

SEE SITE FILE STAFF FOR
ORIGINAL PHOTO(S) OR MAP(S)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

ORIGINAL - NOT TO BE REMOVED
FROM FILES

1. Name

historic Congress Building

SEE SITE FILE STAFF FOR
ORIGINAL PHOTO(S) OR MAP(S)

and/or common Congress Building

2. Location

street & number 111 Northeast 2nd Avenue

N/A not for publication

city, town Miami

N/A vicinity of

state Florida

code 12

county Dade

code 025

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

4. Owner of Property

name A.L. and W. Bertie Weinberg

street & number 111 Northeast 2nd Avenue

city, town Miami

N/A vicinity of

state Florida

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dade County Courthouse

street & number 140 West Flagler Street

city, town Miami

state Florida

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Dade Co. Historic Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date August 1978

federal state county local

depository for survey records Division of Archives, History and Records Management

city, town Tallahassee

state Florida

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<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 date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Congress Building is a twenty-one story, steel frame, stucco and ceramic tile office building located in downtown Miami. The building exemplifies the influence of the Neo-classical style in design in combination with the structural and stylistic innovations of the Chicago School. The building was constructed in two phases: first as a three-bay, five-story structure constructed in 1923 and a later five-bay, sixteen-story addition constructed in 1925. The building displays a three-part classical composition with various classically inspired details, most notably a full entablature at the fourth and twenty-first stories, and elaborate ceramic tile ornamentation. Principal exterior alterations include the addition of metal awnings at the first story of the west elevation, the removal of six pilasters, the covering of a first story cast iron transom and the replacement of original storefronts.

Fabric and Ornamentation: The Congress Building consists of a high rise tower of sixteen stories set on an earlier five-story base. A flat tiled parapet wall and full entablature with a decorative frieze crowns the building at its uppermost termination. A second entablature with a similar frieze and tiled parapet crowns the seventeenth story of a lower projecting wing and continues across the facade of the main block of the building. A less embellished string course extends across the facade between the fourteenth and fifteenth stories. The exterior fabric of the building changes above the fifth story to glazed ceramic tile. The lower stories are clad in limestone. The other elevations of the building are covered in stucco.

Fenestration: Five bays of round-arched windows extend across the second story of the building with decorative medallions set in the spandrels between. At the third and fourth stories a triple grouping of windows separated by single engaged columns resting on a heavy projecting sill embellish the facade. The third and fourth stories of the windows are separated by a decorative panel containing a shield. Windows between the fifth and nineteenth stories have tiled window sills and surrounds, those on the eighteenth and nineteenth stories are separated by flat pilasters. The first five stories of windows are five bays wide; the sixth through the nineteenth stories eleven bays wide and the upper two stories seven bays wide.

Main Entrance: The main entrance to the building consists of metal and glass storefronts with two pairs of double glass doors and side lights at the entrance. Each storefront has a transom set in a rectangular recess. The most significant exterior alterations have taken place here through attempts at storefront modernization.

Interior: The ground floor of the building consists of an entry lobby flanked by small shops. The elevator lobby, originally open to the street, was connected to an interior arcade that transverses the north end of the building. Originally the arcade was laid out in a "L" shape passing behind the elevators. This feature was eliminated during the 1951 addition of air conditioning for use as mechanical space. The arcade consists of a barrel vaulted central aisle flanked by rows of store fronts. Commercial tenants have significantly altered the original interior finishes of the ground floor and lobby. Originally each storefront was glassed with doorways, spandrels and transoms. These have been removed. The arcade aisle is approximately eighteen feet wide by one hundred feet in length and thirteen feet in height. The barrel vaults and some shops were punctuated

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by twelve skylights over the one-story section of the building's rear. The skylights have been covered over. Floors throughout the first floor lobby are terrazo with marble tile inlay. Ground floor walls are wainscoted with white and pink marble to approximately eight feet. The ceiling is detailed with a plaster egg and dart moulding in the elevator lobby. All original plaster ceilings have been covered by suspended acoustic tile. The four elevators have ornate embossed brass doors which remain. Each elevator is hand operated and requires an attendant. Upper office floors were finished only in the elevator lobby area. Walls are white and pink marble wainscoting and floors are vinyl tile with terrazo inlay. Other finishes are concrete floors and plaster walls. "Tenant finishes" have obliterated the original materials on the office floors.

