

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

received OCT 20 1986

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

NR 12-16-86

1. Name

Historic Exchange Bank

and/or common Lion Oil Company

2. Location

street & number Corner Washington and Oak Streets

N/A not for publication

city, town El Dorado

vicinity of

state Arkansas

code 05

county Union

code 139

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Exchange Realty Company

street & number Corner Washington and Oak Streets

city, town El Dorado

vicinity of

state Arkansas

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Union County Courthouse

street & number Union Square

city, town El Dorado

state Arkansas

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date

federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY

Rising to height unequalled in downtown El Dorado, the eight-story Exchange Bank Building was designed in 1926 by the renowned Little Rock architectural firm of Mann and Stern to stylishly accommodate the growing financial concerns of the oil-based community. On its two principal facades the prominent building uniquely displays the symmetry associated with Classical Revival styling, while first and eighth stories possess a free interpretation of Venetian Gothic design expressed through the use of arched windows and glazed terra cotta ornament. Due to its size and detailing the Exchange Bank Building stands today as a bold visual reminder of El Dorado's architectural and economic heritage.

ELABORATION

The Exchange Bank Building occupies a lot at the corner of Washington and Oak Streets and has historically dominated the skyline of the downtown business district of El Dorado. The principle facade of this eight story building faces Washington Street, which is still a major thoroughfare in El Dorado. The major facade is four bays wide at the base and is dominated by a set of round-arched entrances that hold a double glass door with single-pane transom. These doors are flanked by plain pilaster strips supporting simple capital-like base relief carvings. In each arch, a rounded arched window (now filled in) is located above a highly embellished lintel carved in base relief floral designs. The entrance arches are slightly pointed and have plain voussoirs that project out from the wall surface. The surrounds of these doorways are plainly executed with simple panels. The first story base of the entire building is capped with a linear line of plain dentils under a rounded molding. From this base line a decorated cornerboard pilaster with carved base and capital-like features is present at each corner. These pilaster cornerboards rise seven stories to support the decorative parapet wall.

The main shaft of the building is accentuated by six sets of paired single paned double hung windows symmetrically placed on each of the next six floors. These paired windows are undecorated and on each floor are offset by a single bayed undecorated double hung window at each corner.

The eighth and last floor retains the eight bayed symmetry with the addition of a balcony with simple balustrade supported by brackets decorated with carved base relief floral designs. Six sets of paired rounded arched windows are behind the balcony. Each window arch displays a pattern of alternating voussoirs. Every other voussoir is decorated in patterns of dark green, purple, or blue. In addition, each window arch covers a tympanum that is decorated with alternating blues and greens in a diamond-like pattern. The interior spring point of these paired window arches are supported by a smooth stone pilaster with an ornately carved capital.

The crown of the building is defined by a row of stone pointed arches that decorate the base of the parapet wall and run from corner to corner. These arches are flush with the parapet wall and are supported by undecorated stone brackets at each spring point. Decorative shields are located in each tympanum and consist of amorphous symbols alternately colored in green, purple, and blue.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	

Specific dates mid 1926–June 1927 **Builder/Architect** Mann and Stern

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SUMMARY

The tallest building in El Dorado today is the impressive Exchange Bank Building. It gives to the downtown business district a uniquely appealing commercial structure by exhibiting an unusual Venetian-inspired architecture. The influential Little Rock architectural firm of Mann and Stern designed this building. Completed in 1927, it housed one of the largest banks in the city and was the corporate headquarters of Lion Oil Company, one of the most successful oil companies in the state of Arkansas. The Exchange Bank Building eloquently symbolizes the wealth and economic prosperity that the people of El Dorado and Union County enjoyed during the oil business boom of the 1920's.

ELABORATION

El Dorado is located in the Gulf Coastal Plain of south central Arkansas. In 1843 it was surveyed and platted as the new county seat of Union County. Incorporated in 1870, the town grew slowly and gradually became the social and economic center for a county that was largely supported by a rural agricultural population. By the end of the nineteenth century, two major railroads; the Iron Mountain and the Rock Island, along with the smaller El Dorado and Wesson Railroad, transformed this community into an important regional shipping center for cotton and lumber. While the changes in El Dorado resulting from the introduction of the railroads were significant, they did not permanently alter the fabric of the town as did the immediate and irreversible changes that occurred as a result of the discovery of oil on January 10, 1921.

