

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

**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

**1. Name of Property**

Historic name Donaldson and Hosmer Building  
 Other names/site number N/A  
 Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

**2. Location**

Street & number <u>318 E Main</u>	<u>N/A</u>	not for publication
City or town <u>Marion</u>	<u>N/A</u>	vicinity
State <u>Kansas</u> Code <u>KS</u> County <u>Marion</u> Code <u>115</u> Zip code <u>66861</u>		

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
 I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria: \_\_\_ A \_\_\_ B X C \_\_\_ D

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

**Donaldson and Hosmer Building**  
Name of Property

**Marion County, Kansas**  
County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register Register \_\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register Register \_\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		<b>Total</b>

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**COMMERCE/Financial Institution**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**VACANT/NOT IN USE**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Donaldson and Hosmer Building**  
Name of Property

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**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)  
**LATE VICTORIAN/Eclectic**  
**LATE VICTORIAN/Second Empire**

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)  
foundation: **STONE/Limestone**  
walls: **METAL/Cast Iron**  
roof: **WOOD, ASPHALT**  
other:

X

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES**

**Donaldson and Hosmer Building**

**Marion County, Kansas**

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**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.

**Areas of Significance**

**ARCHITECTURE**

**Period of Significance**

**1887-1941**

**Significant Dates**

**1887**

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**N/A**

**Cultural Affiliation**

**N/A**

**Architect/Builder**

**Capital Iron Works (Cast-Iron Front)**

**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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUATION PAGES**

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

**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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University

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recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_  
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

Other  
Name of  
depository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 115-3540-0004

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Less than 1 acre

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1	<u>38.348336</u> Latitude:	<u>-97.019539</u> Longitude:	3	_____ Latitude:	_____ Longitude:
2	_____ Latitude:	_____ Longitude:	4	_____ Latitude:	_____ Longitude:

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

\_\_\_\_ NAD 1927 or X \_\_\_\_\_ NAD 1983

1	_____ Zone	_____ Easting	_____ Northing	3	_____ Zone	_____ Easting	_____ Northing
2	_____ Zone	_____ Easting	_____ Northing	4	_____ Zone	_____ Easting	_____ Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (On continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification** (On continuation sheet)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Christy Davis; Kristy Johnson

organization Davis Preservation, LLC; Ben Moore Studio date 9/27/2019

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:**
  - A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

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- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs**
- **Owner Name and Contact Information**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photo Log:**

Name of Property: Donaldson and Hosmer Building

City or Vicinity: Marion

County: Marion State: Kansas

Photographer: Christy Davis

Date Photographed: September 27, 2019

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 01 of 20:** View North - Primary (south) elevation of the building.
- 02 of 20:** Iron manufacturer insignia on east pilaster, primary façade.
- 03 of 20:** Interior of second floor front room – historic wood windows visible and transoms visible behind exterior infill.
- 04 of 20:** Interior of second floor front room – original ceiling height re-created with gypsum board. Original wood doors with infilled transoms visible.
- 05 of 20:** Eastern corridor at the second floor looking north.
- 06 of 20:** Historic wood balustrade at the top of stairs to the second floor.
- 07 of 20:** Interior of a first floor room. Original ceiling height is maintained, finishes from c. 1970's visible.
- 08 of 20:** Interior of a first floor restroom.
- 09 of 20:** Historic window at rear (north) elevation of the second floor.

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- 10 of 20:** Bi-fold door leading to stair at the rear of the building connecting first and second floors.
- 11 of 20:** Historic skylight at second floor – infilled today.
- 12 of 20:** Room interior at first floor – non-historic ceiling grid still visible.
- 13 of 20:** Room interior at first floor – non-historic ceiling grid still visible
- 14 of 20:** Corridor at the first floor of the building.
- 15 of 20:** Extant bank vault door at former vault room.
- 16 of 20:** Cast ironwork detail and entry door at the east side of the south façade. The original masonry window openings have been partially infilled with stucco and masonry components.
- 17 of 20:** Cast ironwork detail and entry door at the west side of south façade. The original masonry window openings have been partially infilled with stucco and masonry components.
- 18 of 20:** Cast ironwork detail at second floor façade.
- 19 of 20:** Rear (north) limestone façade – historic window at center and entry door at east. The metal stair at the left of the photo provides access to the second floor.
- 20 of 20:** Second floor of rear (north) elevation with three historic window openings, one entry door at east. Membrane roof and parapets are visible.

**Figure Log:**

Include figures on continuation pages at the end of the nomination.

