

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Donaghey Building

other names/site number Site #PU0246

2. Location

street & number 103 E. 7th Street/703 S. Main Street not for publication

city or town Little Rock vicinity

state Arkansas Code AR county Pulaski code 119 zip code 72201

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 for 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.)

Archie Proctor

5/4/12
Date

Signature of certifying official/Title

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
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 certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the
National Register.
 See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the
National Register

removed from the National
Register.

other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Donaghey Building
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
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 count.)

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

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

N/A

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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: Business
Commerce/Trade: Specialty Store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not In Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & Early 20th Century American Movements:

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
Walls Brick
Cut-Stone
roof Asphalt/tar build-up
Other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
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.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1925-1926

Significant Dates

1925-1926

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

George W. Donaghey

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

George W. Donaghey, Builder

Hunter McDonnell, Architect

William Dill, Assistant Architect

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
Previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal Agency
Local Government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Record # _____

Donaghey Building
Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 566716 3844658
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____

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 Sandra Taylor Smith, Preservation Consultant
organization _____ date _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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 the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Charles Hendrix, Lake Hamilton Corporation
street & number P.O. Box 21038 telephone _____
city or town Hot Springs state AR zip code 71903

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 listing. 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 20303.

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SUMMARY

The Donaghey Building is a 14-story office building at the southeast corner of 7th and Main Streets. Designed by New York architect Hunter McDonnell, the building was constructed in 1925-1926. The building is constructed of reinforced concrete and faced with gray-colored brick. Fenestration on the building consists of multi-pane steel windows on the upper eleven floors. The building is covered by a flat roof with parapet and features decorative Neo-Classical detailing on its upper two stories. The building forms a U-shape on the south elevation with a center light-court above the first floor. The first three floors on the north and west facades, originally faced with cut-stone, were covered with an aluminum window grid in 1965.

ELABORATION

The Donaghey Building was constructed on the southeast corner of 7th and S. Main streets in downtown Little Rock, Arkansas in 1925-1926. Historically S. Main Street was the major center of commerce in the city. At 14-stories, the Donaghey Building was the tallest building in Arkansas until construction of the Tower Building (National Register 9-23-11) in 1958-1960.

The building was constructed for George W. Donaghey, a well-known contractor who was governor of Arkansas from 1909-1913. Donaghey selected New York architect Hunter McDonnell to design the building. Assistant architect was William Dill of Little Rock. The building is noted for its early "Skyscraper" form with Neo-Classical detailing on the upper two stories of the north and west elevations.

The Donaghey Building rests on a continuous concrete foundation and has a reinforced concrete frame. The 14-story building contains a full basement and is covered by a flat tar roof behind a cast-concrete parapet. The verticality of the building is accentuated by bays containing multi-pane steel windows that feature both awning and hopper-style openings.

Both the west and north facades have street exposure and decorative detail on the building is largely limited to these facades. A Neo-Classical style parapet with dentiling spans the north and west elevations of the building. The upper two stories of the north and west elevations are denoted by a recessed center bay containing eight nine-pane steel windows separated by Ionic-capped fluted columns and marble panels between floors. A single nine-pane steel window framed by cast concrete is located in each of the end bays on the north and west facades. The 13th-story outer bay single windows feature a decorative cast-concrete balcony supported by scrolled concrete brackets.

A cast-concrete cornice with small dentils runs above the third story on the north and west facades. Original cut stone walls and storefront materials were covered with an aluminum window system and modern aluminum storefronts in 1965.

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The south elevation of the building features a light court in its center above the first floor, forming a U-shape building in its upper stories. Due to the light court, original advertisements for the building stated that all offices were on the outside.

The west façade, facing S. Main Street was the original official “front” of the building with an address of 703 S. Main Street. Since the late 1950s, the building’s address has been 103 E. 7th Street. A glass walkway connecting to the building to the north across E. 7th Street, was constructed in the late twentieth century to connect state offices that were housed in both buildings.

Occupancy

The ground floor of the building was occupied by a variety of small businesses including a coffee shop, barber, and drug store with all upper floors office space. Offices of doctors, dentists, attorneys, and insurance companies and later government agencies were located in the building from the time of its construction until it was closed in 2008. The building remains vacant.

Historic commercial buildings adjacent to and across S. Main Street have been demolished. A new office building has been located directly across Main Street and a parking deck constructed on property to the immediate south of the Donaghey Building. The office building and parking deck are connected by a glass walkway over S. Main Street.

West Façade

The first three stories of the building on the west façade were covered in aluminum-framed stationary windows and new aluminum storefronts in 1965. This area is denoted by a cut-stone cornice with dentils and was originally faced in cut-stone. Pilasters separating bays are still visible and original spacing of storefront bays remain intact. The west façade contains six storefront bays, all similar in their plate-glass windows and doors framed in aluminum. A projecting flat concrete canopy constructed in the 1965 remodeling spans the width of the west façade above the storefronts. The area between the canopy and third-story cornice was covered by two 15-pane aluminum-framed smoked-glass panels on either side of a 35-pane panel. Original second-story steel windows remain behind the 1965 glass panels.

Above the third story cornice, the west façade remains unaltered, featuring four bays with sets of paired nine-pane steel windows flanked by single nine-pane steel windows in the outer bays. The upper two stories are denoted by a recessed center bay containing eight windows separated by round, cast-concrete fluted pilasters with Ionic capitals. The single windows on the end bays of the 13th story feature a decorative cast-concrete balcony supported by scrolled concrete brackets. A projecting cast-concrete cornice with dentiling spans the roofline on the west and north facades.

