

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received JUN 28 1984
date entered AUG 1 1984

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Drexel Hotel

and/or common Vale Hotel and Vale Grand Opera House (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 123 South Main Street N/A not for publication

city, town Vale N/A vicinity of Second Congressional District

state Oregon code 41 county Malheur code 045

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<u>N/A</u> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

4. Owner of Property

name Bob Erb
Mark Bazeghi

street & number c/o Bill Blankinship
778 D Street West

city, town Vale N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97918

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Malheur County Courthouse

street & number _____

city, town Vale state Oregon 97918

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Historic Preservation Office has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date December 1, 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records 525 Trade Street SE

city, town Salem state Oregon 97918

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Vale Hotel, originally known as the U. S. National Bank and Drexel Hotel, was constructed between 1907-1908 in a variation of the Romanesque style. Unoccupied for a number of years, the building is deteriorating, especially on the interior, which has suffered extensive water damage. The adjacent and attached building known as the Vale Grand Opera House was constructed in 1896 in a modest Italianate style. It is also in a deteriorated state. Both buildings are scheduled for rehabilitation.

Prominently sited on a corner lot in the center of Vale and oriented to the east, the hotel is one of the few large scale buildings in the town.

Hotel

Three stories in height, the hotel's rectangular base measures approximately 74' x 94'. The second and third floor circulation is U-shaped around a 12' x 36' light well. When constructed, the hotel had 58 rooms and featured "fire-proof" construction, steam heat, indoor baths on every floor and running water in every room.

The main floor is constructed of rock-faced ashlar sandstone which was quarried locally. Imposing arched window and door openings appear on either side of the entrance pavilion on the east. The large fixed pane window configuration is original, while the entrances to the hotel and storefronts have been altered. Similar window treatment appears on the north elevation towards the east and historically demarcated the size of the interior banking operation. Toward the northwest are two storefronts, altered from their original configuration in 1960.

Upper level walls are of white brick on the east and north, and red brick on the secondary elevations. Use of white brick is uncommon in the region. Sandstone belt courses appear at the sill and lintel levels. The main projecting pavilion on the east elevation is topped with a low-pitched hip roof above a bracketed cornice. Tripartite double-hung, sash windows are located on the third floor and attic levels. Diamond-panel lights over single pane is the configuration. A door once leading to a balconied porch appears at the second floor level and is flanked by two smaller sash windows, one of which carries the same diamond patterned upper light. Other windows on the east and north elevation are one-over-one, double-hung and appear singly or in pairs, in groupings loosely confined by the segmented metal bracketed cornices at the upper level, which is further delineated by a stepped parapet.

Currently, windows and other wood framing is deteriorated. Settling from foundation damage after a 1957 flood has put windows on the southeast corner out of plumb. There has been extensive damage to the sandstone on the north elevation and metal cornices will have to be rebuilt. The roof leakage has led to much interior deterioration as well. Lath and plaster ceilings have fallen and the removal of an interior structural wall resulted in an interior which is unsafe and uninhabitable.

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An extant water tank on the roof of the hotel once provided the city's water supply before incorporation in 1912 resulted in the construction of a water and sewer system.

In 1940, the hotel reopened, having been closed due to the Depression. Major alterations occurring at that time included new plastering, and partitions at the east end to create suites. Windows and doors at the west end were bricked in, enclosing the former dining room.

The 1960 remodeling eliminated the main staircase entry to the upper floors, although the upper portion remained intact. Paneling sheetrock and a new stair completed the lobby alterations. The interior brick walls were sheetrocked and a large restaurant created on the western half of the main floor. False ceilings were added and numerous duct openings were created to accommodate air conditioning.

Rehabilitation plans for the hotel include restoration of the exterior historic appearance, and alteration of the interior configuration for office/restaurant/lounge use.

Grand Central Saloon/Vale Grand Opera House

The Grand Central Saloon was erected c. 1896 as a two-story rectangular block in a combination of rough-faced and smooth ashlar stone which had been locally quarried. A one-story porch with balustrade extended the full width of the front elevation. About the same time as the Vale Hotel was being constructed the Grand Central Saloon was altered. The gable roof was eliminated to provide additional space on the upper level. Concurrently, the front porch was eliminated and the facade was plastered. An addition, in rough-faced ashlar with a recessed storefront, was attached to the south. Both buildings were connected visually by an Italianate cornice above which appeared a triangular parapet projection which announced the building's new function as the Vale Grand Opera House. The interior, much altered and deteriorating, still exhibits a pressed tin ceiling.