This discovery started an oil boom in El Dorado that lasted nearly a decade, bringing with it a prosperity never seen before in the state. The population of El Dorado rapidly grew from 3800 to nearly 20,000 people within the first six months after the discovery. By 1923, the new "city" had awarded over \$2,500,000.00 worth of building permits and boasted ten refineries, twenty-five supply houses, fifty-nine oil companies, two modern hotel buildings, thirty-two smaller hotels, sixty-three restaurants, forty-eight law firms, twenty-three doctors, and eighty-four grocery stores. This excessive industrial and economic growth resulted in the creation of a downtown business district that drastically altered El Dorado's previous appearance. The increasing demand for the construction of new buildings resulted in the display of many examples of the new and exciting architecture of the period. Existing examples are the First Methodist Church (1922), the First Baptist Church (1922), the First Presbyterian Church (1926), El Dorado City Hall (1927), the Union County Courthouse (1927), the Rialto Theater (1929), and the Federal Building (1931).

In response to the increasing financial needs of a flourishing economy, the Exchange Bank was established in 1924. It was organized by Colonial T. H. Barton (who was to become president of the Lion Oil Company in 1929 and one of Arkansas' first

9. Major Bibliographical References

1927 announcement bulletin of opening of Exchange Bank and Trust Company's new home. El Dorado Daily News, August 2, 1968, November 1, 1968, March 25, 1979 (El Dorado News-Times) Lion Oil News, June, 1947.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name El Dorado West, AR

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	5	5	3	1	3	4	10	3	6	7	4	7	5	10
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 1 and 2 Block 3 of the original Town of El Dorado

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bonnie Hoga

organization Exchange Realty Company

date November 29, 1984

street & number 1108 Brookwood Drive

telephone (501) 863-4654

city or town El Dorado

state Arkansas 71730

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Wilson Stiles

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 10-13-86

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

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date entered

Continuation sheet

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millionaires); Ike Felsenthal; and G. W. James, the founding chairman. Within two years this very successful bank had outgrown its original storefront quarters and the investors decided to build a large office building to house the bank on the first floor and provide badly needed office space on the seven floors above.

The architectural firm of Mann and Stern of Little Rock, Arkansas was commissioned to design the new Exchange Bank Building. Construction began in 1926 and was completed for occupancy on June 2, 1927. Architects Mann and Stern were familiar with El Dorado, as they had previously designed the Garrett Hotel (1910), the Union Bank Building, and the Union County Courthouse (1927). The majority of the commercial buildings designed by Mann and Stern had an eclectic nature relying on a variety of styles from the Classical Revival period as Spanish Colonial, Egyptian Revival, and Venetian Gothic. The Exchange Bank Building was no exception. Located in the heart of El Dorado's business district, this eight story steel and limestone building remains the tallest building in the city. There are several significant architectural details. These include two classically-inspired, rounded-arched entrances, highlighted by decorated lintels under large arched windows (now filled in). Also are the sets of paired arched windows on the eighth floor, each containing polychromed voussoirs that are joined by a single pilaster and capital. Decorated brackets support the top floor balconies and balustrades, and there is a parapet wall elaborately trimmed with a series of pointed arches each containing a decorative shield. Upon its completion, the Exchange Bank Building immediately became an architectural landmark in Arkansas, as well as a notable symbol to the people of El Dorado of the new found economic prosperity and monumental changes brought about as a result of the oil industry.

George R. Mann, senior partner of the Mann and Stern architectural firm, was a highly respected architect throughout most of the midwestern United States. Before coming to Arkansas in 1900 to design the "New" State Capitol Building, he had worked throughout the midwest on major projects including the St. Louis City Hall and several county courthouses throughout Kansas, Iowa, and Missouri. His practice in Little Rock quickly flourished. Some of the most notable Mann and/or Mann and Stern buildings in Arkansas are now on the National Register of Historic Places and include the Arkansas State Capitol Building, Pulaski County Courthouse, the Gazette Building, the G. R. Mann Building, and the Little Rock High School, all in Little Rock; the Fordyce Bath House and the Arlington Hotel in Hot Springs; and the Masonic Temple in Fort Smith.

