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United States Department of the Interior  
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National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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date entered

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

1. Name

historic Ayers Bank Building

and/or common The Farmers State Bank and Trust Company

2. Location

street & number 200 West State Street not for publication

city, town Jacksonville vicinity of

state Illinois code 012 county Morgan code 137

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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A 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 The Farmers State Bank and Trust Company

street & number 200 West State Street

city, town Jacksonville vicinity of state Illinois 62651

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office, Morgan County Courthouse

street & number West State Street

city, town Jacksonville state Illinois 62651

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Illinois Historic Structures Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date October 1974  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

city, town Springfield state Illinois

## 7. Description

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

### **Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance** Summary:

The Ayers National Bank Building designed in 1911 and constructed in 1912-1913, was built to house the bank at basement, mezzanine and first floor levels with office space two through seven.

The ground floor is rectangular in plan and this shape was maintained through the mezzanine floor. A "U" shape plan was originally designed for the office floors above. An addition in 1961 closed the "U" shape to the rectangular plan on the second floor only.

Walls are brick masonry with a cut stone facade at the street level to the second floor line. The cut stone has granite wainscot mid-height of first floor with an ashlar block pattern of stone to a continuous cut stone belt course with crown and still at the second floor line. The crown is periodically interrupted by a cut stone keystone placed over the center of each of the two-story window openings.

Upper floors are brick faced with vertical brick ribs surrounding the double-hung windows. All windows are clear glass lites without mullions. The upper story brick facade terminates at the seventh floor by a window height story of decorative brick panels with terra cotta inserts surrounding windows.

The building cornice is all terra cotta beginning with an egg and dart string course, continuous dentil and fascia interrupted with a half round moulded string course.

The building is capped with a terra cotta balustrade screen between terra cotta piers.

The decorative elements of the building are distinctly characteristic of the Second Renaissance Revival Style. This is evident in the general simplicity of the building form and lack of either cast iron or major relief elements of the facade. The design was apparently influenced by the prominence of the tall commercial building styles as noted by the vertical accentuation of the brick ribs in the upper stories. The original design included some minor art moderne details in the windows and transoms but these have been later removed and replaced with porcelain panels.

The later 1958 addition to the west side of the building was designed in the modern vocabulary with more random cut ashlar stone on the south facade and capped with a curtain wall style aluminum storeframe of glass and porcelain panels. The west side of the addition with brick piers at first floor provide space for drive-through and a full brick wall above.

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Exterior

The Ayers National Bank building, designed in 1911 and constructed 1912-1913, was built to house the bank at basement, mezzanine and first floor levels with office space on floors two through seven. The ground plan is rectangular with the primary axis east to west. The primary facade faces south on West State Street and the secondary facade faces east on North Sandy Street. The building was originally constructed adjacent to a two-story commercial row on the north which has since been removed. A "U" shape plan was originally designed for the office floors from first through seventh floor. The "U" shaped plan was terminated at both first and mezzanine floors by a sloping glass skylight system with ventilators installed. The "U" shape occurs to the north side of the building; it was closed at the first floor, and mezzanine by an addition constructed in 1961.

The exterior walls are brick masonry construction with a stone veneer at street level to second floor line - a height of approximately 26 feet. This is capped with a continuous cut stone belt course with crown and sill followed by a two-foot high base stone course at the tower walls. The crown is periodically interrupted by a cut stone keystone placed over the center of each of the two-story window openings. The stone veneer is a polished granite at wainscoat height or about four feet above street level.

Window and door openings in the lower floor facades were originally executed in ornamental cast iron frames and grilles, with plate glass inserts. The two-story window openings were approximately eighteen feet tall with a two foot high ornamental cast iron spandrel panel and two vertical mullions.

Wall thickness on the first through second floors is 2' -9½". Exterior walls are load-bearing and all interior framing is of steel construction with concrete and structural tile floor system. All exterior wall openings have steel lintels.

