

2/7/73

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Nebraska	
COUNTY: Douglas	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER OCT 18 1972	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Omaha National Bank Building

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
New York Life Insurance Building

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
17th and Farnam Streets

CITY OR TOWN:  
Omaha

STATE: Nebraska      CODE: 31      COUNTY: Douglas      CODE: 055

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
The Omaha National Bank

STREET AND NUMBER:  
17th and Farnam Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Omaha      STATE: Nebraska      CODE: 31

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
County Clerk, Douglas County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1700 Farnam Street

CITY OR TOWN: Omaha      STATE: Nebraska      CODE: 31

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic Preservation in Nebraska

DATE OF SURVEY: 1971       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Nebraska State Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1500 "R" Street

CITY OR TOWN: Lincoln      STATE: Nebraska      CODE: 31

\*First Congressional District

STATE: Nebraska

COUNTY: Douglas

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DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

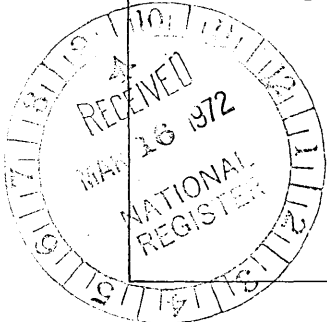
The New York Life Insurance Building, today known as the Omaha National Bank Building was built in 1888-89. It was designed by the New York firm of McKim, Mead and White with the main design credit going to the latter, White. McKim, Mead and White also designed offices for this company in New York and most significantly, an identical office tower in Kansas City, Missouri, which was completed at about the same time, 1890.

The New York Life Insurance Building is characteristic of McKim, Mead and White's early flurrish with the Italianate mode of design. This particular building's style was derived from the Florentine Palazzo, with its characteristic rusticated granite below and brick and terra cotta above. It is an important example of McKim, Mead and Whites early attempts to the solution of skyscraper construction. It sets comparatively narrow on the avenue and deep on the street. Notably, it did not follow the Chicago influence of the slab or vertical box construction which dominated most of these early skyscraper attempts. Instead, it was designed quadrangular or U-shaped in plan with two dominating vertical masses on either side of of a low arched entrance. To the rear of the entrance, rising in back of a central court, is a tower capped by a typical Italianate loggia. This tower, rising above the main mass of the building, projects the most pure character of Italianate detailing and proportioning and further emphasizes the entrance which was manytimes lost on these early solutions in skyscraper design.

The New York Life Insurance building was among the last to make use of massive masonry bearing walls in this beginning era of skyscraper construction. This type of construction conceded to the iron skeleton frame shortly after the engineering impetus of the Paris Exhibition of 1889, and latter to the high strength steel construction of today.

The building has undergone extensive interior remodeling to accomodate an influx of needed office and staff facilities, and all the original furnishings have been replaced by modern fixtures. Shortly after World War II the inner court was filled in on the second and third floors for more office space. In 1920 an eleventh floor was added to both the main masses on either side of the entrance. The addition is very subtle and bears relatively little influence on the building's original integrity. The large bronze eagle which stood over the entrance was also removed to be placed in front of the new Omaha National Bank quarters. This eagle was said to have been cast from an original marble sculpture by the famed American, Beaux Arts sculptor, Saint-Gaudens but research on the subject points to the sculptor as being Augustus' brother, Louis. However, the work was probably done in Augustus' studio in New York.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

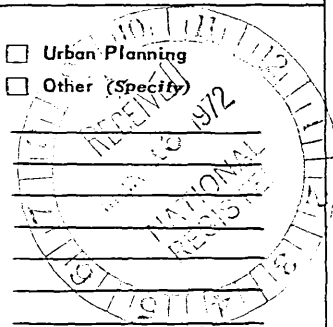
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  |  |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Both McKim and White started in the offices of Richardson and worked with him for some time. His designs and philosophies play an evident part in their background. The firm of McKim, Mead and White was founded in 1879. By the year 1887 they had already reached a commanding position in the architectural profession. The only man who could dispute the artistic leadership with them, Richardson, had died the year before in 1886.

McKim, Mead and White founded, quite unconsciously, a school of design that deeply affected the architecture of the United States. Their office was the forming grounds of a mass of talent that, spreading over the country, influenced the architectural thought of a whole generation.

The special gifts of Stanford White and his sympathy with the arts and crafts contributions to architecture, helped in forming a group of friends in kindred professions which dominated the artistic life of their day. McKim, Mead, White, Bigelow, who White replaced within the firm in 1879, and Saint-Gaudens were together frequently, and the four architects traveled and sketched together in New England. In 1878 McKim, White, and Saint-Gaudens made a walking trip in Southern France. In 1879 when Saint-Gaudens returned from Rome they set about the start of what was viewed as an American Renaissance.

