

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED **AUG 13 1980**
DATE ENTERED **OCT 16 1980**

**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 Marion Hotel

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

108 North Magnolia Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Ocala

VICINITY OF

4

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Florida

12

Marion

083

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Francis Marion Joint Venture

STREET & NUMBER

520 Fort King

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Ocala

VICINITY OF

Florida 32670

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Marion County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Ocala

Florida

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		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Marion Hotel is composed of a seven-story rectangular central tower with flanking two-story wings. The entire structure, constructed of reinforced concrete, steel, and clay tile, is covered with white stucco. The tower has four bays along the east (main) facade, ten bays along the north and south elevations, although the north side is interrupted by an external fire escape system which extends down the entire fourth bay. Window spacing is regular on all elevations from the second through the seventh floors; all windows are double hung sash of eight lights over one light. Each facade of the tower is topped by a central curvilinear parapet interrupted by flanking red clay tile pent roofs. Each pent roof rests on a corbelled cornice with modillions. Bas-relief ornamentation is centered under each of the curvilinear gables. Each of the seventh story windows has a broken-pediment. The seventh story windows rest on a continuous belt course. The windows of the main block on the east facade are capped with a cast ornamented architecture. The outermost windows on the second floor and the inner pair of windows on the seventh floor have wrought iron balconets.

The first floor main entrance bay is surrounded by a bas-relief architrave. The entrance is lined in greenish-black, white veined marble. The name of the hotel is inscribed in a marble panel over the canopy. A rounded metal canopy projects from the entrance.

The flanking two-bay, two-story wings are detailed with double segmental arched windows (fanlighted) on the second floor. The two openings in the north wing originally had only wrought iron railings. The wood casement windows in the south wing are original.

The ground floor of the entire east (main) facade originally had three large rectangular bays flanking each side of the entrance bay. Each bay had storefront glazing with a recessed door. Striped canvas awnings projected over the sidewalk. These six bays were filled with brick and tile creating a large space on each side of the main entrance. Above each bay, narrow panels of poly-chromatic ceramic tile delineate the second floor level. Stores still function in the flanking bays of the hotel on the ground floor. The recessed entrance is lined with greenish-black, white veined marble. The entrance doors are set into a wall of small rectangular panes of glass. This wall is divided into a tri-partite arrangement topped with glass transoms. Inside these doors is a vestibule lined with a ceramic tile wainscot, now painted brown. Four steps with colored ceramic tile risers and brass handrails lead up to the lobby. Entrances to shops formerly located on either side of this vestibule are also topped with the panels of colored ceramic tile.

(See Continuation Sheet)

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1927

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

See Continuation Sheet

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Serving as a dominant visual landmark to the City of Ocala, Florida, the Marion Hotel is significant as one of the last remaining examples of the popular 1920s Mediterranean Revival architectural style in Marion County. It also stands as a symbol and expression of the community spirit, unity, and prosperity which existed in Marion County during the decade following World War I.

The building is composed of a rectangular central tower rising seven stories with flanking two-story wings. Each of the tower facades is topped by a curvilinear parapet interrupted by flanking red tiled pent roofs. The simply-ornamented, stucco-covered building has features such as inlaid polychromatic ceramic tiles, wrought iron balconets, stained glass, and segmentally arched windows with fanlights. The main entrance is delineated by an architrave with low relief detailing.

The Marion Hotel was built in 1926-27. Designed by the architectural firm of Peebles and Ferguson (Norfolk, Virginia), the hotel was constructed to satisfy the growing demands of business and tourism in Marion County. The reorganization of the Marion County Board of Trade into the Marion County Chamber of Commerce in 1919, provided the impetus for economic growth in the county. With fresh initiative, the Chamber of Commerce began programs to increase agriculture, dairy, and livestock production and to revive the area's citrus industry.¹ Instrumental to the county's growth was the expansion and improvement of a highway system providing greater accessibility to markets. The construction of this highway system of over 400 miles of paved county roads provided the catalyst for the economic prosperity of the county which contributed to an increase in business and tourism.² The Chamber of Commerce encouraged such growth by advertising nationally with slogans proclaiming the county "The Kingdom of the Sun."³

