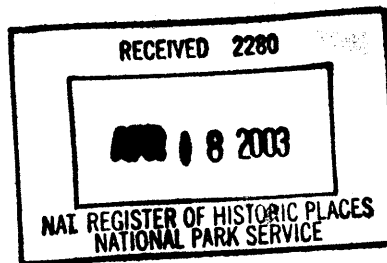


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United States Department of Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Mead Bank
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number	215 Jefferson Street	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Waupaca	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Waupaca	code 135 zip code 54981

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets _ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _ nationally statewide locally. (_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Alvin T. Cole
Signature of certifying official/Title
Apr. 12, 2003
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _ meets _ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Mead Bank
Name of Property

Waupaca
County and State

Wisconsin

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register.
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined eligible for the National Register.
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined not eligible for the National Register.
___ See continuation sheet.
___ removed from the National Register.
___ other, (explain):

Ethan H. Beall

5/30/03

for
Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as
as apply)

private
___ public-local
___ public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

building(s)
___ district
___ structure
___ site
___ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources
in the count)

contributing	noncontributing
1	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	0 total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property
listing.)
N/A

**Number of contributing resources
is previously listed in the National Register**
0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)
VACANT/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)
MID-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)
Foundation stone

walls weatherboard

roof asphalt
other wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1 Mead Bank
Waupaca, Waupaca County, WI

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Mead Bank is a one-story, Greek Revival-style, commercial building built in 1862 that sits in a mixed commercial area of Waupaca, a small city in central Wisconsin. The building is located on a small lot at the north end of Jefferson Street. The north end of Jefferson Street runs through the east edge of Waupaca's downtown, one block east of the city's most important historic commercial street, Main Street. It is perpendicular to East Union and East Fulton streets, short blocks that connect Jefferson Street to Main Street in the heart of the city's downtown.

The 200 block of Jefferson Street developed as an extension of the city's historic downtown commercial district primarily during the early twentieth century. At this time, new buildings were erected for machine shops, automobile dealerships, and other retail businesses in this area of downtown. The Mead Bank was moved to this location around 1900, just before much of this development took place. It was originally located just around the corner on East Union Street, about one-half of a block away. It was moved to make room on East Union Street for the construction of a larger building.

The topography of the 200 block of Jefferson Street is flat and the street is wide with parallel parking on both sides of the street. There are no terraces and most of the buildings sit close to the sidewalk, similar to the buildings along Main Street. However, unlike Main Street, the buildings in this part of the downtown are generally not attached to one another with party walls. In fact, along the 200 block, the buildings are separated by large spaces. Jefferson Street is improved with concrete curbs, gutters and sidewalks. Streetlights are attached to large wooden poles that carry electrical wires.

There is little landscaping along this part of Jefferson Street. On the north and east elevations of the Mead Bank there are small areas of lawn space. To the south of the bank is a large paved parking lot for the automobiles of the neighboring automobile dealership.

Exterior

The Mead Bank is a one-story, frame, commercial building that has a rectangular plan and Greek Revival details. The building consists of a main block with a small rear addition. The main block has a low-pitched gable roof that is decorated under the eaves with a wide wooden frieze. The eaves are returned on the east wall of the main block and become a full pediment on the main or west elevation. The rear addition is slightly lower than the main block and its gable roof is not decorated with a frieze. The entire building sits on a very low rubble-stone foundation that

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Section 7 Page 2 Mead Bank
Waupaca, Waupaca County, WI

has been stuccoed under the rear extension. The main block is covered with clapboards, while the rear addition is clad with shiplap wood siding.

Most of the details of this building occur on the main elevation. Above the storefront is a large full pediment filled with clapboard siding. The storefront is made up of two large show windows flanking a recessed entrance. The show windows are each made up of four large glass panes. The north window sits on a paneled base, while the south window sits on a plain wood base because its decorative panel has been replaced. Because the entrance is recessed from the windows, the show windows appear as bays and on each interior side there are narrow openings, each filled with two panes of glass. At the corners of the storefront, flanking each show window, are wood pilasters. The pilasters have simplified Doric capitals that wrap around the corner of the building.

The recessed entrance consists of two narrow doors. The doors have bases decorated with recessed panels and two large glass panes each, a smaller pane on top of a larger pane. There are very narrow sidelights flanking the entrance, but the openings have been enclosed. The transom has also been enclosed with a wood panel. A sign indicating that this building is the "Mead Bank" and giving the date of "1882" (when the original owner, a banker, was murdered in the building) sits over the transom.

The south elevation of the building has undecorated walls on both the main block and the rear ell. Two openings punctuate the south wall of the main block. They are filled with a period four-light double-hung sash and a single-light double-hung sash. Both windows have simple cornice moldings. The rear or east elevation, consisting of the rear wall of the ell, is also undecorated, and at the northeast corner, there is a simple four-panel wood entry door. The north elevation walls of the main block and the rear ell are undecorated and have no windows except for a small rectangular opening at the far east end of the main block wall. This opening corresponds to a later-added bathroom opening in the interior.