The upper floors two through seven are constructed of masonry with brick exterior, laid in common bond at vertical piers and flemish bond at all spandrels, and window recesses. All window openings were originally constructed with wood frame double hung sash with clear glass free of muttons. The vertical tower design is accented by the masonry piers which extend to the seventh floor and are additionally emphasized by a corbeled corner at each side of the pier which extends up the pier and across the lintel below the seventh floor.

Wall thicknesses on the upper floor vary from 2'-5" at the second floor to 1'-5" at the sixth floor and the piers add 9" in over-all wall thickness

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Exterior - continued

The seventh floor and roof parapet completed the building facade and contain its most decorative feature developing a full building entablature. The seventh floor line is accented by a continuous string course executed in terra cotta and built into the masonry fabric. The string course consists of a rolled base with wave mould fascia and projecting flat sill scotia mould. The flat sill projects approximately 8" from the masonry wall and extends back at window openings to receive the window sills.

The seventh floor masonry and window pattern develops a classic frieze with brick panels penetrated by rectangular double-hung windows. Each window is accented by a 1' wide projected brick band at jambs and head with a terra cotta relief rosette at corners. Beyond the vertical band the brick is corbelled forward in line with the tower piers to a patterned brick panel with a rectangular center severed by an intersecting rowlock patterned diamond with terra cotta center ornament. The top of the panel is accented by four quartrefoil terra cotta ornamental inserts.

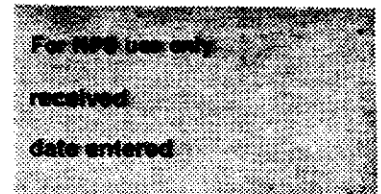
The cornice and parapet crowns the entablature. The cornice is fully terra cotta built into the masonry fabric and suspended on a projecting steel framework and tie anchored. The cornice begins at the masonry wall plane with a simple scotia followed by a 10" egg and dart continuous belt course. The first projecting course follows with a massive dentil capped by a decorative bead and reel mould. The large projecting cornice with a flat fascia then follows with more than a two-foot projection beyond the brick face of wall. Another bead and reel caps the flat fascia followed by an 9" cornice scotia capped by a double layered flat sill projecting back from the parapet wall. The parapet is terra cotta faced with an ornamental balustrade screen between flat terra cotta extensions of the vertical pier pattern.

The decorative pattern of the facades are consistent on the south, east, and west elevations. The upper floor decorative facade extends around the projecting corners of the north "U" shaped facade but are not extended onto the north central elevation. The north facade is generally all constructed of flat pressed red brick with window openings.

The exterior of the building has been maintained in remarkably good condition. Alternations were made to the building in 1958 and 1961 but the exterior facade remains true to the original design. The wood double-hung windows were removed and replaced by aluminum windows on the south, east and west facades. The original steel windows remain on the north facade. The 1958 addition to the west side of the building was designed in a modern vocabulary with the more random cut ashlar stone facade capped by a curtain wall upper story of glass and porcelain panels in aluminum frames, providing the bank with drive-up facility. The top of this addition aligns with the horizontal top of stone facade.

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Exterior - continued

In 1961 renovations were made to the bank which included removal of all the ornamental cast iron window frames, sprandels, grilles and doors. These were replaced by plain aluminum frames with plate glass and porcelain spandrel panels.

In 1983 the building was tuck-pointed and the terra cotta joints repaired and sealed to prevent damage from moisture.

The decorative elements of the building are distinctively characteristic of the Second Renaissance Revival Style. This is evident in the general simplicity of the building form and lack of either cast iron or major relief elements of the facade. The design was obviously influenced by the prominence of the tall commercial building style as noted by the verticle accentuation of the brick miers in the upper stories, but does not go into the full skeleton steel structure developing rapidly after the turn of the century.

The cornerstone of the Ayers National Bank was laid on Tuesday afternoon, November 28, 1911. Inside is a sealed glass bottle containing a manuscript which reads as follows:

"Founded 1852.