Indicative of this increased economic activity was the appearance in 1925 of a Hollywood movie company in nearby Silver Springs. The company filmed several pictures at Silver Springs, including the Players-Lasky Corporation Film Studio's motion picture "Old Home Week" starring the famous silent movie actor, Thomas Meighan.⁴

The enthusiasm of Meighan and other members of the motion picture community spurred local interest for building a hotel in Ocala. Newspaper accounts in 1925, reported that a group of 31 civic and business leaders, lead by former Ocala Mayor Dr. James E. Chase, and Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce Horace L. Smith, determined that Ocala needed a first class hotel to meet the demands of tourists and traveling salesmen.⁵ However, it is widely held

(See Continuation Sheet)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one.

QUADRANGLE NAME USGS Ocala West, 1968

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,7 | 3,8,9,4,3,0 | 3,2,2,9,1,5,0
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B [] | [] | []
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C [] | [] | []

D [] | [] | []

E [] | [] | []

F [] | [] | []

G [] | [] | []

H [] | [] | []

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots three and four, Block 43, Old Survey, City of Ocala as recorded in Deed Book L of the Public Records of Marion County, Florida.

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

Rolla L. Queen, Historic Sites Specialist

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Florida Division of Archives History and Records Management July 11, 1980

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

The Capitol (904) 487-2333

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Tallahassee Florida

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

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

TITLE L. Ross Morrell, State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 8/5/80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. Ray Price
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 10/16/80

ATTEST: Curt Dubois
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 10/11/80

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The lobby is a T-shaped space and is divided by shallow segmental arches resting on pairs of small dark brackets. The ceilings of the lobby and its vestibule are spanned by dark narrow beams decorated with rows of small, richly colored figures. Large round amber glass chandeliers are hung in the vestibule and lobby. The seating area of the lobby focuses on the five narrow stained-glass casement windows which look out onto Washington Street. Wrought iron grilles are mounted on the side walls in various locations throughout the lobby. The flooring is terazzo in a large scale checkerboard pattern.

The original registration desk was located on axis with the main entrance, with the two elevators (one passenger and one freight) and a stair to the upper floors located to one side. Foliated wrought iron grilles are set into narrow panels in the wall above the stair and elevator doors, and in other locations throughout the lobby, fills the southwest corner of the ground floor. Kitchens, service rooms, and a small office fill the remainder of this floor. Hotel guest rooms fill the second through seventh floors, arranged around a central double loaded corridor. Additional meeting rooms were located on the second floor. An elevator penthouse is located on the roof, and metal exterior fire escapes are located on the west and north sides of the tower.

FHR-8-300A
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Builder - Day and Zimmerman, Inc.
Architect - Peebles and Ferguson (Norfolk, Virginia)

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that Meighan and the movie community convinced the leaders of the Ocala community that all the city needed was a first class hotel to become a "Hollywood of the East."⁶

Hockenberry Systems, Inc., a Harrisburg, Pennsylvania consulting firm was hired by the Chamber of Commerce to prepare a feasibility study on a hotel for the community. Hockenberry recommended the construction of a 100 room fireproof hotel financed by the community.⁷ Acting on those recommendations, the Hotel Committee of the Chamber of Commerce formed a Citizens Sales Organization. The organization consisted of 140 volunteer boosters to sell stock in the Community Hotel Corporation. Using the sales slogan "What Ocala Builds - Builds Ocala,"⁸ the sales organization sold stock in units of \$300.00. This amount purchased three shares of stock.⁹ In less than six weeks the committee had raised \$500,000 to finance the hotel (\$50,000 for the land; \$450,000 for the hotel).¹⁰ Most of the stock was purchased by local citizens.