Currently, both buildings have sustained loss of exterior fabric. The base is covered by a combination of siding and flagstone, while the upper portion of the original 1896 building has been refaced and had its windows changed. Rehabilitation plans center around a restaurant/kitchen use for the rehabilitated hotel. The current ground plan covers an area approximately 80' x 38', with the eastern (front) elevation being the largest dimension. Approximately 26' of the southerly end of the building comprising the dimensions of the c.1906 addition will be removed as it is structurally unstable. Only the front of the building is of masonry construction. The other sides are wood framed. The rear elevation is notable for the embossed metal siding which covers the wall.

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 checked="" 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 1906-08, 1896 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Vale Hotel was constructed between 1906-1908 as a central feature in the newly-developing business district in Vale. The building is significant locally for its associations with the development of the county seat, and as one of the community's most architecturally significant structures. We feel it is eligible under criterion "a" and "c." The adjacent Vale Grand Opera House/Grand Central Saloon has been significantly associated with Vale's development and is eligible under criterion "a." It is believed to have been erected in 1896.

Historical Development of Vale

The crossing of the Malheur River by the Oregon Trail is the site of the present city of Vale. This area of hot springs and cold water in the desert was a resting place of both historic emigrants and prehistoric cultures.

In the fall of 1863, Jonathan Keeney built a small log house at the Malheur Crossing on the south side of the river and this cabin served as a wayside inn for the accommodation of emigrants passing over the Oregon Trail from 1863-1870. In the autumn of 1870, Louis B. Rinehart bought Mr. Keeney's holdings at Vale Hot Springs and the next year started construction of the historic Stone House, which he completed in 1872. On New Year's day, 1873, Mr. and Mrs. Rinehart opened it as a hotel with a grand ball to celebrate the new year. This was the first memorable occasion of the County, and folks from as far as Boise and Mormon Basin came. During the Seventies a considerable number of travelers passed over the emigrant road and the Stone House became a popular wayside inn. Later in 1878, a stage line was established between Boise and Canyon City and a stage station was set up at the Rinehart Place.

Agricultural and livestock interests soon vied for importance in the region, but it was the Oregon Short Line Railroad which provided the growth stimulus that created Malheur County.

Once the railroad outlet was made at Ontario, commercial activities in the livestock industry rapidly began shifting from Baker, with cattle and sheep being driven to Ontario in increasing thousands. Other business followed the swing in traffic until in 1885-1886 movements began to form a separate county, breaking away what was to be Malheur from Baker County. There was little opposition to the forming of the new county and the Creating Act was passed by the State Legislature to take effect April 1, 1887.

This new creation started a fight over the location of the county seat, although the Creating Act named Vale as the temporary seat of government, pending an election to chose a permanent site. No less than six townsites were in that first election in 1887. Vale topped Jordan Valley by only 13 votes, while Ontario was 52 votes behind the leader. Of the 758 votes cast, Vale got 315, Jordan Valley 202, Ontario 163 and Paris, which had excellent promotional backing, ran close to 146. Grove City got 30 ballots and Basterville received 2.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Malheur Oriano, 8/24/1907 and 6/11/1908
Malheur County Enterprise, May, 1969.
Caldwell (Idaho) Tribune, 10/10/1909

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Vale East

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	0	4	8	1	8	1	0	4	8	6	9	6	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet attached

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state None code county code

state None code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bill Blankinship

organization N/A date February, 1984

street & number 778 D Street West telephone (503)473-3215

city or town Vale state Oregon 97918

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 Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date May 31, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for Allison Byers Entered in the National Register date 8/1/84
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

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Since only a majority of the voters could decide the permanent site, Vale and Jordan Valley ran it off in a special election, with Vale winning handily. The first courthouse was built in Vale in 1887 at a cost of \$1,400.

This city served as the county seat until 1900, when Ontario again raised the question of moving the county seat. Both Vale and Ontario raised money for a permanent building, and since Vale raised the funds and erected a stone building for the courthouse, the election failed to materialize. Again, in 1912, the question was raised by residents of Ontario, and after a long and bitter battle an election was held that Vale won handily. The stone courthouse in Vale was replaced in 1958.

