

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register Listed
2/3/2012

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 *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 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Union National Bank Building
Other name/site number KHRI # 173-5880-08162

2. Location

Street & number 104 South Broadway not for publication
City or town Wichita vicinity
State Kansas Code KS County Sedgwick Code 173 Zip code 67202

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.)

See File

Signature of certifying official/Title Kansas State Historical Society Date _____

State or 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 commenting official /Title _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is _____ Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

- 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:) _____

Union National Bank Building
Name of Property

Sedgwick County, Kansas
County and State

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.)

African American Resources in Wichita

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter Categories from instructions)

Commerce and Trade

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant, not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century American Movements/
Chicago/Skyscraper

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Concrete
Walls: Concrete with glazed brick infill

Roof: Concrete covered with tar and weather proofing materials

Other: _____

Narrative Description

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

Union National Bank Building

Name of Property

Sedgwick County, Kansas

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- B** Property is associated with significant person.
- 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 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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture _____

Ethnic Heritage _____

Period of Significance

1926-1958 _____

Significant Dates

1926 & 1958 _____

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A _____

Cultural Affiliation

N/A _____

Architect/Builder

K. M. Vizthum & Co., Inc. K. M. Vizthum & J. Burns Architects _____

& E. D. Reem Associate Architect _____

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:

Wichita Beacon & Wichita Eagle newspapers

Union National Bank Building
Name of Property

Sedgwick County Kansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property .021

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1
1 4 6 4 6 8 1 0 4 1 7 2 0 3 5
Zone Easting Northing

2

3
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Dr. Pamela Kingsbury
Organization Historic Preservation Consulting Date February 2011
Street & number 224 North Crestway Telephone 316-686-1731
City or town Wichita State Kansas Zip code 67208-3840

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Name CCC Investments LLC (C/O Dave Burk)
Street & number 151 N Rock Island, Suite 1A Telephone _____
City or town Wichita State KS Zip code 67202

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Union National Bank Building
Wichita, Sedgwick County, KS
African American Resources in Wichita MPDF

The Union National Bank building is located in Wichita, Kansas at the southeast corner of Broadway and Douglas Avenues, the crossroads of downtown Wichita. The building was erected at great speed in 1926, and has a concrete frame with white glazed brick-infill. It has fourteen stories and a full basement. All the original fenestration on the two primary elevations is modern replacements. Giant Corinthian pilasters define the first two floors of the north and west elevations and act as a podium for the remaining twelve floors. Except for the basement and first two floors which are rectangular, the building is L-shaped with the long, vertical side facing the first hundred block of South Broadway and the short horizontal side facing the first hundred block of East Douglas.

The first three floors of the Broadway elevation are composed of white glazed terra cotta covered with a concrete-like-finish. The remaining eleven floors consist of white glazed terra cotta corner pilasters coated with a concrete-like-finish and white glazed brick filling the wall surfaces between the pilasters. The Broadway elevation consists of eight bays with a series of eight giant Corinthian pilasters defining the first and second floors (Photos 1 & 2). At the center of the elevation is a two-story entrance defined by a classical surround surmounted by a large shield bearing an image of a classical temple at its center. At the top of the shield festoons project from either side and join festoons from smaller shields flanking the entrance (Photo 5). The Broadway entrance originally led to the bank lobby and a series of elevators and stairs to the upper floors Photos 7 & 8). The Union National Bank occupied all of the

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basement and half of the first and second floors from the Broadway entrance to the southwest corner of the building. Above the second floor all the floors were available as rental offices with the exception for the eighth floor that was occupied by the Union National Bank's law library.¹ All the fenestration on both the Broadway and Douglas Avenue elevations is devoid of any ornamentation. The third floor is defined by eight pairs of windows that sit on top of the pilasters' entablature and dividing the third from the fourth floor is another entablature upon which sits the fourth floor windows. From the fourth floor the elevation rises nine stories to another entablature. Above it are the last two stories consisting of eight windows alternating with white-glazed tile pilasters supporting an abbreviated cornice. The fenestration consists of three window panes for each floor divided by a broad metal ban. Completing the elevation is a white-glazed terra cotta brick dentilated cornice followed by a white-glazed terra cotta brick parapet. Today the roof consists of gravel over a rubber membrane that lies on top of the older tar roof.