Structural Design:

The Congress Building was built as a sixteen-story addition placed upon an existing five-story structure. The present structure is actually composed of two separate buildings, constructed three years apart. The first Congress Building, built in 1923, was a three-bay, five-story structure (see structural composite drawings) known as the "New Congress Building." As the land boom in South Florida reached its peak and the City of Miami lifted its ten story height restriction in 1925, sixteen additional stories were built above the original five-story structure with two additional bays and seventeen stories constructed as a north wing. The addition, which appears not to have been originally planned, does not engage the structural system of the smaller building, but rather completely "straddles" it with a truss and cage system that distributes the load of the sixteen story addition around the earlier structure. The truss system supporting the addition is placed through the sixth and seventh floors and is connected to a column system attached to the exterior of the earlier building visible on the north and south facades. The structure consists of one-way reinforced concrete ribbed slabs, supported by a structural frame of steel I beams and columns encased in concrete. Horizontal wind loads are supported by continuous structural steel frames with riveted moment connections and cross bracing at the sixth and seventh floors. The foundation system consists of spread footings.

Drawings prepared by M.L. Hampton and Associates, Architects, 100 Congress Building, Miami, Florida, and E.A. Sturman, Structural Engineer, Miami, Florida, dated August 22, 1924, survive and have been used to prepare the attached structural composite showing the existing "straddle" of the two buildings.

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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

Specific dates 1926 Builder/Architect W.S. Tyler/Martin L. Hampton

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Congress Building is significant as a noteworthy example of mid-1920s commercial architecture in Dade County. The twenty-one story masonry and steel frame building is architecturally significant as an example of Neo-classical Revival architecture with fine terra cotta work. The building is also noteworthy for its structural design and corresponding significance in the area of engineering. The present structure is acutally composed of two separate buildings constructed three years apart, although their integrated design causes the present structure to read as a single composition. The building is also significant in the area of commerce through its association with the land boom of the early 1920s. It is one of the few remaining examples of high-rise commercial building dating from this period remaining in downtown Miami.

The Congress Building and its expansion typifies the frenzied pace of speculation in real estate during the height of the Florida land boom in the early 1920s. It is noteworthy that the Greentree Inn, directly across the street from the Congress Building (NW corner of NE 2nd Avenue and 1st Street) was reported in the newspaper of the day to have a valuation of \$75,000 in 1918 when it was sold at a price of \$116,000. In 1920 the property was again resold for \$225,000 and only two months later resold again for \$250,000. The property value, with no further improvements since 1918, was reported to be somewhere between \$500,000 and \$600,000 on January 1, 1925. According to The Miami Herald, 1925 downtown land values appreciated dramatically during the very short "boom-time". The Biscayne Hotel, for example, which was previously located at the SE corner of Flagler Street and Miami Avenue, sold in 1920 for \$225,000, but by 1925 conservative estimates placed its value at least \$1,000,000. The real estate boom in Miami was so great that it became a national phenomena. To quote The Nation, August 12, 1925, "Miami is the boom town preeminent in our paramount boom state....boom on, Miami - until the boom meets the boomerang."

The owner and developer of the Congress Building was Mr. Thomas O. Wilson, President of the Realty Securities Corporation, "Owners and Agents of City and Suburban Properties." Wilson moved to Miami in 1911 from Philadelphia where he was a travelling salesman. In 1912 he organized the Woodlawn Park Cemetery Company, now one of Miami's most architecturally noteworthy Gothic revival ensembles, located on SW 8th Street. In 1913, Wilson organized the Realty Securities Corporation, which "specializes in attractive sub-divisions and the buying and selling of high-grade business properties." The Realty Securities Corporation made their offies in both the 5-story Congress Building and the subsequent addition. The 1924 edition of the R.L. Polk Miami City Directory lists the company's address as the "Congress Building," 109 N.E. Second Avenue. Wilson is well noted as one of Florida's largest developers of cemeteries which included the Myrtle Hill Cemetery Company of Tampa in addition to his Miami holdings. He was active in civic and commercial affairs as a member and director of the Chamber of Commerce and the Miami Realty Board, a building also designed by M.L. Hampton.

