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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Griswold National Bank

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

corner of Main and Cass Sts.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Griswold

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

Fifth

STATE

Iowa

CODE

COUNTY  
Cass

CODE  
29

**CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Cass County Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Griswold

VICINITY OF

STATE

Iowa 51535

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Cass County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Atlantic

STATE

Iowa

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Griswold National Bank building is believed to have been built in 1885. It is situated on a corner lot in this rural town's central business district. Dimensions are 25' x 43', with the main entrance on the northeast corner. The front (Main Street) facade is three bays, the side four bays. The building is two stories, on a stone foundation with exterior walls veneered in soft red brick.

First floor windows are round-arched, and second floor windows have slightly curved tops. The windows (and two of the entrances) have large metal hoods, square at their outer perimeter and curved inside in conformity with the window heads. The main entrance has a segmentally-arched top, and probably had a decorative hood at one time. A distinctive feature of the east side are the two chimney panels, corbelled out from the wall just below the impost level of the first floor windows. The two chimneys themselves were probably cut down to their present height; only one is functional. The metal cornice is bracketted, the brackets paired at the corners of the building. On the entrance corner the cornice rises to form a triangular pediment, below which, in the "tympantum" is the inscription "BANK".

Access to the basement is through a door on the east side. The main floor consists of three rooms and a vault. The ceiling here is pressed tin, wainscoting marble. No banking features, aside from the vault, remain. The upper floor, reached via a door on the north side of the building, was originally established as an apartment, but is now vacant. The second floor windows have in the past few years been covered with plywood and shuttered.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1885

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Griswold National Bank building is a representative example of a small-town, late 19th-century banking facility, especially with its street-corner location and cut corner. Its decorative features are rather restrained, but the building is lent an air of individuality by the distinctive and almost overscaled window hoods.

The building is still one of the central business district's more prominent structures. According to early photographs, "Main Street" in Griswold was characterized by one- or two-story business blocks, with storefronts on the ground floors and offices or meeting rooms above. A number, particularly the single-story buildings, had false fronts to give them a more imposing air. Most two-story buildings were rather plain, with small metal cornices, or cornices of corbelled brick. The few really "decorative" structures, therefore, stood out prominently in the streetscape. They included two bank buildings (the subject of this nomination being one) and two two-story commercial blocks topped with cast iron "pediments" above the cornice.

The town of Griswold was laid out in 1879, in expectation of the coming of a railroad line through the area. Its founders were C.E. Perkins and F.H. Whitney, the latter a well-known town speculator in southwest Iowa at this time. Whitney established the first bank (the Bank of Griswold) in 1880, as well as the first hardware store, first hotel, and first grain elevator. In 1883, this bank merged with Theodore H. Brown's recently-established First National Bank. The institution operated out of the little brick building at Main and Cass until 1930, when it went into receivership.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

History of Cass County, Iowa. Springfield, Ill.: Continental Historical Co., 1884, pp. 821-826.  
 DeWitt, Fred B. The Land and Men, Now and Then. Privately printed, 1954.  
 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Griswold, Iowa, 1894, 1899, 1909.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME Griswold, Iowa

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,5 | 3,2,0 | 4,2,0 | 4,5 | 6,6 | 8,0,0  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B    |    |    |    |    |     
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C    |    |    |    |    |   

D    |    |    |    |    |   

E    |    |    |    |    |   

F    |    |    |    |    |   

G    |    |    |    |    |   

H    |    |    |    |    |   

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

North 43 feet in Lot 1, Block 12, Griswold, Iowa.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

M.H. Bowers, National Register Coordinator

ORGANIZATION

Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

December 1978

STREET & NUMBER

26 East Market Street

TELEPHONE

319/353-6949

CITY OR TOWN

Iowa City

STATE

Iowa

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL X

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Adrian D. Anderson*

TITLE

Director, Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

12/12/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Charles Murray*  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

2-22-79

DATE

ATTEST: *William H. Brantman*  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

2-21-79

DATE