

DOWNTOWN OCALA HISTORIC WALKING TOUR

MARION BLOCK

24 SE 1ST AVE, OCALA, FL 34471

The Marion Block was completed in 1885 by D.C. Wharton Smith of Philadelphia. It was one of the first rebuilds on the Square after the 1883 Thanksgiving Day fire.

The first retail establishment here was Nathan's, a retail establishment run by Nathan Emanuel and Herman Kaminski. It offered dry goods, clothing, boots, and shoes. In keeping with the prosperous cultural and social life of the time, the entire third floor became the Marion Opera House with a seating capacity of 800. It was a multi-use space for a ballroom, convention hall, and the city's first theater. In 1890, the Populist Party held their national convention there.

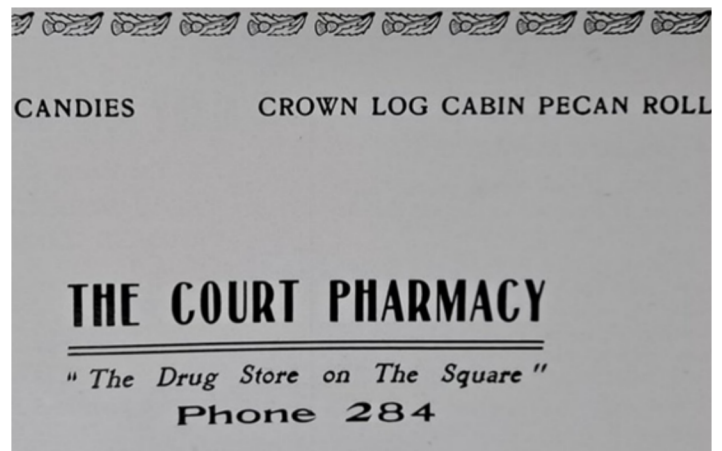
Real estate brokers S.W. Teague & Co. also had offices in the building. D.W. Davis, an insurance agent, occupied an office in the building in its early years. Davis was considered one of Ocala's most progressive and energetic young businessmen. Dr. Dan M. Smith, a physician, and D.D. Rogers, a civil, mining, and consulting engineer, also had offices in the building.

The Court Pharmacy, also known as "The Drug Store on the Square," occupied storefront space on the Broadway side of the building starting in 1912. Its soda fountain made it popular with both local residents and tourists until it closed in the late 1930s. The store's original mosaic tile remains today, and the words "Drug Store" can still be seen on the floor of the first-floor main entrance. It was the original site of Bittings Drug Store. The building also contains the oldest elevator in Ocala.

By 1908, the building was sold and renamed Holder Block. At this time, the entire second and third floors of the building were being used as professional offices. By 1940, it was again identified and referred to by its original name, Marion Block. Now, the building houses offices on the second and third floors, and the block is home to Harry's Seafood, Bar & Grille.



Marion Block c.1908



Ad for the Court Pharmacy in a 1921 Copy of the *Ocaleean* (an Old Newspaper)

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