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North Façade

The first three floors of the north façade appear much as the west side of the building with the 1965 aluminum-framed smoked-glass panels and storefronts. This façade is slightly wider than the west façade and its entrance is broader. The center entrance is flanked by three similarly sized storefronts on either side. The upper stories feature the same Neo-Classical detailing seen on the west elevation with its dentiled cornice, recessed 13th and 14th story windows with Ionic capped, fluted cast-concrete columns and marble panels. Decorative cast-concrete balconies on the 13th story outer bay windows are repeated on the north façade.

A glass skywalk over E. 7th Street connecting the Donaghey Building to the building to its north at 623 S. Main was constructed in the late 20th century.

South Façade

The center of the south façade of the building forms a U-shape above the first floor. Outer walls contain four bays of nine-bay steel windows. Some first floor windows on the outer walls of the south façade have been boarded.

Inside walls of the "U" feature 16-pane steel windows with awning and Hopper-style openings. A metal fire escape is located on the west wall of the inside of the "U". A large round metal chimney pipe from the basement boiler runs to the roof on the east wall of the "U".

A freight elevator is located on the east end of the south façade.

East Façade

The east façade of the building remains largely unaltered. The windows on the east façade maintain the same style and pattern as those on the north and west facades. The original cut-stone material covering the first three floors of the north and west facades wraps around the corner on the east elevation, as does the cast-concrete parapet with dentils.

Interior

The interior of the building was designed for commercial space on the first floor and office space on the upper floors. The main lobby contains access to four passenger elevators. In the program of the official opening on April 1, 1926, the main lobby was described as being of marble in rich shades with cornices and corbels decorated with fern leaf and lamb's tongue moldings and classical caps crowning heavy marble pillars. Paul Heerwagen, a Little Rock interior designer who had worked on the state capitol building, was responsible for interior decoration.

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Two elevators are located on each side of the center of the first floor lobby. The steel doors feature an Art-Deco motif. Elevator shafts were constructed of fire-proof material and then enclosed with fire-proof openings. Elevator cars are made of metal.

The 1965 remodeling project in addition to revamping then north and west elevation first three stories, was largely confined to interior remodeling. At this time the building's first central air-conditioning system was installed as was new lighting and general redecorating. Ceilings were dropped with laid-in panels with the new ductwork and vents.

Upper floors

Office spaces on the upper floors have been changed to meet the needs of the occupants. Many of the original office occupants' names are on the original drawings. Donaghey boasted that each office space was designed to meet the needs of the client. A significant amount of demolition of original office space on the uppermost floors was done after the building was closed in an attempt to convert some spaces into condominiums. That project was halted and there are new plans to redevelop the building.

Although varied alterations to walls have occurred, the elevator halls on each floor at the inside of the south façade "U" retain their original configuration and steel windows.

The program for the opening of the building on April 1, 1926, written by George W. Donaghey provided "A Word of Appreciation" listing the following individuals and firms involved in the construction of the building:

Hunter McDonnell, Architect in Chief
William Dill, Assistant Architect
James J. Broadwell, Marble Designer
Gardner & Howe, Reinforced concrete Engineers
Kaucher, Hodges & Co., Contractors for reinforced concrete
R. E. Williams, Mechanical Engineer
Robinson Brothers, Contractors for plumbing and heating
Herzog Iron Works, Contractors for ornamental iron work
Houghton Elevator Company, Contractors for elevators
Atlanta Terra Cotta Co., Contractors for terra cotta
Hilliard Brothers, Contractors for cut stone work
Arkansas Brick and Tile Co., Contractors for brick and tile
Southwestern marble & Tile Co., Contractors for terrazzo floors
Paul M. Heerwagen, Contractor for painting and oil decoration
Home Electric Co., Contractor for electric wiring

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Williams Roofing Co., Contractor for roofing
Collins Sheet Metal Works, Contractor for sheet metal work
Fenestra Construction Co., Contractors for steel windows
Charles T. Abeles & Co., Contractors for glass and mill work
Binswanger & Co., Contractors for art glass
T.G. Johnson, Contractor for plaster enrichments
The Arkla Sash & Door Co., Contractor for doors
Arkansas Foundry Co., Contractor for structural steel
Arkansas Lumber & Mfg. Co., Mill work and lumber
Bracy Brothers Hardware Co., Contractor for finish hardware
Laster & Wallace, Contractors for metal lath
Simplex Steel Products Co. Contractors for steel partition fabric
G.A. Leiper & Co., Contractors for cement and plaster
T.B. Ledwige, General Superintendent of construction
J.C. Hamilton, Receiving Clerk and Supt. of concrete work
Clarence Cothem, Foreman of brick work
M.C. Smith, Foreman of plasterers
C.J. Urbani, Contractor for interior finish
Quick Elevator Safety Co., Contractor for elevator signals
Akers & Co., Elevator Doors¹

INTEGRITY

The Donaghey Building retains a strong integrity of location and setting as a historic and prominent anchor to 7th and Main streets in downtown Little Rock. The main change to the building took place in 1965 when the building's first central air-conditioning system was added and aluminum and glass panels applied on the first three stories of the north and west facades. Although aluminum and glass storefronts were installed in 1965, the spaces remain in their original location and size. A glass skywalk over E. 7th Street from the north façade connecting to Donaghey's 1912 building on the northeast corner of 7th and Main Street was constructed in the late twentieth century.

The upper stories of the building retain their original appearance with vertical rows of steel windows and decorative Neo-Classical detailing on the upper two stories. Constructed 1925-1926, the Donaghey Building was Little Rock's tallest building for over thirty years. Despite its alterations on the lower levels, the Donaghey Building is easily recognizable as an early skyscraper that helped define the skyline of Little Rock for over three decades. The Donaghey Building represents the most advanced techniques used in design and

¹ "Opening of the New Donaghey Building: Seventh and Main Streets, April 1, 1926." From information in Quapaw Quarter Association Collection filed at the Arkansas Studies Institute, Little Rock, AR.