As the seat of County government, Vale has been dependent upon business from both legislative and judicial activities from the time of the County's founding. Although the County has been spared any famous criminal elements with its attendant court trials, many of the early disputes that ended in court involved the potentially dangerous questions of cattle vs. sheep and water rights that created the very profitable agricultural lands. As these early disputes were fought in court, interested spectators thronged into Vale and continued the fights within the rooms and establishments that were a part of the Vale (Drexel) Hotel.

Business interests in Vale grew in proportion to the government business and also as the surrounding agricultural interests expanded. The Vale Chamber of Commerce was organized in 1910 with a membership of about seventy, and met regularly in the Drexel Grill and Dining room.

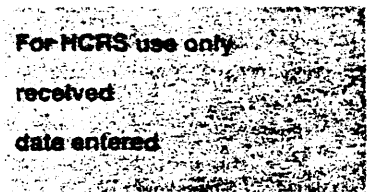
The year 1911 marked the greatest progress and building development in Vale up to that time, totaling over \$250,000.

The main street of Vale, for many years, ran north and south from the depot to the park, placing the Vale (Drexel) Hotel at the center of town. Now that the "main" streets of town are the two one-way parts of U. S. Highway 20, Washington and "A" Streets are the main traffic funnels through town and across the Malheur River, from east to west. The Vale Hotel, at the corner of Main Street and "A" Street is still at the traffic center of town.

Through the years, Vale has progressed from a bustling frontier town to the trade and business center, as well as center of government for the Valley, to today's picture of a declining older country town surviving on a declining portion of County activity. This decline has had the benefit of allowing the historic architecture erected in its early years to remain standing, rather than to be replaced with "modern" buildings, as many other faster growing cities.

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Hotel Construction

The Vale Hotel became the center of business and social life for the entire area during Vale's period of historic growth.

The original owner of this structure was the U. S. National Bank of Vale. The Malheur Oriano, carried an article in the August 24, 1907 edition which held the information that the U. S National Bank would begin construction of a "new building of brick and stone, to be three stories high, which would cost \$40,000 and would be completed within six months." The original plans did not include a Hotel as such, but merely the space for an enterprise of such nature.

The Oriano in its June 11, 1908 edition announced that "one of the best hotels in the West would be completed in the Fall, compared with the Idahoan in Boise, which would be all modern with hot and cold water in 58 units."

The Bank occupied the lower north-east corner of the buildings main floor. The space of 25' x 50' is today clearly outlined by the foot thick interior walls of solid brick which separated the business from the rest of the building.

The bank and its service can be best described in the language of its day by quoting from the October 10, 1909, Caldwell Tribune.

U. S. National Bank
As Sturdy an Oak as Stands in the Financial Forest
Glimpses of its Makers and Managers, Themselves
Every Inch Hickory.

Unquestionably the greatest developing, upbuilding and propelling force in Vale and vicinity has been the United States National Bank, formerly the First Bank of Vale.

It is the energy that has made the town more attractive, architecturally at least, than has any other single institution or individual in it, or the financial heavyweights who are the bone, and sinew of the bank have done this, which is practically the same thing.

The stockholders of the U. S. National, the pioneer pocketbook of this empire, were no sooner convinced that the public convenience demanded a first-class hotel in Vale than their hands hurried to their pockets, and by the grace of their public enterprise, this town of 1,000 inhabitants has a hotel today which would be a boast of most cities with 25,000 people, a palatial hostelry costing \$50,000 and standing a monument to the highest evolution in hotel architecture, charm and comforts.

This magnificent pile of brick and stone is also the home of the U. S. National Bank. It occupys the northwestern half of the ground floor.

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Another exceptional feature for a small interior town bank is to sell exchange on every country in the world, but the U. S. National does it, and finds it worth while.

One hundred per cent of the stock of this bank is held by Malheur county citizens, men who, for the most part, have been life-long neighbors and friends, . . .

A burglar-proof steel safe in a fire-proof vault bespeaks the security of their funds.

A complement of three assistants are necessary to the daily dispatch of the banks business.

Descriptions of the subject building are many, but probably is best summed up in an article in the Caldwell Tribune of October 10, 1909, which described opportunities available in the "New Town" of Vale and the County of Malheur.

Temple of Appetite and Rest
The Hotel Drexel - Its host, Fred L. Johnson,
is the Soul of geniality and hospitality.

The most enticing establishment of rest and appetite between Nampa and Portland is the Hotel Drexel, a palatial inn in a town but practically three years old, a house with accommodations in every way equal to the best hotel in the old and cultured East.