**Figure 1:**

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**Donaldson and Hosmer Building**

Name of Property

**Marion County, Kansas**

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N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Summary

The Donaldson and Hosmer Building is a symmetrical two-story two-part commercial block located at 318 E. Main in downtown Marion, a rural community in central Kansas. The building's exterior features an eclectic mix of late Victorian architectural styles, including Second Empire Style, Romanesque Revival, Queen Anne, and even Late Gothic Revival. Principal building materials include cast-iron and stone.

Setting

The Donaldson and Hosmer Building is located at 318 E. Main in downtown Marion, Kansas (population 1800). The building is located in the middle of the block, on the north side of East Main Street between Third and Fourth Streets. The south end of this block was developed in the early 1880s when the first major masonry commercial block was built for the First National Bank Building. Following the construction of the Donaldson and Hosmer Building in 1887, the First National Bank left its location at the corner of Fourth and Main and relocated here, making it a rare financial institution located in the middle of a downtown commercial block. This was one of the last buildings completed before the 1880s real estate boom went bust, and it represents a rare high-style nineteenth-century façade in a rural downtown.

Exterior

**Storefront** - The building has a south-facing front with a symmetrical storefront and upper façade divided by a lintel. The lintel features four panels topped with a simple cornice. Historically, the panels were recessed and there were dentils along the cornice. The storefront is divided by cast-iron columns into four bays - two equally sized bays flanked by a narrower bay on each side – all framed by fluted cast-iron pilasters with decorative bases and capitals. Historically, the outer bays housed raised entrances accessible via stone stairs with cheek walls. The west entrance, which now opens to a small foyer with three interior stairs, allows access to the first floor. The east entrance opens to a stair that provides exterior access to the second floor. At some point before 1970, the transom/lintel area was infilled with flat panels. At the same time, owners infilled access to the lower level, removed the exterior stairs, and lowered the first-floor entrances to sidewalk level by adding stairs at interior foyers. Later, arches were added to the upper halves of the historic transom openings. Historically, the inner bays housed large plate-glass windows with Queen Anne transoms over a sidewalk opening with cast-iron railing at an entrance to the lower level, which historically housed businesses, including a barbershop. The storefront windows and doors are now framed with clear anodized aluminum.

**Upper Façade** - The symmetrical upper façade is divided into three bays framed with cast-iron pilasters. The center bay is framed with Corinthian columns sitting atop fluted brackets. The columns support a corbelled frieze and curved pediment with trefoil. The pediment pierces the mansard roofline; however, a steep hipped roof peeks out from behind in the center bay. The frieze's recessed panel includes the words "Donaldson & Hosmer 1887." The upper-façade opening in this bay houses a pair of windows divided by a cast-iron mullion and topped by a decorative lintel. Although covered with aluminum storms, the original 1/1 wood windows are intact. The Queen Anne transom windows are also intact, although not visible from the exterior because they are covered with panels.



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The two outer bays that flank the pedimented center bay are identical. The window frames sit on a continuous sill that spans the building's full width. Each opening houses a pair of windows divided by a cast-iron mullion. Although the windows and transoms, which are covered, are not themselves arched, each pair is housed in an arched opening created by a decorative rounded cast-iron frame with a bullseye in the center. Above each window opening is a decorative frame and lintel that features iron columns topped with Doric capitals supporting a segmented arch embellished with two rosettes. Above each lintel on the outer bays is a corbeled cornice and mansard roof.

Rear Elevation – The rear elevation has changed little since the building's construction. The predominant material is limestone. On the lower level, there is an entrance on the east and a window opening. Infill indicates that there were historically three windows on the lower level of this elevation. There are three windows and one entry door on the upper story. The entry door is accessed via a metal stair that rises from the alley. The extant windows are original wood 4/4 double-hung.

Interior

First Floor – The interior of the first floor reflects a ca. 1960 remodel. The entrance stair opens to a reception/waiting room. There are three offices running along the west side of the building, accessible from a narrow corridor formed by a partial wall that follows the plane of the safe, which is located east of the northernmost office. A north/south corridor at the back of the building opens to a small restroom and rear exit. In the northwest corner of the building, there is a narrow five-step stair leading to a back landing, which opens to a non-historic interior stair that leads to the second floor.

The vast majority of finishes on the first-floor date to the ca. 1960 remodel. The reception room features gray carpeting, wood paneling, fluorescent lighting, and a salvaged lumber grid that held a suspended ceiling. Although concealed by the 1960 materials, historic materials remain. These include wood door trim with corner blocks, plaster ceilings, and plaster walls. A ca. 1940 fluorescent light fixture is mounted to the concealed plaster ceiling. Office space finishes are similar to the reception room. Some office walls are textured. The vault maintains its historic cast-iron surround with fluted pilasters and Corinthian columns and its hand-painted original black iron safe door that opens to the south. The vault is accessible via these doors, as well as from the north via a plain cast-iron single-leaf vault door that opens to the rear hall.