Donaghey Building

Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas

County and State

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construction in the 1920s, with particular emphasis on interior layout and decoration, providing maximum light and ventilation and advanced fireproofing features, all of which remain intact.

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SUMMARY

The Donaghey Building is located at the southeast corner of 7th and Main streets in the center of downtown Little Rock. The 14-story rectangular-shaped, flat-roofed building was constructed in 1925-1926 and is characterized by its gray brick walls with bands of steel windows and Neo-Classical detailing on the upper stories. The first floor contained commercial retail space with office spaces on the upper floors of the reinforced concrete building. Employing the most up-to-date fireproof construction, the building was specifically designed to provide maximum ventilation and light. The Donaghey Building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** with **local significance** for its innovative fireproof construction and its early skyscraper presence in Little Rock.

The building was the vision of and constructed under the close supervision of George W. Donaghey, an esteemed building contractor, former governor of Arkansas, and avid supporter of higher education. Through its association with George W. Donaghey, one of Arkansas's most influential citizens, the Donaghey Building is also being submitted for nomination under **Criterion B** with **local significance**.

ELABORATION

Little Rock is situated on the southern bank of the Arkansas River near the center of the state. Early commercial development grew east and west along Markham Street and south from the river along Main Street. South Main Street evolved into a thriving commercial corridor and the destination for shoppers from across the state. The majority of Little Rock's commercial buildings were only one or two-stories tall at the beginning of the twentieth century. A two-story commercial building was located on the southeast corner of 7th and Main streets, where the future Donaghey Building would be constructed. Construction of taller office buildings, which were began to be built in large cities in the late nineteenth century, did not come to Little Rock until the early years of the twentieth century.

The first building to incorporate skyscraper construction in Little Rock, the 10-story Southern Trust Building was built in 1906-07, using a steel frame. Taller by one story, the 11-story State Bank Building at 5th and Main was constructed in 1909-10. In 1917, the 10-story A.O.U.W. Building at (listed 9-25-81) was completed. A number of significant public and commercial buildings were constructed during the early 1920s in downtown Little Rock, but none measured up to skyscraper status. Little Rock's skyline had significantly changed by the end of the 1920s, in part due to former governor and building contractor, George W. Donaghey. Construction of the 14-story building in 1925-1926 of his own design became a major factor and influence in the appearance and development of Little Rock's modern skyline.

George Washington Donaghey was born July 1, 1856, in Oakland, Louisiana, to Christopher Columbus and Elizabeth Ingram Donaghey. George, the oldest of the five children of was greatly influenced by two events

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in his childhood.¹ His father was taken prisoner while fighting in the Civil War and returned a broken man. Before the war, Christopher Donaghey was very successful operating a family farm in the Lapile Community in Union County. After his experiences in the war, his father fell into alcoholism, and forced young George to work the farm, denying him any further education after only six months in school, even though his sisters attended school nearby.²

Donaghey left the family farm in 1876 on the first of two adventures into Texas, eventually working as a cowboy on the Chisholm Trail.³ After a short career as a cowpoke, he returned to the family farm in Union County. He sold off all of his possessions and boarded a train for Conway, Arkansas, in 1879 wearing his life savings, of two-hundred dollars, sewn into a cloth belt. His uncle, John Ingram, owned a prosperous livery stable in Conway. While working as a carriage driver for his uncle, he met his future wife Louvenia Wallace. During this time Donaghey took up the carpentry trade for which he had some interest, previous experience, and apparent natural ability. In 1882, he put his new profession on hold to attend the University of Arkansas, but after less than a year and out of money, he decided it was time to get married. George and Louvenia Wallace settled in Conway, where he found work in the cabinet shop of J.H. Pence. The industrious couple soon had a small home, a horse, and carriage.⁴

A major fire destroyed most of the businesses in the downtown district of Conway in 1886 including the carpentry shop where Donaghey worked. A sudden need to for building contractors prompted George Donaghey to open his own construction business. Demolishing burned-out buildings in downtown and constructing new buildings was the perfect vehicle for Donaghey's new contracting company to develop experience and increase exposure.

While Donaghey built up his contracting business, he also developed into a formidable advocate for two issues that had been a factor in his character since childhood. The first was prohibition of liquor resulting from his personnel experience with the debilitating effect alcohol had on his father. In 1884, he was elected as Town Marshal of Conway on an anti-saloon campaign. He was defeated in a bid for the Conway mayor's office on the same anti-saloon platform, but he did not give up the fight. George Washington Donaghey organized and successfully led a coalition against the sale of liquor, resulting in Faulkner County becoming a dry county in 1888, and it remains dry today.

Banning the selling of liquor was a moral issue for Donaghey, but he also knew that having a dry township was crucial for Conway to attract schools of higher education. The absence of opportunity for proper schooling that young Donaghey experienced fostered a lifelong passion for expanding education possibilities for Arkansans.

¹ "George Washington Donaghey" Found at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net>.

² Faulkner County Historical Society. *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, River Road Press, Conway, Arkansas 1986, p. 350.

³ "George Washington Donaghey" Found at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net>.

⁴ Faulkner County Historical Society. *Faulkner County: Its Land and People*, River Road Press, Conway, Arkansas 1986, p. 350.

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In 1890, just four years after starting his own contracting business, Donaghey donated \$1,500.00, a third of his assets at the time, to a fund started by Conway citizens to move Hendrix College to Conway from Altus, Arkansas. Conway's bid was accepted, beating out six other cities in Arkansas attempting to attract Hendrix College. Two years later Donaghey pledged \$5,000.00 to help locate another college in Conway, the newly authorized Central College for Women, now Central Baptist College. In addition to donating to this college, he was the building contractor for the campus' first building, Main Hall. Although demolished in the 1970s the bell tower with its elegant lines remains an icon and image for the college. A replica of the bell tower stands in the center of the remodeled campus reinforcing the importance of history and visually tying it to the school's original building, Main Hall.