The Ayers National Bank,  
of Jacksonville.  
Jacksonville, Ill., November 28, 1911.

This corner stone was laid the above date by the Ayers National Bank. A copy of their statement made to the comptroller of the currency under the date of Sept. 1, 1911, is herewith enclosed. The statement shows the names of the directors and officers of the bank.

The architect of this building is Jarvis Hunt of Chicago, and the contractor is James Stewart & Co., of St. Louis. The superintendent is Milton E. Souther of Milwaukee.

It is contemplated when the building is erected that the bank of Dunlap, Russel & Co. and the Ayers National Bank will be consolidated under one name and both institutions thereafter will be in business in this building.

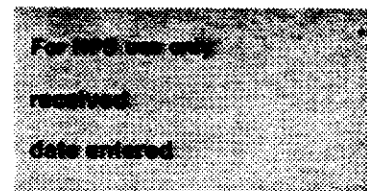
The deposits and capital and surplus of the two institutions when consolidated will be about \$2,000,000.

This is the first building of steel construction that has been erected in Jacksonville.

M. F. Dunlap, President  
The Ayers National Bank." 1.

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Exterior - continued

The General Contractor was James Stewart & Co., of St. Louis, their supervising foreman was W. Bridges.

Subcontracted work which has been documented include:

Foundation and excavation work	- William Nunes of Jacksonville
Vaults	- Mr. C. A. Donnell of Donnell Safe Company
Cut Stone	- First and Fanning of Chicago
Construction Steel	- Noelke Richards Co., Indiana
Granite	- Bodwell Granite Co., Vinalhaven, Maine
Sheet metal	- Sykes Steel Roofing Co., Chicago
Plumbing	- Jacksonville Plumbing Co.
Heating and ventilation	- Hanley-Casey Co., Chicago

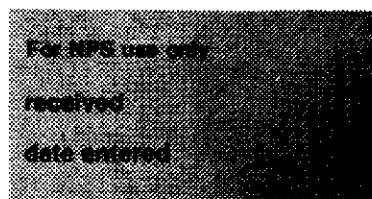
The construction was completed for approximately \$250,000 and the bank opened for business on January 2, 1913.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Jacksonville Journal, Wednesday, November 29, 1911

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Interior

As originally constructed, the first floor contained all of the primary banking functions, tellers, offices, etc. The mezzanine included bank working spaces open by balcony rail to the first floor. The basement level contained the vaults, meeting rooms and safe deposit. The basement level also included a boiler room on the west end of the building as well as coal room, water supply system and sewer handling system.

The upper floors two through seven contained offices accessible by elevator and stair. The service corridor runs through the building on the north wall with suites accessible directly from the corridor.

In 1958 and 1961 major additions and alterations were made in order to modernize and expand banking facilities. In particular, the 1961 renovations totally altered the basement, first floor and mezzanine floors. The mezzanine was closed by a full floor addition over the two-story space with the ornamental iron, terra cotta and plaster work removed or covered over. New drywall and glass partitions and a suspended acoustical tile ceiling applied. The first floor was also modernized grillework, cashiers' cages, and all ornament removed. The central stair case to the basement was also removed and new partitions constructed. Today only the massive vault door and vault grillework remain.

During most of 1984 a major renovation program was undertaken to modernize floors two (2) through seven (7). The renovations had a two-fold purpose, one, to bring the building into compliance with life safety standards and two, to provide functional workspace. Life safety included the continuation of the northeast stairwell to the seventh floor which provided a second means of egress, a smoke and fire detection and alarm system, and a new hi-rise elevator to comply with current standards. All former partitions were removed to provide larger work areas; new energy-efficient heating and air-conditioning systems were installed on each floor. All new plumbing and electrical service was installed with a new washroom on each floor. Energy efficiency was improved with the addition of insulation to all exterior walls and inside windows. After the completion of all remodeling work in November 1984, banking departments were relocated and the bank now uses all but the top floor which is for future expansion.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1911-1913 **Builder/Architect** Jarvis Hunt, Chicago