Second Floor – Unlike the first floor, the second floor retains many of its historic floorplan and finishes. The second floor is accessible via two stairs – one (original) rising from the east storefront entrance and another (non-historic) from the interior of the back of the first floor. The top of the stair terminates in a long corridor that stretches along the east wall to the back of the building. The second floor historically housed four office spaces. The first is accessible via a door that opens south from the corridor. The space is lit by three large front plate-glass windows. Their Queen Anne transoms are visible from this space although they are covered on the exterior. On the north wall of this office is an original double door with enclosed transom. The second room is accessible via this double door – or from a single door that opens east into the corridor. In this space, it is clear that the second floor received some minor modifications to convert it to housing. There is a small kitchen in the northwest corner and a small restroom in the northeast corner. A thruway between the kitchen and bathroom provides access to the third office space. This space houses a ca. 1960 stair. On the north wall is a double door with a transom

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Name of Property <b>Marion County, Kansas</b>
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that opens to the fourth office space. This space is also accessible through a door on the north end of the corridor.

Historic finishes and details abound on the second floor. These include plaster walls and ceilings, wood door and window trim, original stair rail, corrugated wood wainscoting and chair rail along the east wall of the corridor, and hardwood floors. Some ceilings have non-original gyp board at the original ceiling height.

Integrity

The Donaldson and Hosmer Building retains adequate integrity for a property nominated under Criterion A (Historical Significance). According to National Register Bulletin 15, properties nominated under Criteria A and B "ideally might retain some features of all seven aspects of integrity: location, design, settings, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association." "A basic integrity test," the bulletin adds, "is whether a historical contemporary would recognize the property as it exists." Despite the loss of some historical details - particularly on the lower facade/storefront, the building's exterior retains a high degree of architectural integrity and, because of its high-style cast-iron elements, would easily be recognizable by historical contemporaries. Although the interior of the first floor reflects a ca. 1960 remodel, many of these changes are reversible and in the process of being reversed. The second floor retains a high degree of architectural integrity, with character-defining features including floorplan and original finishes and trim.

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<b>Donaldson and Hosmer Building</b>
Name of Property <b>Marion County, Kansas</b>
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Intro

The Donaldson and Hosmer Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with "events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history." The Donaldson and Hosmer Building is a unique study of financial triumph, upheaval, and humility in the pioneer and progressive rural west - from the time of its completion in 1887, through the financial collapse of the 1890s, to a period of stability in the early twentieth century in downtown Marion, Kansas (population 1900). The building's Period of Significance stretches from the time of its construction in 1887 until 1941 when the building last served a financial institution. During its first five decades, the building remained little changed. The majority of the changes to both the exterior and interior occurred after 1958 when the building was purchased by local attorney David Wheeler. Current plans for rehabilitation call for returning the building to its ca. 1960 appearance.

The Boom Begins

When the building was constructed for the First National Bank in 1887, Kansas was in the midst of a spectacular real estate boom. As settlers and railroads marched westward, eastern capitalists, with Gilded-Age-sized earnings, placed their bets on western real estate. The boomtown playbook often involved a concerted effort between business communities and newspaper editors, fueled by the promise of railroads and the growing expendable incomes of cash-crop farmers experiencing favorable climate conditions.

The communities that attracted attention in the late nineteenth century were those that were situated along historic routes of commerce. Marion County, named after Revolutionary War hero Francis Marion, was established in 1855. By then, local landmarks, like Lost Springs, were familiar to American Indians and Euro-American capitalists who traversed the ancient trading route that came to be known as the Santa Fe Trail. Just as the town of Marion Centre (now Marion) was platted in 1860, Kansas titans like Cyrus K. Holliday promised to replace the freight wagons with iron horses. This was the birth of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad.

Despite its trail-days pedigree, Marion would spend the next two decades trying to lure the railroad. As the Santa Fe finally pushed west in the years following the Civil War, the line bypassed the county seats of Cottonwood Falls (Chase County) and Marion, instead opting to plat new towns at Strong City and Florence. It wasn't until the Santa Fe finally built a line from Florence to McPherson in 1879 that Marion's future as a trading center was secured. Marion noted the *Wichita Weekly Beacon* was "as proud as a boy with a red, white and blue kite."<sup>1</sup>

As expected, the arrival of the railroad signaled a period of rapid growth for Marion – with the First National Bank leading the way. Moralizing pioneer, politician, and capitalist N. W. Gordon incorporated the Bank of Marion in 1872. In 1880, Gordon sold the bank to local attorney R. M. Crane and Crane's friend and investor A. W. Brewerton, who built on his success. In 1883, soon after the completion of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Wichita Weekly Beacon*, 20 August 1879.