The New York Life Insurance Building was Omaha's first ten-story building and marked the beginning of an era, to midwesterners, of the skyscrapers growth in the larger metropolitan areas of New York and Chicago. The New York Life Insurance Building portrays the treatment and philosophy of this early stage in skyscraper evolution.

McKim, Mead and White were disinclined to be closely identified with the design of the skyscraper. They aligned with the view that laws would place restrictions on the skyscraper tendencies of Metropolitan business structures. They consciously avoided the design of facades whose heights were badly proportioned to their frontages and to the width of the streets on which they were placed. The high rise office buildings built for the New York Life Insurance Company in New York, Kansas City, and Omaha are indeed interesting attempts at keeping the height of skyscrapers down rather than emphasizing it.

McKim, Mead and White's designs seek the balance of lines, masses, and projections, rather than overwhelming predominance of any one dimension or

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES  
 Files, Nebraska State Historical Society

Magonigle, E. VanBuren, "A Half Century of Architecture," Pencil Points, Vol. 15, 1934, pp. 115-19.

Cortessoy, Royal, "Ghosts of New York," Architectural Forum, Vol. 53, 1930, pp. 87-90.

Desmond and Croly, "The Work of McKim, Mead and White," Architectural Record, Vol. 20, 1906, pp. 153-246.

Caffin, Charles H., Sculpture, New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1903.

"Omaha National Bank" in Around the Bank, Vol. 13, No. 6, Oct., 1960.

Hitchcock, Henry-Russel, Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century, Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1955.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LATITUDE			LONGITUDE	
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	95°	56'	16"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	41°	15'	28"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

NO  
 WITH  
 CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Persijs Kolberg, Curator of Historic Sites

ORGANIZATION: Nebraska State Historical Society DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET AND NUMBER: 1500 "R" Street

CITY OR TOWN: Lincoln STATE: Nebraska CODE: 31

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

<p>As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>Marvin D. Kuehl</u></p> <p>Title <u>Director, Nebraska State Historical Society</u></p> <p>Date <u>2-14-72</u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>Robert W. Utley</u>          Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date <u>10/18/72</u></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>[Signature]</u>          Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date <u>10/18/72</u></p>
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE	
Nebraska	
COUNTY	
Douglas	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	OCT 18 1972

#8 - Significance (Continuation Sheet)  
(Number all entries)

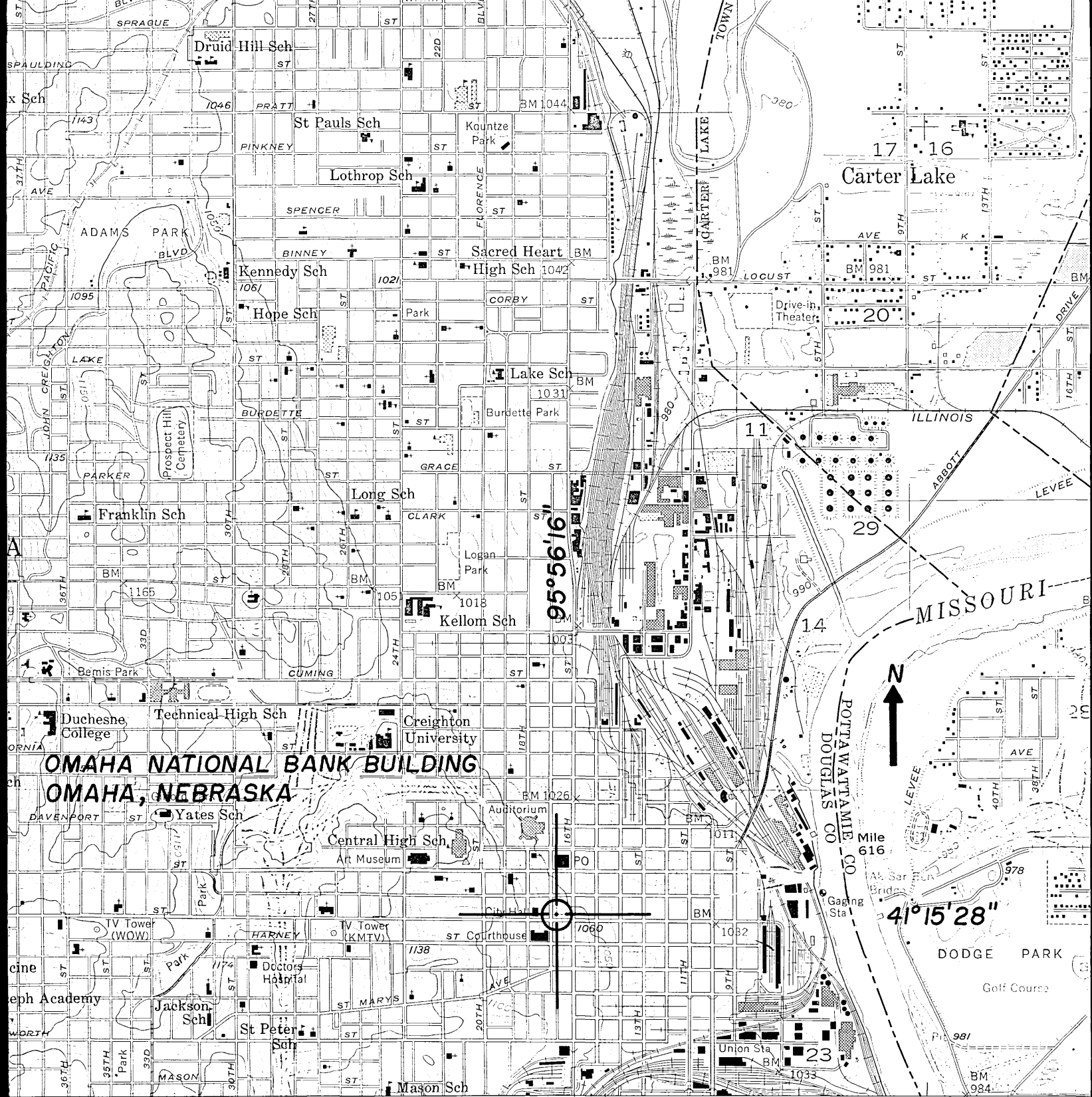
series of lines. This philosophy of design is very evident in the line masses and volume of the New York Life Insurance Building.

