

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

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

1. Name

historic Dime Savings and Trust Company

and/or common First Valley Bank

2. Location

street & number 12 N. 7th Street not for publication

city, town Allentown vicinity of Congressional district

state PA code county Lehigh code

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"/> N/A in process | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial |
| | | <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 Allentown Partnership c/o Judith Fellheimer

street & number 1401 Walnut Street

city, town Philadelphia vicinity of state PA 19102

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lehigh County Court

street & number 455 Hamilton Street

city, town Allentown state PA

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 | | Check one | Check one | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site | N/A |
| <input 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

Allentown's commercial center was placed at Seventh and Hamilton Streets, removed from the industrial corridor and the railyards along the Lehigh River. Its intersection is marked by a handsome Beaux Arts Civil War monument that stands in the midst of a public square which is now engulfed in the traffic of a modern city. In that zone are stores, offices, and banks of the central business district. The Dime Savings and Trust Company was erected in 1925 on a salient site where Seventh Street joins the square. That site determines the configuration of the tower: the front lines up with Seventh Street, the side with the northwest edge of the square, while the small south wing marks the turn south of the west side of the square.

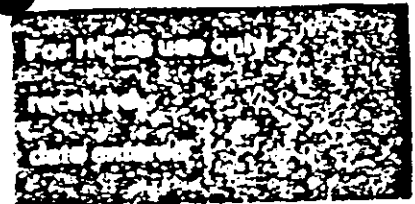
The Dime Savings and Trust Company building is T-shaped in plan with a short wing, containing the main entrance to the building, and the elevator stack, adjacent to the principal block. Though rectangular at the first story, the main block is indented on the north side by a central light well that assured illumination to the offices even had the adjacent properties been more intensively developed. That configuration suggests an awareness of the requirements for light and marks a new level of sophistication in Allentown commercial design.

The facade is developed in a manner that recalls taller buildings from the 1920s in New York and Philadelphia. The base is sheathed in limestone with arcaded openings - two on the Seventh Street facade, and three on the south wall, lighting the banking room, while the entrance opens through a similarly arched opening, facing east. These openings are framed by arches carried on engaged columns between windows and on capitals which serve as imposts on the adjacent wall. The contrast between volume and plane creates one of the interesting points of the design, one which is reiterated in the limestone and brick attic, where blind arches span the piers above the first story arched openings. A classical cornice and balustrade top the limestone facade and sets off the four stories of the office tower.

The office tower is of deep red brick that explores the conventions of New York art deco with expressed continuous piers flanking recessed spandrels and windows. Wider windows and narrower piers in the central bays contrast with narrower windows and wider piers in the corner bays emphasizing the classical mass form of the building. The upper stories are especially startling for, above capital-like limestone blocks, a story high attic is treated as panels of brick wall with broken quoining rising to a slightly stepped top. The effect is compositionally daring, forming a contrasting but similarly-scaled counterpart to the monumental base, while also creating an eye-catching top that serves to attract the eye in the best fashion of commercial Art Deco.

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The question of the actual style of the exterior is resolved by the main banking room. The exterior provides hints of both the then fashionable brick, round-arched medieval style of the Lombard Romanesque, just then being published by Arthur Kingsley Porter, but also a sort of Georgian classicism, especially in the balustrade and the quoined attic. From the raised archivolt framing the arches, the elongated proportions of the windows and decidedly unclassical transition between column and wall plane, the medieval origins of the style seem more likely. That is resolved by the main banking room which shows a number of features derived from Lombard design, most notably the medieval shield forms at the imposts of the blind arcades and the outlined arches of the arcade.

The banking room deserves additional comment as one of the best preserved monumental banking rooms of its day in the Allentown region. The room occupies the full width of the front wing, and extends back beyond the elevator core. At the rear it is spanned by a balcony that marks the full two stories of the room. That balcony is accented by a blind niche framed by engaged piers and consoles. The room itself is surrounded by a deep, dentillated cornice, similar to that of the exterior, which with the arcaded walls completes the sense of a monumental masonry space common to major banks. One final touch of note is the presence of a pair of handsome Art Deco bronze chandeliers with fluted sides that are suspended from the ceiling at each end of the room.

The upper levels are largely without significant detail as the result of a remodelling project in the 1960s. Available documentation and disruption suggest that the offices were of simple design and that no features of significance have been lost.

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 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 1925 **Builder/Architect** Tilghman Moyer and Co.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

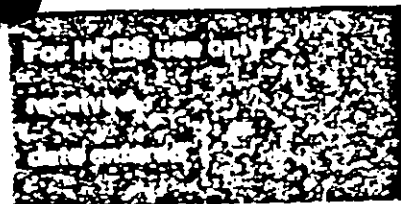
The Dime Savings and Trust building (now the First Valley Bank) on Center Square is the best preserved and most original Art Deco structure in Allentown. It was designed by Tilghman H. Moyer and Company, a regionally important architectural firm that specialized in banks, for a consortium of businessmen headed by the Honorable Fred E. Lewis, the youthful two-term mayor (at 31) of Allentown (1896 - 1904), U.S. Congressman (1912 ---) and again mayor during the Depression. The Dime Savings, though using a name first used in the 1840s, was founded in 1921 as the fifth largest bank in Allentown. By the Depression it had become one of the largest in the city, but it failed by 1932, leaving only its handsome building to recall the financial institutions and businessmen who had formed the Dime Savings and Trust Company. That building survives in remarkably good condition, with the exterior and the banking room intact.

The Dime Savings Bank is an important Art Deco design for Allentown, one that brings the high urban style to a city that in the 1920s was moving into the upper echelon of Pennsylvania's cities. It is noteworthy that the city's principal modern buildings, the Americus Hotel, the Electric Company and the Dime Savings were all erected in the same two year span reflecting that style. Of these, only the Dime Savings was erected from design by a local architect, Tilghman H. Moyer. Moyer's firm was an important regional office that designed banks in Lebanon, (North Side Bank), Doylestown (Bucks County Trust), Kensington, Philadelphia, and Atlantic City (Seaside Trust Company). In these buildings, Moyer explored both the classical and Art Deco styles of the day, and was also responsible for many important houses in the Allentown vicinity. In addition several significant Allentown architects came out of the office, including John K. Heyl, restoration architect, late of Heyl and Treby. Though Moyer's training was as an engineer, Harold Hammond (University of Pennsylvania, 1915), Frederick Steinmetz and Frederick Genther all were trained as architects, presumably it was their efforts that resulted in the handsome Art Deco Dime Savings.

The Dime Savings has added importance as a major creation by one of the city's leading citizens, the Honorable Fred E. Lewis (b.1865). A member of a prominent local family, and a graduate of Muhlenberg College, he was admitted to the Lehigh County Bar in 1888. Shortly afterwards he began a remarkable political career that included terms as mayor at the end of the nineteenth century, and again in the Depression. In his first term, he built the central police and fire station, modernized streets and sewers,

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and improved water service. The History of Lehigh County described him simply as "the best mayor Allentown ever had". His business interests were equally widespread, with the Lehigh Telephone Company, the Merchant's National Bank and the Dime Savings and Trust Building, some of his creations. In addition he served as head of the Allentown Board of Trade. Thus, his position as president of the bank suggests its significance to the community.

Finally, the building is an important urban landmark on the town's Center Square. That square marks the commercial focus of Allentown, with handsome banks, commercial buildings, and offices all around the Civil War monument. As such it forms a principal focus of Allentown's urban core. Its intact high style Art Deco exteriors and interiors form a monument to the confident aspirations of Allentown in the 1920s.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see attached

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property One half

Quadrangle name Allentown East Quad

Quadrangle scale 7.5' series

UMT References

A

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | | | Northing | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | | | Northing | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | | | Northing | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | | | Northing | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | | | Northing | | | | | | |

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | | | Northing | | | | | | |

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|------|--|---------|--|--|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | | Easting | | | | | | Northing | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

Please see attached

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

state Pennsylvania code county Lehigh code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title George E. Thomas, Ph.D.

organization Clio Group, Inc.,

date September 11, 1984

street & number 3961 Baltimore Avenue

telephone (215) 386 6276

city or town Philadelphia,

state PA

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

title _____ date _____

For NPS use only

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

date _____

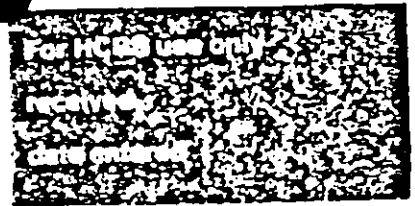
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration

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Charles R. Roberts et al., History of Lehigh County, Pennsylvania, Volume III, (Allentown, Pa, 1914) pp 816-817.

Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide, Volume 40, 42, 21 October 1925.

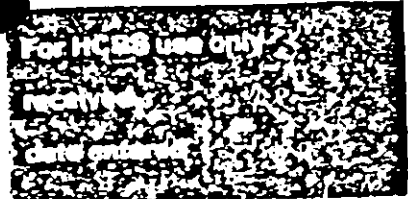
Interview with John K. Heyl, Bar Harbor, ME.

Polk's Allentown City Directory, 1926.

Lehigh County Courthouse, Department of Records.

"Kensington - Security Bank and Trust Company", The Architectural Forum, (January 1934) pp. 45-46.

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Boundary Description

Beginning at the northwest corner of Seventh Street and Centre Square; thence extending northwardly along said Seventh Street thirty (30) feet to property now or late of Mrs C. M. Runk; thence extending westwardly along the same eighty-four (84) feet to a point in line of property now or late of Hottenstein Brothers; thence extending southwardly along the same thirty (30) feet to a corner in line of property now or late of Hottenstein Brothers; thence extending eastwardly along the same fourteen and fifteen one-hundredths (14.15) feet to another corner in line of property now or late of Hottenstein Brothers; and thence extending southwardly along the same eleven and twenty-five one-hundredths (11.25) feet to another corner of the same property; and thence extending eastwardly along the same twenty-nine and eight tenths (29.8) feet to a point on Centre Square; thence extending northwardly along the same eleven and thirty one-hundredths (11.30) feet to the northern side of Centre Square; thence eastwardly along the same forty and five one-hundredths (40.05) feet to the northwest corner of Centre Square and Seventh Street, at the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification

This is the property on which the bank stands.

5865 J. NE
(CEMENTON)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



STATE OF
DEPARTMENT OF
TOPOGRAPHIC AN