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new bank block (1882), the Bank of Marion was granted a national bank charter and renamed the First National Bank of Marion.

In late nineteenth-century Kansas, a county seat railroad town surrounded by fertile farms and grasslands attracted the attention of outside investors. With the help of eastern capital, Marion's population ballooned from 857 to 2047 between 1880 and 1890. Within five short years of its construction, the community would take to calling the imposing four-lot-wide stone edifice the "OLD National Bank Building."

The Players: Donaldson and Hosmer

Among the eastern-backed firms that laid claim to Marion in the mid-1880s was Donaldson and Hosmer – a partnership between Kansas native E. M. Donaldson and New Hampshire investor Joseph L. Hosmer. Edwin M. (E. M.) Donaldson (1856-1918) was born in Jefferson, Kansas, in 1856, at the height of the Missouri/Kansas border wars. As the oldest of ten siblings, Donaldson was forced to help his mother make ends meet following the untimely death of his father, Captain George T. Donaldson, in 1869. The family remained at their Butler County farm in 1875, but by 1880, they had moved to Manhattan, Kansas, where Donaldson worked as a store clerk. In the early 1880s, he moved to Marion to take a job as principal of Marion schools. "Professor Donaldson" married Iowa native Marion Charlotte Spees (1861-1940) in 1882. During their marriage, the couple had three children. One boy, whom they named Hosmer Erle Donaldson (1890-1947) after E. M.'s business partner Joseph Hosmer, was born in Marion.

Joseph L. Hosmer (1836-1910) was one of many eastern capitalists who invested part of his Gilded-Age fortune in the American West. Born in Weld, Maine, in 1836, Hosmer made his way to Merrimack County, New Hampshire, where he was living and working with his business partner Charles Williams in 1870. As a young single man of 28, Hosmer had already amassed an estate valued at \$7000. In 1872, Hosmer married Alice Potter, who, along with her mother, managed the household while he continued to build his business. In 1879, Hosmer remained in business with Charles Williams; and, together, they made their mark on Pembroke, New Hampshire, with the construction of a Clocktower Building. Hosmer invested heavily in the Sunflower State in the 1880s and early 1890s, establishing financial institutions in western Kansas (Greensburg, Jetmore, etc.) after staking a claim in Marion. Hosmer was partnered with E. M. Donaldson on many of these ventures, including the Iowa Cattle Company, based in Sioux City, which owned thousands of acres of farm and ranchland in Marion County alone.

Building the Temple of Finance

Billed as the successor to the "New Western Land and Loan Company," the firm of Donaldson and Hosmer speculated spectacularly in real estate during the 1880s boom. Before Donaldson and Hosmer came to town, the lot east of the National Bank block housed a blacksmith shop and harness shop. But in 1886, the *Marion Record* announced that "E. M. Donaldson was down to Kansas City ... getting the plans and specifications for a fifty-foot front business house" that "when finished will be one of the best buildings in the city."

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N/A

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With an estimated population of 140,000 in 1886, Kansas City was a regional trade center and, therefore a logical source of inspiration for E. M. Donaldson.<sup>2</sup> Amidst the boomtime frenzy of Gilded Age Kansas City, a handful of buildings stood out. And among these architectural jewels was the Kansas City Bank of Commerce: “the bank had specially built for its own occupation and into which it moved in April, 1885, a structure which is probably the most perfectly unique in design, decoration, and suitableness for banking purposes that is to be found in the country.” When the doors of the imposing purpose-built Bank of Commerce were “thrown open” to thousands of boosters in April 1885, it created a sensation: It was “crowded all day by people who were anxious to see the handsomest bank building in the west if not in the entire country... The structure is massive in appearance and somewhat quaint in architecture and of English style. The front is of stone and granite and imparts to the building its appearance of massiveness.”<sup>3</sup>

In the 1880s, most in Kansas City would never have seen anything like it. During the early nineteenth century, Greek Revival was the style of choice for the growing number of purpose-built banks. The trend was epitomized by Benjamin Henry Latrobe’s Bank of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia (1799). After Philadelphia banker Nicholas Biddle declared that Greek forms were most suitable for American architecture, the die was cast. Between 1820 and 1860, the number of banks in the United States exploded from 300 to 2000 – with hundreds of new buildings sporting lofty raised entrances framed by temple fronts. (M to M, 42)