The dilemmas in skyscraper design produces many compromises and McKim, Mead and White's tendencies to dissociate themselves from the brutal fact of the American Skyscraper may seem to be an illustration of a deficiency rather than a merit, but in truth, while it brings out the obvious limitations in their ideas and methods, it also brings out the soundness of their judgment and the integrity of their point of view.

The New York Life Insurance Building is truly a lesson in History. It stands as a reminder of the beginning of the everpresent urban problem and is a reflective example of the answer to the solution of the design of central Business District office towers.

The New York Life Insurance Building also marks the former site of Sen. Joseph H. Millard's residence. Millard settled in Omaha in 1856, beginning business as a real estate dealer. He became identified with the Omaha National Bank in 1867 and served as its president from 1884 to 1920. Mr. Millard served as mayor of Omaha from 1872 to 1873, and was, for six years, a Government Director of the Union Pacific Railroad. Mr. Millard represented Nebraska as U.S. Senator from 1901-1907; he died in 1921. Millard lived on this site until 1886 when he sold the property to the New York Life Insurance Company for \$85,000, for the construction of this office building.

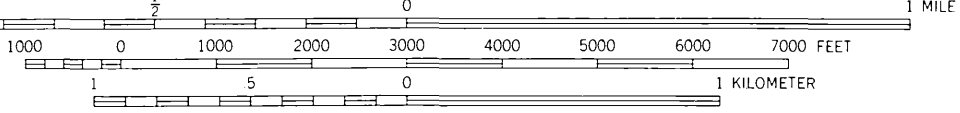




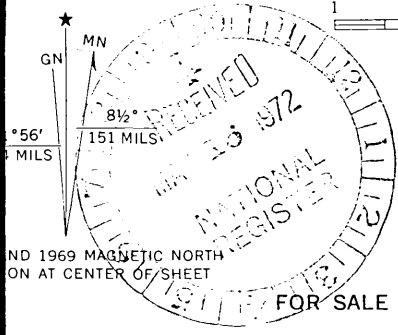
**OMAHA NATIONAL BANK BUILDING**  
**OMAHA, NEBRASKA**

000 FEET (NEBR.) 252 57'30" R. 13 E. 253 (OMAHA SOUTH) 6866 III NW 2.5 MI. TO U.S. 275 PLATTSMOUTH 17 MI. 55' 256 134

SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
 DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS  
 DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL



ND 1969 MAGNETIC NORTH  
 ON AT CENTER OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
 FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
 AND BY THE IOWA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, IOWA CITY, IOWA 52240  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

*Over →*

Form 10-301  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

*(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)*

STATE Nebraska	
COUNTY Douglas	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER <b>OCT 18 1972</b>	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>			
COMMON:	Omaha National Bank Building		
AND/OR HISTORIC:	New York Life Insurance Building		
<b>2. LOCATION</b>			
STREET AND NUMBER: 17th and Farnam Streets			
CITY OR TOWN: Omaha			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Nebraska	31	Douglas	055
<b>3. MAP REFERENCE</b>			
SOURCE: U.S.G.S., 7½', Omaha North Quadrangle			
SCALE: 1:24,000			
DATE: 1956			
<b>4. REQUIREMENTS</b>			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			

