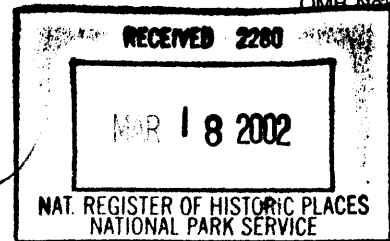


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

4200

[Handwritten signature]



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name MERCHANTS BANK OF ELLIS

other names/site number 051-1600-0005

2. Location

street & number 822 WASHINGTON STREET not for publication

city or town ELLIS vicinity

state KANSAS code KS county ELLIS code 051 zip code 67637

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 nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William D. Pankratz, DSHPO 12-14-01
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

KANSAS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

[Handwritten signature]
Signature of the Keeper
Edson H. Beall

Date of Action
5/2/02

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: SPECIALTY STORE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: ROMANESQUE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: LIMESTONE

walls STONE: LIMESTONE

roof SYNTHETICS: RUBBER

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

The Merchants Bank of Ellis (c. 1885) is located at 822 Washington in Ellis, Ellis County, Kansas (pop. 1,750). The one-story rusticated limestone block building maintains an eastern and southeastern facade orientation, its arched entry faces to the southeast while its plate glass storefront faces to the east. Built at an intersection, the southeastern corner of the building stands at a forty-five degree angle to the street. Overall dimensions for the building are twenty-two feet from north to south and forty-one feet from east to west.

A corbelled, parapet wall hides a single slope, slightly pitched roof. Finish dressed limestone block quoins delineate the building's corners. A limestone block and brick arch surmounts the building's doorway. Both the fanlight above the front door and the upper third of the plate glass storefront window have been covered with wood. The door surround has also been enclosed but it appears that the original beveled glass door remains.

A side entrance pierces the south elevation of the building, surmounted by a finish dressed limestone lintel. Two arched window openings surmounted by brick lintel courses pierce the western elevation. Wood covers one window fully and half of the other window.

While the building was built as a free-standing structure, its north elevation has abutted against other buildings over the years. Currently, a one-story modern building abuts the bank.

Partition walls and some dropped ceilings change the interior appearance. The walls are plaster. An embossed tin ceiling and cornice remain from the 1885 period. In 1910, three large hanging light fixtures were installed. Two of the three are being used today. The third one was removed when remodeling was done in the early seventies to accommodate a bathroom facility, kitchen facility, and a storage and furnace area.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

The Merchants Bank of Ellis (c. 1885) is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its historical association with the growth and development of Ellis, Kansas. The bank served the community under several different names from 1885 until 1892 and then again from 1906 until 1918. After that time it housed a number of businesses including a butcher shop, a cobbler shop and storage for Keller Furniture. Today the building houses a crafts and antique shop.

Evidence that town promoters were seeking a bank is found in the April 24, 1880 edition of The Ellis Weekly Headlight, which notes that “a banking house could do a splendid business- one of the very best in the State. There are from \$10,000 up paid employees here monthly. This is a reason for discounts. There are still cattle men here- they need a bank.” Founded in 1870, Ellis was a division point for the Kansas Pacific Railway. The railroad surveyed and laid the town out in 1873, seven years later Ellis’ population had grown to eight hundred people.

Ellis, like many nineteenth century western Kansas towns, “dreamed big.” (Miner, 9) In his book West of Wichita: Settling the High Plains of Kansas, 1865- 1890, Craig Miner includes an interesting observation published in the October 18, 1876 edition of the Hays Sentinel. “Ellis is a city. She has all the hopes and aspirations of Chicago; the enterprise of St. Louis; the prosperity of Kansas City, and a the trifle of cussedness Hays hasn’t got.” Andreas writes in his 1883 History of Kansas that as long as Ellis remained a railway terminus with a roundhouse and machine shops “it will be a town of some importance.” (Andreas, 1294)

By 1885 the economy had grown enough to support a bank and the Merchants Bank was born. The November and December 1885 editions of The Ellis Headlight signal the bank’s establishment. “The new bank building is rapidly nearing completion.” (The Ellis Headlight, 12/1/85) “Mr. Honey the cashier of the Merchants Bank of Ellis informs us that the Bank will open for business next Monday morning.” (The Ellis Headlight, 12/27/85) The January 12, 1886 edition of The Ellis Headlight contains an advertisement for the Merchants Bank indicating it was capitalized at \$50,000. The bank’s officers were W. O. Ray, President, William O. Harrison, Vice President, H. R. Honey, Cashier and W. E. Moore, Assistant Cashier.

This business was short-lived however and was sold less than a year later, becoming the Bank of Ellis. John W. Colby and Edward F. Childs purchased the Merchants Bank on October 2, 1886. Childs served as president, Colby as cashier, and A. H. Childs as assistant cashier. Offering banking service to the community from 1886 until 1892, the Bank of Ellis was foreclosed in 1892 and liquidated in early 1893. The community did not have another bank until 1906, when the First National Bank established its business in the building. The First National Bank operated in the building until 1918, when a new building was constructed.

The building is an example of the one-part commercial block written about by Richard Longstreth in his book The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture. The one-part commercial block is a one-story

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

building with larger windows designed for smaller businesses. These buildings may take the design characteristics of a variety of styles. Longstreth writes that this “type appears to have been developed during the mid-19th century and soon became a common feature in towns and cities. It proliferated because of the rapid growth of Victorian communities, large and small, and the hopes speculators held for continued expansion.” (Longstreth, 54).

The one-story building is rectangular in form and contains an arched window above the door. The rusticated stone that is used for the building and the arch that accentuates the door harken to the Romanesque style, although this building is clearly vernacular. Reflecting late-nineteenth century technologies, such as pressed metal cornices and a metal ceiling, the building retains a very high degree of architectural integrity. Like many nineteenth century banks, the main entry was built at the forty-five degree angle to the street. The building stands as a reminder of late nineteenth century commerce and banking in Ellis, Kansas.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1885 - 1918

Significant Dates

1885 - 1892; 1906 - 1918

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9, 10 Page 1,1

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andreas, A. T. History of the State of Kansas. (Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1883).

The Ellis Weekly Headlight; 24 April 1880.

The Ellis Headlight; 17 November 1885, 1 December 1885, 27 December 1885, 5 January 1886, 12 January 1886.

Longstreth, Richard. The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture. (Washington: Preservation Press, 1987).

Miner, Craig. West of Wichita: Settling the High Plains of Kansas, 1865- 1890. (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1986).

Sanborn Map Co., Ellis, Kansas. September 1905, April 1920.

Shortridge, James R. Peopling the Plains: Who Settled Where in Frontier Kansas. (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1995).

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property stands on Lot 018, Block 06, Subdivision 94, Ellis original town. The property is bounded on the east by Washington Street, to the south and west by alleys, and north by adjacent property lines,

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary includes the entire parcel that is historically associated with the property.