including its brick masonry, cast stone ornamentation, and unusual austral windows remain intact and in good condition. Inside the building is largely shell space with the original partitions removed. An exception to this is partial corridors remaining on levels 9 and 10 which provide valuable evidence of the original interior materials. Original terrazzo office floors and porcelain mosaic corridor floors remain intact on levels 2 through 10. Despite the first-floor storefront alterations and loss of many interior features, the building retains a high degree of integrity and remains an important and recognizable landmark in downtown Amarillo.

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## Location and Setting

The Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building is a prominent Amarillo landmark constructed in 1927 at one of the city's busiest intersections, the then newly-established Route-66 aligned along SW 6<sup>th</sup> immediately to the north. It is surrounded primarily by one and two story 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings with the community's governmental center, including the Potter County Courthouse (NR 1996) and Amarillo U.S. Post Office and Courthouse (NR 2000), located two blocks to the northeast. Lots immediately to the south and west of the building are vacant (Maps 1 and 2).

## Exterior

The skyscraper is rectangular in plan at the first floor, being 6 bays and 140-feet on its east-west axis, and three bays and 60-feet on its north-south axis. Above the first floor, the southwest corner steps in approximately 85-feet and 11-feet respectively. This setback arrangement ensured that, in the event a building was constructed on the adjoining lot to the south, offices would be assured of light and ventilation (Figures 18-23).

Clad in cream-colored scratch-faced brick with cast stone details on the primary facades and common brick on the secondary, the 84,000 square foot building is a three-part vertical block with a base containing the first two stories, a shaft containing the next six, and a cap containing the last two stories; each of these features are visible along the north and east facades (Photos 5-8).<sup>1</sup> The base, shaft and cap are each visually divided by a decorative belt course. There is Classically-inspired ornamental detailing and a projecting cornice that tops the structure with a dentil course immediately below (Photo 11). The fenestration is regular and unadorned. Of special interest are the building's austral windows which remain in remarkably good condition with 1-over-1 wood sashes on the primary facades, and 2-over-2 and 3-over-3 metal sashes on the secondary (Photos 21-22).

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*, (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2000), 93-99.

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### **Primary (East and North) Elevations**

The building's primary elevations are identical in materials and details. This was historically-true of the storefronts, with the exception of entry placement, and the accentuation of the primary entrance at the building's southeast corner.

Original drawings (Figures 18-27) and photographs (Figures 5, 9 and 10) indicate that on the east and north elevations the first floor was clad in cast stone on a base of Carthage Stone. Storefronts were metal-clad wood with Kawneer plate-glass window systems and obscure-glass transoms. Below the storefront windows, a series of simple metal grilles protected awning windows serving the basement (See detail Figures 23-24). The rhythm of the storefront bays was defined by the structural columns. Remodeling of the building in 1955 and again in 1981 resulted in replacement of the original first floor cladding and storefronts (Figures 12-14). In a subsequent effort to rehabilitate the building the more-contemporary cladding at the first floor was removed, leaving the structural columns exposed (Photo 8). Above the first floor the building facades remain remarkably intact and in good condition preserving the building's prominent presence in the central business district (Photos 5-12).

The east elevation facing Polk Street is symmetrical with three storefront bays, the center being wider than those flanking it. The leftmost, located at the southeast corner, serves as the main entrance to the building and provides access to the lobby. The entrance originally included a decorative metal canopy supported by metal rods. This primary entry included a centrally-placed revolving door flanked by a single door on either side. Doors were  $\frac{3}{4}$  glazed with brass kickplates. The other two storefront bays each featured a central recessed entry. At the north elevation the storefront details matched those on Polk, with some variation of door placement. Of note on the original plans is a single door near the center of the street-level facade that provided direct access to a basement stair. (Figures 21 and 23)

Immediately above first floor storefronts on both the north and east facades is a wide belt course of cast stone that also forms the sills of the second-floor windows. The brick veneer is a running bond with rowlock bricks surrounding only the second-floor windows. Above these windows is another less pronounced cast stone belt course delineating the change from base to shaft, and a third and even simpler cast stone belt course forming the sill for the third-floor windows. Between these two belt courses are raised brick panels under each third-floor window. The remaining windows of the building shaft have simple cast stone sills and lack additional detailing. From the second to the eight floors, the corners of the building are ornamented with stylized quoins articulated in brick. (Figures 21 and 23)

Above the eighth-floor windows is another cast stone belt course demarcating the change from shaft to top, with the ninth and tenth stories comprising the cap of the building. In between these windows are single brick pilasters that run the height of both floors, each capped by an ornate cast-stone capital which appear to draw from Assyrian and Persian motifs of the 6<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. These include horned griffins and floral elements like stylized palmettes (Photos 11-12).<sup>2</sup> These pilasters are paired at the building corners. The building is topped with the previously-described dentil course and projecting cornice featuring cast stone and a soldier brick course. Centered along the east façade is a roof-mounted flagpole. (Figures 21 and 23)

### **Secondary (South and West) Elevations**

The secondary building elevations and penthouse are of red common brick, now painted in a cream color, and are topped with a cast-stone coping. Ornamentation of the primary elevations extends around the northwest and southeast corners approximately two feet. The first floor of the south elevation is windowless, the building that occupied the adjoining lot having been previously demolished. Above this, the windows are regular in size and placement except at the south wall along the elevator core where they are smaller and stepped at each floor. The windows are generally arranged in widely spaced pairs, one pair in each structural bay. On the west, the two outermost bays have a single, centrally-placed window. The center bay has a pair of windows per floor, the leftmost being wider and aligning the landings of a

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<sup>2</sup> "Assyrian and Persian Art," The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, March 25, 1955–January 22, 1956.

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cantilevered metal fire escape. At the building inset, the west wall of the building core is aligned with the interior stair and includes a single large metal austral window per floor. (Figure 22, Photos 9-12)

The building has a flat built-up roof. The large elevator and stair penthouse extends a full story above the roofline and also encloses the building's water tank. At the southwest corner of the building a black metal incineration stack rises approximately one story above the building parapet. (Figure 21, Photos 1, 10, and 29)

### Interior

The rectangular building is comprised of ten floors plus a full basement. Vertical circulation is provided by two elevators. An ornamental stair immediately to the west of the elevators provides access from the first floor to the basement and second floor (photo 17). Floors two through ten are connected by a narrow, enclosed fire stair situated across the elevator lobby to the north. The elevators have been modernized and the doors refaced except for the metal casings on floors two through ten. The ornamental stair was resurfaced and modernized in a past remodeling of the interior. The smaller central stair remains largely as it appeared in 1927. (Figures 18-20)

While the elevator and stair core remain intact, the overall floorplan of the building is heavily modified. The basement is composed of contemporary partitions with the exception of the transformer vault the east stair enclosure (Photo 13). Level 1 is shell space with fragmentary plaster on some walls and columns (Photos 16-18). Levels 2 through 8 are shell space. On levels 9 and 10 the eastern 50% of the primary corridors remain intact though altered (Photos 25-27). These alterations include removal of the corridor-facing windows, removal of the original doors, wallpaper on plater wainscots, louvers in place of the original transoms, and a lowered ceiling installed in the 1950s to accommodate mechanical systems.

The original basement arrangement included a boiler room and large transformer vault at the southwest quadrant. The remainder of the basement was dedicated to two large rental spaces that extend under the sidewalks along Polk and Sixth. To enhance light and ventilation in these spaces, the first-floor structural slab along Polk and Sixth was raised eighteen inches to allow for the installation of a row of awning windows at the base of the storefronts above. Inside the first floor, this raised platform provided street-level display for the various shops (See detail Figure 24). Access to the basement was provided by the central elevators and stair, a service corridor and stair to the boiler room at the southwest corner, and centrally-placed stair at the center of the north elevation that was accessed directly from the sidewalk (Figure 18). The existing interior partitions of the basement are contemporary, and the raised slab along Polk and Sixth flattened, eliminating the associated window openings.

The first floor includes the elevator and stair lobby at the southeast corner of the building. The remainder of the floor was originally divided into six distinct retail spaces, the smallest of which was accessed from the alley at the west side of the building. The first floor is no longer intact, the retail spaces having been rearranged several times over the decades and reduced to shell-space by a previous owner. The lobby, elevators and stair were initially remodeled in 1955 under the direction of Dallas architect George Dahl, who also modernized the storefronts. These areas are also largely shell space with only fragmentary evidence of the decorative progression. (Figures 12 and 18, Photos 15-18)

In an interview of B. R Barfield conducted in 1988 he stated, "The 1927 lobby floor was gray marble with gray marble, beige veined marble, and black marble wainscot, as well as a black marble chair wall [rail]. Classical Revival details on the interior included an egg and dart and raised circle with dot in center plaster molding at the cornice. The light fixtures were brass in a Mediterranean design. The stair was also gray marble with square iron newel posts and turned wrought iron bannisters with a wood hand rail."<sup>3</sup> These details are largely-confirmed by the historic drawings and fragmentary evidence in the building (Figures 24 and 27). Newspaper accounts and remaining marble in the building identify the gray stone as Tennessee marble. Newspaper accounts and the Barfield interview describe the George Dahl modifications to the

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<sup>3</sup> Personal interview, B.R. Barfield, 1988. THC National Register Files. Barfield Building NR Nomination, 1988.



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building as having included replacement of the gray lobby marble with pink Italian marble, refacing of the stairs and elevators, the elimination of the revolving door in favor of double Herculite doors, and a modernization of the storefront.

Wyatt Hedrick designed floors two through ten to be largely identical with a double-loaded corridor serving office suites on both sides (Figures 18-20). The corridor included a white porcelain mosaic tile floor with a classical border pattern in shades of brown, green and red. Walk-off pads at the elevators were marbled rubber tile in a checkerboard pattern of green and brown and with a black border. Walls were sand-finish plaster with Tennessee marble wainscots. Quarter-sawn white oak in a natural finish was used for doors and millwork and corridor walls included interior windows with obscure glass. Metal doors at stairs and elevators were faux-grained to match the wood trim. Ceilings were flat sand-finished plaster. Office suites shared similar finishes but with terrazzo floors.

A notable variation of the original floorplan was that of the sixth floor where a single ladies' restroom was installed alongside the men's (Figure 19). A later remodel of the building apparently included the installation of a ladies' room in the same location on the remaining floors.

With the exception of mosaic tile and terrazzo flooring, the office floors of the building are no longer intact. Portions of the original corridor walls remain on levels nine and ten and include marble wainscots, and quarter-sawn oak trim (Photos 25-27). Few doors and no interior windows remain. Remnants of faux-grained finishes are visible on the metal fire-stair doors and casework.

### Summary

While it must be recognized that the loss of the building's storefronts and much of the interior have resulted in diminished integrity, the Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building retains a significant degree of architectural integrity that still reflects its prominence as an Amarillo landmark and important example of the work of architect Wyatt C. Hedrick. The first-floor storefronts and building interiors have undergone major modifications with few details remaining, but the remainder of the exterior remains entirely intact, in good condition clearly representing the Hedrick's three-part vertical block design. The exterior retains its integrity of materials including the buff-colored scratch-faced brick, cast stone, and unusual austral windows in steel and wood. The excellent condition of the original materials reflects the workmanship of the construction and is notable in the crispness of detail remaining in pilaster capitals and other ornamentation. While fragmentary, remaining interior finishes including terrazzo and mosaic tile floors, and partial corridors on levels 9 and 10 also demonstrate the quality and workmanship of the original design. The building still conveys a strong presence and associated feeling as an important commercial structure in the downtown district, but this is diminished somewhat due to vacancy and related lack of street-level connection. The building retains its integrity of location on a prominent corner facing historic Route 66 (Southwest 6th Avenue). The setting of the area has been diminished, most notably with a gradual loss street-level retail and associated activity during the last quarter of the 20th century. This is evidenced by parking areas to the south, east and west of the building that replaced commercial structures. However, more recent economic trends have noticeably reinvigorated and reactivated the area, adding new strength to the downtown setting. Still named for the family that built and maintained it over many decades, the Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building retains some sense of association despite the vacant state of the building. The proposed hospitality and hotel use as part of an ongoing rehabilitation is highly compatible with the building's historic characteristics and will reestablish lost elements of the original design including storefronts, lobby and circulation spaces, and associated finishes.

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## Statement of Significance

The Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building at 600 S. Polk Street in downtown Amarillo, Texas was financed by renowned citizen, pioneer businesswoman, and philanthropist Mrs. Melissa Dora Oliver-Eakle. Completed during the oil boom of the Texas Panhandle, the 10-story skyscraper was constructed in response to the rapidly-growing local economy and was designed to provide the city with high-quality office and retail space. Mrs. Oliver-Eakle had a profound impact on the city, and the Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building stands as a testament to that. The property is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B in the area of Commerce at the local level of significance for its association with Mrs. Oliver-Eakle. When compared to her two other extant properties, this is her most high-profile commercial property best associated with her productive life and thus represents the culmination of her career as a real estate developer. One of several commercial buildings constructed during the short-lived economic boom, it stands out for the quality and refinement of its design. The Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building is also nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Architecture at the local level of significance for serving as an important local example of the work of Texas architect Wyatt C. Hedrick. Designed in 1926 and completed in 1927, the composition represents Hedrick's early work heavily influenced by his former mentors and partners, Sanguinet & Staats, known for their Classically-styled three-part vertical block buildings. The period of significance spans from its construction in 1927 to Mrs. Oliver-Eakle's death in 1931.

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## General History of Amarillo<sup>4</sup>

Amarillo began in 1887 as a result of the Fort Worth-Denver City Railroad construction across the Texas Panhandle. A railroad construction camp formed in the area and in April 1887, J. T. Berry platted a townsite and named it Onieda. In August of that year, Onieda was voted the county seat of Potter County and was then renamed Amarillo. In the same year, freight services for shipping cattle were initiated, thus establishing Amarillo as a major shipping center. By November, the first post office was founded. In 1890, Amarillo had grown to a population of 482 and had seen a boom in business coming to the area, especially cattle, as a result of the railroad shipping industry.

Amarillo was incorporated in 1892 and featured a one square mile city limit. Throughout the rest of the 1890s, Amarillo saw the creation of numerous necessary aspects of infrastructure and growth including hotels, banks, schools, telephones, retail shops, and most importantly, freight roads and additional railroads. By 1903, Amarillo was served by the Sante Fe, the Pecos Valley, the Rock Island and the Fort Worth-Denver City railroads in addition to numerous freight roads. With this influx of business and infrastructure as well as transportation connectivity, Amarillo quickly made a name for itself as the major transportation center of cattle across the world solidified by the tripling of the population in one decade. In 1910, the population grew to 9,957, over twenty times the population in 1890.