Donaghey did not stop after the location of two colleges in Conway. He led the effort to raise \$51,753.00 cash in a successful bid to bring a third college to his beloved adopted city. Conway offered the Arkansas State Normal School, authorized by the State legislature in 1907, a choice of three tracts of land in addition to cash and to beat out four other hopeful cities. The only school established by the state to train teachers later became known as Arkansas State Teachers College, and now as the University of Central Arkansas, located on Donaghey Avenue, one of Conway, Arkansas's, primary corridors.

While tirelessly promoting access to education in Arkansas, Donaghey's business continued to grow. His ethics and professionalism as a contractor earned him his first major contract, which was for the construction of the Bank of Conway in 1890. Other building contracts followed, including Main Hall at Central College, Tabor Hall on the Hendrix College campus, the Otto Building and the Faulkner County Courthouse and eventually Old Main Hall at what is now the University of Central Arkansas. George Donaghey's drive, influence, and buildings he constructed played a major role in Conway's development.

Donaghey began to spread his business beyond Conway and Faulkner Country, and in 1898 was awarded the contract to construct all the buildings along the new railroad between Little Rock and western Oklahoma, on the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad route. This included railroad bridge construction and large clear-span steel-reinforced structures for locomotive and railcar repairs. This exposure and experience to the expanding use of steel at the turn of the century would serve him well in many of his future positions and projects. In this capacity, he built many of the Choctaw Depots that remain today.

Donaghey's first contract with the State of Arkansas came in 1899 when Governor Dan W. Jones named him to the board of the Capitol Commission for the construction of a new state capitol building. This would begin another tireless campaign this time "to secure construction of an appropriate building for state government."⁵ This effort would last 18 years and spark a new career for Donaghey in state politics. George Mann from St Louis was hired as the architect. The site selected for the new capitol would be on the old state prison

⁵ "Donaghey Rose From Obscurity By Own Effort," Arkansas Gazette 16 December 1937, p. 6.

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grounds and to save money on the labor costs, the state legislature allocated the use of 200 convicts. These convict crews, supervised by Capitol Commissioner George Donaghey, began work in July 1899 laying out the foundation. The foundation was essentially completed when the cornerstone was laid on November 27, 1900.⁶

The Caldwell & Drake firm was given the building contract amidst growing opposition. A former building commission, political power-house and current governor Jefferson Davis opposed the economic investment in a new capitol and believed that the only legal location for a capitol building was the grounds where the then-current capitol building was located at 300 W. Markham Street. Donaghey disagreed with Davis on both points, but they both agreed that the construction was plagued by shoddy work and corruption. Beginning in 1903, Donaghey headed a movement to bring to the attention of the public and state legislature the construction failures and abuses, but the project drug on. In 1905, four state senators and two representatives were indicted for accepting bribes followed by new allegations of poor workmanship and use of substandard materials. Construction on the Arkansas State Capitol slowed further then ceased in 1907.

Donaghey continued his contract with the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad Company, constructing depots, bridges and switch houses throughout Arkansas and Oklahoma until 1903. He took on a similar task with the expansion of the railroad southwest into Texas. In 1905, he purchased one hundred feet of Main Street frontage in downtown Little Rock at the northeast corner of Seventh Street. He constructed the original Donaghey building, a five-story business and office building he constructed on that corner burned in a major fire which destroyed all the buildings between 6th and 7th Streets. Donaghey also supervised the construction the Broadway Bridge in 1922-23 and the Main Street Bridge in 1924, linking Little Rock to North Little Rock.

George Washington Donaghey ran for governor in 1908, basing his platform on the issue of the construction of the state capitol. Once elected governor, Donaghey took charge of the capitol construction project. The newly elected legislature began investigations, which resulted in numerous lawsuits and counter-suits, prosecution, cancelled contracts and all new bids were awarded.

New York-based architect Cass Gilbert was hired to restore earlier work and complete the capitol building. The concrete floors, iron and steel work were all found to be inadequate. Fireproofing was improved, and new reinforced concrete floors were poured. The poor-quality iron and steel work was removed and replaced, this included the original metal dome in favor of the stone dome.

When Donaghey lost his third bid for governor to Joe T. Robinson in 1912, the capitol was still not complete even though all three branches of state government had moved from the Old State Capitol building to their new facilities. Robinson, however, resigned the governorship in order to enter the U.S. Senate in early 1913.

⁶ "Arkansas State Capitol Building". Found at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net>.

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His successor, George W. Hays, reappointed Donaghey to the Capitol Commission, and once again, he was overseeing Capitol construction until it was deemed essentially complete on January 1, 1915.⁷

While governor, Donaghey did not forget his core belief in the importance of access to education. He successfully pushed for legislation to fund and establish four regional agricultural schools, which would become Arkansas State University (ASU) in Jonesboro, Arkansas Tech University in Russellville, Southern Arkansas University (SAU) in Magnolia, and the University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM). Donaghey supported and won approval for the establishment of the Arkansas History Commission.⁸

After leaving the office of governor, Donaghey served as vice-president for Banker's Trust Company and then National Savings and Loan of Texas and as president for First National Bank of North Little Rock and then Federal Bank and Trust of Little Rock. But as he had done throughout his life he never stopped building. A list of some of those buildings included The School for the Deaf in Little Rock, the Washington County, Arkansas Courthouse, the Gregg County, Texas courthouse, and state hospitals in Little Rock and Terrell, Texas.