The Drexel is a three story, brick and stone edifice 84' x 120' in dimension, and the building and its furnishings testify to a prudent outlay of \$65,000.00.

Some 60 rooms have all the up-to-date equipments, electric lights, electric return call bells, hot and cold water, steam heat, and many of the rooms have a private bath room in connection, and public bath rooms are at the disposal of guests, without charge.

Its water supply is from its own deep well, the water is pure, soft and palatable, and brimming high tank high in the air, insures a copious supply and ample pressure in the event of fire. Hose reels are on every floor, and safety fire-escape ladders are numerous.

The illustrations of the lobby, the dining room, and the exterior view of the Drexel hint its stature and its sumptuous dress. The dining room of this charming hostelry is all that the most exacting could expect in point of furnishings, embellishments and cuisine. And a more tempting bill of fare anywhere at any time is very difficult of discovery.

A piano of celebrated make invites the fingers and voice of the musical to test their skill and edify listeners.

Suites of dainty sleeping rooms, with parlor and bath rooms, are also the boast of the Drexel.

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Opera House

The Grill

is under the personal direction of D. A. McCurdy, a chef who has enriched his experience by 30 years of catering to the most fastidious palates. Invariably wholesome and appetizing is every dish which he permits to be served in the Grill. And the countenance of his regular guests has the pinkness which comes from vast table comfort. Those who await the alchemy of his culinary skill have biscuits set before them with just the proper brown tinting on top, the sort that fairly melts in one's mouth, the best you have eaten since you were a boy back home. And when it comes to desert, thick, juicy apple pie, with ice cream on top, is by no means unknown to the menu.

The Drexel closed in 1932 due to the Depression and was renamed the Vale after it reopened in 1940. Renovated again in 1960, the interior configuration more resembled an apartment building, as several rooms were combined into suites. In May, 1969, the Malheur Enterprise announced the closing of the Vale, ". . . a victim of progress as fast highways and transportation no longer make it necessary for people to stay overnight when they come from a distance to conduct business in Vale."

Once restored, it is expected that the Vale Hotel will serve once again as a center of business and social life in the community.

Grand Central Saloon/Vale Grand Opera House

Vale is one of the oldest communities in Malheur County. Having accommodated emigrants traveling west since the mid 1860s, Vale thrived and became the county seat by 1890. Many fine stone buildings much as the Grand Central Saloon were erected before the turn of the century and contributed to the slow but solid growth pattern. With the construction of the grandiose Vale Hotel next door, it was decided to enlarge the building to provide for an entertainment function. Known as the Vale Grand Opera House, little is known about the entertainment activities that highlighted its tenure. The building erected to the south housed the Palace Restaurant, noted locally for its Japanese proprietor. Currently known as the Westerner, the building retains its historical associations with Vale's past.

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Title "A"
---Vale Hotel---

Land in the ORIGINAL TOWNSITE, City of Vale, Malheur County, Oregon, according to the Official Plat thereof, as follows:

In Block 19: All of Lot 8 and the following described portion of Lot 7,
to wit:

Beginning at the Northeast corner of Lot 7; thence
South along the East line 23 feet and 10 inches;
thence West 70 feet and 8 inches;
thence South 1 foot and 5 inches;
thence West 23 feet and 4 inches;
thence North 25 feet and 3 inches to the Northwest
corner of said Lot 7;
thence East along the North boundary line of said
Lot 7 to the Place of Beginning.

Title "B"
---Grand Central Saloon/Vale Grand Opera House---

Land in the ORIGINAL TOWNSITE, City of Vale, Malheur County, Oregon, according to the Official Plat thereof, as follows:

In Block 19: All of Lots 6 and 7,

EXCEPTING FROM Lot 7 the following described parcel:

Beginning at the Northeast corner of Lot 7;
thence South along the East line of Lot 7, 23 feet
and 10 inches;
thence West perpendicular to the previous line, 70
feet and 8 inches;
thence South perpendicular to the previous line, 1
foot and 5 inches;
thence West perpendicular to the last described line,
23 feet and 4 inches;
thence North along the West side of Lot 7, 25 feet