In the early 1900s, Amarillo expanded its economic reach to include feed milling and manufacturing as a result of increased production of wheat and small grains (Figure 2). However, it was after World War I that industry and culture in Amarillo flourished. With the discovery of gas in 1918 and oil in 1921 in West Texas, business in the area began to grow rapidly and the Borger Oil Boom began.

With this discovery, there was a clear need for building stock to support the influx of residents and businesses during the 1920s. Large oil companies such as Magnolia Oil, Phillips Petroleum Company and Shamrock Oil flocked to Amarillo to establish offices. In the first few months on 1926 alone, almost 400 building permits were issued in Amarillo to accommodate the growing population and booming business. Between the years 1920 and 1930, Amarillo's population

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<sup>4</sup> Adapted from *Handbook of Texas Online*, H. Allen Anderson, "Amarillo, TX," accessed June 3, 2017. <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hda02>

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jumped from 15,494 to 43,132<sup>5</sup> Homes, churches and hotels popped up seemingly overnight and suddenly Amarillo went from a small railroad camp to a thriving city.

The effects of the oil boom became more apparent toward the end of 1926 with the erection of the city's first skyscrapers along Polk Street. The increase in business for the city also meant an increase in newcomers flocking to the city seeking employment, leading to the expansion of housing development. To accommodate the increased traffic into the city, Route 66, which ran through the heart of Amarillo, was designated a national highway in 1926.<sup>6</sup> It was the primary vehicle route for commerce from Chicago to Los Angeles and made a significant impact on the city of Amarillo and its economy, bringing travelers and emigrants cross country who were escaping the devastating dustbowl of the Midwest.<sup>7</sup>

In 1926, Amarillo had a single 8-story building, the Amarillo Office Building (1925). By March of 1927 the skyline was dotted with tall buildings including the 10-story Oliver-Eakle and Medical Arts Buildings, 12-story Amarillo Hotel, the 8-story Rule Building, the Palo Duro Hotel, and the 14-story Herring Hotel, with the 14-story Davidson Hotel under construction (never completed). The 14-story Gothic Revival Santa Fe Building would be completed by 1930.<sup>8</sup>

### Melissa Dora Callaway Oliver-Eakle

Melissa Dora Callaway Oliver-Eakle was born near Eufaula, Alabama on September 23, 1860 to Mr. and Mrs. J.S. Callaway.<sup>9</sup> In 1879 she graduated from Wesleyan Female College in Macon and in 1884, married William Oliver, industrialist and principal stockholder of Mississippi Mills, the south's largest textile manufacturer at the time.<sup>10</sup> (Figures 1 and 15)

Melissa's brothers, John and James Callaway, were merchants in Amarillo and invited her to visit for the first time in 1890.<sup>11</sup> Widowed in 1891, she visited her brothers several times in the following years and purchased land in Potter and Randall counties before permanently moving there in 1895.<sup>12</sup> She made a lasting impression upon arriving in Amarillo with her elegant attire, stately horses and carriage, and household servants earning her the nickname "Duchess."<sup>13</sup> Her personal fortune is speculated to have eclipsed the holdings of all of Amarillo's banks combined.<sup>14</sup> Despite her obvious means, she went to work for Callaway Brothers Mercantile, later Amarillo Mercantile Company, and eventually became manager of the firm.<sup>15</sup> Aside from her formal appearance, she was known to be generous and contributed funds to a growing town. She was a frequent lender via local banks and used the name "M.D. Oliver" in her business affairs as an effort to keep her gender anonymous.<sup>16</sup>

In 1902 Mrs. Oliver-Eakle married her second husband, O.M. Eakle. Mr. Eakle was the director of the Amarillo National Bank and the first president of the Amarillo Board of Trade. He also ran several businesses in Amarillo including a

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<sup>5</sup> F. Stanley, *The Early Days of the Oil Industry in the Texas Panhandle, 1919-1929*, (Borger, Hess, 1973), 122.

<sup>6</sup> Christina Crapanzano, "Route 66," *Time Magazine*, June 28, 2010, <http://http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2000095,00.html>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "Amarillo, Queen of an Empire as it Appears Today." *Amarillo Sunday News-Globe*, (Amarillo, Texas), March 13, 1927.

<sup>9</sup> *Handbook of Texas Online*, B. Byron Price, "Oliver-Eakle, Melissa Dora Callaway," accessed February 22, 2016. <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fo111>.

<sup>10</sup> The Mirror. Wesson, Mississippi, July 4, 1891. (Clipping in M. D Oliver-Eakle family files, Panhandle Pains Museum).

<sup>11</sup> Amarillo Sunday News and Globe, August 14, 1938, Sec. c., p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Price, B. Byron and Claire R. Kuehn. "Melissa Dora Oliver-Eakle." Texas Historical Commission Marker Files, (Panhandle Plains Historical Museum).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Carlson, Paul Howard. *Amarillo: The Story of a Western Town*. (Texas Tech University Press), December 2006.

<sup>16</sup> *Handbook*, "Oliver-Eakle, Melissa Dora Callaway."

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furniture store and a funeral parlor (Figures 3 and 4). They had one daughter, Oliver Rea Eakle.<sup>17</sup> She kept her business interests separate from her husband's and signed herself in business affairs as M.D. Oliver-Eakle.<sup>18</sup> In 1903, she filed a residential plat with the city that contained a portion of the land she purchased in 1891. The M.D. Oliver-Eakle Addition spanned from 15th Street to 34th Street bound by Pierce and Washington Streets.<sup>19</sup> She donated a block of land at 28th and Polk streets to the city, later to become Oliver-Eakle Park.<sup>20</sup> The park now features a Texas Historical Marker, honoring Mrs. M.D. Oliver-Eakle and her accomplishments. She was widowed for the second time in 1914.<sup>21</sup>

Mrs. Oliver-Eakle eventually became one of the largest single property owners on Polk Street, investing in the 400-700 blocks and working to establish a prosperous section of the city center.<sup>22</sup> She commissioned her crowning achievement in 1926, hiring architect Wyatt Hedrick to design her eponymous skyscraper. Completed in 1927, it was the city's premier office building. Regarding the Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, the architect stated, "The city of Amarillo is to be congratulated on having in its environs such a far-sighted and public-spirited citizen as the owner of the building, Mrs. M.D. Oliver-Eakle, for not only has she built for today but for twenty years hence. There will never be a building in Amarillo that will surpass the Oliver-Eakle building in modern equipment, completeness of design or desirability for tenants."<sup>23</sup>

In addition to her financial contributions to the early formation of Amarillo, Mrs. Oliver-Eakle also put a great deal of effort into bringing culture to Amarillo. She helped to establish the first library in 1910 with the help of her niece Pearl Bethune Lawrence and the Just Us Girls (JUG) Club as well as the Amarillo Opera House in 1907 where several noted artists performed.<sup>24</sup> She was active in the local temperance movement with Amarillo putting the prohibition law into effect in 1912.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, she helped the finance Tri-State Fair in 1923 which is still a successful annual event.<sup>26</sup>

By the 1920's Oliver-Eakle had clearly established herself as an influential citizen of Amarillo and no longer felt the need to mask her role as a businesswoman in Amarillo. She was regularly recognized as a community leader and builder of the city and the Panhandle in newspaper articles.<sup>27</sup> In January 1927 she was an honored guest at the groundbreaking of the Davidson Hotel at Seventh and Tyler Streets.<sup>28</sup> Oliver-Eakle held the reins of the mule team as the first furrow was turned.<sup>29</sup> Upon the dedication of the Oliver-Eakle Building her image was prominently displayed on the front page of the *Amarillo Sunday News-Globe* next to a rendering of her new accomplishment.<sup>30</sup> After a long illness, she passed away in El Paso on November 16, 1931.<sup>31</sup> Upon her death, she was remembered in area newspapers for four days.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Price. "Melissa Dora Oliver-Eakle."

<sup>19</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Plemons/Mrs. M.D. Oliver-Eakle Additions Historic District, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas, National Register #92000370.

<sup>20</sup> *Handbook*, "Oliver-Eakle, Melissa Dora Callaway."

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Price. "Melissa Dora Oliver-Eakle."

<sup>23</sup> "New skyscraper is to be formally opened." *Amarillo Sunday News-Globe* (Amarillo, Texas), April, 10, 1927.

<sup>24</sup> *Handbook*, "Oliver-Eakle, Melissa Dora Callaway."

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Price. "Melissa Dora Oliver-Eakle."

<sup>28</sup> The Davidson was never completed and was embroiled in a protracted court battle with the Baker Hotel chain after the firm failed to fulfill its commitment to the project.

<sup>29</sup> "The Davidson." *Amarillo Sunday News-Globe* (Amarillo, Texas), April 10, 1927.

<sup>30</sup> "New skyscraper is to be formally opened."

<sup>31</sup> "Death Within Few Hours of Near Relative: Building, Sub-Division of Amarillo Owned and Developed by Her," *Amarillo Daily News*, November 17, 1931.

<sup>32</sup> Price. "Melissa Dora Oliver-Eakle."

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Melissa Dora Oliver-Eakle was a resident of Amarillo for 36 years and her rise to prominence as a community leader is mirrored by the remarkable growth experienced during the same period in the city she called home. When she arrived in 1895 it was a small town of less than 1,000 people and she worked to shape it into a city of 45,000 by the time of her death in 1931. She was a pioneer, developing her community both physically and culturally. Initially operating her interests through intermediaries, she utilized her skills to break down barriers to women and gain full recognition for her achievements business, philanthropy, and the arts.<sup>33</sup> She left a marked impression on the early formation of Amarillo as a cultural and economic stronghold of West Texas.

Two residential properties associated with Oliver-Eakle remain standing in Amarillo. Her home at 2000 S. Polk was designed by architect W. C. Townes in 1920 (listed in NRHP as part of Plemons/Oliver-Eakle Historic District in 1992) (Figure 16). The other at 2610 S. Harrison was designed by architect Harold Walsh in 1930 (Figure 17). She died having never occupied her new home. While these properties are important reminders of her life and legacy, the Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building stands as the most significant, visible, and high-profile representation of M. D. Oliver-Eakle's contributions to the remarkable development of Amarillo in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century.

### Female Business Owners in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Texas

In the 1920s and 1930s business and specifically real estate was still a male dominated profession and few women worked outside the home after marriage. For this reason, limited information is available on women business owners and real estate developers in Texas in the 1920s early 1930s. The lack of information does confirm that the participation and accomplishments of Mrs. Oliver-Eakle in Amarillo and a small group of her contemporaries across the state were extraordinarily remarkable for that time. Their unique circumstances often provided them opportunities not accessible to other women in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Usually these women were wealthy, ran a joint business with their husbands and were later widowed or divorced, were politically connected, and were philanthropists and developers in their respective communities.<sup>34</sup>

**Phoebe A. Worley** of Pampa, a town located just east of Amarillo, was a well-known female entrepreneur in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Texas. Born in Illinois in 1857, she moved to Montague County, Texas in 1871. It's unclear exactly when her family relocated to the Texas Panhandle, but by 1892 Phoebe, her husband Henry, and business partner Albert Combs, created a 9,000 acre ranch between Wildorado and Hereford. After the death of her husband, Phoebe continued her role as a business partner in the Combs-Worley Company, and the two became prominent ranchers, oil investors, real estate developers, and philanthropists. They financed several buildings in Pampa including the Worley Hospital, and the largest office building in town, the Combs-Worley Building (NRHP 1999) constructed in 1931.<sup>35</sup> Phoebe was even voted the "most useful citizen" in Pampa in 1931 and was reported as having "imparted to citizens the confidence in Pampa."<sup>36</sup>

**Mellie Keenan Esperson** (1872-1945) was a businesswoman and real estate developer in Houston, Texas. Born in Kansas in 1870, she came to Texas in 1903. Her husband Neils had interests in the Humble oilfield, and by the 1910s, the couple became involved in real estate, oil, and other business affairs. Neils Esperson passed away in 1922 leaving most of his assets to Mellie. She continued to participate in the business world for some twenty years after his death and was well-known philanthropist in Houston. She invested in several real estate projects including the Majestic Theater, the 32-story

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> "30 Texas Women: Women Have a Reputation that Precedes Them," *Texas Monthly*, February 2003, accessed November 18, 2018, <https://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/30-texas-women/>

<sup>35</sup> "Mrs. Worley Celebrates Her Seventy-Fifth Birthday Here," *The Pampa Daily News*, October 5, 1932; "Well-Known Pampa Residents are Surprised with Dinner Sunday Given by 25 Friends," *Pampa Daily News*, October 5, 1931; "Combs-Worley in Gift to T.W.C.," *Pampa Daily News*, December 25, 1932; National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Combs-Worley Building, Pampa, Gray County, Texas, 1999, 9-11.

<sup>36</sup> "Dodson Likes News Context – Gives Views," *The Pampa Sunday News-Post*, December 21, 1930; "1931 in Pampa," *Pampa Daily News*, January 1, 1932.



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Neils Esperson Building built in 1927 and the adjoining Mellie Esperson Building completed in 1941. She also served as developer in the Neils Esperson Industrial District and owned several other properties across Houston. She played an important role in the development of the Houston Ship Channel and was a patron to the Museum of Fine Arts, and the Houston Symphony. She married Harry Ewing Stewart in 1925 and the couple started the Stewart Company and the success of that business continued to feed her other projects and interests.<sup>37</sup>

**Oveta Culp Hobby** (1905-1995) was a wealthy business leader in Houston. Born in Killeen, Texas in 1905 and was educated at Mary Hardin Baylor College in Belton. Her father was a state legislator and his political connections provided her some unique opportunities including serving as legislative parliamentarian between 1925 and 1931. She remained involved in politics for the next several years and met and married newspaper publisher William Pettus Hobby in 1931. William Hobby served as Governor of Texas when James Ferguson was impeached in 1917 and later acquired the *Houston Post* in 1939. During World War II, Oveta served as the first commanding officer of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and served as the first secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare under President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953. The Hobby's decided to relocate the newspaper and built a new *Houston Post* building at 2410 Polk Street (NRHP 2018). Upon her husband's death in 1964 she remained involved in her work at the *Houston Post*. Oveta lived out the remainder of her life as a wealthy businesswoman, philanthropist, patron of Houston's art and cultural institutions, and political appointee.<sup>38</sup>

**Carrie Marcus Neiman** (1883-1953) was a prominent business owner in early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Dallas. Born in Kentucky in 1883, she moved to Hillsboro, Texas in 1895. In 1905 she met and soon married Abraham Lincoln Neiman. The couple formed a business partnership with her brother Herbert Marcus in Atlanta, Georgia. By September 1907, they relocated to Dallas opening the specialty clothing store known as Neiman Marcus. Carrie served a prominent role in the business as buyer helping to solidify the success of the company. She divorced her husband in 1928 and her brother helped her buy the entire Neiman Marcus business. Carrie continued as lead buyer and held fashion shows until her brother's death, at which point she became the chairman of the board in 1950.<sup>39</sup> Limited information is available on her community and philanthropic activities, but she rose to high level status among the few female business owners and civic leaders in Dallas and Texas.