The north elevation of the Union National Bank faces the first hundred block of East Douglas. Like the Broadway elevation of the bank the Douglas elevation has giant concrete pilasters composed of white glazed terra cotta covered with a concrete-like finish defining the first and second floors. The Douglas street entrance was located at the corner of Douglas and Broadway

¹ According to the blue prints the ninth through the twelfth floors were occupied by attorneys, investment firms and oil and insurance companies. A copy of the blue prints of the Union National Bank building are in the possession of Mr. Dave Burk of Wichita, Kansas.

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and was recessed with a revolving door at its center flanked by stationary doors leading into the Dockum Drug Store that occupied the north half of the first floor while the Union National Bank occupied the south half of the first floor. Today the original entrance has been sealed off by glass and steel partitions. With the exception of the differences in the articulation on the Doulgas and Broadway streets' first and second floors, the treatment of the remaining twelve floors is the same (Photo 1).

Today the south elevation of the Union National Bank faces an alley and beyond it the unoccupied Henry's Department Store building (Photos 3 & 4). The elevation is constructed of buff color brick and the ground floor of the south elevation is without fenestration and has two doors and two windows that have been bricked shut at a later date. At some point a two-story addition of brick was added to the east side of the south elevation. Above the first floor there are a series of the original four pairs of three-over-three steel-framed windows. Also a later addition to the elevation is the center steel fire escape that starts at the second story and terminates at the fourteenth floor.

The first two stories of the east elevation are obscured by the Kansas Health Foundation building. Unlike the other elevations, the east elevation is L-shaped. The long side of the L is defined by five pairs of the original three-over-three steel framed-windows. A steel pipe is located between the third and fourth windows and runs the entire height of the elevation. This pipe served as the chimney for the original boiler. An addition to the east elevation is the

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insertion of six air conditioner louvers from the seventh to the twelfth floors of the last row of windows on the north. On the short side of the elevation there are pairs of the original steel-framed windows down the center of the elevation (Photo 3).

With regard to the interiors of the Union National Bank none of the original integrity of the hallways and rooms survive. The elevators are in their original positions, but have been stripped of their original décor. The rooms have been given false ceilings to accommodate the air conditioning and none of the original lighting fixtures remain in the rooms or the hallways. While most of the hallways and elevator lobby floors have been replaced, some of them have retained their original terrazzo flooring. By following a copy of the building's blue prints Mr. Dave Burk of Wichita, Kansas, will be able to restore the interiors of the Union National Bank building and turn them into apartments.

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The Union National Bank building is being nominated under **Criterion C** as a classic example of a Chicago, tall, concrete-framed, elevated office building and the only one of its kind in Wichita, Kansas. The Union National Bank building also is being nominated under **Criterion A** in the area of *Ethnic Heritage: Black* for the Dockum Drug Store sit-in led by a group of Wichita's black youth during July of 1958. This nomination is being submitted as part of the "African American Resource in Wichita" multiple property submission as an example of the "Commercial Buildings property type."

The design and construction of the Union National Bank were financed by the Edith Rockefeller McCormick Trust of Chicago, Illinois.² Edith Rockefeller McCormick (1872-1932), a prominent socialite and opera patron, was the fourth daughter of John D. Rockefeller, the founder of Standard Oil. Her husband Harold F. McCormick was the son of Chicagoan Cyrus McCormick, the inventor of the mechanical reaper. Because the design and construction of the Union National Bank building were financed by the Chicago based Edith Rockefeller McCormick Trust, the architectural firm of K. M. Vitzthum & Co. Inc., K. M. Vitzthum & J. J. Burns Architects, E. D. Krenn Associate Architect as well as the engineering firm of Brussel & Viterbo, J. B. Black Associated Engineers were employed to design and oversee the building

² Edith Rockefeller McCormick had no ties to Wichita or to the Union National Bank. In all probability the trust officer in charge of investing the Edith Rockefeller McCormick Trust's funds considered the loan to finance the construction of the Union National Bank to be a good investment. To insure the viability of the loan the manager of the trust probably insisted that the architect as well as the engineering firm be from Chicago.