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Continuation sheet

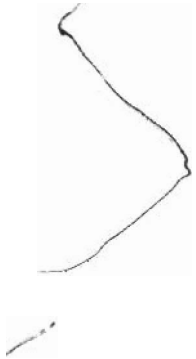
Item number 7

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The secondary facade faces Oak Street and is identical to the main facade in every detail except at the base. Here the base contains an arcade of six large arched windows that have twenty panes each and are offset at the corners of the building with a small decorated single-paned window (one window has been filled in). Each arched window in the arcade is covered with a pointed arch whose voussoirs are plain and flush with the outside wall. Each arch spring point is defined with a capital-like element featuring carved stone that is supported by a plain pilaster.

In 1968, the Exchange Bank Building underwent major alterations to the interior for the modernization of its banking facilities. The exterior of the building has remained intact except for the filling in of a few small windows at the base of the building. Double paned energy efficient windows were also added to the building as part of its renovation.






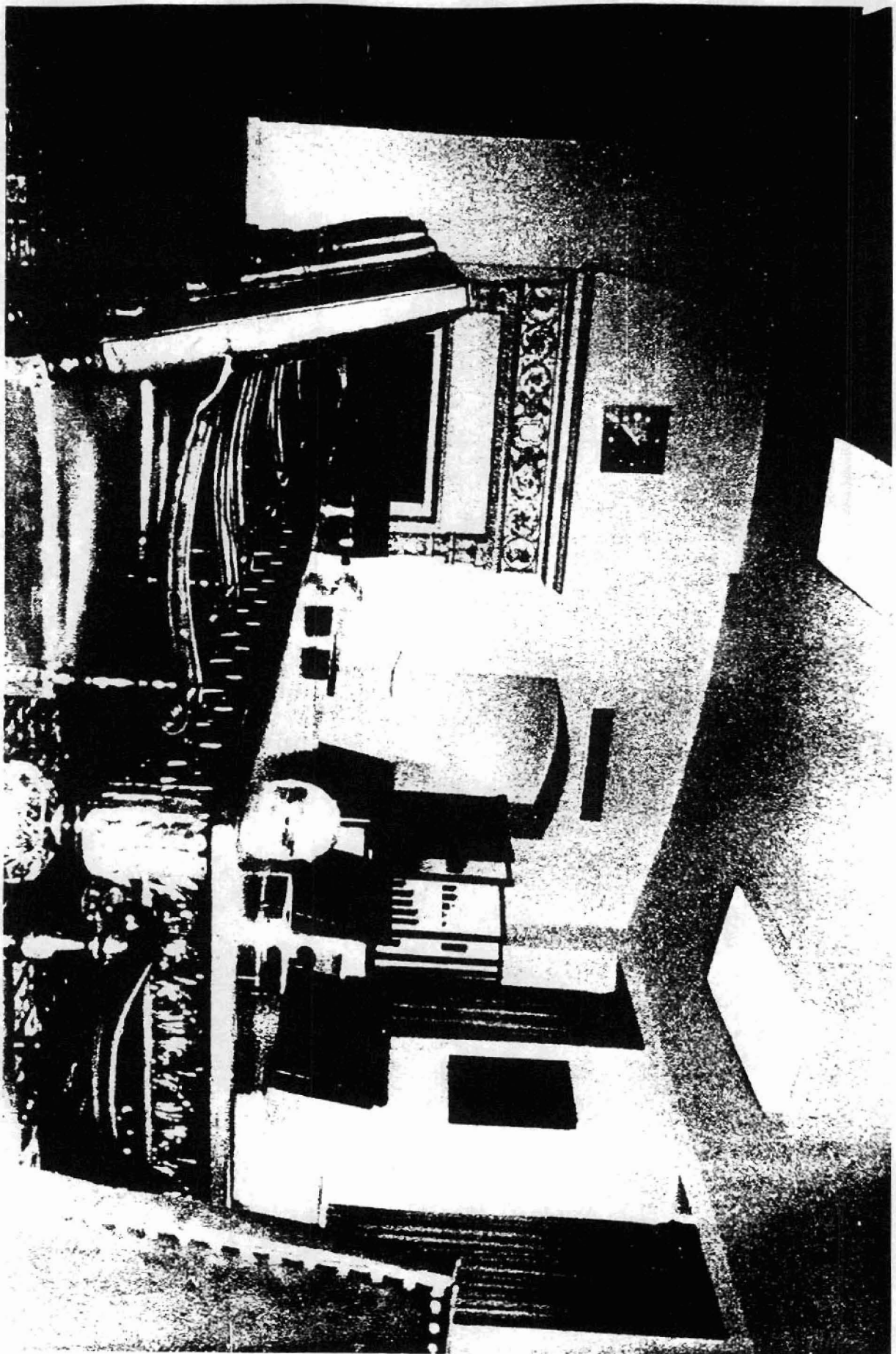


Exchange Bank Building
El Dorado, Union Co.
Photographed by J. Vosmik
Negatives on file at AHPP