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

SUMMARY

Evidence strongly suggests that the site on which the Ayers Bank Building is located has been continuously associated with banking longer than any other site in the State of Illinois. It is entirely possible, in fact, that no site in the five present-day states of the Old Northwest enjoys a longer continuous association with banking activities. Initiated by David Ball Ayers, banking functions have occurred on this site since at least December 23, 1835, and it is likely that such functions occurred there as early as 1832. A few banks in the state trace their origins back to the 1830s, but it appears that all of these early banks have moved from their original sites. The significance of banking at the site on which the Ayers Bank Building is located stems from more than mere longevity, however. Early banking in Jacksonville and in Morgan County was significant because the young town and county played such vital and important roles in shaping the state's early history. Moreover, David Ayers was undoubtedly the leading financial figure of early Jacksonville, and the banking activities he initiated and which were strengthened by his sons dominated the local banking scene well into the 1930s. Other individuals associated with the site over the decades also figured prominently in state history and even national history. The importance of the site's early banking functions was symbolized in 1913 by the opening of the Ayers National Bank Building (now the Farmers State Bank Building), an eight-story structure that even today towers over the smaller commercial buildings of the central business district. This impressive building symbolizes the crucial financial role played by the site over the decades. It also reflects the hopes and aspirations of an earlier generation. The building today provides powerful tangible links with an important and sometimes turbulent past, and its preservation will extend these links to future generations.

\* Detailed Statement \*

The Farmers State Bank Building, originally known as the Ayers National Bank Building, occupies a site that probably has been continuously associated with banking longer than any other site in the State of Illinois. It is possible, moreover, that no site in the five states that comprise the Old Northwest enjoys a longer continuous association with banking activities.

The person who initiated banking on this site was David Ball Ayers. After engaging in the sale of drugs and medicines in Philadelphia for approximately a decade, he and his wife and sons arrived in Jacksonville in May, 1830, where he promptly re-established his drug business, almost certainly the first in the state (McDonald, p.1 and Atlas of Morgan County, p. 51). This was located on East State Street, just east of the public square. In December, 1831, he purchased from Mr. and Mrs. William R. Turpin lot 81 on the plat of the Town of Jacksonville, located at the northwest corner of West State Street, the site of today's Farmers State Bank Building (Deed Record E, p. 235). He resumed his drug business at this location in early 1832.



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As was true of so many frontier merchants, David Ayers dabbled in a wide variety of activities. In addition to selling drugs, he sold such items as surgeons' instruments, books, hats, shoes, dyes, glass, turpentine, and a host of other goods (Western Observer, July 3, 1830, and September 18, 1830). In addition, the Western Observer of July 10, 1830, noted that Ayers, "being appointed Agent for the Morgan County Bible Society, offers for sale a quantity of Bibles, which may be purchased at the Bible Society's prices." In short, like other frontier merchants Ayers sold whatever he could get his hands on.

Moreover, he joined countless other frontier merchants in extending credit and soon he had become a merchant-banker. Since the state laws of early Illinois severely restricted the use of the term "bank" to just those institutions that officially served as branches of the State Bank of Illinois, individuals and firms engaging in receiving deposits and making loans and investments had to use other terms to describe their operations. Some individuals merely extended informal credit to favored customers, some agreed to be depositories for valuables, others called themselves agents, while still others generated capital via insurance plans. Whatever name the activity went by, these undertakings and related undertakings in reality constituted various aspects of banking.

Since the banking world in Illinois in the early 1830s was chaotic, fragmented, and uncertain, David Ayers

started his own banking system to accommodate his friends and to aid his own business.