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of the bank.³ The George H. Siedhoff Construction of Wichita was the contractor for the bank.⁴

Vitzthum and his associates were part of what became to be known as the “Chicago School,” a group of architects who worked in the Windy City during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and pioneered the tall, metal-framed, elevatored office buildings that were the precursors of the skyscraper. The basic characteristic of the Chicago tall office building is the virtual elimination of the wall and its replacement with glass and narrow supporting members intended to create an impression of verticality.⁵ An excellent example of such a building, and one that is still extant, is William Le Baron Jenney’s Second Leiter Building of 1889-1891, later renamed the Sears Roebuck building located in Chicago’s Loop. The most famous member of this group was Louis Sullivan (1856-1924). Vitzthum and his associates designed a number of Chicago’s tall office buildings. Prominent among them is the One North LaSalle Building of 1930.

Although the Union National Bank building has a concrete frame instead of the metal frame employed by the Chicago School, the aesthetic effect is the same. When one looks at the Broadway and Douglas street elevations of the

³ Blue Prints of the Union National Bank Building, Sheet 1. Dave Burk, Wichita, Kansas.

⁴ *Wichita Eagle*, May 30, 1926, Picture Gravure Section.

⁵ William H. Jordy, “The Tall Buildings,” in *Louis Sullivan: The Function in Ornament*, ed. Wim de Wit, p. 65-67 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1986).

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Union National Bank the eye is swiftly directed upward. Unlike Sullivan's Wainwright Building in St. Louis, Missouri laden with vegetal ornamentation to distract the eye, there is no ornamentation of any kind on the fenestration or anywhere else to distract the eye and impede its rapid upward movement to the top of the building (Plate 8). The Union National Bank building took only eight months to complete at a cost of \$200,000. Upon its completion it was the tallest building in the state of Kansas.⁶

The Union National Bank building also is being nominated in **Criterion A** for the Dockum Drug Store sit-in led by a group of Wichita's black youth during July of 1958. Their sit-in was the first of many such sit-ins throughout the country and pre-dated the more famous and supposedly the first sit-in of the Civil Rights Movement in Greensboro, North Carolina in February 1960. Not only did the Dockum's sit-in lead to the desegregation of the Dockum's company premier drug store located in the heart of Wichita's thriving downtown. But with it came the quick desegregation of all nine of Wichita's Dockum Drug Stores and all of the Rexall-affiliated drug stores in the state of Kansas.⁷

The idea for a sit-in led by the Wichita chapter of the NAACP youth group occurred in 1956, when Franklin Williams, the NAACP's western regional

⁶ *Wichita Eagle*, May 29, 1926, p. 11.

⁷ Gretchen Cassel Eick, *Dissent in Wichita: The Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest, 1954-72* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 9.

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director spoke at a Wichita NAACP conference organized by Vivian Parks, who was the first woman to serve as president of the Wichita NAACP chapter.⁸ That night Williams stayed at Vivian's home. During his stay he told Ron Walters, the president of the Wichita NAACP's youth group and Carol Parks, Vivian's daughter and the youth group's vice president about the sit-ins the Congress of Racial Equality had organized in the 1940s. Over the intervening two years Williams returned to Wichita for additional speaking engagements and spoke to the local NAACP youth group about what they could do to combat racial discrimination.⁹

Then in the summer of 1958, sixteen year old Joyce Glass on her way home from her downtown job stopped at Dockum's drug store at Broadway and Douglas and ordered a drink only to be refused. Joyce told her older sister Lequitta, the secretary of the NAACP youth group, about her treatment at Dockum's drug store. In turn, Lequitta told the youth group about her sister's experience at the downtown Dockum's drug store. The youth group discussed Joyce's experience at the downtown Dockum's drug store and Ron and Carol told the group about the sit-ins CORE had organized in the 1940's.¹⁰

⁸ Ibid, 35-37. Vivian Parks is not related to Rosa Parks, who on December 1, 1955, sat in the front of a Montgomery, Alabama bus and refused to move to the rear of the bus when the bus driver demanded she do so. Today Rosa Parks is considered to be the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement."