George W. Donaghey built an office building at the northeast corner of 7th and S. Main streets for himself in 1906. It was destroyed by fire in 1911, and the following year he built a five-story building on the site. Called the Donaghey Building, it was constructed of steel and reinforced concrete. Donaghey took particular care to make the building as fireproof as possible. In 1946 to avoid confusion between the 14-story Donaghey Building, the name of Donaghey's first building was changed to the "Waldon Building". The new name was a combination of his wife's maiden name and his name, Wallace and Donaghey. The building has also been called the Donaghey Trust Building.⁹

Construction of the "New Donaghey Building" was announced in on the front page of the Sunday, November 23, 1924, *Arkansas Gazette*. The headline "\$1,000,000 Office Building Planned" was accompanied by a large rendering of the proposed building with another headline "New Donaghey Building to Be Erected at Seventh and Main Streets, as Largest in City." The article quoted George W. Donaghey "For more than a year, I have been thinking of erecting an office building, modern in every respect." He stated that he had surveyed office buildings in Memphis, Fort Worth, and Dallas and had many consultations with architects, engineers, owners, and real estate agencies. Donaghey stated in the article "I have worked out the details of the building I want to erect. Last summer, I went to Mineral Wells, Texas, where I remained for three weeks, making a complete set of plans for the building."¹⁰

⁷"Arkansas State Capitol Building", Found at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net>.

⁸ Faulkner County Historical Society. *Faulkner County: Its Land and People, River Road Press, Conway, Arkansas 1986*, p. 350.

⁹ "Donaghey Building Credit to City of Little Rock" *Arkansas Gazette*, 31 August 1918, page unknown.

¹⁰ "\$1,000,000 Office Building Planned" *Arkansas Gazette*, 23 November 1924, p. 1.

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George W. Donaghey selected architect Hunter McDonnell (1891-1944) of New York to work with on the 14-story building. Donaghey stated that he wanted McDonnell to specifically work on the artistic part of the building design. Born in 1891, Hunter McDonnell grew up in Little Rock. His father, James Smith McDonnell, was one of Donaghey's business associates. He graduated from the Columbia University School of Architecture in 1915 and was a recipient of the prestigious McKim Fellowship. McDonnell received additional training in the offices of the noted architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White of New York City, who were noted for their design of skyscrapers using Neo-Classical Revival details. McDonnell opened his own architectural firm in New York City in 1922. The records of McDonnell's application for membership in the American Institute of Architects listed his business address on New York City's Park Avenue.¹¹

An advertisement for the grand opening of the Donaghey Building in the *Arkansas Gazette* on April 1, 1926, read, "A new epoch in the history of Little Rock will be written with the opening of this immense building, at Seventh and Main streets. Scientifically constructed, fireproof, artistically finished; it represents the last word in convenience and service for the office renter. It is a complete city within itself; outstanding because it is the tallest and most modern building of its kind between St. Louis and Dallas and between Memphis and Tulsa." The advertisement also featured an eloquent statement to the public from George W. Donaghey. In this Donaghey wrote, "But it must be obvious to all that the building of a beautiful city can be accomplished in no other way than through individual contributions; each being a distinct unit of the whole, and each reflecting the mind of its contributor. Such independence of thought and mobility of purpose, intelligently expressed in a civic plan, reflects the strongest community character."¹²

The grand opening of the Donaghey Building took place on April 1, 1926, from 7:30 to 10:30 P.M. Music was provided by the Arkansas Razorbacks Orchestra. Tours of the entire building were given from the basement to the roof where a platform was erected to give an unobstructed view of Little Rock from 14 stories.¹³

Light and ventilation were given special attention and treatment throughout the building. Steel windows with an awning opening on top and a hopper-style opening on the bottom were heralded as energy-efficient and designed to provide the most efficient ventilation possible. The U-shape of the building above the first floor on the south elevation allowed for each office in the building to have an outside window. Corridors on every floor were well lit and ventilated by windows and featured higher ceiling heights than offices spaces.

George Donaghey had experienced first-hand the devastation that fire can cause in a densely packed downtown district during the Conway fire in 1886 and the massive 1911 Little Rock fire that destroyed the

¹¹ AJA.

¹² "Attend the Grand Opening of Arkansas' Finest and tallest Office Building This Evening, April 1st" *Arkansas Gazette* 1 April 1926, Part II, p. 8.

¹³ *Ibid.*

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first Donaghey building. Mr. Donaghey was particularly careful to include the latest fire resistant aspects in his new building. He stated that the "New Donaghey Building was specifically designed to utilize the most advanced forms of fire prevention in use." All of the windows in the building were made of non-combustible material and every outside piece of frame work around the openings was constructed of metal. The elevators were metal, and the shafts were built of fire-proof materials and enclosed in fire-proof openings. Fire-resistant glass was used on every window exposed to adjacent property. Stairways were also constructed of fireproof materials and had fire protection doors. Two 5,000 gallon steel tanks of water on the roof fed pipes extending through the center of each end of the building down to the basement. These pipes were tapped on each floor with 75 ft. long fire-hose connected. The basement boiler room had nine-inch thick, brick walls.¹⁴

Donaghey wanted to use gray-colored brick like what he had seen on buildings in St. Louis. None of the regional brick manufacturers produced this color brick, but the Arkansas Brick and Tile Company after changing its formula, was able to create a gray color that satisfied Donaghey and his architect. The cut stone used on the first three stories of the north and west facades continued the gray color theme of the building.¹⁵

Interiors of the building were decorated by Paul Heerwagen, a Little Rock interior designer whose work at the Arkansas State Capitol had impressed Donaghey. The first floor lobby walls were lined with marble. Detailing in the lobby included cornices and corbels decorated with fern leaf and lamb's tongue moldings and classical caps on marble pillars. Many of these details are visible above the current suspended ceiling system. The marble lobby walls also remain intact. Concrete floors throughout the building were described as originally having brightly-colored tiles. A large stained-glass skylight illuminated the south end of the lobby.