In the words of British-American Architect Calvert Vaux, however, “In architecture, as in history, Greece has fallen victim to Italy.” In the mid-nineteenth century, banks were among the first commercial building types to adopt the Italianate Style. Less intimidating than Greek Revival, Italianate appealed to a growing middle-class clientele. Besides, bankers argued, modern finance had its roots not in Greece, but to Fifteenth-century Florence. (M of M 70) Once again, the nation’s financial center, Philadelphia, took the lead – beginning with the 1831 arrival of English Architect John Notman. In 1847, Notman designed Philadelphia’s Bank of North America, a symmetrical two-story commercial front with pointed pediment, quoining, narrow arched windows with elaborated crowns, and a flat projecting cornice. (M and M 71)

With the increasing circulation of banking publications, including *The Bankers Magazine*, the style took hold nationwide. In 1882, pioneers in Marion constructed the four-lot-wide First National Bank Building in the 300 Block of East Main Street, just west of the lot on which the Donaldson-Hosmer Building was later built. The First National Bank Building featured ornate columns, hoods, and cornices of carved Flint Hills limestone. Advances in cast-iron made it possible to apply Italianate details – like cornices, fronts, and window hoods – with less cost.

Although Italianate would dominate commercial architecture well into the 1880s, innovative designers were always looking for something new. Not surprisingly, the purveyor of the “latest style” in banking in the 1880s was working in Philadelphia. His name was Frank Furness, and his designs defied categories. A student of Richard Morris Hunt, the first American to graduate from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, Furness was once called the “greatest bank designer in the High Victorian Gothic.” Those who weren’t sure how to classify his iconoclastic designs simply referred to his buildings as “Furnessque.”

Philadelphia’s Provident Life and Trust Bank (1879) secured Furness’s reputation as an innovator in bank design. It was an imposing edifice with a massive symmetrical stone façade. The exaggerated projecting center bay was framed by bold stone brackets with columns supporting a large pointed arch/gothic window. Other gothic features included recessed stone trefoils on the upper façade. The building was

<sup>2</sup> S. Ferd. Howe, *The Commerce of Kansas City in 1886 with a General Review of its Business Progress* (Kansas City: Ramsey, Millett and Hudson, 1886), 12.

<sup>3</sup> “Bank of Commerce,” *Kansas City Star*, 1885 April 5, page 2.

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Name of Property <b>Marion County, Kansas</b>
County and State N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

topped by an elaborate entablature that employed an eclectic mix of classical references. Like many preceding bank designs, this temple of finance featured a raised first floor that required the ascent of five stone risers to reach the entry bay. (Now hailed as a masterpiece, the Provident Life and Trust Bank was demolished in 1959.)

Among the designers who were paying attention to the "latest style" was Kansas City architect Asa Beebe Cross (1826-1894). In 1883, the officers of the Kansas City's Bank of Commerce hired Cross to design a new building for the institution. "[B]efore commencing on the plans, the officers of the bank, accompanied by their architect, visited every city of importance in the country and minutely inspected the various bank buildings with a view to attaining the most perfect design of a banking establishment ..." (ibid 27) When Cross returned to Kansas City, he was carrying sketches of Furness's Provident Life and Trust Bank.

The similarities between the Kansas City Bank of Commerce and the Provident Life and Trust Bank were striking. The proportions were nearly identical – with raised entries, projecting center bays, elaborate entablatures, and brackets. Whereas Furness's design employed gothic references, Cross's bank had Romanesque segmental arches. Furness used dressed stone. At the Bank of Commerce, a band of rusticated limestone interrupts the otherwise austere façade.

By the time E. M. Donaldson arrived in Kansas City to commission plans and specifications for his building in Marion, the Bank of Commerce was about two years old. In the interim, technological advances in cast iron had made the "latest designs" increasingly accessible for businesses in large cities and small towns ... like Marion. While Frank Furness and Asa Cross created an air of massive stability and security with the use of massive limestone facades, other designers, including Kansas City's firm Burnham and Root, were employing cast-iron as a tool to lighten masonry buildings with large spans of glazing. Among their best-known commissions was that of the Kansas City Board of Trade, which was in the planning stages at the time Donaldson "was down to Kansas City" in 1886.

The Donaldson & Hosmer Building drew from the proportions and details used by Frank Furness and adopted by Asa Cross. In fact, we suspect that the building was likely designed by Cross. The Donaldson & Hosmer Building bore an unmistakable resemblance to Kansas City's Bank of Commerce. It had a raised first floor, projecting center bay with trefoil and pediment atop brackets and columns, and segmented arches. The proportions were very similar.

But it was also clearly inspired by the glass window walls employed by late nineteenth-century Chicago architects as well as the Kansas City office of Burnham and Root. The effect created by the use of cast-iron elements creates an airier effect. Cast-iron columns framed window walls at the storefront level, topped with multi-pane Queen Anne transoms. On the upper level, the space spanning each of the columns housed windows – three pairs of windows each topped with Queen Anne transoms.