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The architect of record for the Congress Building and its later addition was Martin Luther Hampton (Martin L. Hampton & Associates, Congress Building, Miami, Florida.) The original five-story building was designed by Hampton in 1923. Structural engineer for the addition was E.A. Sturman, Structural Engineers, Miami, Florida. At the time of the original design, Martin Hampton was associated with E.H. Ehmann in an architectural practice located in Suite 100, New Congress Building, according to the 1924 R.L. Polk Miami Directories. The original plans for the addition are signed Martin L. Hampton & Associates and dated August 17, 1925.

The first mention of Martin L. Hampton in the R.L. Polk Miami Directory appears in the 1921 issue. At that time, Hampton was listed in partnership with Robert R. Reinert, Jr., as "Hampton & Reinert, Architects" with offices at the Bedford Building, 129-131 Northeast First Avenue. Three years later the Polk Directory listed Hampton in practice with E.A. Ehman as "Hampton & Ehmann, Architects," 100 New Congress Building, 111 Northeast 2nd Avenue, Miami, Florida. Within two years (1926) Hampton was listed in the City directories only as Martin L. Hampton Associates, 1402-06 Congress Building, Miami.

Although little is presently known of Hampton's life or career, he amassed a sizable number of significant commissions throughout the Miami area. Most notably he designed the Old Miami Beach City Hall (1927), which is listed in the National Register as part of the Miami Beach Architectural District. Hampton was also involved with Miami developer and aviation pioneer Glenn Curtiss in the design of buildings in Country Club Estates (now Miami Springs). Hampton designed Curtiss' "pueblo-style" home at 500 Deer Run, as well as the Curtiss-Bright Administration Building (demolished) in Country Club Estates. Hampton may also have designed many other public buildings in Miami Springs, although records are no longer extant to provide documentation. The majority of Hampton's known Miami buildings are still standing, most in good condition. A list of documented structures designed by Hampton is attached. Hampton is noted principally for his early "Boom Time" architectural designs with few buildings attributed to him after the early 1930s.

The Congress Building is particularly noteworthy for its unique structural design. Structural engineer for the building was E.A. Sturman of Miami, Florida. The present building is composed of two separate buildings, constructed three years apart. The first Congress Building, built in 1923, was a three-bay, five-story structure (see structural composite drawings) known as the "New Congress Building." In 1925, sixteen additional stories were constructed by "straddling" the original five-story structure with two additional bays of seventeen stories constructed as a north wing. The truss system supporting the addition is placed through the sixth and seventh floors and is connected to a column system attached to the earlier portion of the building. At the present time, no other buildings in Miami are known to be constructed in this manner.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property Less than 1

Quadrangle name Miami

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

117	58112110	285108810
Zone	Easting	Northing

B

Zone	Easting	Northing

C

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D

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E

--	--	--

F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The northernmost 100.045 feet of Lots 11 and 12, Block 103 North, B-41 subdivision, City of Miami. This area includes all significant historic properties.

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Maxwell, Ian Nestler/Michael F. Zimny, Historic Sites Specialist

organization Florida Division of Archives

date February 6, 1985

street & number The Capitol

telephone (904) 487-2333

city or town Tallahassee

state Florida

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

date 2/7/85

title George W. Percy, State Historic Preservation Officer

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Florida Master Site File, Historic Site Data Sheet. Dade County Historic Survey, Miami, Florida, August 1978.

Polk, R.L. R.L. Polk & Company's Miami City Directory. Jacksonville, Florida: R.L. Polk & Company, 1919-1928.

Hopkins, G.M. Plat Book of Greater Miami, Florida & Suburbs. Philadelphia, 1925.

Sanborn Map Company, Insurance Maps of Miami, Dade County, Florida, New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1921.

Miami-Dade Public Library, Florida Room, Romer Photographic Collection.

Historical Museum of South Florida, Miami, Florida, Photographic Collection.

Metropolitan Dade County, Historic Preservation Division From Wilderness to Metropolis:
The History and Architecture of Dade County, Florida 1825-1940 Miami, Florida, 1982.

Miami Herald, "Miami's Silhouette is Impressive Site" July 28, 1935.

City of Miami, Building & Zoning Department, Congress Building Original Plans,
Martin L. Hampton, Architect, Roll M-31.

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