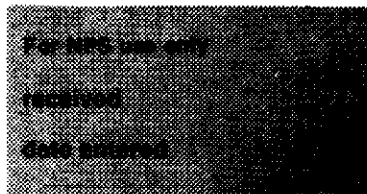
On the firm from which he purchased his supplies in Philadelphia he drew drafts which financed his own trade and the ventures of his friends . . . (Jacksonville Daily

Journal, December 9, 1932. See also Coultas, "Banks," p. 4). In addition to extending and maintaining lines of credit, Ayers served as an agent for eastern real estate interests: "A group of Philadelphia real estate operators became interested in the prospects of this area; they advanced capital for David Ayers and his business flourished . . ." (Jacksonville Daily Journal, December 9, 1932).

It is highly significant for the creation of credit in early Jacksonville that Ayers maintained ties with financial circles in Philadelphia, for it was Philadelphia -- not New York -- that was at this time the financial capital of the nation. There is no doubt that Ayers was in the business of obtaining and extending credit. This is clear from a notice he ran in the Illinois Patriot on March 10, 1836;

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Those persons whose accounts or notes are now due, will please take notice that the time has arrived when payment is to be made, and as the subscriber is now making his remittance of cash to the East and has need of all his funds, he hopes that not one person who reads this notice and knows himself to be indebted to him, will fail of calling and settling his accounts without delay.

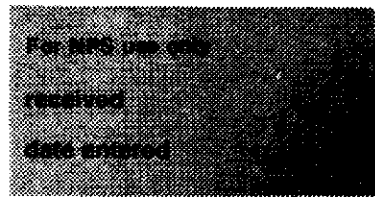
This notice is nearly identical to the one that appeared in the Sangamo Journal on January 6, 1837 by John Williams, an early merchant-banker in Springfield: "One of the undersigned will leave this place for the East after goods about the first of January; and they now call upon those whose accounts are due to pay previous to that time." Ayers' services went beyond extending credit and serving as an agent for those who wished to invest in western lands. He provided a safe depository for funds (Crabtree).

The important fact about Ayers -- the fact that sets him apart from all other early merchant-bankers operating in the state - is that once he began to do business at the northwest corner of West State Street and the public square, he never moved from that site and neither did his successors. Very few banks in Illinois trace their origins back to the 1830s, and those few that do lay claim to such early origins invariably have moved from one site to another. For example, the Alton National Bank and the First National Bank of Alton (each of which has early beginnings) have moved a number of times to various locations. Similarly the Springfield Marine Bank traces its roots via the Springfield Marine and Fire Insurance Company to a relatively early date, but it moved shortly after it became a bank in early 1851, locating to the east side of the square (Angle, Here I Have Lived, p. 17, "One Hundred Years," unpaginated, and "Historical Sketch," p. 1). In short, a thorough investigation of each of those few banks that claims antecedents as far back as the 1830s has demonstrated that each bank has moved at least once. Evidently, in Illinois only lot 81 in Jacksonville has witnessed continuous banking activity since the early 1830s.

The banking activity was crucial for Jacksonville. The early national banking system, never robust and always weaker in the West than in the settled East, was soon to be rocked and then destroyed by President Jackson's war against the Second Bank of the United States. The 1830s would prove to be very turbulent years and would end in prolonged economic depression, a depression that would sweep Jackson's hand-picked successor, Martin Van Buren, from office in the election of 1840. Not until the national banking acts of 1863 and 1864, war-time measures taken to strengthen the nation's economy, would a banking system be re-established. Prior to 1865 a number of currencies floated about: advertising notes, bank notes, certificates of deposit, post notes, and various forms of scrip (Marckhoff, pp. 366-67). Much currency was of

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little value, many banks failed, the economy suffered, and confidence in banks remained low. In desperation, many people resorted to barter (Coleberd, p. 33).