The iron front, designed by Capital Iron Works in Topeka, was impressive enough to be mistaken by Marion citizens for "polished marble and stone ... Mr. Donaldson manifested excellent taste and his liberal spirit in putting up such a grand structure is to be commended. Give us more such handsome blocks."

The building's interior, as described below, appears to have drawn from the works of both Frank Furness and Burnham and Root:

As to the fitting and furnishing of the room – there is no finer in Kansas – it is simply elegant. The counters and desks are all of cherry and present a most pleasant sight. Desks are arrayed along one side of the aisle for the convenience of customers and throughout the bank is a model of neatness and comfort. Donaldson & Hosmer are the gentlemen who own the building and the outside fully corresponds with the interior in point of architecture. Mr. Donaldson gave the

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building his personal supervision both in course of erection and in fitting up the banking room. The interior walls of the First National Bank Building are being frescoed in the latest style.

Just as Donaldson was putting the final touches on his new building, First National Bank President R. M. Crane was moving on to greener pastures. After serving two terms as a State Senator, Crane joined fellow Marion pioneer and retired State Treasurer Richard T. Howe to establish the Kansas National Bank in Topeka. So, Senator Crane sold the First National Bank to Donaldson and Hosmer – and the First National Bank moved into the Donaldson and Hosmer building. But the cast-iron façade was itself a symbol of the Gilded Age. The First National Bank was not as stable as its building suggested.

### Making Good

It was a booming time, and the money was easy ... for a while. Farmers were mortgaging their futures to invest in the equipment necessary to expand their cash-crop operations. Ranchers were buying cattle or more grasslands to lease to cattlemen who were fulfilling a growing eastern market for beef. And middle-class businessmen were demonstrating their Victorian refinement by building fine homes on the tony side of town known as “the hill.” For all these things, the First National Bank and Donaldson’s Union Trust and Mortgage Company seemed to have endless cash to invest. Until they didn’t.

In retrospect, the foreshadowing of what was to come was uncanny. In July 1887, the *Marion Headlight* called Crane’s removal to Topeka “probably an assured calamity.”<sup>4</sup> Still, the *Marion Record* and *Marion Register* routinely endorsed the bank with accolades from “settled on a firm and solid financial basis;” “‘manned’ by as competent a corps of financiers as do business in Kansas, and ‘backed by almost unlimited wealth.’”<sup>5</sup>

Soon, there was the revolving door of investors, officers, and employees, many of them Donaldson’s relatives. As a young man that was the oldest of nine children, Donaldson found work for his brothers. George Donaldson, who had been managing his brother’s interests in Greensburg, arrived in Marion in December 1890. He and his brother Harry would manage the livestock and farming operations of E. M. Donaldson and his eastern investors. Other trusted employees included Harvard-educated attorney C. L. Dean, who named his son Donaldson Dean in honor of the men who, for a short time, were like brothers.

It was this crew of loyal men who were left to manage E. M. Donaldson’s Kansas interests after Donaldson expanded his enterprise to Iowa in 1889. There, he built and managed a National Bank in Ida Grove and from there, for a time, he managed the Iowa Cattle Company and Union Trust Company, both based in Sioux City. By 1890, Donaldson was managing \$1 million in investments from offices in Iowa and Kansas City. But he always returned to Marion. In June 1892, Donaldson led the “heavy stockholders” of the Union Trust Company on a tour of their Marion County investments. According to a local newspaper account, the company was “met with such marked success in its Kansas operations” that eastern investors entrusted Donaldson with \$2 million more.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Marion Headlight*, 21 July 1887.

<sup>5</sup> *Marion Record*, 9 September 1887.

<sup>6</sup> *Marion Headlight*, 16 June 1892.

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Everyone marveled at the local man “made good” – the man who invested so much of his hard-earned wealth in his adopted home of Marion County. Marion residents continued to follow his rise through local newspaper reprints of articles in publications from the *Sioux City Tribune* to the *Bankers Journal*. The First National Bank was, according to the *Marion Record*, “Safe and wise in its management from the beginning of its career,” and “among the strongest banks in the State.”<sup>7</sup>

House of Cards

It’s never a good sign when banks feel it necessary to attest to their own stability – such as in this statement from the National Bank on November 5, 1890: “Our deposits are heavier now than they have ever been in the history of the bank. Customers are meeting their paper more promptly, and collections are good.”<sup>8</sup>

Everyone knew that the economic boom was over. But those who knew E. M. Donaldson, the hardest working man from Marion, were sure that his enterprises would survive. What they didn’t know is that this was just the beginning of the worst economic crisis in American history. Wheat crops failed, beef prices plunged, and farmers and ranchers couldn’t make payments on the debts they accrued during the good times. Donaldson’s businesses had prided themselves in making loans to the masses with competitive interest rates. Now they had to sue for payment. And often, what they got for their trouble was the nearly valueless land of their debtors. In a repentant letter to his friend and partner, Charles Dean, Donaldson acknowledged “errors in judgment and management,” but he counted himself among the “men who have conducted large business affairs and maintained integrity.”