Mrs. Oliver-Eakle's involvement in business and real estate places her among these other exemplary women ahead of their time. Her wealth, status, connections, and tenacity allowed her to access and navigate the business and real estate spheres traditionally dominated by men in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Her unique circumstances and bold business strategies enabled her to contribute significantly to her community in a number of ways, most obviously through the Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, and emerge as one of Amarillo's most prominent citizens.

### **The Oliver Eakle/Barfield Building**

On January 8, 1925, Mrs. M.D. Oliver-Eakle wrote a formal letter "To Amarillo Lodge Number 731 A.F and A.W., It's Worshipful Master, Wardens, membership, and Trustees of said Lodge."<sup>40</sup> In it she accepted the organization's offer to purchase their lodge building at 600 Polk Street for \$2,500.00, a sum she provided in cash.

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<sup>37</sup> "Esperson, Mellie Keenan," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed November 16, 2018, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fes25>; "Texas Department of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Standard Certificate of Death for Mrs. Mellie Esperson," *Ancestry.com*, accessed November 16, 2018.

<sup>38</sup> "Hobby, Oveta Culp," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed November 16, 2018, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fho86>; National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Houston Post, Houston, Harris County, Texas, 2018.

<sup>39</sup> "Nieman, Carrie Marcus," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed November 16, 2018, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fne30>.

<sup>40</sup> Letter from M. D. Oliver-Eakle to Amarillo Lodge No. 731. January 8, 1925, (Letter in the in M. D Oliver-Eakle family files, Panhandle Pains Museum)

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One year later, Mrs. Oliver-Eakle entered into a contract with Charles and R. C. Ware, owners of the Amarillo National Bank, for the development of a new building on the site. Under the provisions of the contract, Oliver-Eakle would retain controlling interest in the property of 55 percent, the remaining 45 percent interest being transferred to the Wares for \$54,000.00 to be paid in a combination of in-kind services and cash. Furthermore, the Wares would manage the property on her behalf free of charge until the debt was paid in full. The brothers were also required to provide a loan at the most advantageous terms of interest possible in the sum of \$75,000.00 for the erection of the new building.<sup>41</sup>

Designed by Wyatt C. Hedrick and completed in 1927, the Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building is often referred to as "Amarillo's First Skyscraper," though there were several multi-story buildings built in the same year as result of the construction boom in the Amarillo Central Business District. Standing at a prominent street corner in downtown Amarillo, the building is one block southwest of the courthouse square.

The building formally opened on April 11, 1927 to great fanfare. A prominent article in the *Amarillo Sunday News-Globe* boasted that the building was already 95% occupied.<sup>42</sup> It housed many of Amarillo and the Panhandle's most important businesses and organizations and featured 195 offices with three floors equipped with compressed air systems for medical and dental offices. Each floor was furnished with ice water fountains as well as hot and cold running water. Tenants in the building at the grand opening included doctors, lawyers, loan companies, a detective agency, insurance agencies, oil and drilling companies, construction companies, real estate agencies, association offices, an abstract company, and numerous private offices.<sup>43</sup> Among the several real estate development companies in the building were Amarillo Improvement Company, Crudgington and Pennington Real Estate and Texas Plains Building and Loan, was Fred M. Seale, the real estate agent for the Oliver-Eakle Residential Addition.<sup>44</sup> Notable first-floor tenants included City Drugs, Leveritt's Barber Shop, Parisian Hat Shop, and Panhandle Building and Loan. Professional organizations included the Amarillo Real Estate Board, Llano Cemetery Association, and Amarillo Master Plumbers Association. Attorneys included Foster, Nix & Fullingim, W. T Brothers, Perry S. Pearson and H. K Stanfield. Medical providers included Dr. F. W. Cabbage, Dentist, Dr. H. E. Mann, Osteopath, and Dr. Ben N Ard, Surgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics.<sup>45</sup> No evidence was located to suggest Mrs. Oliver-Eakle herself ever had an office in the building. As of 1928 she is listed as having a business address of 814 Pierce.<sup>46</sup>

The grand opening was announced by Mrs. Oliver-Eakle with a full-page advertisement in the *Amarillo Sunday News and Globe*. In it she boasted of the building's \$600,000.00 construction cost stating that, "No expense was spared in the erection of this fine structure to make it comfortable and convenient for tenants and the public as well."<sup>47</sup> The public was invited to an open house from 7 PM to 10 PM, a stately affair in which their hostess provided food and an orchestra for guests to enjoy.<sup>48</sup> Inside the revolving door at the main entrance, the elegant elevator lobby that was finished with marble and other lavish details for visitors to enjoy and the entire building thrown open for public inspection.<sup>49</sup> Her grandson stated that she was a "visionary" and that the building "was such a special building."<sup>50</sup> The ground floor, in addition to the extravagant elevator lobby, housed seven retail stores with window displays that faced along both Polk Street and SW 6th Street.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Contract (M. D Oliver-Eakle family files, Panhandle Pains Museum).

<sup>42</sup> "New skyscraper is to be formally opened."

<sup>43</sup> "New skyscraper is to be formally opened."

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> *Amarillo City Directory*. Hudspeth Directory Company, 1928.

<sup>46</sup> *Amarillo, Texas, City Directory*, 1928, page 458.

<sup>47</sup> *Amarillo News and Globe*. Advertisement, April 10, 1927, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> *Amarillo News and Globe*. Advertisement, April 10, 1927, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> "New skyscraper is to be formally opened."

<sup>50</sup> Jenni Treadway-Miller, "B.R. Barfield," *Amarillo Magazine*, September 27, 2009.

<sup>51</sup> "New skyscraper is to be formally opened."

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From its construction in 1927 and through the 1940s, the Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building was home to some of Amarillo's most important commercial and trade companies and was also the home to a popular radio program called "Man on the Street." During Amarillo's boom years of the late 1930's and 1940's the corner of Sixth and South Polk was known locally as the 100% corner, because the building was consistently occupied at a rate of 100%.<sup>52</sup>

As one of six buildings that were eight stories or taller built between 1926 and 1927, the Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building was among the highest concentration of skyscraper construction that Amarillo has seen. Other early multi-story buildings of the period include the 8-story Amarillo Building (1925 and 1926, NRHP 2017) at 301 South Polk designed by the architectural firm of Shepard and Wiser from Kansas City; the 8-story Rule Building (1927) at 101 East Third also designed by Shepard and Wiser; the 11-story Fisk Medical Arts Building (1927, NRHP 2012) at 724 South Polk designed by Guy A. Carlander, an Amarillo architect; the 14-story Herring Hotel (1926 and 1928) at 317 East Third also designed by Shepard and Wiser; and 14-story Santa Fe Office Building (1928-1930, NRHP 1996) at 900 South Polk designed by E.A. Harrison of Chicago.<sup>53</sup>

Each of these five buildings as well as the Oliver-Eakle/Barfield building has its own distinctive ornamentation and fenestration in brick, cast stone, and terra cotta; however, the overall design of all six utilizes the three-part composition of the base, shaft, and capital of the Classical column. In comparing the compositions this three-part arrangement appears most successful at the Oliver-Eakle Building where the divisions are more clearly and distinctly delineated. For example, at the Amarillo, Rule, Herring and Fisk Buildings the ornamentation appears applied to surface of the facades, especially along the parapets. On the other hand, Hedrick's composition incorporates the ornamentation more completely and effectively even with minimal variation in color. This is achieved with careful attention to the proportions and placement of the horizontal divisions, multiple horizontal divisions of varying emphasis between the three principal parts, and subtle articulation of the brick in the form of quoins along the building shaft and pilasters at the upper floors.

Beginning with the Santa Fe Building in 1928-1930, the architects designing commercial buildings in the Amarillo Central Business District began to move away from the more traditional Classical Revival style to Art Moderne and Art Deco styles, most notably the 8-story Potter County Courthouse (1930-1932, NRHP 1996) at 501 S. Taylor and the 2-story Paramount Theatre (1932) at 817 S. Polk.<sup>54</sup>

Oliver Rae Eakle, Mrs. Oliver-Eakle's only child, married Bourden Ivy Barfield on Thanksgiving Day, 1925 (Figure 11).<sup>55</sup> After the death of Oliver Rae's mother in 1931, the couple retained controlling interest in the building. It was renamed The Barfield Building with an official announcement in the *Amarillo Daily News* on January 3, 1948.<sup>56</sup> They undertook a major renovation of the storefronts and first floor retail spaces in 1955 with architect George Dahl (Figure 12). The project included installation of a central mechanical system. The total cost of the renovation was \$500,000.00.<sup>57</sup> Floors two through eight were remodeled in 1969 and 1971. In 1981 the first floor was altered to accommodate a savings and loan branch bank. This included removal of the 1955 George Dahl storefronts in favor of a brick arcade (Figures 13 and 14). The building was vacated soon thereafter.<sup>58</sup>

### Wyatt C. Hedrick

Wyatt C. Hedrick was born in Chatham, Virginia, in 1888. After earning a Bachelor of Arts degree from Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia, in 1909 he attended Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, and earned an engineering

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<sup>52</sup> B.R. Barfield. Interviewed by Sally S. Victor. Personal Interview. 1988.

<sup>53</sup> Victor, Sally and Larry Hodge. "Oliver Eakle Building," Draft National Register Nomination, 1989 (THC Files).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid

<sup>55</sup> "Approaching Eakle-Barfield Marriage is Announced at Affair Given This Afternoon." *The Amarillo Globe* (Amarillo, Texas), November 18, 1925.

<sup>56</sup> "Landmark is Now Barfield Building." *Amarillo Daily News* (Amarillo, Texas), Jan 3, 1948.

<sup>57</sup> "Barfield Building to Get \$500,000 Remodeling Job." *Amarillo Sunday News Globe* (Amarillo, Texas), Sept 4, 1955.

<sup>58</sup> Personal interview, B.R. Barfield, 1988. THC National Register Files. Barfield Building NR Nomination, 1988.

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degree the following year. Hedrick worked as an engineer in Virginia for several years before being hired by Stone and Webster Engineering Corporation of Boston as a construction engineer for the company's Dallas office. After a short stay with the firm he established his own construction company in Fort Worth in 1914. It was during this time that he was contracted to construct the Boedeker Ice Cream Factory at 1201 South Ervay. His role as a contractor across all of his projects helped him establish a strong relationship with the prominent Fort Worth architectural firm of Sanguinet and Staats, for whom he constructed the Fort Worth Criminal Justice Building (1918), and the Houston Place Lofts (Fort Worth, 1918). In 1922 he was invited to become a partner in the firm later known as Sanguinet, Staats, Hedrick, and Gottlieb, and in 1926 he purchased the remaining interests upon the retirement of his elder partners.<sup>59</sup>

The influence of Sanguinet & Staats on Hedrick's design aesthetic is clear in his early independent works such as the Oliver-Eakle Building. Sanguinet & Staats was a prolific firm with commissions across a wide variety of building types, but their practice is known for their design of multi-story office buildings throughout Texas. They became so successful state-wide that they had branch offices and/or limited partnerships in San Antonio, Houston, and Wichita Falls in addition to their main office in Fort Worth. Sanguinet & Staats' designs for commercial office buildings typically utilized a three-part composition corresponding to the divisions of the Classical column with a 1 to 3-story base utilizing distinctive Classical ornamentation motifs for retail space, a more subdued mid-section or shaft utilized as office space and crowned with a highly ornate 1 to 3-story upper-section or capital utilized as office space and/or penthouse. Their practice produced commercial skyscrapers in San Antonio, Houston, Fort Worth, Beaumont, Waco, Midland, and Shreveport, Louisiana.<sup>60</sup> Among the last designs completed by the firm prior to the 1926 retirement of its founding principals was the Houston Post Dispatch Building (NRHP 2002) in downtown Houston. Though much larger in scale and with variation in materials, the building shares notable similarities to the Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building in terms of massing, proportion and the three-part arrangement and no doubt influenced Hedrick's design.

After the retirement of his partners, Hedrick's designs initially continued to reflect the Classical three-part vertical block commonly used by the firm as exemplified in the Medical Arts Building (Fort Worth, 1926), the Worth Theater Building (Fort Worth (1927), and the Sanger Building (Fort Worth 1929) among others. Hedrick's design aesthetic continued to evolve, with the architect eventually abandoning more traditional compositions in favor of Art Deco and Art Moderne (Texas and Pacific Terminal Complex, Fort Worth, 1928-1930), and eventually embracing the modern movement of the 1950s. The Fidelity Union Building (Dallas, 1952) and Corrigan Tower (Dallas, 1952) stand in striking contrast to his earlier three-part compositions. The Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building is an important example of Hedrick's early work as the principal in charge of his firm and is his only composition of its type in Amarillo. Hedrick's design for the Davidson Hotel in Amarillo was never realized.<sup>61</sup> His only other notable work in the city was the design for St. Anthony's Hospital at Polk and West Amarillo Boulevard. The beautiful three-part composition is horizontal in its massing and includes gothic stylistic details.<sup>62</sup>

Over more than 30 years, Hedrick grew the firm to nationwide prominence and the third largest in the country.<sup>63</sup> Hedrick produced buildings in a wide range of historical and modern styles. He died in Houston of a heart attack on May 5, 1964 and was buried in Fort Worth.<sup>64</sup> Notable Texas examples of Hedrick's work include:<sup>65</sup>

Medical Arts Building - Fort Worth (1926)  
Worth Theater - Fort Worth (with Alfred C. Finn, 1927)

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<sup>59</sup> Handbook, "Hedrick, Wyatt Cephas."