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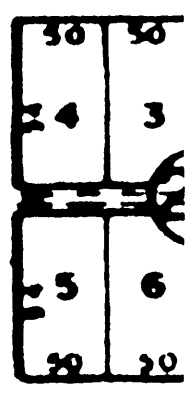
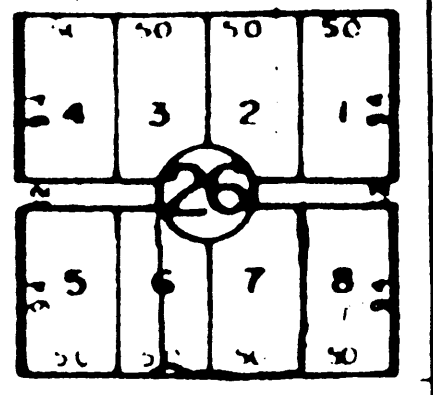
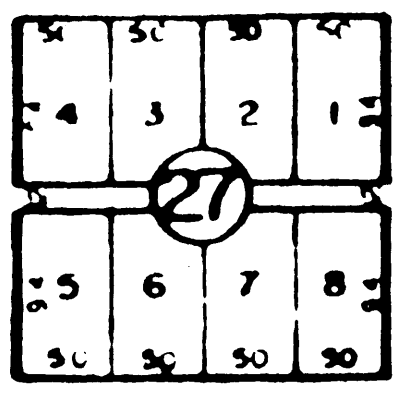
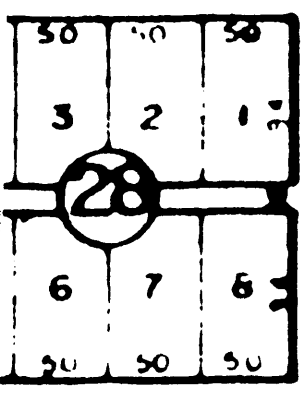
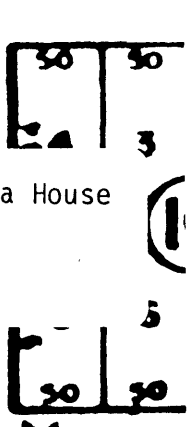
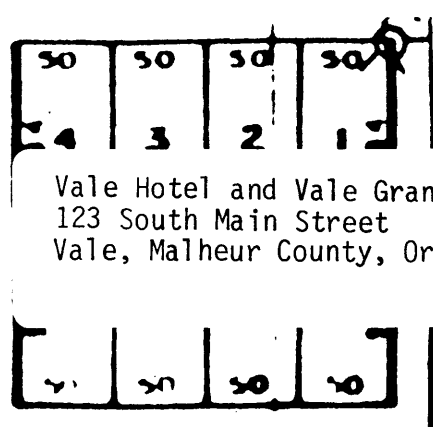
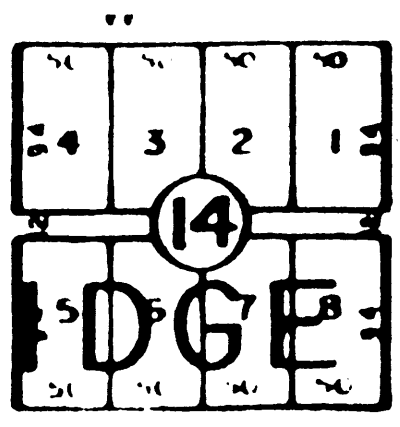
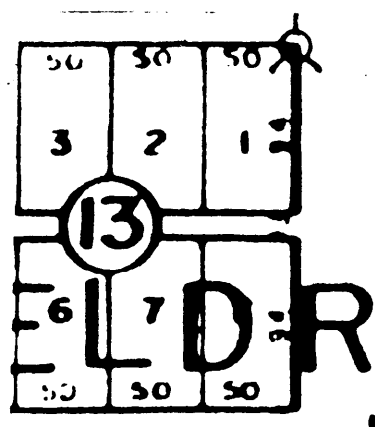
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Title "B" (continued)

and 3 inches to the Northwest corner of Lot 7;
thence East along the North side of Lot 7, 94 feet
to the Point of Beginning.

ALSO that portion of Lot 5 more particularly described as
follows:

Beginning at the Northeast corner of Lot 5;
thence South along the East line of Lot 5, 2 feet
and 9 inches to the center of the North wall of
Farmers and Stock Growers Bank Building;
thence West along the center of said wall, 94 feet
to the West side of Lot 5;
thence North along the West side of Lot 5, 2 feet
and 9 inches to the Northwest corner of Lot 5;
thence East along the North side of Lot 5, 94 feet
to the Point of Beginning.



"A" Street