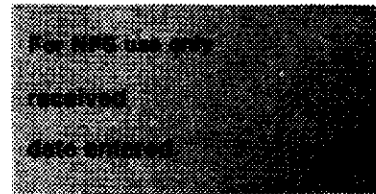
During this time, in September 1850, David Ayers died. Changes in banking laws in Illinois in 1851 ended the state's monopoly on the term "banking," and in December 1852, Marshall Paul Ayers, David's younger son, formed the banking firm of M. P. Ayers and Co. During the rough times prior to the Civil War, the financial operations started by David Ayers and continued by Marshall Paul Ayers never faltered. The successful undertaking of banking activities by David Ayers in the early 1830s entitle him to be called the "city's first financier" (Coultas, "Banks," p. 4).

This success is important for several reasons. First, a sizeable percentage of the state's population lived in the region during the 1830s. The census of 1830 found 12,714 residents in the county, making it the second most populous county in the state. By 1840 the figure stood at 19,547, making it the most populous county. In addition, Jacksonville's population spurted from a mere 446 in 1830 to 1,800 by 1833, making it the state's largest town, a position it held for the next half dozen years or so (Heinl, p. 5). Adding to the importance of the region was the bountiful agricultural surplus, a surplus that was beginning to find its way to the East Coast via the Great Lakes and the Erie Canal. (By the time of the Civil War the state was the nation's wheat and cattle center, and Morgan County was a leader in both.) Of additional importance to the town was the presence in the 1830s and 1840s of a number of significant institutions: Illinois College, the state's first institution of higher learning; the state's first medical school; three state institutions to help the blind, the deaf, and the insane; the Illinois Conference Female College (now MacMurray); and a host of cultural institutions such as the Ladies Educational Society (founded in 1833), the Female Academy, and the Jacksonville Library Association. Finally, before the Civil War the community produced such notable and important political figures as Joseph Duncan (Governor, 1834-38), Stephen A. Douglas (Senator, 1847-1861), and Richard Yates (Governor, 1861-65 and Senator, 1865-71). Clearly, the quality of the people in the town and in the region was impressive, and it does not seem unlikely that the availability of sound credit via the efforts of the Ayers family encouraged people of ability to settle in the town and establish useful societies and institutions. The town had a reputation before the Civil War of being a vibrant, enterprising place, and a good deal of the credit for this reputation must rest with David Ayers and his sons.

The deaths of Marshall Paul Ayers and Augustus E. Ayers shortly after the turn of the century ushered in significant change. The local banking world soon experienced a flurry of activity at the hands of two energetic and ambitious men, Millard Fillmore Dunlap and Andrew Russel, the founder in 1891 of the banking house of Dunlap & Russel. In 1910 they bought

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controlling interest in Ayers Bank, and three years later they acquired Jacksonville National Bank. Another purchase was made by Russel and Dunlap in 1930, when they obtained Farrell and Company. This purchase, on the eve of the Great Depression, caused the assets of Ayers Bank to top \$8,700,000, the largest in the region (Coultas, "Finance," pp. 79-80).

The men who put this financial empire together were talented individuals. Dunlap was a power in the Democrat Party at the state and national levels. He was a close friend and frequent companion of William Jennings Bryan:

Mr. Dunlap was an intimate friend of Mr. Bryan, their association beginning in their early careers in Jacksonville. Even after the great commoner became a world figure he continued to number Mr. Dunlap among his closest friends.

The two men were first brought together in business matters. Their bonds of friendship grew stronger as time went on. (Jacksonville Courier, July 28, 1925)

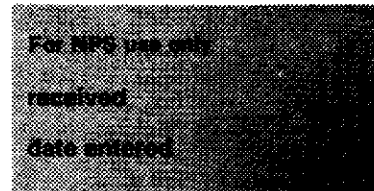
Russel was a powerful figure in the Republican Party. He twice served as State Treasurer and was State Auditor from 1917-1925. He was supervising editor for Financing an Empire: History of Banking in Illinois. His reputation caused him to be selected as an early president of the Illinois Bankers' Association.

