272# Dutton Bank (Script by Peggy Macdonald)

This brick building houses one of the earliest private banks in the state and was the head office of the H. F. Dutton Company, a leading mercantile firm run by Henry Forest Dutton, one of the most prominent Gainesville businessmen at the turn of the 20th century.

For nearly 40 years the Dutton Company was a major shipper of Sea Island cotton. The company became the largest cotton gin dealer in the Southeast, according to local historian Pam Marlin. Dutton gave back to the Gainesville community through community service, including serving as President of the Board of Directors of the East Florida Seminary.

During the 1890s, the Dutton Company controlled the phosphate industry in North Central Florida, handling half of the entire American phosphate production. Originally a two-story building with second floor space for professional offices, a third level was added in 1888 to serve as a meeting place for the Masons.

The building features semicircular arches at entry level, elaborate plaster cornices, pressed metal ceilings and marble floorings. The Florida Theater was built on the former site of Dutton’s home on University Avenue. The Dutton Bank building is now home to The Bank Bar & Lounge.