⁹ Eck, 1-2.

¹⁰ Ibid., 3.

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The result of Dockum's discrimination policy was that Ron Walters and Carol Parks proposed that the youth group conduct a sustained sit-in at Dockum's downtown drug store. Ron and Carol discussed their idea with Chet Lewis, the president of the Wichita branch of the NAACP, who had succeeded Carol Parks' mother Vivian as president of the Wichita NAACP chapter. Lewis endorsed their idea for a Dockum's drug store sit-in and submitted their proposal to the local NAACP executive committee which endorsed the Dockum drug store sit-in.¹¹

This was by no means the first sit-in in which the local NAACP youth group was involved. During Vivian Park's tenure as president of Wichita NAACP chapter the youth group became active in the community. In the spring of 1956, fifteen students from Wichita High School North entered Hollebaugh's Drug Store and sat down at its lunch counter. They asked to be served and were denied. Then they asked to speak to the manager. He told the group that "integration had not gotten that far west. When it did, he said, he would be the first to serve "colored people."¹² A month or so later, some members of the youth group unsuccessfully tried to order ice cream at Randall's Drug Store.¹³

The target of the black sit-in in Wichita was the Dockum's two-story drug store in the Union National Bank building located at the corner of Broadway and Douglas, the busiest intersection in downtown Wichita. The Dockum

¹¹ Ibid., 4.

¹² Ibid., 36.

¹³ Ibid.

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company owned nine stores in Wichita and had been in business for fifty-eight years. The Dockum company considered its Union National Bank drug store to be its flagship store, making it an ideal target for a sit-in. Another reason that this Dockum store was selected for the sit-in is that many in Wichita's black community believed that this drug store was the worst of the downtown variety stores because it refused service to blacks at the take-out counter if whites were being served at the lunch counter. Furthermore, Dockum's employed very few of Wichita's black citizens and those who were employed were not permitted to eat at the store's lunch counter.¹⁴

The goal of the youth group, which consisted of high school and college students, was to diminish or destroy the economic viability of the Dockum's lunch counter and the business of the drug store in general, forcing the Dockum's management to end its discriminatory lunch counter policies. From the Dockum Drug Store the youth group intended to move their protest to another of Wichita's downtown chain stores. In preparation for their Dockum sit-in the NAACP youth group met for about two years at various Wichita locations to learn the tactics of non-violent protesting.¹⁵ The youth group selected Thursday to begin its sit-in of Dockum's lunch counter so they could attract the attention of the downtown's evening shoppers.

¹⁴ Ibid., 3 & 5.

¹⁵ Ibid., 1-4.

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On the afternoon of Thursday, July 19, 1958, with Kansas' notorious hot summer well under way and with anxious parents looking on across the street, more than a dozen well dressed and well mannered black high school and college students entered the Dockum Drug Store and took their seats on the stools at the store's counters sitting quietly in an erect position looking forward. Joining the group of protesters was a white man, Jerry Cole, a Wichita resident and a strong civil rights advocate.¹⁶ One of the group attempted to order a coke and was refused. After a while the store's management closed the fountain and posted a sign stating that "This Fountain Temporarily Closed."¹⁷ The students left the store at closing time feeling a sense of accomplishment for Dockum's had lost money that day. Their intention was to return on Saturdays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, including Tuesday and Thursday evenings, until the Dockum's management changed their discriminatory policies toward blacks.

They followed the same non-violent routine for about three weeks. On two of the Tuesday evenings the police entered the drug store armed with billy clubs. One encounter occurred when three Wichita police officers entered the drug store and looked menacingly at the black students sitting at the lunch counter. "One officer hit a billy club repeatedly against the palm of his hand, glowering and telling the youths to move off the stools. They shifted to the

¹⁶ *The Enlightener*, Thursday, August 7, 1958, the front page.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