Meighan, in addition to other real estate purchases in Ocala, purchased \$5,000.00 worth of stock in the hotel and served as vice-president of Griner Hotels, Inc., managers of the hotel when it opened in 1927. Along with Meighan, Florida Governor John W. Martin also served on the Board of Directors of the Griner corporation.¹¹

The firm of John Kevan Peebles and Finley Forbes Ferguson (II) were chosen to design the hotel.¹² Their partnership had been formed in 1917, although each had practiced individually or in other firms for many years. Together, they designed hotels throughout the South, including the Hotel Lorraine and Hotel Monticello in Norfolk, and the Hotel Elliot in Surfolk, Virginia (a 100 room hotel similar in scale, massing, and layout to the Marion).¹³ Other projects included the design of Fayerweather Hall at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, the restoration of the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond, and numerous churches and banks in Virginia, Tennessee, and Florida. Finley Ferguson also served on the Advisory Committee for Architects during the initial restoration of Colonial Williamsburg, and John Peebles acted as Chairman of the Jamestown Exposition, Jamestown, Virginia, in 1907. On his death in August, 1934, the New York Times referred to Peebles as the "dean of Virginia architects."¹⁴

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The Marion Hotel was the only essay in the Mediterranean Revival style by Peebles and Ferguson. Peebles visited Ocala several times to present his design to the Board of Directors of the **Community** Hotel Corporation. The firm also supervised the construction of the hotel.

The Marion Hotel opened in March, 1927, with a gala attended by over 300 of the County's business, professional, and social leaders.¹⁵ The hotel has since served as the focal point for civic, business, and social meetings in the county. The building is presently used for apartments and as a transient hotel. Maintaining most of its original integrity, the hotel is the tallest building in Marion County, and continues to be prominent local landmark. The building was recently acquired by the Francis Marion Joint Venture, having been owned since 1965 by the Ocala Hotel Corporation.

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¹Ott, Eloise Rovinson and Louis Hickman Chazal, Ocala Country Kingdom of the Sun, A History of Marion County Florida (Ocala: Marion Publishers, Inc., 1966; Second Edition, 1974), pp. 186-190.

²Ibid., pp. 177-178

³Ibid., p. 176

⁴Ibid., p. 186

⁵"Official Statement of the Executive Committee: A New Hotel for Ocala," Advertisement published in the Ocala Evening Star, May 13, 1925.

⁶Telephone conversation with Edward Snowden d'Avi, (Architect) owner of the Marion Hotel, May 16, 1980.

⁷"Hockenberry Hotel System," Ocala Evening Star, April 22, 1925 and "Official Statement of the Executive Committee," Ocala Evening Star, "Citizens Should Own the Stock," Ocala Evening Star, May 15, 1925.

⁸"Campaign for the New Hotel Enthusiastically Commences," Ocala Evening Star, May 12, 1925.

⁹"Community Executive Committee," Ocala Evening Star, May 15, 1925.

¹⁰"Words of Appreciation to the Faithful Workers," Ocala Evening Star, June 19, 1925.

¹¹"An Asset to Ocala," Ocala Evening Star, September 17, 1925; "Throngs View New Hostelry," Ocala Evening Star, March 5, 1927; Ott, p. 186-188.

¹²"Ocala Community Hotel Company's Architect," Ocala Evening Star, August 20, 1925. The commission was confirmed by John K. Peebles, Jr., AIA, of Richmond, Virginia, in a telephone interview, August 20, 1979. He worked for the firm during this period, and supervised construction of the building's foundations.

¹³"Ocala Community Hotel Company's Architect," Ocala Evening Star. Telephone conversation with Calder Loth, Architectural Historian, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, Richmond, Virginia, August 15, 1979. "Virginia Firm of Architects Planned Hotel," Ocala Evening Star, March 5, 1927. For Peebles, see Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathborn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). (Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Company,

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1956), p. 207.

¹⁴Ibid.; "John Kevan Peebles, Dean of Virginia Architects" (obituary), New York Times, August 1, 1934, p. 17. For Ferguson, see Withey and Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), P. 404.

¹⁵"Throngs View New Hostelry," Ocala Evening Star, March 5, 1927.

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"An Asset for Ocala." Ocala Evening Star. May 11, 1925.

"Campaign for the New Hotel Enthusiastically Commenced." Ocala Evening Star.
May 12, 1925.

"Citizens Should Own Stock." Ocala Evening Star. May 15, 1925.

"Community Executive Committee." Ocala Evening Star. May 15, 1925.

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(Historic Sites Specialist, FDAHRM). May 16, 1980.

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"Words of Appreciation to the Faithful Workers." Ocala Evening Star. June
19, 1925.