<sup>60</sup> Victor, Sally and Larry Hodge. "Oliver Eakle Building."

<sup>61</sup> *Amarillo Sunday News-Globe*. "The Davidson." (Amarillo, Texas), April 10, 1927.

<sup>62</sup> The Amarillo Globe. "Institution is Complete in All respects." (Amarillo, Texas), May 23, 1928.

<sup>63</sup> Liles

<sup>64</sup> Ibid

<sup>65</sup> Handbook, "Hedrick, Wyatt Cephas."

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Worth Hotel - Fort Worth (1927)  
Sterick Building (1928) in Memphis, Tennessee  
YWCA Building - Fort Worth (1928)  
Sanger Building - Fort Worth (1929)  
Baker Hotel - Mineral Wells (1929)  
Lone Star Gas Company Building - Fort Worth (1929)  
Hollywood Theater - Fort Worth (with Alfred C. Finn, 1930)  
Commerce Oil & Gas Building - Fort Worth (1930)  
Aviation Building - Fort Worth (1930)  
1930 Electric Building - Fort Worth (1930)  
Texas and Pacific Terminal and Warehouse - Fort Worth (1931)  
United State Post Office - Fort Worth (1933)  
Will Rogers Memorial Center - Fort Worth (with Elmer G. Withers, 1936)  
Fort Worth City Hall - Fort Worth (with Elmer G. Withers, 1938)  
Shamrock Hotel - Houston (1949)  
Baroid Sale Division Company Building - Houston (1952)  
Fidelity Union Building - Dallas (1952)  
Corrigan Tower (for Leo Corrigan) – Dallas (1952)  
211 Ervay (for Leo Corrigan) – Dallas (1958)  
Dallas Love Field - Dallas

### Summary

The Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building is a prominent architectural landmark in the Amarillo central business district. Commissioned by prominent local businesswoman Melissa Dora Oliver-Eakle, the building stands as the most significant, visible, and high-profile representation of her contributions and achievements as a real estate developer in Amarillo. One of several early skyscrapers constructed in a remarkable though short-lived economic boom of the 1920s, it stands out for the quality of its three-part vertical block design. The building is an important local example of the work of Texas architect Wyatt C. Hedrick. Designed in 1926 and completed in 1927, the composition reflects Hedrick's early work as principal in charge of the firm founded by his mentors and partners, Sanguinet & Staats, and reveals their influence as skilled architects known for their Classically-styled high rise buildings. For these reasons, the Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B in the area of Commerce and Criterion C in the area of Architecture, both at the local level of significance. The period of significance is 1927-1931.



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Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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**Additional Documentation**

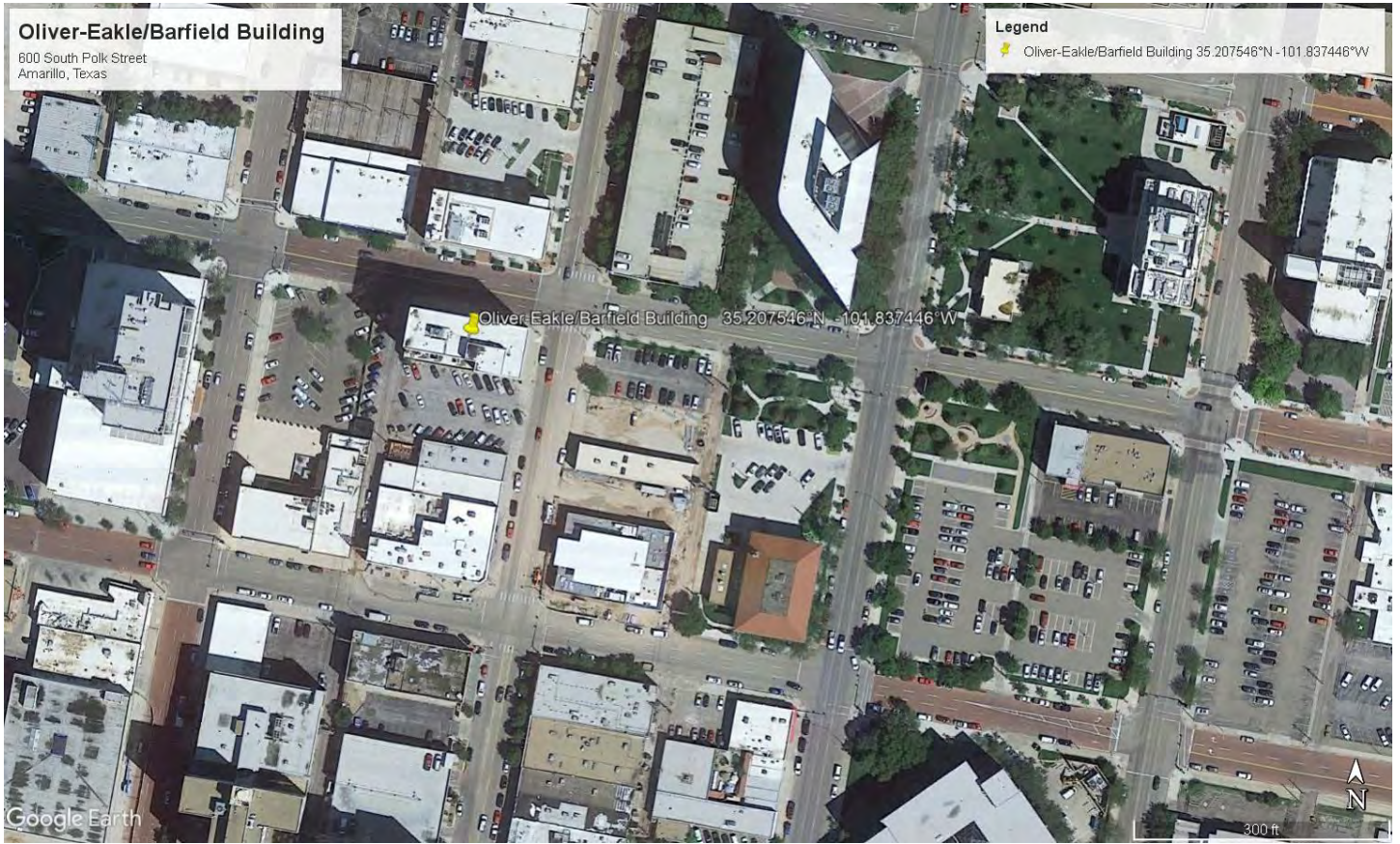
Map 1  
Vicinity Map





Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

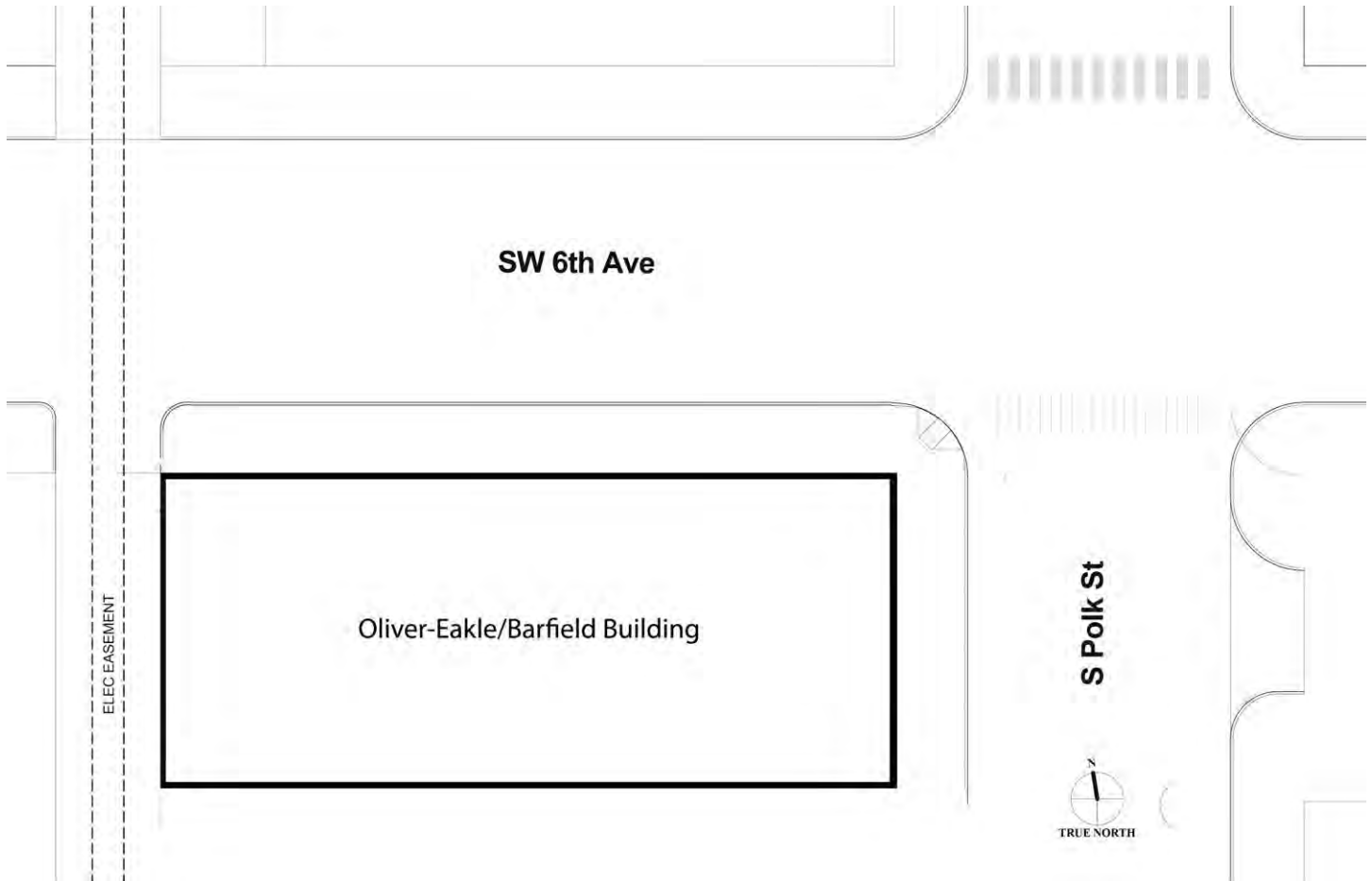
Map 2  
Google Earth Map, Accessed July 23, 2018



Latitude: 35.207546°N Longitude: -101.837446°W

Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

Map 3  
Site Plan – Property line conforms to building limits



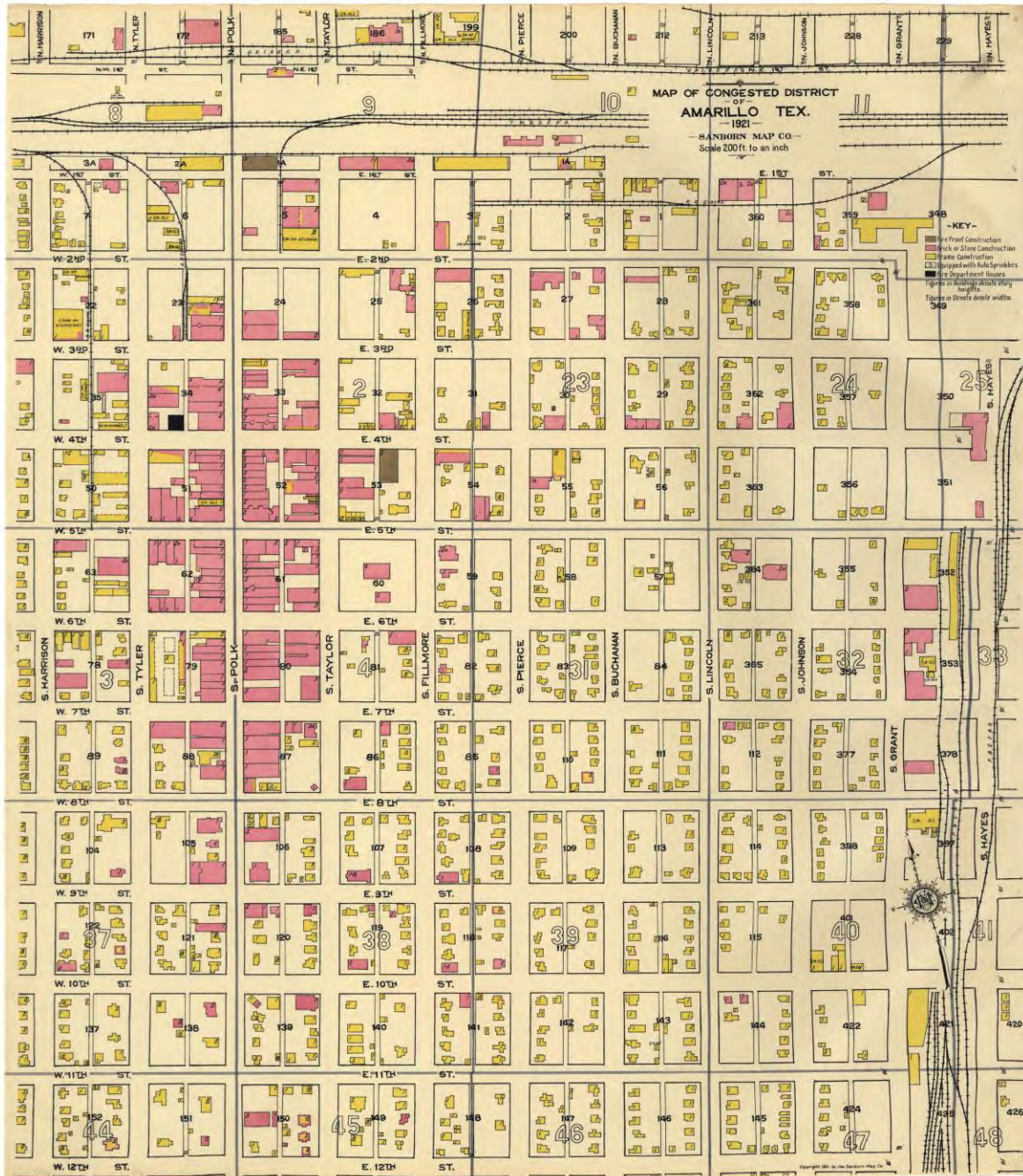


Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

Map 4

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Detail (1921) 1 Volume, page 1

Map depicts the downtown area as a district of one and two-story commercial buildings prior to the building boom between 1925 and 1929.