When the crisis began in 1890, E. M. Donaldson, this man of integrity, wasn’t seen as part of the problem. He was the solution. The eastern investors charged Donaldson with collecting “nearly half a million of defaulted western farm and city mortgages...” Kansas City, Wichita, and Topeka were among America’s top ten cities in volume of real estate transfers in 1887 – and the higher they rose, the harder they fell. Many assumed western Kansas, including Jetmore and Greensburg, where Donaldson had banks, would revert to unpopulated desert.

In the midst of the economic crisis, a series of calamities befell the Donaldson family. In August 1891, Harry Donaldson was “seriously if not fatally injured ... while engaged in stacking hay on the Donaldson ranch.”<sup>9</sup> E. M. Donaldson was forced to return to Marion “for some weeks” to “personally superintend the farming operations.”<sup>10</sup> In October 1891, the Donaldsons sold 300 head of cattle.<sup>11</sup>

In February 1892, E. M. Donaldson withdrew “from active connection with all his Kansas interests except for his banking interest.”<sup>12</sup> By March 1892, his brother George was closing up the bank in Jetmore and had purchased the cattle business. The Donaldson brothers shipped a “trainload of fat cattle” to Kansas City in May 1892; but by then, they were all exhausted. Harry Donaldson, who was still recuperating from his near-fatal injuries, left for a two-month stay in Tallapoosa, Georgia. While Harry was gone, his brother

<sup>7</sup> *Marion Record*, 11 October 1889.

<sup>8</sup> *The Central Advocate* (Marion), 5 November 1890.

<sup>9</sup> *Marion Record*, 21 August 1891.

<sup>10</sup> *Marion Record*, 4 September 1891.

<sup>11</sup> *Marion Record*, 23 October 1891.

<sup>12</sup> *Marion Headlight*, 18 February 1892.



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A. J. fell off a pony and endured a “severe cut to the right leg.” Once Harry returned, George, who announced his “retirement” from the banking business, made a “recuperative” trip to Manitou Springs. But while George was gone, Harry suffered “numerous accidents.” Then, just a couple of days after visiting his nephews in Marion, E. M. Donaldson’s uncle Judge J. C. Lambdin, a government cattle inspector, died “very suddenly” in September 1892.<sup>13</sup>

No one thought it could get worse – until it did. By early 1893, the debt-strapped public was beginning to turn on eastern capitalists, bankers, and financiers – and E. M. Donaldson was no exception. In January, when one of the houses on the cattle ranch burned down,<sup>14</sup> many suspected insurance fraud. By the end of 1893, more than 16,000 businesses – including 156 railroads and nearly 500 banks had failed.

In January 1893, the *Sioux City Journal* declared that the Union Trust Company was “One of the most prosperous of our organizations.”<sup>15</sup> In February 1893, the company was predicting a 15% return on investments for the coming year. But by April, Donaldson announced that his First National Bank in Ida Grove, Iowa would “go into voluntary liquidation.” “Since the headquarters of the Union Trust company were moved to Kansas City,” according to company spin, “it has been closing out its interests in Iowa banks.”<sup>16</sup>

Then, in June, there was a run on the banks. The Iowa stockholders of the Union Trust Company directed E. M. Donaldson to go east to check on the condition of the business there.<sup>17</sup> In late June, according to the *Sioux City Journal*, E. M. Donaldson filed a petition to have a receiver appointed.<sup>18</sup> The Union Trust Company was one of the first western institutions to fail in the Panic of 1893. And many smaller banks – including his eleven banks in Iowa - would follow.

### On the Run

As his empire began to crumble, E. M. Donaldson returned home to Marion. If he couldn’t save the Union Trust Company, maybe he could save his First National Bank. But within a month of his return, Marion’s First National Bank started to flounder as well. On July 21, 1893, the *Newton Kansan* announced that the bank had failed to open the day before.<sup>19</sup> “The immediate cause,” according to the *Marion Record* “was the reprehensible conduct of the Bank of Commerce of Kansas City, in using \$5,000 with which our bank expected to tide over the immediate crisis.”<sup>20</sup> At first, Marion sources chalked up the bank’s closure to a “temporary embarrassment.” But the bank closed permanently on August 16.<sup>21</sup>

By the time the bank examiner arrived in Marion, Donaldson had skipped town with \$23,000 of the bank’s money.<sup>22</sup> Another \$600,000 – related to his banks in Iowa – remained unaccounted for. Donaldson’s brothers blamed business partner and friend C. L. Dean for leaking information “relative to the frauds of

<sup>13</sup> *The Wichita Daily Eagle*, 24 September 1892.