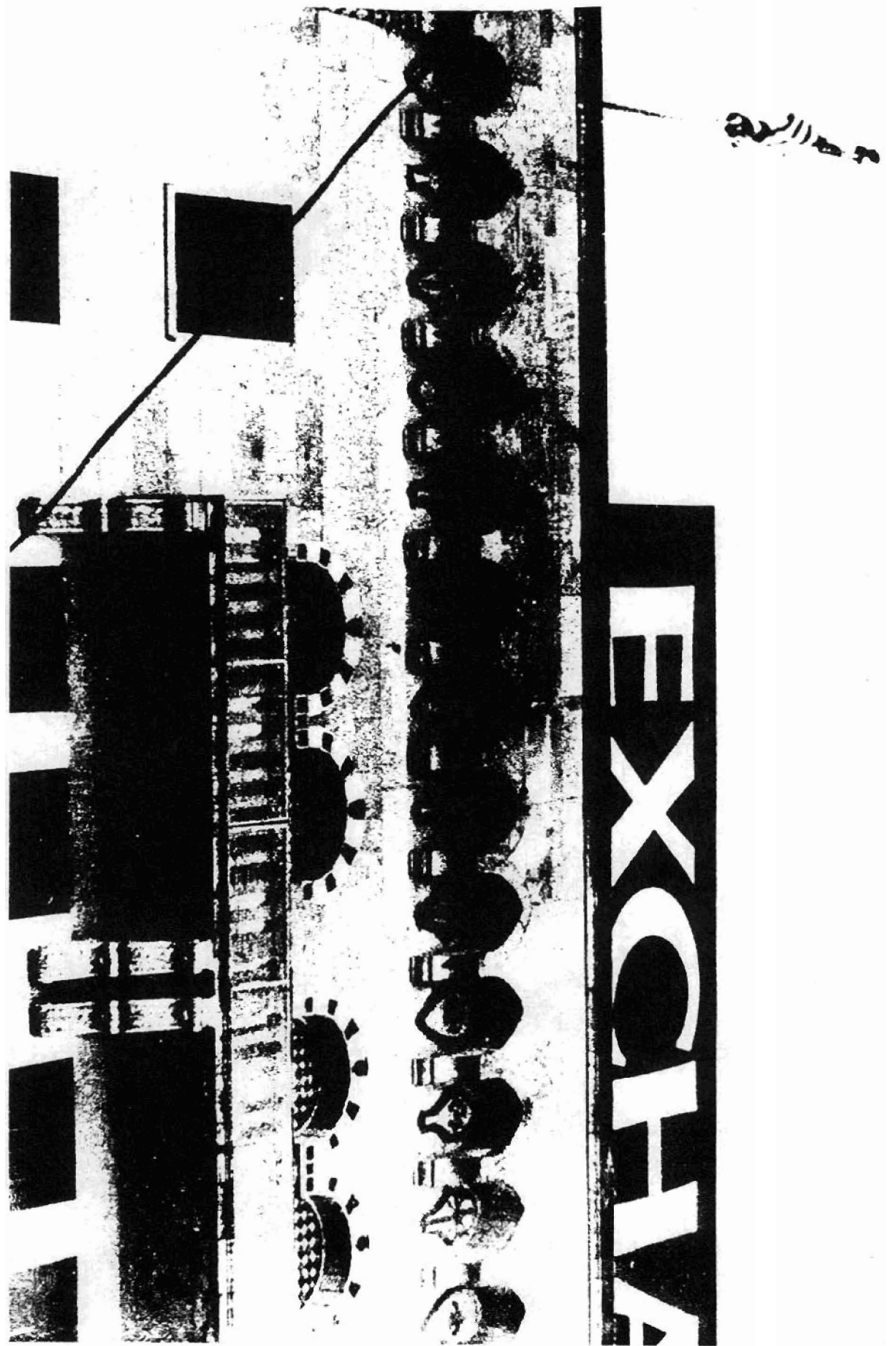




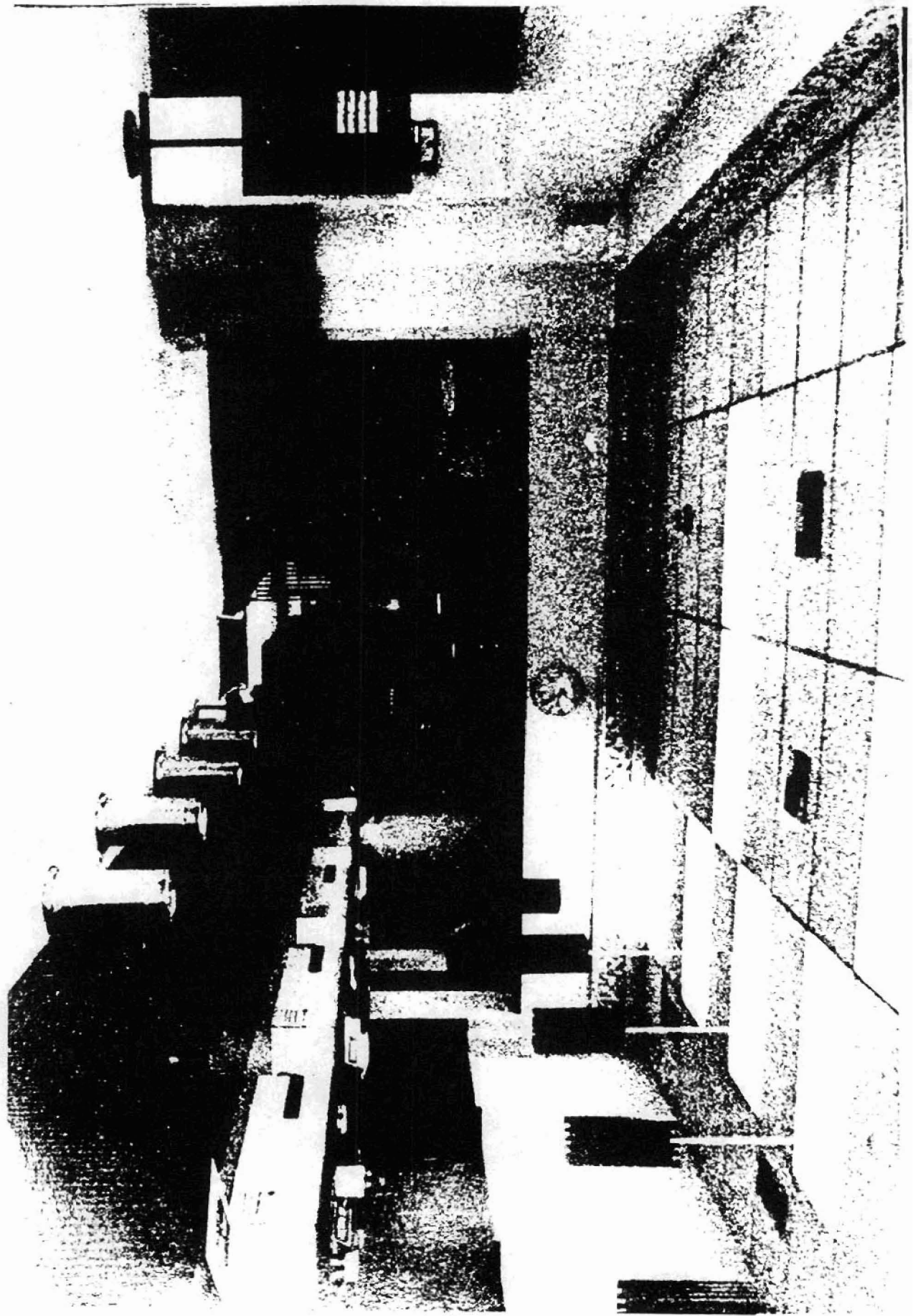
Exchange Bank
El Dorado, Union Co.
Entrance, 1986
Negative on file at AHPP



Exchange Bank
El Dorado, Union Co.
Board room interior, 1986
Negative on file at AHPP



Exchange Bank Building
El Dorado, Union Co.
Exterior ornament, 1985
Negative on file at AHPP



Exchange Ban
El Dorado, Union Co.
Interior, 195
Negative on file at AHPP