The first floor was designed for small retail operations. The remainder of the building was occupied by doctors, dentists, attorneys, and insurance companies. Donaghey urged his tenants to feel that they were the owners of their space, and he was merely the custodian. He pointed out that between the offices, his two buildings at 7th and Main streets (Waldon and Donaghey) there were over 2,000 occupants, or as many people that would be in a small town. Donaghey encouraged his tenants to be co-operative and neighborly with one another and to consult him for advice and help in affairs connected with the building, or concerning their business undertakings. He wrote and published a monthly magazine called "The Donaghey News," which he distributed to the tenants of both of his buildings at 7th and Main.¹⁶

Original floor plans of the building indicate names of many of the future occupants. The building originally held 559 office spaces. Tenants were involved in the planning and specifics of their offices. The 1926 Polks' Little Rock/North Little Rock City Directory listed the occupants of the Donaghey Building. It is unknown

¹⁴ "Opening of the New Donaghey Building; Seventh and Main Streets April 1, 1926". From information in Quapaw Quarter Association Collection filed at the Arkansas Studies Institute, Little Rock, AR.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Martin, Roberta. "A Farm Boy's Dream Come True". *Arkansas Democrat Magazine*, 17 November 1946, pgs. 1-2.

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what time of the year the directory was published, but it clearly indicated the building was well occupied in first months following its opening. The occupants of the building in 1926 were:

Lobby: The Nook cigars
 Ellis Apothecary Shop
 Eureka Vacuum Cleaner Co.

Room:

201-46 Vacant
301-46 Vacant
401-46 Vacant
501-46 Vacant
601-7 Vacant
608 Office of the Building
 H.A. Newman, Superintendent

612-616 Vacant
617-18 R. E. Pryor phys
 W. A. Snodgrass phys

619-20 Vacant
621-22 T. J. Richardson dentist
623-32 Vacant
633 Grady Garms building contractor
634 St. Louis Joint Stock Land Bank (Ark. Branch)

635-46 Vacant
701-11 Vacant
712-14 W. J. Apple, Jr. Dentist
715 J. O'Connor physician
716 W. A. Harrod dentist
717-18 Crawford & Crawford physicians
719-20 Thomas H. Harris dentist
721-22 Edward J. Mahoney Dentist
723-26 J. W. Barnett dentist
727-39 Shipp Bond Clinic
740-46 Vacant
801-5 Rhinehart & Rhinehart physicians
806-16 Jones & Jones physicians
817 C.W. Koch dentist
818-19 M.G. Daly physician
820-22 S. C. Fulmer physician
 R. J. Calcote physician

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823-30	Vacant
844	Commonwealth Life Ins. Co.
845	J.B. Simpson, Inc. wholesale clothing
901-18	Vacant
919-20	W. A. Joplin Advertising Agency
921-22	D. M. Lewis osteopath
923-33	Vacant
935-36	Taylor & Taylor lawyers
937-46	Vacant
1001-2	L. E. Gebauer bacteriologist Ned Reid dentist
1003-18	Vacant
1019-20	R. Q. Patterson physician
1021-22	National Old Line Ins. Co.
1024-43	Vacant
1044-45	W. A. Smith Jr. public accountant
1046	Cotton Fire & Marine Underwriters
1101-18	Vacant
1119	J. B. Dooley physician
1120-32	Vacant
1133	Rommel & McCarroll insurance Jefferson Standard Life Ins. Co.
1134-46	Vacant
1205-41	Vacant
1301-31	Vacant
1332-36	National Life & Accident Ins. Co.
1337-46	Vacant
1401-7	Vacant
1408-12	Rogers, Barber & Henry lawyers R. E. Lee lawyer
1414-16	Vacant
1417-18	Baxter Engineering Co.
1419-33	Vacant
1434	Swift & Co. packers
1435-46	Vacant ¹⁷

¹⁷ Polk's Little Rock/North Little Rock City Directory, 1926.

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As in other cities throughout the United States, residents moved in ever-increasing numbers to the new developing areas away from downtowns beginning in the 1950s. Stores, banks, and offices followed, locating on the outskirts of the city. Many buildings in downtown Little Rock were altered during this time in an attempt to appear as modern as new buildings being constructed in suburban areas. Most of the alterations were to the fronts of buildings through application of "modern" coverings, often aluminum, over first floors.

An article in the *Arkansas Gazette* on December 5, 1964, announced, "Donaghey Building Exterior To Get Smoked Glass Panels" The article stated that the bottom three floors of the "Donaghey Building 14-story landmark on Main Street and Seventh Street," would be revamped on the outside as part of an \$850,000 remodeling job. Most of the project budget was for interior work, including the installation of the building's first central air-conditioning system, new lights, and general redecorating. The article stated that on the outside, smoked glass panels would be hung in aluminum frames over the first three floors. Despite the attempt to bring the building up to modern standards in 1965, many of the occupants of the Donaghey Building followed the move to the newly developing areas of the city. In 2008 after having been only partially occupied by state government offices since the 1990s, the Donaghey Building was closed.¹⁸

The Donaghey Building was listed on the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas's "Most Endangered" list in 2000 as adjacent new construction and redevelopment posed a threat to the building when there was discussion about replacing it with a parking deck. The outcry from the public, during this threat, underlined the significance of the building to the state's citizens. For over fifty years, a large number of the city's doctors, dentists, and numerous other professionals were housed in the Donaghey Building. People from all around the state came to Little Rock to the offices of the Donaghey Building and returned home eager tell their stories of visiting the big building in Little Rock.