These men were ambitious, and they wanted to leave a mark. Although there was little or no economic justification for a tall building to be constructed in Jacksonville's central business district, Russel and Dunlap steered the Ayers Bank into the construction of the tallest, most imposing and probably the costliest commercial building in the community to that date. It was to be the most impressive bank building in downstate Illinois. It was the city's first steel frame building and the only high-rise commercial building ever to be built in the city. In many ways, it symbolized the site's impressive history in the economic development of the region. It served as a monument of sorts to past success, and it served as an expression of confidence in the future. A noted Chicago architect, Jarvis Hunt, was retained for the undertaking, and ground was broken on August 16, 1911. After an investment of some \$250,000 and the labor of nearly seventeen months, the new Ayers National Bank Building was opened January 2, 1913.

Solid growth in the bank's assets between 1910 and 1930 seemed to justify the creation of the town's only high-rise building. The new building towered, literally and figuratively, over its much smaller neighbors in the central business district, reflecting the bank's relative dominance over its competitors. By 1930 the bank stood on a pinnacle of success and influence.

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Unfortunately for the bank, for individuals in the bank, and for the region, radical change swept the landscape in the early 1930s. Although the bank managed to withstand the stormy blasts of the Great Depression, unsound and illegal banking practices by Dunlap and Russel brought the bank to ruin. Eventually, depositors received only \$.33 on the dollar, the bank closed and the region suffered a blow from which it took years to recover, and Dunlap and Russel went to jail. The closing of the bank hurt Illinois College, which had deposited large quantities of funds in the bank. The rest of the community also suffered for years, and it was not until World War II that the worst of the damage caused by the bank's failure passed. In 1939 the Farmers State Bank bought the Ayers Bank Building at a foreclosure sale for \$53,000. After the facility was refurbished, Farmers State Bank moved into its new home in 1941, where it has remained for the last forty-five years.

Alterations have changed the building somewhat over the decades, but the structure remains what it has been since 1913--the tallest, most dominant, and most impressive commercial building in the city. The eight-story building is obvious to even the most casual observer. The more perceptive observer, however, will wonder why anyone ever built an eight-story building in a community in which no other commercial building in the downtown district exceeds three stories. The perceptive observer who bothers to learn the history of the site will conclude that the building is a monument. It is a monument to a site that has seen over 150 years of banking activity. It is a monument to the region's early institutions and early prosperity. It is a monument to the creation of a financial empire in the early part of this century and to the folly and excessive pride that accompanies empires. It is a monument to the Great Depression, to illegal activities, and to the bitterness caused by economic collapses. Today the building serves as an important link, a link that ties yesterday's accomplishments, and yesterday's hopes and vanities, with today's realities. Preservation of the building will mean that an important link will be maintained for future generations. Its preservation will help us to understand who we were and who we are.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property .29 acres

Quadrangle name Jacksonville, IL

Quadrangle scale 7.5 minute ser.  
1:24,000

UTM References

A 

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

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

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D 

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H 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Lot eight one (81) of the original Plat of town, now City of Jacksonville. Said lot located in north-east quarter of north-east quarter of section 20, township fifteen (15) north, range ten (10) west. Lot size with building comprising approximately 180 ft. x 70 ft. at corner of State Street and North Sandy Street.

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

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Harold Cox, Vice President  
James E. Davis, Professor of History

organization The Farmers State Bank and Trust Company  
Illinois College date May 21, 1986

street & number 200 W. State Street  
1101 West College Avenue telephone 217-245-5131  
217-245-7126

city or town Jacksonville state Illinois

## 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 *James E. Davis*

title Director date 9-22-86

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

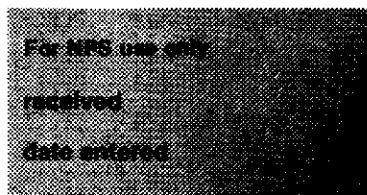
date

Attest:

Chief of Registration

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

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



Continuation sheet ayers National Bank Building item number 9

Page 1

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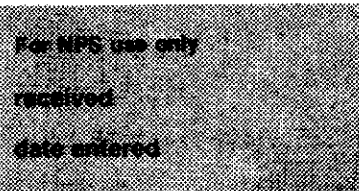
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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

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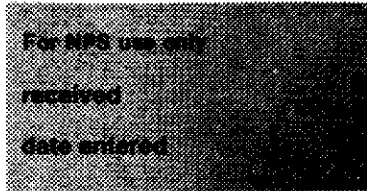
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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Continuation sheet Ayers National Bank Building item number            Attachments            Page 1

EXHIBITS ATTACHED:

- 1) Letter from Roger D. Bridges, head librarian for Illinois State Historical Library, on his findings on banking sites in Illinois.
  