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floor”¹⁸ and left the drug store. Another incident reported in the black press at the time stated “that about twenty ‘white gang’ members entered the store on Saturday evening, presumably August 9, began to make antagonistic remarks to those sitting at the eight lunch-counter seats, and destroyed their protest signs.” One gang member said: “wait till the rest of us get here. We’re really going to have a party.”¹⁹ After other white groups threatened violence to the black youths sitting at the lunch counter, Ron Walters, the president of the NAACP youth group, and Dockum’s store manager Wayne Williams, asked the police to stop the harassment of the youths sitting at the lunch counter. “I have instructions to keep our hands off this”²⁰ was the response from an officer at the scene. When word spread about the sit-in at Dockum’s lunch counter the drug store was filled with the curious and the hostile mingling with the Dockum’s shoppers. Some of the whites in the drug store made racist remarks.²¹

On Monday, August 11th the black student protesters once again took their places at Dockum’s lunch counter. Carol Parks, one of the protesters, saw a white man enter the store and look toward the rear of the store where Wayne

¹⁸ Ibid. 8

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 7. The events that occurred inside the Dockum’s drug store during the sit-in were taken from oral interviews of the participants by Gretchen Cassel Eck the author of *Dissent in Wichita: The Civil Rights Movement in the Midwest, 1954-72*, the only authoritative account of the Dockum’s drug store sit-in.

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Williams, Dockum's merchandise manager, was standing and said to him: "Serve them. I am losing too much money."²² The exhausted protesters were stunned and celebrated their victory with a coke. The next day Chester Lewis, the president of Wichita's NAACP chapter, met with Walter Hieger, the vice president of the Dockum Chain Drug Stores, to verify that the Dockum Drug Stores would abolish their discriminatory policies as of 10:00 am, Monday morning, August 11, 1958. The black youth protesters had won a monumental victory. Not only would the Dockum company, the largest drug chain in the state of Kansas, desegregate its Wichita stores, but the Rexall corporation followed suit and agreed to desegregate all its Rexall stores in the state.²³

The successful desegregation of Dockum's flagship store in downtown Wichita had an immediate effect beyond Wichita and the state's borders. Eight days after the successful Dockum's sit-in on August 19th and inspired by it, a NAACP-sponsored youth lead by sixteen-year-old Barbara Posey and their adult adviser Clara Luper initiated sit-ins at the Katz Drug Store in Oklahoma City. Other towns in Kansas followed suit.²⁴

²² Ibid., 9.

²³ Ibid. 9. & *Wichita Eagle*, March 6, 1950, p. 4A. Harry A. Dockum, the founder of the Dockum Drugstore chain, was a graduate of the University of Kansas School of Pharmacy and an early and strong advocate of the idea that one drug manufacturing firm should sell its total output of drugs to independently franchised druggists. Acting on his belief, he obtained the Rexall franchise for all his Dockum drug stores in Wichita in 1906.

²⁴ Eck, 9.

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Despite the great success of Wichita NAACP's youth group to desegregate the Dockum Drug Store's flagship store in the heart of downtown Wichita, Kansas in the summer of 1958, the Dockum Drug Store sit-in has never been properly recognized by historians as the first successful, student-led sit-in of the Civil Rights movement. Several factors are responsible for this lack of recognition.

The day before the sit-in was to occur, Chester Lewis as president of the Wichita chapter of the NAACP and his predecessor as president, Vivian Parks, sent a telegram to the national NAACP staff, informing them of the Wichita chapter's intention to undertake a sit-in of a Dockum Drug Store in downtown Wichita. Herb Wright, the youth secretary for the National NAACP office replied in a telegram stating his vehement opposition to the sit-in. The national NAACP headquarters did not approve of sit-ins and other forms of direct protest actions. "These are not NAACP tactics" Wright wrote in reply. In response Vivian Parks telephoned Gloster Current, the national director of the NAACP branches, and Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the NAACP. Neither approved of Wichita's planned sit-in. Both stressed that the local branches of the NAACP were to confine themselves to litigation and that they were not to participate in any direct action campaigns.²⁵

²⁵ Ibid., 5.