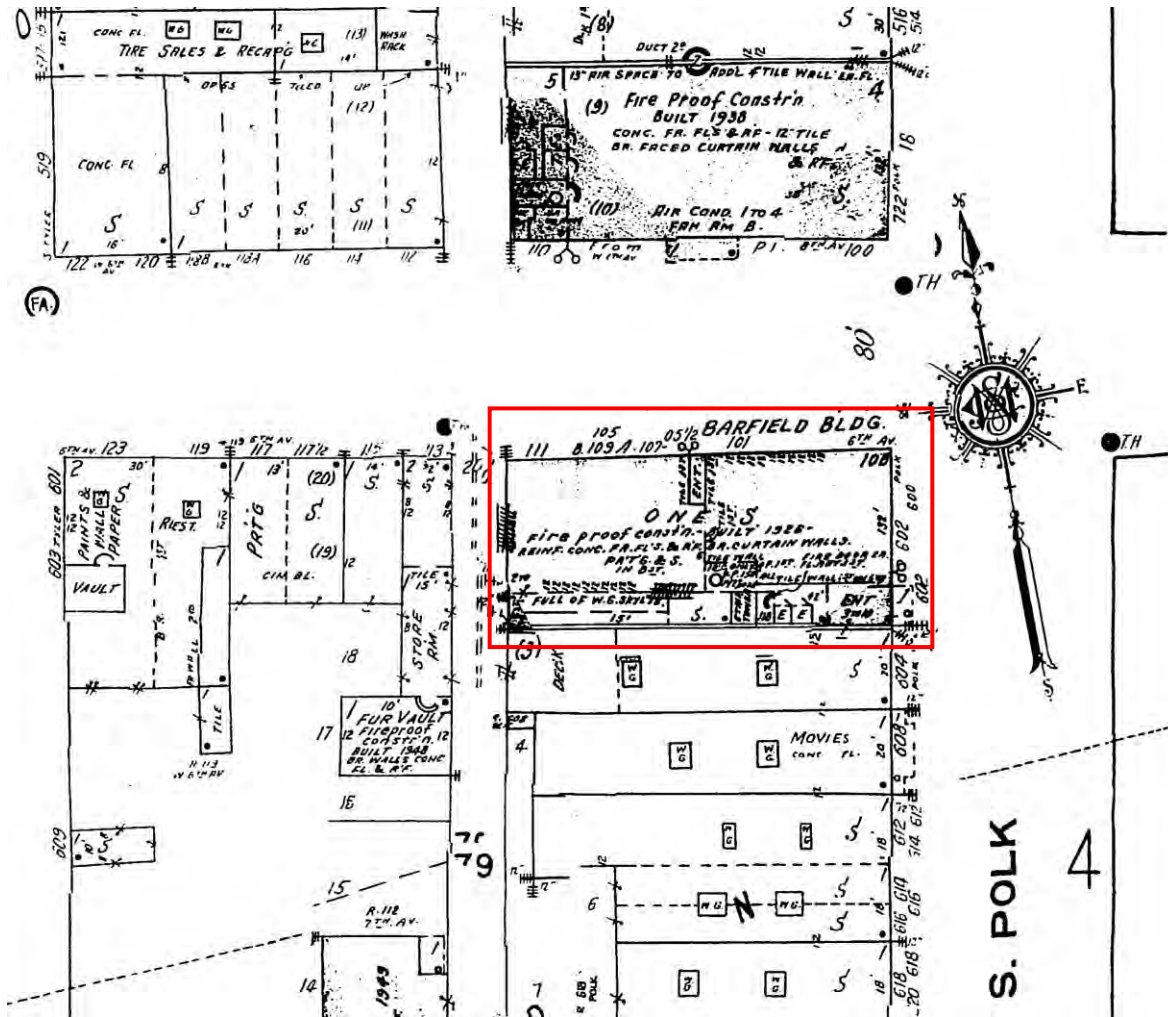


From the collections of the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.

Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

Map 5

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Detail (1955), Volume 1, sheet 3



Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Figure 1

Melissa Dora Callaway Oliver (c. 1900)

Courtesy: Panhandle Plains Historical Museum – M.D. Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Family Collection





Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Figure 2

Polk Street (c. 1910) – Facing south from 4<sup>th</sup> street (inset is of the same view in 1930c with the Oliver-Eakle Building, Amarillo Building and Santa Fe Building (from right to left).  
Courtesy: Amarillo Public Library



Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Figure 3

Eakle Undertaking Parlor (1892) – 709 Polk Street  
Courtesy: Amarillo Public Library



Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Figure 4

Eakle Furniture Store (1908) – 600 Polk Street  
Courtesy: Amarillo Public Library





Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Figure 5

M.D. Oliver-Eakle Building – Color postcard (c. 1928)

Courtesy: Amarillo Public Library



Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Figure 6

Polk Street facing south from 4<sup>th</sup> Street with Oliver-Eagle Building at center (c. 1930)

Courtesy: Amarillo Public Library





Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Figure 7

Polk Street facing south at 6<sup>th</sup> Street with Oliver-Eagle Building at right (c. 1930)

Courtesy: Amarillo Public Library



Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Figure 8

Construction of the White and Kirk Furniture Store at 516 South Polk (c. 1938)

Oliver-Eakle Building is visible on the right.

Courtesy: Amarillo Public Library

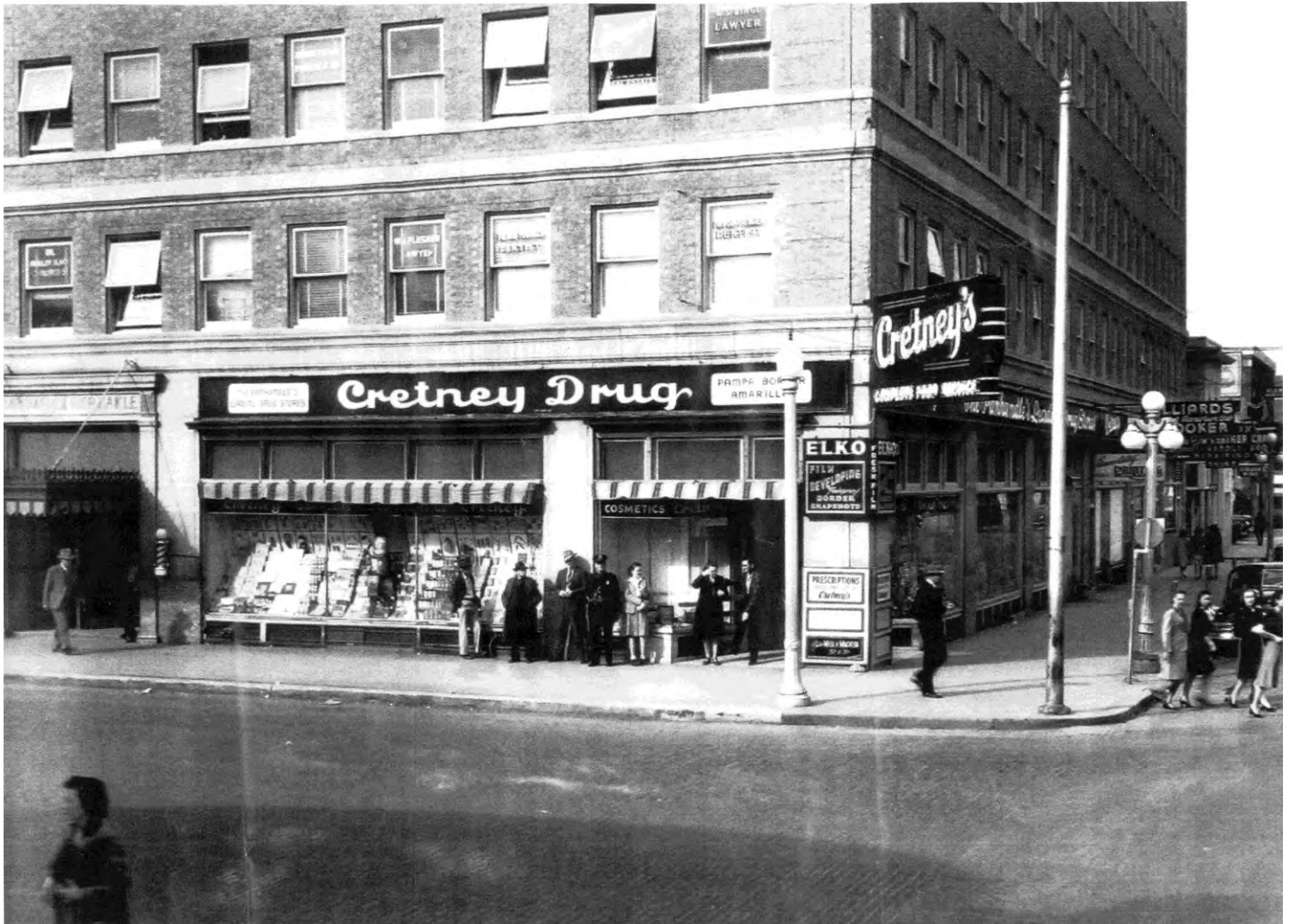


Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

Figure 9

Cretney's Drug Store at the Oliver-Eagle Building (c. 1940)

Courtesy: Owner's files



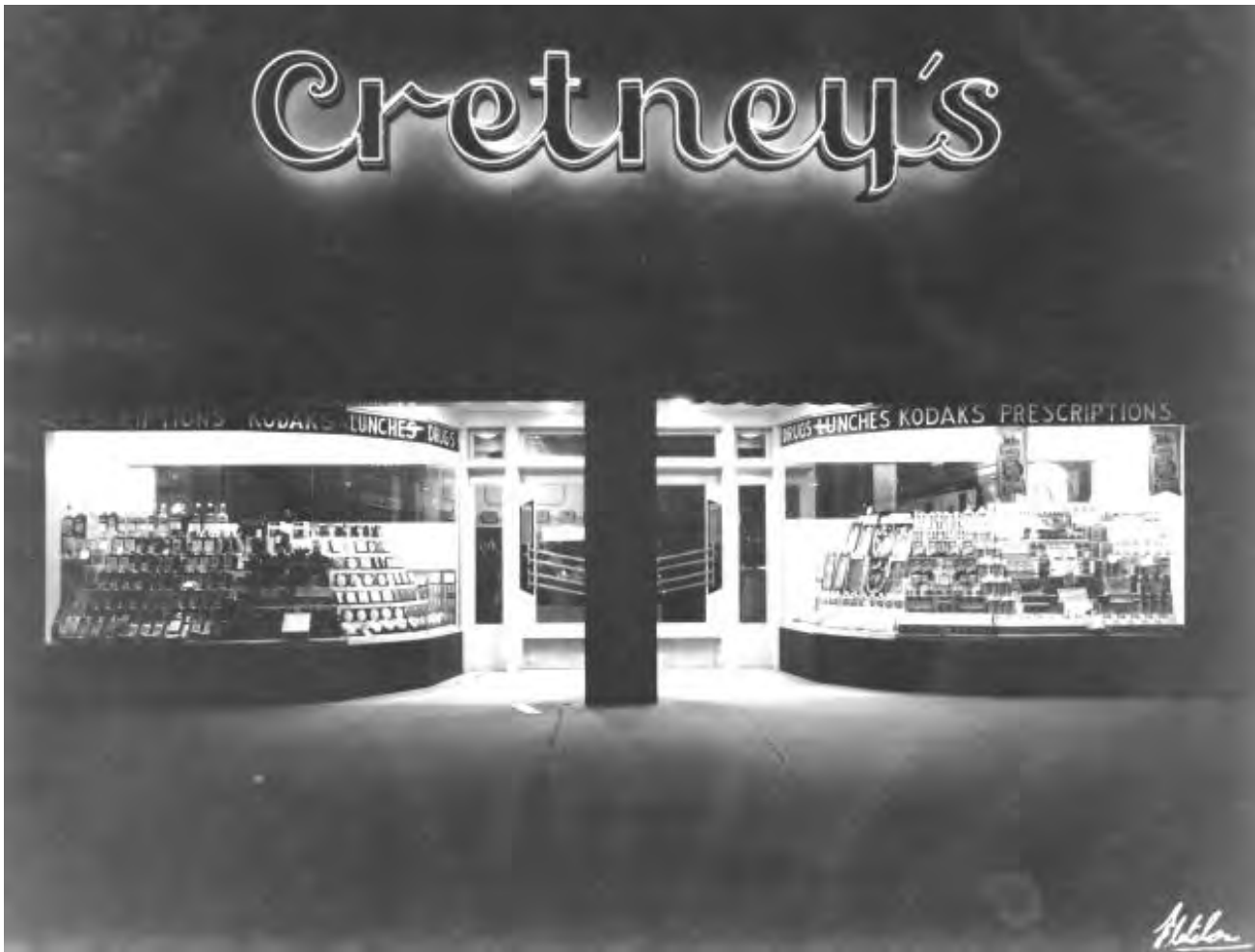
Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Figure 10

Nighttime view of Cretney's Drug Store at the Oliver-Eakle Building (1940c)

Courtesy: Amarillo Public Library





Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Figure 11

Bourden Ivy and Oliver Rae Eakle Barfield (c. 1925)