- 2) Hand-written statement from Mrs. James C. (Gratia) Coultas on the importance of the Ayers Bank Building.



IN REPLY REFER TO:

# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. BOX 37127

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127

NOV 28 1986

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places beginning November 16, 1986 and ending November 22, 1986. For further information call (202) 343-9552.

STATE, County, Vicinity, Property, Address, (Date Listed)

ARKANSAS, Columbia County, Magnolia vicinity, Ozmer House, US 82 by pass, Southern Arkansas University Farm (11/20/86)

CALIFORNIA, Los Angeles County, Los Angeles, Granada Shoppes and Studios, 672 S. Lafayette Park Pl. (11/20/86)

CONNECTICUT, Hartford County, Simsbury, Simsbury Bank and Trust Company Building, 760--762 Hopmeadow St. (11/20/86)

CONNECTICUT, New London County, Waterford, Eolia--Harkness Estate, Great Neck Rd. (11/20/86)

ILLINOIS, Champaign County, Urbana, Chemical Laboratory (University of Illinois Buildings by Nathan Clifford Ricker TR), 1305 W. Green St. (11/19/86)

ILLINOIS, Champaign County, Urbana, Metal Shop (University of Illinois Buildings by Nathan Clifford Ricker TR), 102 S. Burrill Ave. (11/19/86)

ILLINOIS, Champaign County, Urbana, Military Drill Hall and Men's Gymnasium (University of Illinois Buildings by Nathan Clifford Ricker TR), 1402--1406 W. Springfield (11/19/86)

ILLINOIS, Champaign County, Urbana, Natural History Building (University of Illinois Buildings by Nathan Clifford Ricker TR), 1301 W. Green St. (11/19/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Balaban & Katz Uptown Theatre, 4814--4816 N. Broadway (11/20/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Lincoln Park-South Pond Refectory, 2021 N. Stockton Dr. (11/20/86)

ILLINOIS, Livingston County, Pontiac, Livingston County Courthouse, 112 W. Madison (11/19/86)

ILLINOIS, Morgan County, Jacksonville, Ayers Bank Building, 200 W. State St. (11/20/86)

ILLINOIS, Morgan County, Jacksonville, Morgan County Courthouse, 300 W. State St. (11/19/86)

ILLINOIS, Sangamon County, Springfield, Central Springfield Historic District (Boundary Increase), Sixth St. from Capitol to Monroe St. (11/19/86)

IOWA, Black Hawk County, Cedar Falls, Rownd, C. A., Round Barn (Iowa Round Barns: The Sixty Year Experiment TR), 5102 S. Main (11/19/86)

IOWA, Plymouth County, LeMars, Tonsfeldt Round Barn (Iowa Round Barns: The Sixty Year Experiment TR), Plymouth County Fairgrounds (11/19/86)

IOWA, Wayne County, Allerton vicinity, Nelson Round Barn (Iowa Round Barns: The Sixty Year Experiment TR), CR J46 (11/19/86)

IOWA, Winneshek County, Burr Oak vicinity, Kinney Octagon Barn (Iowa Round Barns: The Sixty Year Experiment TR), Off US 52 (11/19/86)

KANSAS, Miami County, Osawatomie, Mills, William, House, 212 First St. (11/20/86)

KENTUCKY, Lincoln County, Stanford, Stanford Commercial District, Main St. from Somerset St. to Third St. (11/17/86)