<sup>14</sup> *Marion Record*, 3 March 1893.

<sup>15</sup> *Sioux City Journal*, 1 January 1893.

<sup>16</sup> *Sioux City Journal*, 16 April 1893.

<sup>17</sup> *Sioux City Journal*, 8 June 1893.

<sup>18</sup> *Sioux City Journal*, 29 June 1893.

<sup>19</sup> *Newton Kansan*, 21 July 1893.

<sup>20</sup> *Marion Record*, 21 July 1893.

<sup>21</sup> *The Evening Kansan*, 17 August 1893.

<sup>22</sup> According to a decree filed a year later, he left town on August 12, 1893.

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E. M. Donaldson.” When Dean came to Marion from Kansas City on August 24, just a week after the bank closed, he “was knocked flat to the floor by Harry Donaldson in less than a jiffy.” Dean, they said, “kept his mouth shut as long as he received pay for it.”

By the time Donaldson was charged with forgery and embezzlement and a warrant was issued for his arrest, he had fled the country – first to Mexico, then to Costa Rica. He may have escaped, but he left a chaotic mess in his wake. In September 1893, Harry Donaldson bought an interest in a Marion livery stable.<sup>23</sup> In October 1893, Mrs. Donaldson, who was left to raise her three small children, moved into a Marion house with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Spees.<sup>24</sup> She was only thirty-two years old in December 1893, when she left for Kansas City to attend a stenography and typing course.<sup>25</sup> In 1894, the penniless but educated Mrs. Donaldson filed for divorce.<sup>26</sup>

The bankruptcy court judge ordered William P. Morris, receiver of the First National Bank, to “see all the property of the bank in his possession. Morris was forced to sue in 1897 to gain control of a farm valued at \$50,000, which Donaldson had fraudulently placed in his name. While in exile in Central America, E. M. Donaldson worked as a plantation manager and started a second family. He died in Costa Rica in 1918. Mrs. Donaldson lived in the United States until her death in Chattanooga in 1940. Their son, Hosmer Erle Donaldson, the boy named for his father’s eastern business partner, died in Honduras in 1947.

### The Second Chapter

Remarkably, the local business community was able to recover. On December 1, 1893, J. S. Good opened the Bank of Commerce as a private bank. In 1898, the bank was able to increase its capital and incorporate it as a state bank, with J. S. Good as the bank’s president and his son Isaac Good as Vice President.

In late 1910, the State Bank of Commerce absorbed the Marion State Bank with a combined capital of \$30,000.<sup>27</sup> When J. S. Good retired in 1911, Isaac Good became president. Other employees included Miss Ellen Daly, who served as a bookkeeper and teller beginning in 1916. By 1926, the bank boasted \$203,000 in deposits.

Perhaps the Goods learned a lesson from the Panic of 1893. When the next major economic crisis hit, the Great Depression in the 1930s, many banks folded. But the State Bank of Commerce survived. In 1941, after Isaac Good died, his son Josiah Good announced plans to retire and voluntarily liquidate.<sup>28</sup> After the bank closed, the Good Family kept the building. The first floor was converted to a restaurant on the first floor with living space above.

<sup>23</sup> *Marion Record*, 15 September 1893.

<sup>24</sup> *Marion Headlight*, 5 October 1893.

<sup>25</sup> *Marion Headlight*, 7 December 1893.

<sup>26</sup> *The Kansas City Gazette*, 2 September 1894.

<sup>27</sup> *The Peabody Gazette-Herald*, 22 December 1910.

<sup>28</sup> *The Emporia Gazette*, 29 November 1941.

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In 1958, Edward and Bula Good sold the property to local attorney David Wheeler. For the next half-century, the building housed the law offices of David W. Wheeler, Edwin G. Westerhaus, and D. W. Wheeler. More recently, the building housed the law practice of Dan Baldwin.

In 2013, the Donaldson and Hosmer Building was listed for sale. The current owners, Randal and Rachel Collett, purchased the building at Sheriff's auction in 2018 for \$525. They are in the process of planning a rehabilitation of the building.

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (On continuation sheet)

The Donaldson and Hosmer Building sites on a .07-acre parcel in downtown Marion with the following legal description: LOT 46, Original, Except E 24' 6" thereof.

**Boundary Justification** (On continuation sheet)

The above is the legal description for the parcel on which the Donaldson and Hosmer Building sits.

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**Figures**