The 14-story Donaghey Building is the only structure that is named after one of Arkansas's most prolific building contractors, former governor, and champion of higher education. The building was the direct result of the vision and planning of George W. Donaghey. It not only represents Donaghey and his contributions to the state, but defined the skyline of Little Rock for over thirty years and has been considered a landmark in downtown Little Rock since the 1930s. Much of Little Rock's S. Main Street has suffered from severe alterations, vacancies, and demolition. The Donaghey Building remains a tangible symbol in Little Rock's skyline of the era in which Little Rock transformed itself into a modern city. Plans to renovate the building are in progress.

In their later years, the Donagheys contributed their time and money to a number of charities. Again, George Donaghey's passion for assisting new and struggling institutions of higher education came to the forefront. To celebrate his 73rd birthday on July 1st 1929, George Donaghey and his wife Louvenia deeded the bulk of their estate to an endowment for Little Rock Junior College, which later became the University of Arkansas

¹⁸ "Donaghey Building Exterior to Get Smoked Glass Panels", *Arkansas Gazette*, 5 December 1964, p. 3A.

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at Little Rock. This donation eventually included the Wallace building as well as the Waldon and Donaghey buildings, estimated at the time to be valued at over one and one-half-million dollars. The Donagheys also continued to generously donate to Conway's Hendrix College and Arkansas State Teachers College (now the University of Central Arkansas.) Donaghey maintained his service on behalf of the public into his 70s, serving as president of the state Board of Education and as chairman of the state Board of Charities and Corrections.

George W. Donaghey died at the age of eighty-one on December 15, 1937, as the result of a heart attack. Out of deep respect, Little Rock Junior College cancelled classes. The student body and faculty attended the funeral en-masse along with dignitaries and hundreds of admirers. Donaghey left a legacy of determination, honesty, and leadership in the state. He also left a lasting legacy to the state through his work in politics, business, banking, and education. However, the most lasting legacy of George W. Donaghey are the buildings, he constructed all through the state during his career.

George W. Donaghey wrote, "To have a share in the creation and expression of such material sentiment; to share in the architectural lights of our time, which we may pass on to our successors, who will in turn pass them on to others yet unborn; is an honor for which every citizen should strive."¹⁹

SIGNIFICANCE

The Donaghey Building was Arkansas's tallest building for over thirty years after its completion in 1926. Its design and modern building techniques represent the best construction methods of the time. Carefully thought out and planned by George W. Donaghey, the building was a revolutionary introduction to the skyline of Little Rock. Particular attention was given to fireproofing the building, ventilation, and interior decoration. It is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion C** as a good example of an early Little Rock skyscraper. Despite the alterations to the first three stories of the north and west facades, the Donaghey Building retains its original appearance on the upper stories and remains a significant landmark in downtown Little Rock.

The building is also being nominated with **local significance** under **Criterion B** for its association with George W. Donaghey, who is a key figure in the history of Arkansas through his many contributions to the state as a former governor, building contractor, benefactor.

¹⁹ "Opening of the New Donaghey Building Seventh and Main Streets: April 1, 1926". From information in Quapaw Quarter Association Collection filed at the Arkansas Studies Institute, Little Rock, AR.

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Donaghey Building

Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas

County and State

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Donaghey Building

Name of Property

Pulaski County, Arkansas

County and State

United States Department of the Interior
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Verbal Boundary Description

Lots 1 & 2 and the N1/2 of Lot 3, Block 8 Original City of Little Rock

Boundary Justification

The property being nominated is that which was historically associated with the Donaghey Building.