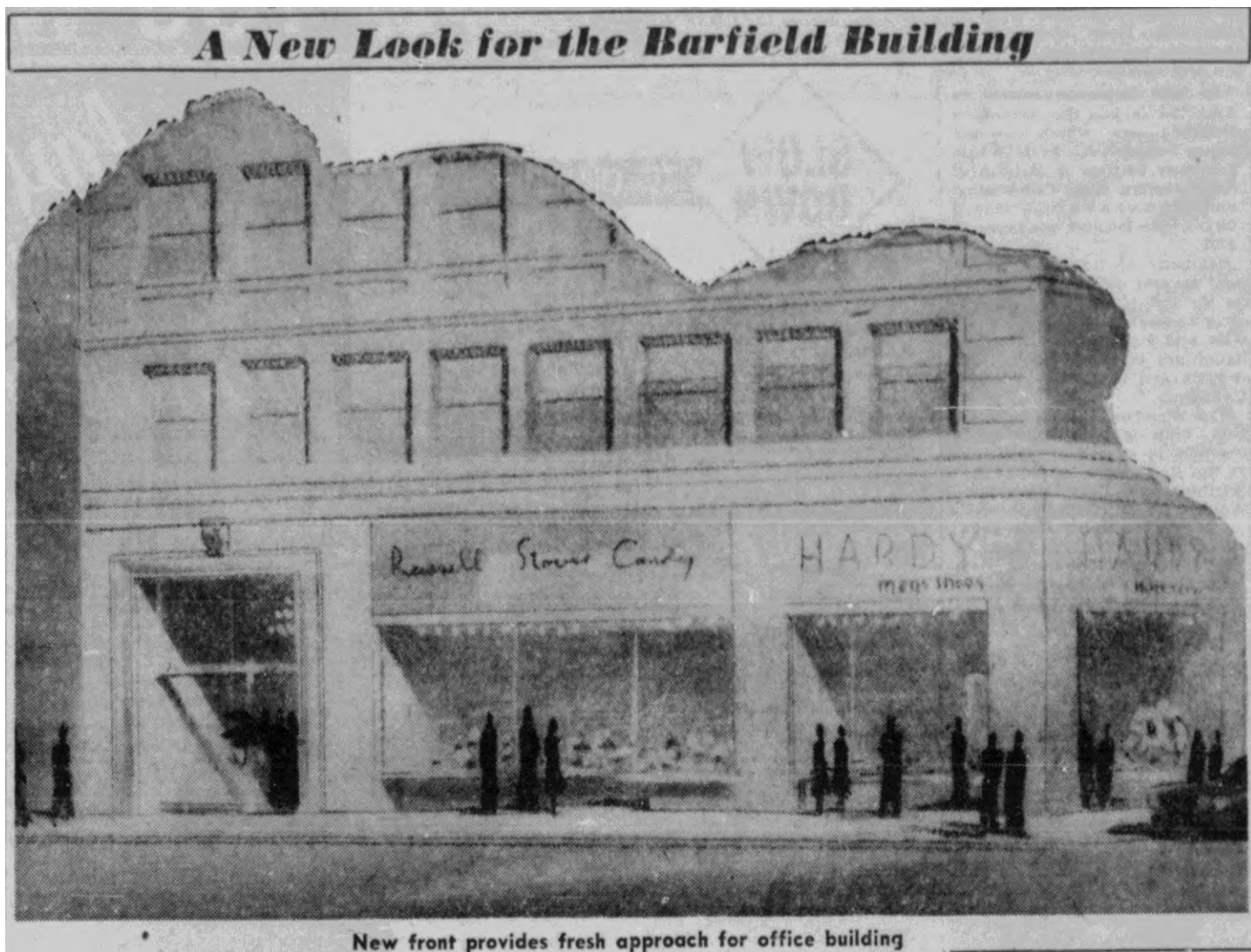
Courtesy: Panhandle Plains Historical Museum – M.D. Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Family Collection



Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

Figure 12

The George Dahl redesign of the building's storefronts as depicted in the Amarillo Sunday News Globe, September 4, 1955.



Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Figure 13

Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building view of the first-floor storefronts, 1988c.  
Victor, Sally and Larry Hodge. "Oliver Eakle Building," Draft National Register Nomination, 1989 (THC Files).



Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Figure 14

Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building view from the northeast, 1988c.  
Victor, Sally and Larry Hodge. "Oliver Eakle Building," Draft National Register Nomination, 1989 (THC Files).  
American National Bank of Amarillo and SPS Tower visible in background.





Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Figure 15

Melissa Dora Oliver-Eakle – Pastel Portrait  
Courtesy: Panhandle Plains Historical Museum





Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Figure 16

M.D. Oliver-Eagle House, 2000 S. Polk  
Photograph by Jay Firsching 06/11/2018





Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Figure 17

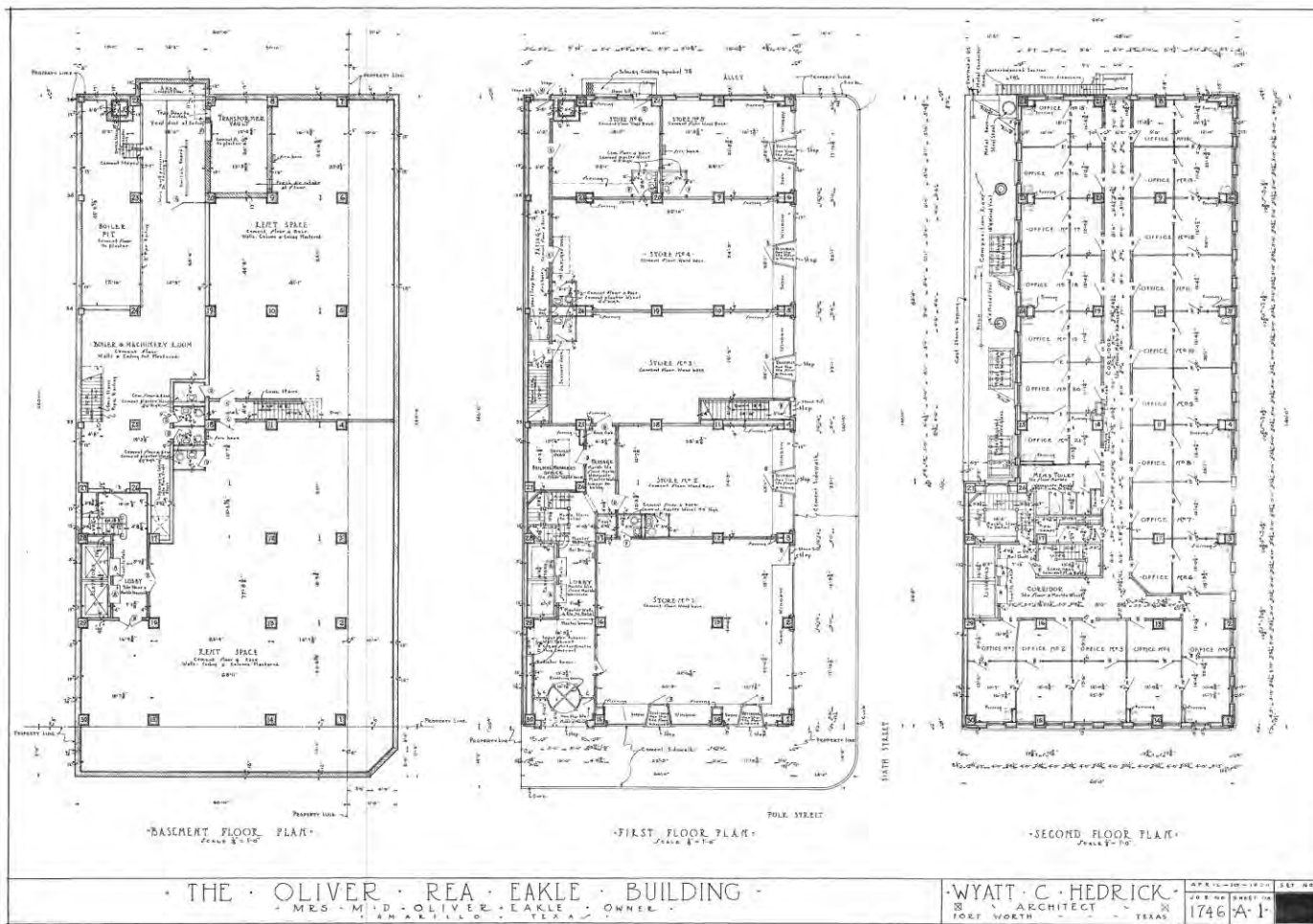
Oliver-Eakle/Barfield House, 2610 S. Harrison  
Photograph by Jay Firsching 06/11/2018



Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

Figure 18

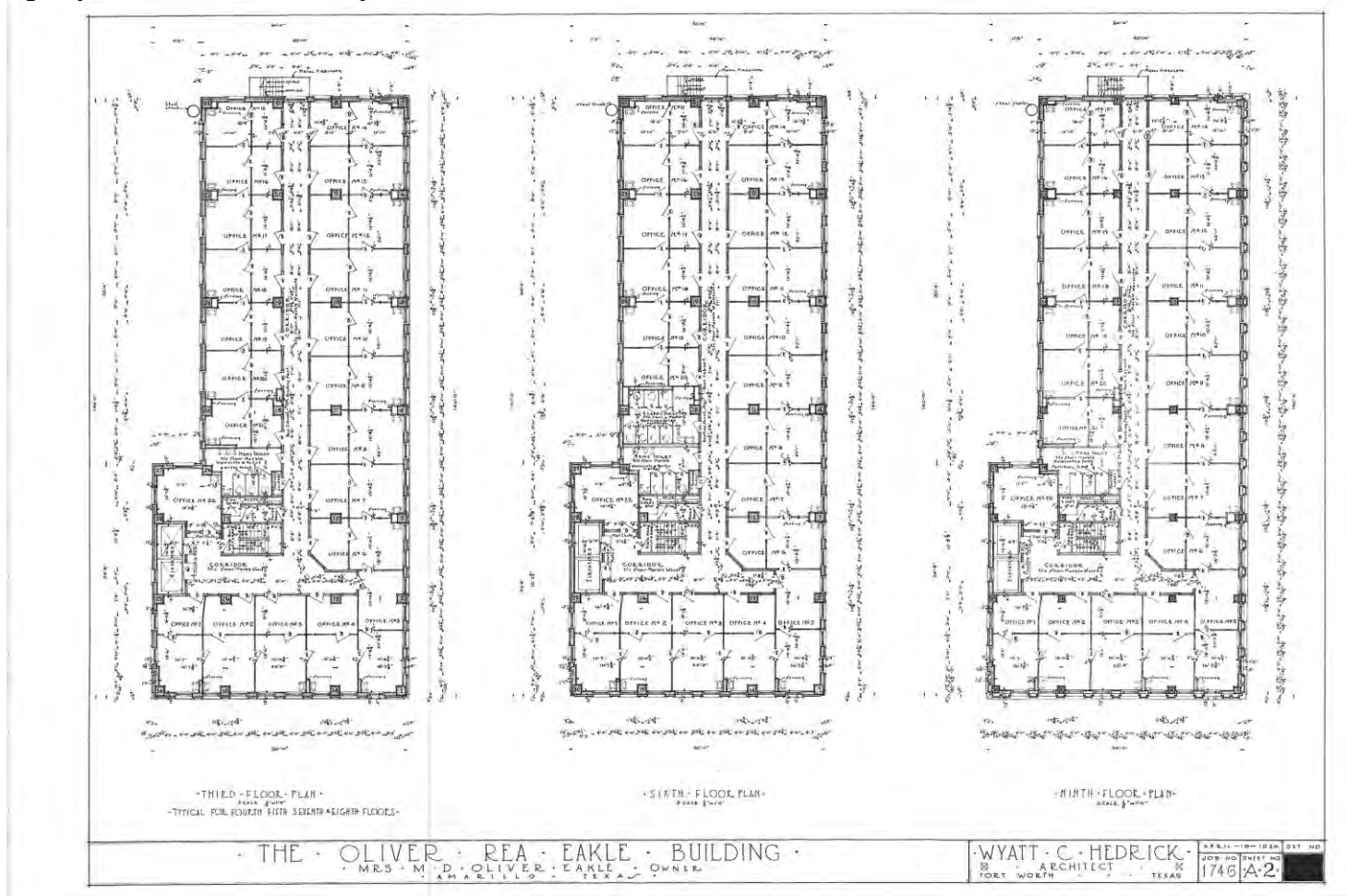
Oliver-Eakle Building, Wyatt Hedrick, Architect, April 10, 1926, Sheet A-1



Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

Figure 19

Oliver-Eakle Building, Wyatt Hedrick, Architect, April 10, 1926, Sheet A-2

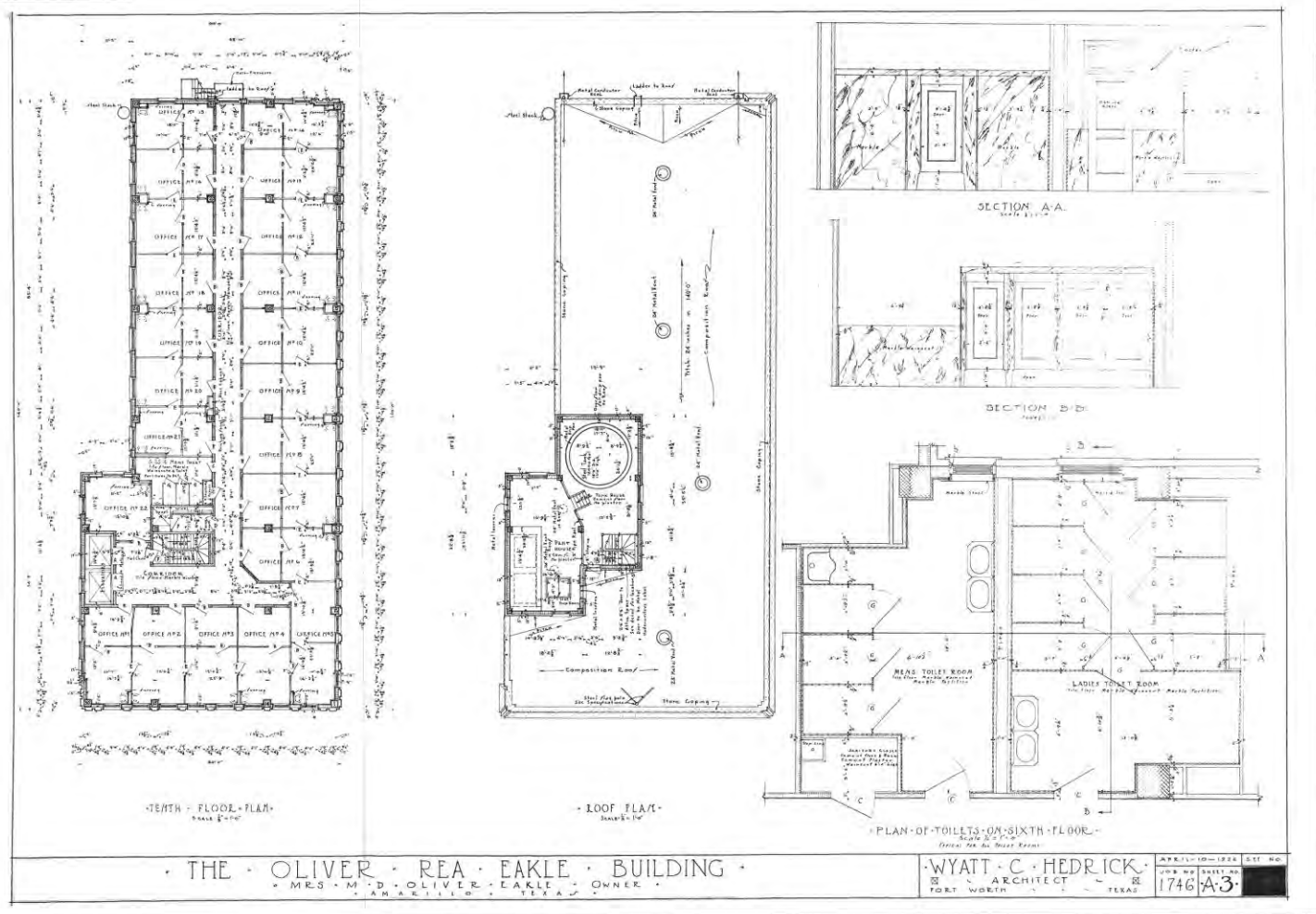




Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

Figure 20

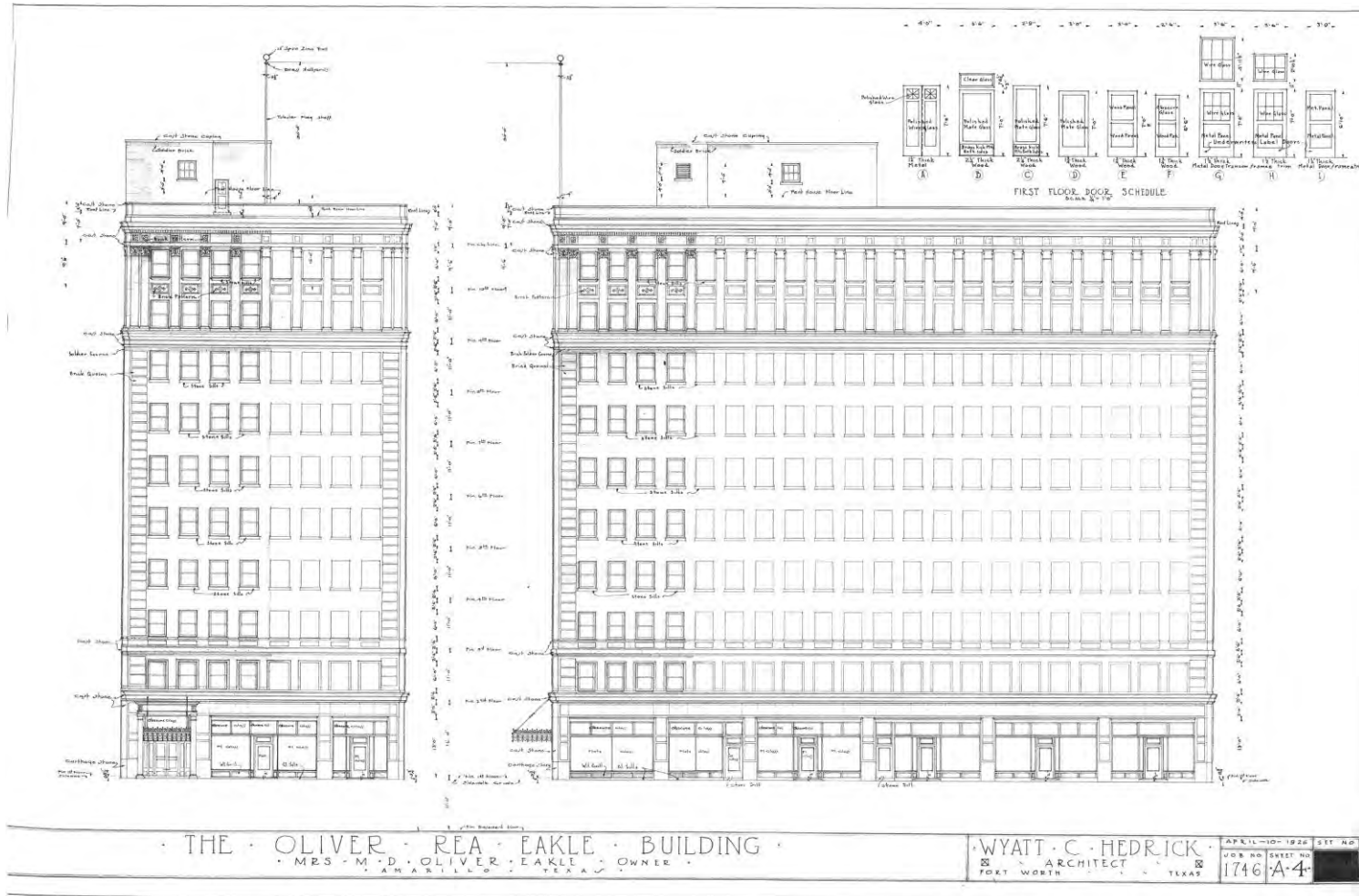
Oliver-Eakle Building, Wyatt Hedrick, Architect, April 10, 1926, Sheet A-3



Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

Figure 21

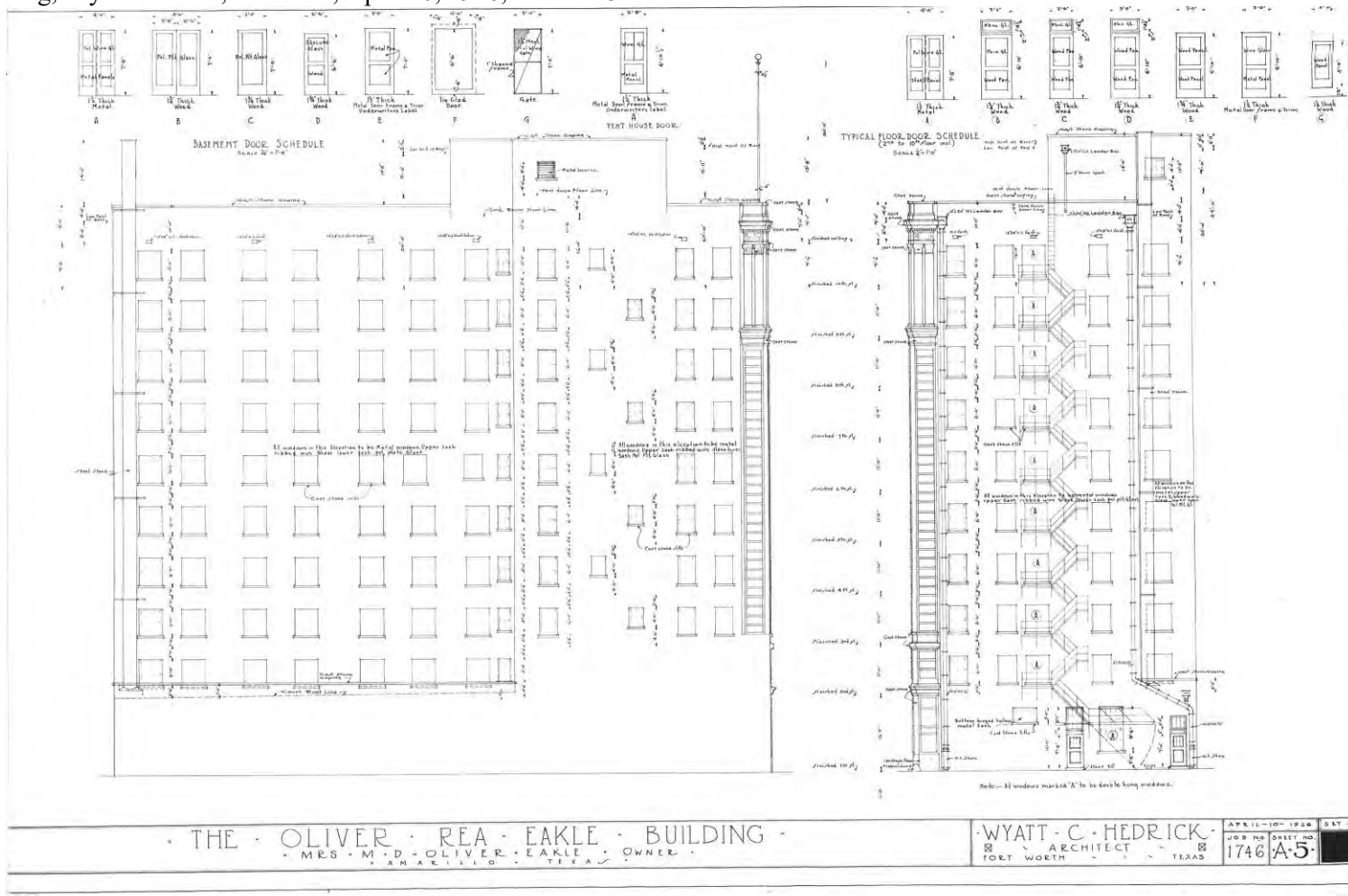
Oliver-Eakle Building, Wyatt Hedrick, Architect, April 10, 1926, Sheet A-4



Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

Figure 22

Oliver-Eakle Building, Wyatt Hedrick, Architect, April 10, 1926, Sheet A-5





Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

Figure 23

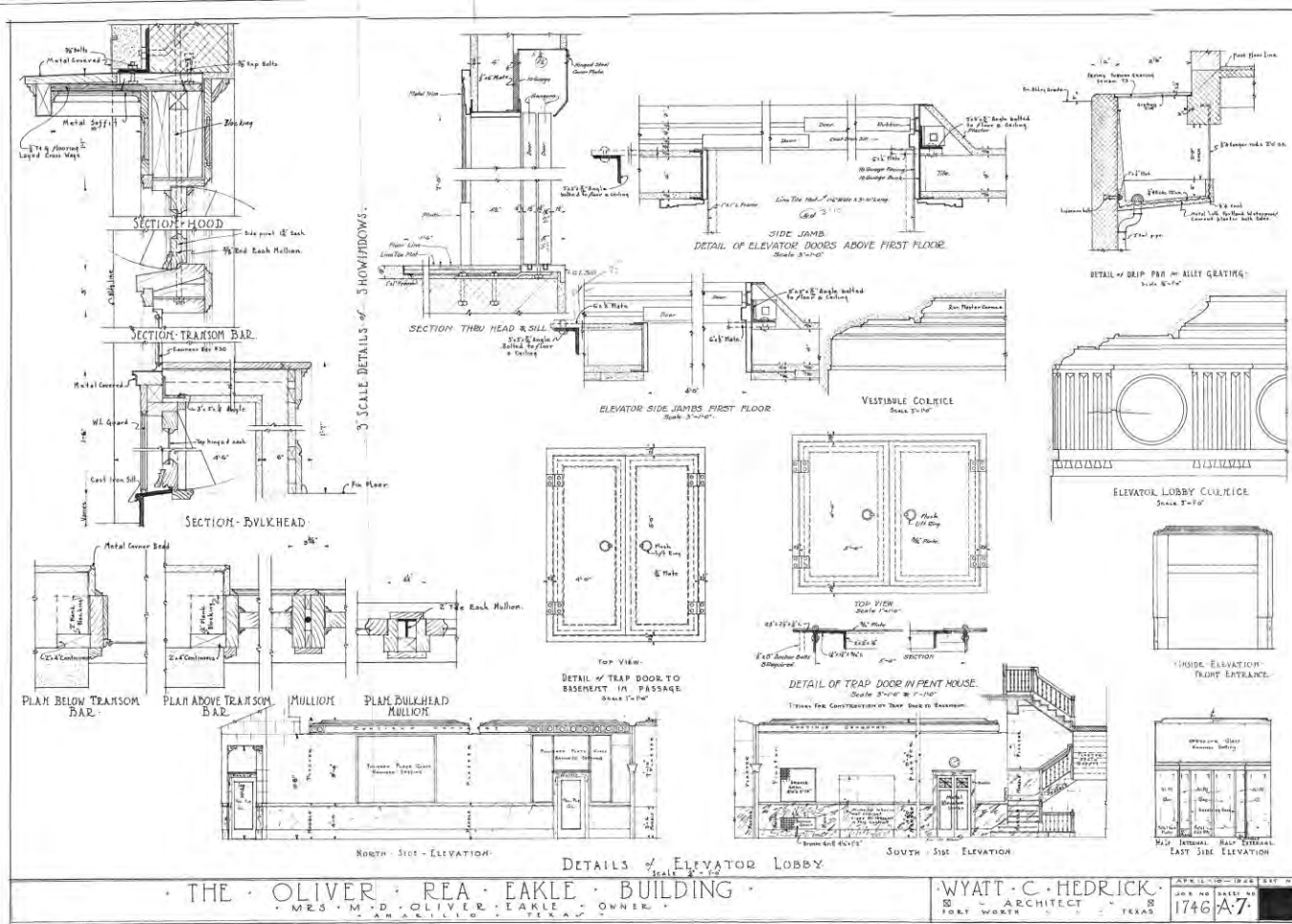
Oliver-Eakle Building, Wyatt Hedrick, Architect, April 10, 1926, Sheet A-6



Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

Figure 24

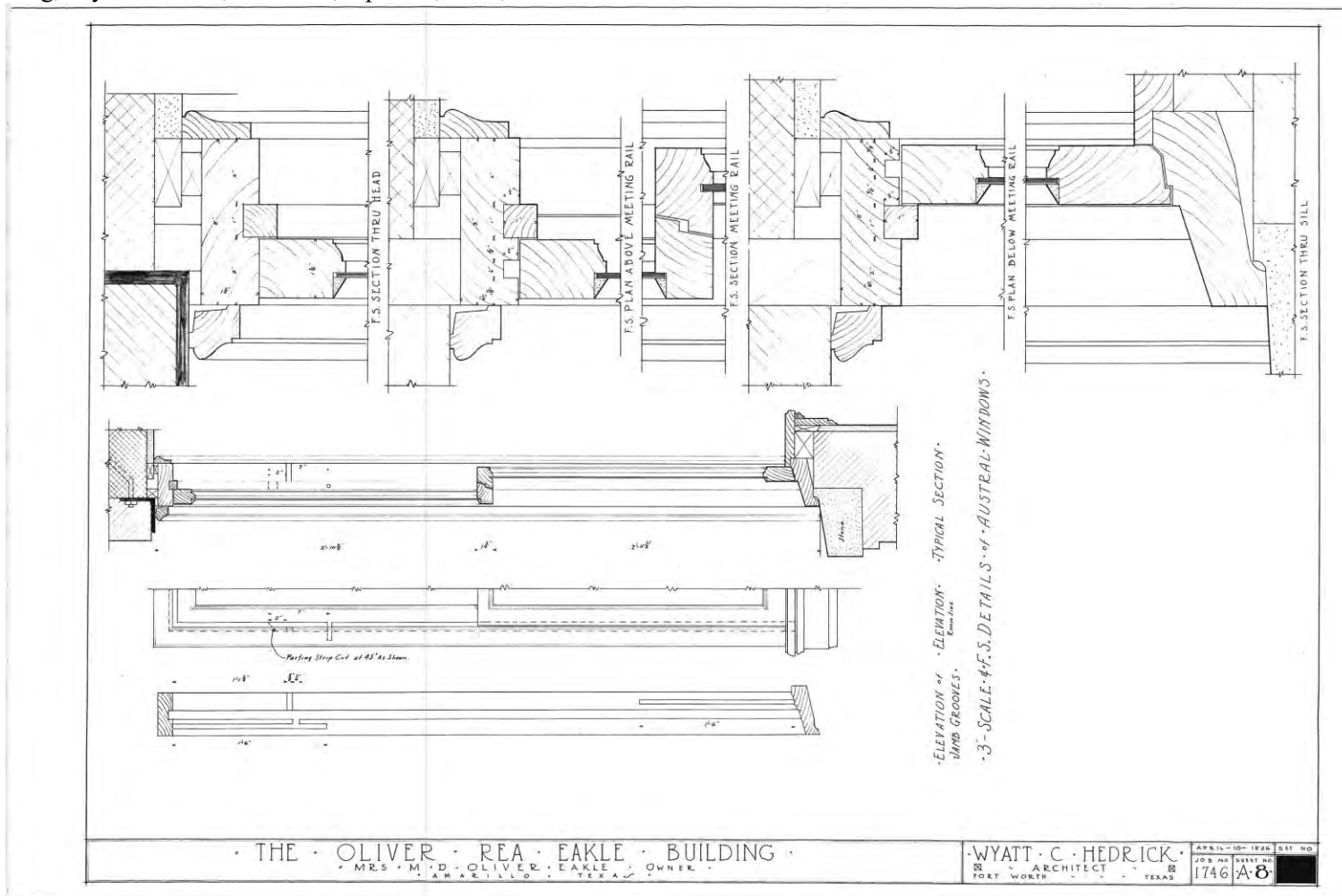
Oliver-Eakle Building, Wyatt Hedrick, Architect, April 10, 1926, Sheet A-7



Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

Figure 25

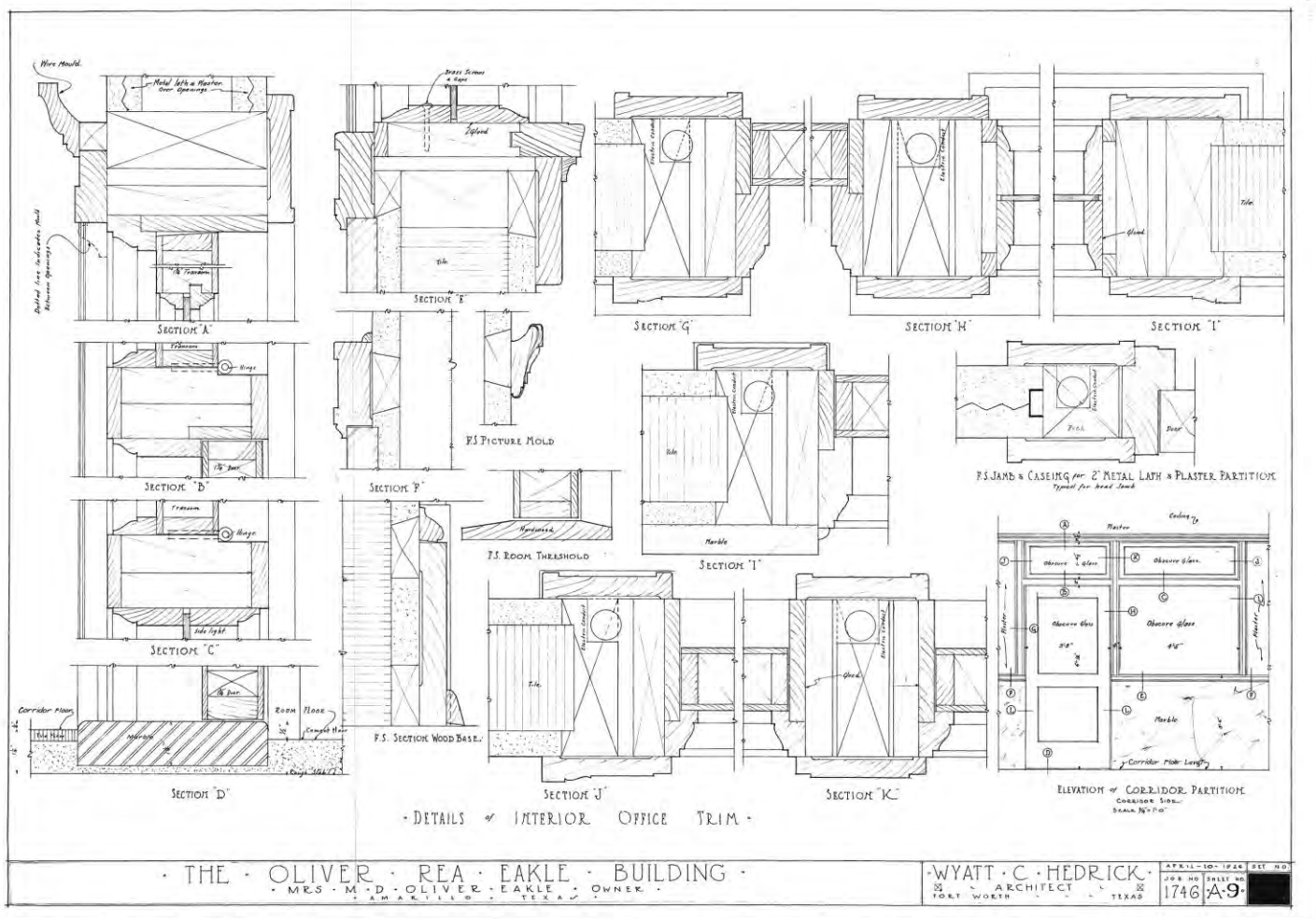
Oliver-Eakle Building, Wyatt Hedrick, Architect, April 10, 1926, Sheet A-8



Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

Figure 26

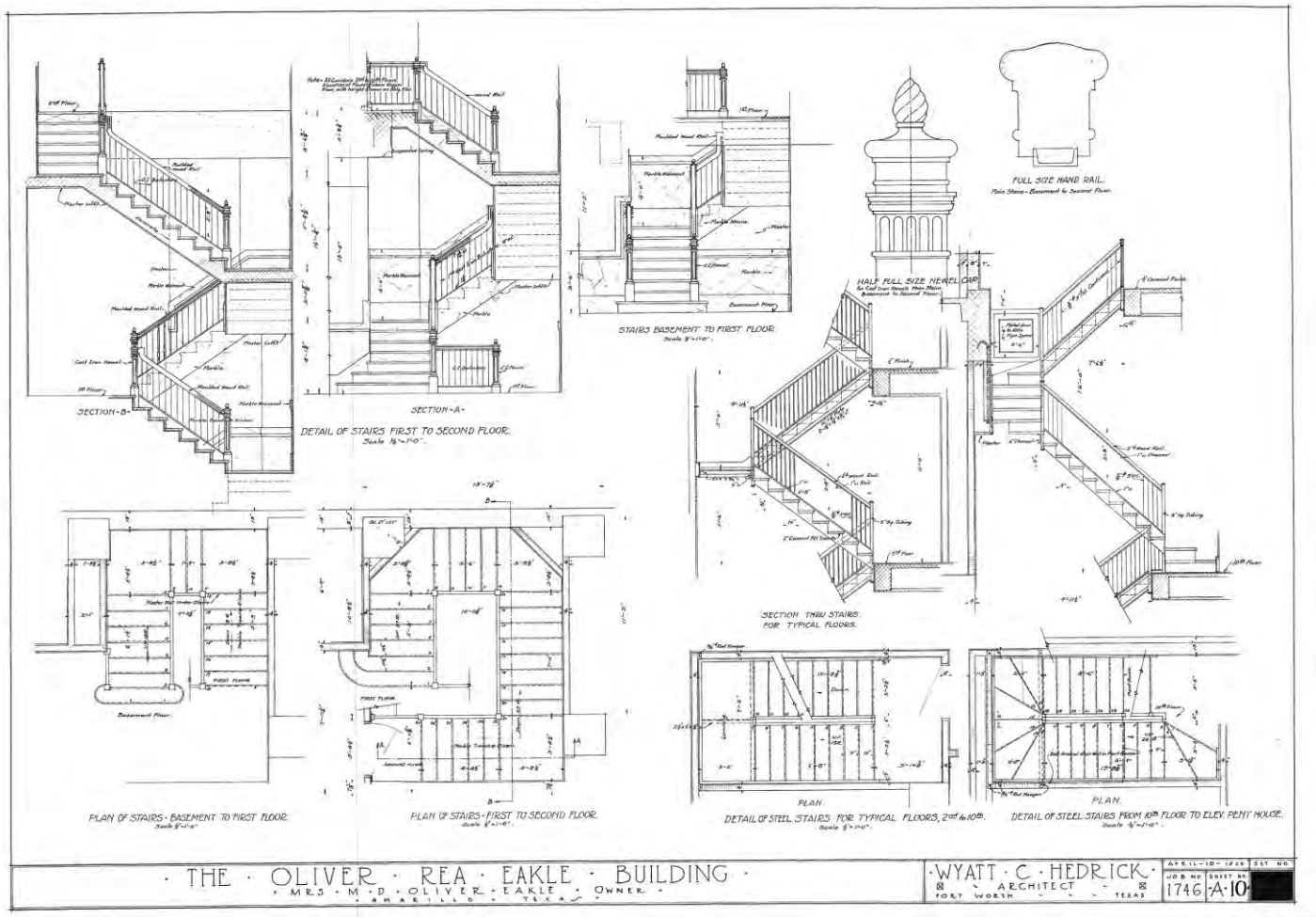
Oliver-Eakle Building, Wyatt Hedrick, Architect, April 10, 1926, Sheet A-9



Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

Figure 27

Oliver-Eakle Building, Wyatt Hedrick, Architect, April 10, 1926, Sheet A-10





Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photos

Photo 1: Aerial View.



Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 2: Streetscape view – Polk Street facing south.





Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 3: Streetscape view – Polk Street facing north.



Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 4: Sixth Street facing west.





Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 5: Northeast (primary) oblique. Camera facing southwest.



Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 6: Southeast oblique. Camera facing northwest.





Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 7: East (primary) elevation. Camera facing west.



Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 8: Northeast (primary) oblique. Camera facing southwest.





Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 9: West (rear) elevation. Camera facing east.



Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 10: South elevation. Camera facing north.





Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 11: Detail of cornice and parapet. Camera facing northwest.





Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 12: Detail of ornamentation. Camera facing west.



Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 13: General view in basement (typical). Camera facing east.





Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 14: Boiler, view in basement. Camera facing east.





Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 15: General view of first floor. Camera facing west.



Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 16: First floor lobby. Camera facing south.





Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 17: First floor primary lobby stair. Camera facing southeast.



Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 18: Detail view of Caen stone plaster treatment fragment. Camera facing west at stair.





Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 19: Second floor general view. Camera facing west.



Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 20: Second floor detail of mosaic tile floor and terrazzo. Camera facing west.





Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 21: Second floor wood astral window (typical). Camera facing north.



Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 22: Second floor steel austral windows (typical). Camera facing southwest.





Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 23: Third floor general view (typical). Camera facing west.





Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 24: Third floor general view (typical). Camera facing south.



Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 25: Ninth floor with fragment of original corridor. Camera facing west.





Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 26: Tenth floor with fragment of original corridor. Camera facing east.





Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 27: Tenth floor corridor. Camera facing east.





Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 28: Elevator equipment in penthouse. Camera facing southeast.



Oliver-Eagle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

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Photo 29: General view of roof. Camera facing west.



































5th St

POLK ST

H  
P  
P  
R









Amarillo National Bank

AMARILLO  
ECON

















FEIBLE  
KEWANEE  
PORTABLE  
FIREBOX BOILER

KEWANEE  
PORTABLE  
FIREBOX BOILER



KEWANEE  
BOILER

KEWANEE  
BOILER

KEWANEE  
BOILER









































my youth is yours - 1985























UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Oliver--Eakle--Barfield Building

Multiple Name: \_\_\_\_\_

State & County: TEXAS, Potter

Date Received: 11/27/2018      Date of Pending List: 12/10/2018      Date of 16th Day: 12/26/2018      Date of 45th Day: 1/11/2019      Date of Weekly List: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference number: SG100003302

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request     | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver           | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission     | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      1/11/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary  
Comments:

**Automatic listing due to lapse in appropriations.**

The Oliver-Eakle-Barfield Building is locally significant under National Register Criteria B and C in the areas of Commerce and Architecture. The 10-story, Classical Revival styled skyscraper represents an important component of downtown Amarillo's early twentieth century commercial investment boom (oil). Designed by Wyatt Hedrick, the 1927 building is a fine local example of period commercial design, and reflects the work and investment efforts of noted Amarillo entrepreneur and business woman Melissa Dora Olver-Eakle.

Recommendation/  
Criteria Accept NR Criteria B and C

Reviewer Paul Lusignan      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2229      Date 1/11/2019

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
*real places telling real stories*



**TO:** Paul Lusignan  
 National Register of Historic Places  
 Mail Stop 7228  
 1849 C St, NW  
 Washington, D.C. 20240

**From:** Mark Wolfe, SHPO  
 Texas Historical Commission

**RE:** Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas

**DATE:** November 20, 2018

The following materials are submitted:

X	Original National Register of Historic Places form on disk. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the National Register of Historic Places nomination of the Oliver-Eakle/Barfield Building, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas
	Resubmitted nomination.
X	Original NRHP signature page signed by the Texas SHPO.
	Multiple Property Documentation form on disk.
	Resubmitted form.
	Original MPDF signature page signed by the Texas SHPO.
X	CD with TIFF photograph files, KMZ files, and nomination PDF
	Correspondence.

**COMMENTS:**

- SHPO requests substantive review (cover letter from SHPO attached)
- The enclosed owner objections (do ) (do not ) constitute a majority of property owners
- Other:

