



United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name: Little Kanawha Valley Bank

other name/site number: _____

2. Location

street & number: 5 Howard Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Glenville

vicinity: N/A

state: WV

county: Gilmer

code: 021

zip code: 26351

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related property listing: N/A

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification:
Classical Revival/Neo-Classical Revival

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation concrete roof asphalt
walls metal other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance. x See continuation sheet.

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : B

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1901-1916

Significant Dates : N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
x See continuation sheet.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 1

The Little Kanawha Valley Bank is a simple, rectangular box planned building with a single story. It sits on a low concrete block foundation and has a flat roof.

The facade is located on a short end of the rectangle and includes a large, fixed sash window and a canted entrance bay. The single pane door with a transom stands under the roof's corner. A short flight of concrete steps ascends to the entrance. The long side of the building facing the street includes an even arrangement of five double-hung windows. The rear of the building has two bays of windows and the other long side has none.

Pressed metal covers all four sides of the bank. Underneath the metal, is a diagonal board frame to which the metal is applied. On three walls, the sheet metal is designed to look like blocks of stone. The facade, however, is a smooth metal with pilasters flanking the window and door. These pilasters are fluted and have egg and dart capitals.

A broad entablature is a false extension of the roofline that surrounds three sides of the building. The ceiling only rises to the base of the entablature so the roofline is actually lower than it appears to be on the exterior. The rear of the building is the only place where the false front is revealed. The entablature includes simple classical detail that defines the building's character. The dentil cornice extends along all three sides. The frieze is blank on the front but displays the bank's name using applied letters. The frieze on the side has an Adamesque swag that extends the length of the side.

The Little Kanawha Valley Bank's interior consists of two rooms. The main room occupies roughly two-thirds of the plan. Originally a tellers' cage divided this room but since its removal, the space is completely open. Two horizontal panelled doors open into the back room. Located here were the banker's office and the safe. A small bathroom with partition walls has been incorporated into this room. Tongue and groove horizontal panelling covers the interior walls of both rooms and plywood has replaced the original hard wood floors.

Very few alterations have changed the appearance of the bank's turn-of-the-century appearance. Inside and out, the original materials and spaces have been left intact. The only noticeable alterations are the added bath and the new floor. Other than this, the building only suffers slightly from disrepair which can be attributed to its age rather than lack of maintenance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

The Little Kanawha Valley Bank received its charter in 1901 and its building was built during the same year. In 1906, this institution merged with the First National Bank, together forming the Kanawha Union Bank. The Kanawha Union bank continued to operate in the Little Kanawha Valley Bank building until 1916 when it outgrew the small facility. The building has served various functions since that time and was moved three times but is now situated on a lot roughly a block from its original location.

The Little Kanawha Valley Bank is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion C in the area of architecture. It is architecturally significant for its pressed metal material and for its use of classical detail. Pressed metal was a popular building material during the early twentieth century and was probably used widely in West Virginia. The low cost of the material allowed the bank to imitate the impressive classical fronts of larger, urban financial institutions. Currently it is one of two pressed metal buildings in Glenville. It will soon be the only one because the other metal building is being remodeled and stripped of its metal. The bank is perhaps the only structure in the entire county that has a pressed metal front with classical detail.

The bank's sheet metal exterior is its most notable characteristic. Since the 18th century, American buildings have displayed ornamentation in a variety of metals. Very little of this decorative metal, however, appeared on typical houses. It was instead reserved for grand houses and large commercial and religious buildings. Technological developments after 1800 led to a greater variety of metals available at a lower cost. Pressed metal provided ornamentation for a relatively low price. It was easy to order through manufacturers' catalogues and was simple to install. Some critics argued that sheet metal elements were nothing but imitations of those fashioned from other materials. The metal's low cost, high quality, and availability guaranteed a ready market, however, and the material became commonplace across the country. One manufacturer, the George L. Mesker Company of Evansville, Indiana, sold hundreds of pressed-metal fronts during the end of the 19th century at the peak of catalogue trade. These facades were made of components which could be combined in a variety of ways allowing variation upon the styles illustrated in the catalogues.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Because of sheet metal's availability and low cost, modest buildings like the Little Kanawha Valley Bank could add ornamentation that otherwise would have been impossible. Classical architectural styles proved to be the most popular style for large banks across the county. It added an appearance of stability and strength to those institutions. A cut stone, marble, or even concrete classical structure would have been impractical for a small bank. An inexpensive and durable material like metal, however, allowed smaller organizations to have the same detail without the expense. The Little Kanawha Valley Bank took advantage of this material which gave it the classical detail of the monumental banks but on a smaller scale.

Sheet metal was a ubiquitous material but became less popular after the 1930's. Many buildings that had been covered with metal were stripped of it, allowing the frame structure below to be exposed. The use of metal is currently becoming more popular but those that were originally covered with the material during the turn-of-the-century are few. Although the Little Kanawha Valley Bank has been moved, it still retains its original sheet metal exterior and stands as it appeared in 1901.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

- Chase, David, and Carolyn Laray. Sheet Metal Craftsmanship: Progress in Building. Washington, D.C.: National Building Museum, 1988.
- Gayle, Margot, David W. Look, and John G. Waite. Metals in America's Historic Buildings. Uses and Preservation Treatments. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Technical Preservation Services Division, 1980.
- Kahn, Eve M. "Architectural Metalwork". Traditional Building. Nov./Dec. 1989.
- SHPO - survey and technical services files.
- Wells, Nelson. "Little Kanawha Valley Bank Renovation". The West Virginia State Folk Festival, p. 6.
- Young, Bayard. "Glenville as it Was...As it Is". The Parkersburg News, July 10, 1977, p. 56.
- site visit and conversation with Nelson Wells and Women's Club members, April 30, 1991.