Go g_oe earth

feet
meters



Donaghey Building
Little Rock, Pulaski County, AR
34.741879 -92.271157





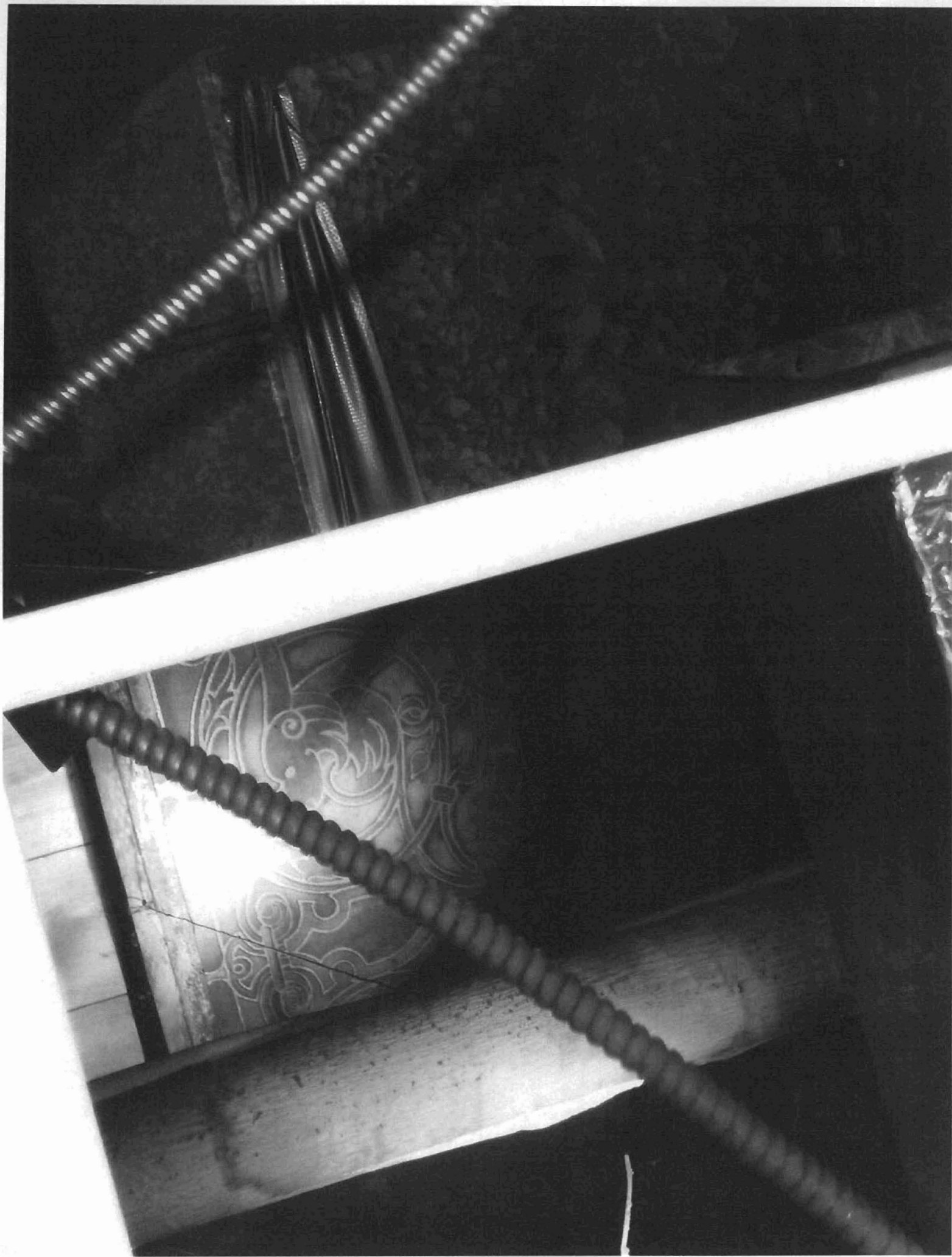


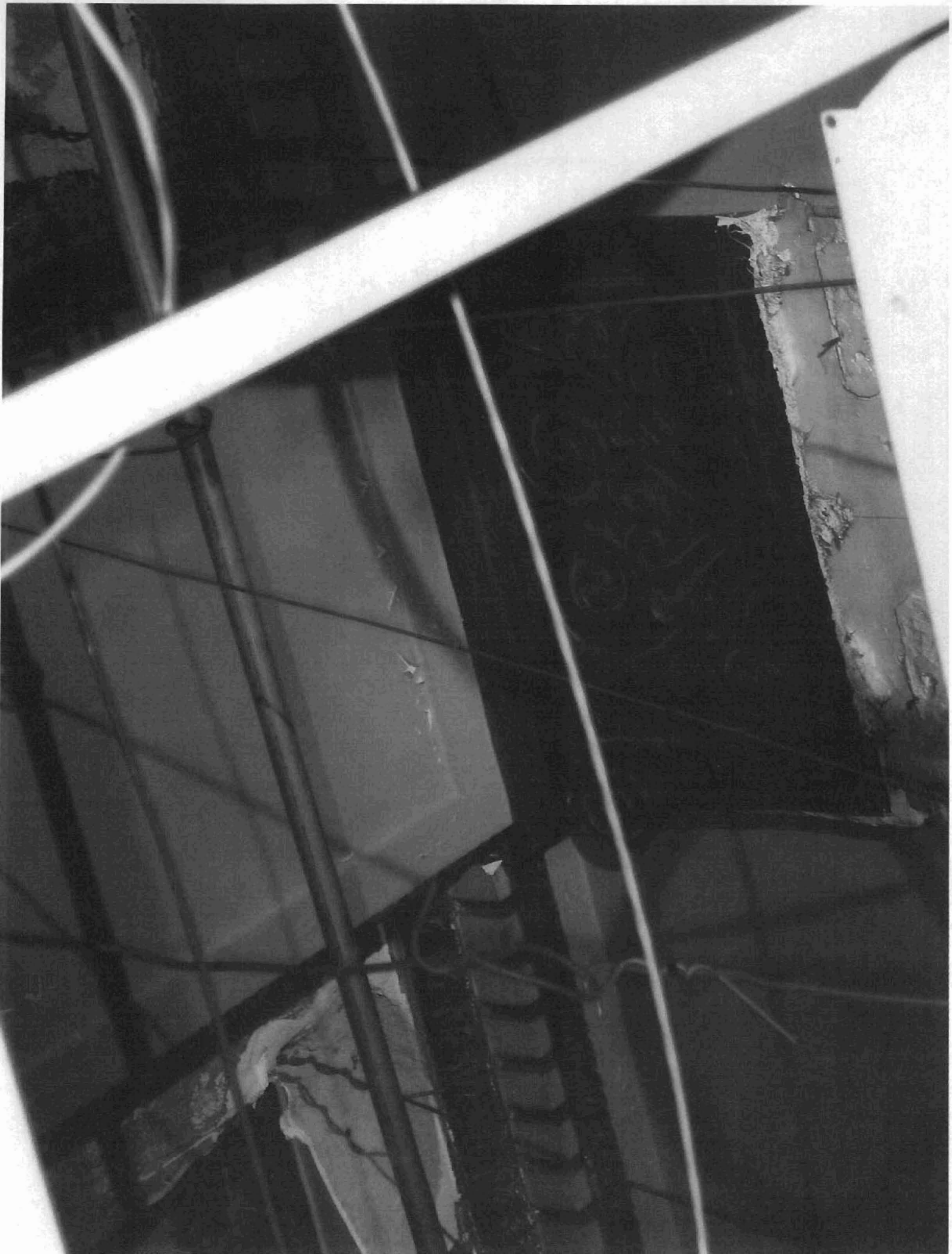














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