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To confirm the NAACP's national policy against sit-ins the National NAACP's board minutes did not record anything about the Wichita sit-in. To compound the problem, Chester Lewis writing to inform the NAACP's national youth secretary about the Wichita youth sit-ins gave the wrong dates for the Wichita sit-in. He wrote that the sit-in began on August 2nd and ended on August 11th. The actual dates of the Dockum's sit-in are July 19th to August 11th. His error in dating may have down played down the significance of the Wichita sit-in.²⁶

Lewis convened an emergency meeting of the Wichita NAACP board to decide what should be done. After much discussion and on Lewis's advice, the board decided to defy the national board's directive and support the local youth group's sit-in. Lewis then volunteered free legal services for the sit-in.²⁷

Another significant factor that kept the Dockum Drug Store sit-in a local rather than a national news media event was the refusal of the *Wichita Eagle*, one of the two prominent Wichita newspapers, to cover the Dockum's sit-in. The other prominent local newspaper the *Wichita Beacon* printed only one very small article. Wichita's white business community was terrified that news of the Dockum Drug Store sit-in would ruin business in downtown Wichita. Although the Associated Press and the United Press services reported the Dockum Drug Store sit-in nationally and despite the fact that the *Wichita*

²⁶ Ibid., 10.

²⁷ Ibid.

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Beacon printed one small article, these newspaper articles had no impact on the national media or the national consciousness.²⁸ Although Wichita's two main-line, white oriented newspapers all but ignored the Dockum sit-in, black newspapers did cover the Dockum sit-in. The black-owned newspapers *The Enlightener* and the *Mid-West News Press* covered the sit-in, with *The Enlightener* featuring a large photo on its front page of the Dockum's sit-in.²⁹

Yet another important factor in the failure of the national NAACP headquarters to acknowledge the Wichita's NAACP youth group's successful Dockum's Drug Store sit-in concerns the arcane nature of board politics. The national NAACP board minutes did not include any mention of Wichita's successful youth sit-in at Dockum's flagship drug store in downtown Wichita. In contrast, the success of the Oklahoma City youth's sit-in was praised in the NAACP's board minutes of September 8th and December 8, 1958.

The reason that the Wichita sit-in was not recorded in the NAACP board minutes was due to the fact that the NAACP board included a member from Oklahoma, but no representative from Kansas sat on the board. One positive action to come from the Wichita Dockum Drug Store occurred at the NAACP's state youth conference in December 1958, when the branch presidents agreed to allow youth members to participate in sit-ins with the stipulations that they be carefully planned and coordinated by the chairman of the Youth Work

²⁸ Ibid, 7.

²⁹ Ibid.

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Committee of the adult branch.³⁰ Although the Wichita NAACP's youth group only belatedly received recognition of their successful Dockum Drug Store sit-in during the summer of 1958 their actions paved the way for the much publicized and lauded Greensboro, North Carolina sit-in of February 1960.

With regard to Wichita, Kansas, the NAACP's youth group's successful Dockum Drug Store sit-in has served as a catalyst to encourage the process of reconciliation and integration between the races and make Wichita a more humane, compassionate city in which to live.

³⁰ Ibid. 10.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Starting at the southeast corner of Broadway and Douglas going east 75 feet; going south to the alley then west to Broadway then traveling north to the southeast corner of Broadway and Douglas. Lots 1, 3, 5, on Douglas Avenue, in N.A. English's Addition to Wichita, Sedgwick County, Kansas.

Boundary Justification

The boundary for the Union National Bank nomination contains all the property historically associated with the Union National Bank Building.

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Photographs

Union National Bank Building

Wichita, Sedgwick County, KS

Photographer: Christy Davis

Date of Photos: August 5, 2011

- Photo 1 of 10 North and west elevations, facing SE
- Photo 2 of 10 North elevation, facing S
- Photo 3 of 10 East (side) and south (rear) elevations, facing NW
- Photo 4 of 10 South (rear) elevation, facing N
- Photo 5 of 10 Arched entrance along west elevation, facing E
- Photo 6 of 10 Close-up of detail around arched entrance on west elevation
- Photo 7 of 10 Interior, bank lobby
- Photo 8 of 10 Interior, bank stairs to second floor
- Photo 9 of 10 Interior, back stairwell
- Photo 10 of 10 Interior, upper floor office