According to local historic sources, this building suffered fire damage some time around 1870. It may be at this time when the storefront was remodeled. It is also possible that the new storefront was added in the 1880s, when the building changed use. According to the Sanborn maps, the building was used as a meat market in 1885 and was a millinery in 1895. The window size, moldings and trim are consistent with the period of the 1880s. The basic form and Greek Revival details of the building appear to be from its original construction date, but the storefront suggests a later period when larger show windows were popular and more affordable. In any event, the exterior of the building has a historic appearance, with twentieth century remodeling confined to the interior.

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Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 3 Mead Bank
Waupaca, Waupaca County, WI

Interior

The interior of the building consists of three rooms; two rooms in the main block, and a room in the rear addition at the back of the building. All of the rooms have had some twentieth century remodeling, but many of the historic features of the interior are extant and most are probably extant under some of the modern materials.

The first room behind the main entrance is the larger of the two rooms of the main block. At the west end of this room is the storefront, with its show windows and main entrance. The walls and ceiling of this room have plaster surfaces, but about 80 percent of the surfaces are covered with "peg" board. This covering dates from the building's twentieth century use as a parts department for the neighboring automobile dealership. The holes of the peg board allowed for hooks that held automobile parts. The floor of this room has a mid-twentieth century covering of composition tiles. In this room, the moldings around the window in the south wall have been covered with the peg board, but the simple moldings around the entry doors and around the door that leads into the second room of the main block are exposed.

The back room of the main block has identical details, except a period oak floor is exposed. Within the northeast corner of this room is an early twentieth century toilet enclosure. This enclosure is made up of dark finished wood paneling and has a two-panel early twentieth century door. The period toilet sits inside of this enclosure, and a period sink is attached to the exterior wall. At the back of this room is a painted four-panel door decorated with a simple molding and a transom. This door leads into the rear ell. All of the historic surfaces of the small room of the rear ell have been entirely covered with mid-twentieth century wood paneling and plywood.

The interior of this building is only in fair condition. It has been used for storage for a number of years after being used as a parts department for the neighboring automobile dealership. The exterior of the building is in good condition.

Mead Bank
Name of Property

Waupaca
County and State

Wisconsin

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1862-1882

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 4 Mead Bank
Waupaca, Waupaca County, WI

SIGNIFICANCE ¹

The Mead Bank is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C. It is being nominated for local contribution to the commercial history and development of Waupaca. It was built in 1862 for the city's first bank, a long-time private bank that served the community during its formative years.

The building is also being nominated to the National Register for its architectural significance as a fine example of a modest Greek Revival-influenced commercial building. Historic photographs show that this type of small, frame-constructed, commercial building was pervasive in Waupaca's downtown during the community's pioneer era. All of these early buildings were razed or destroyed by fire during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and replaced by brick blocks. Only this building and a nearby law office that housed the city's most important law firm have remained from this era. The Mead Bank has a high level of integrity and well represents the era of frame commercial buildings in Waupaca.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The city of Waupaca is located near a chain of interconnected lakes about five miles in length. According to historical sources, Native Americans were attracted to these lakes and numerous prehistoric mounds and archeological sites have been identified in the Waupaca area. The city is located in one of the state's most picturesque areas, but it was a water power source that drew the early white settlers to form a community at this location. A group of five men from Vermont, among them E. C. Sessions and William and Joseph Hibbard, came to the area in 1849 and made land claims between that year and 1852. The land claims were formalized in 1853 and more settlers began to come after that time.²

In 1853, the county board established the county seat at Waupaca, and after attempts to move it elsewhere, the county seat was permanently set at Waupaca in 1855. A courthouse was built in

¹ This footnote pertains to the period of significance and significant dates on page one of Section 8. The period of significance for this building includes the date of construction, the date of possible reconstruction after a fire, and ends with the date the building ceased to be a bank. These dates were selected based on historic tax assessment rolls and other historic sources.

² Carol Lohry Cartwright, *City of Waupaca, Wisconsin Intensive Survey Report Architectural and Historical Survey*, Waupaca: Waupaca Historic Preservation Commission, 1999, p. 7.

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Waupaca, Waupaca County, WI

Waupaca in that year on the square block of public land in downtown Waupaca that was established in the land sale of 1853. During the 1850s, the downtown commercial district of the city grew up around the courthouse, primarily in small frame buildings housing general stores and small shops that made goods such as shoes, harnesses, furniture, wagons, and agricultural implements.³

By 1857, Waupaca was incorporated as a village and important public advancements were made during the 1860s, such as the construction of a new public school building and the establishment of a cemetery. In 1860, the Masons formed the first fraternal group in Waupaca, and during the 1850s and 1860s, citizens established Baptist, Episcopal, and Methodist churches. Industry in Waupaca during this period revolved around grist milling, lumber milling, and small industrial shops. The coming of the railroad in 1871 would help boost the city's commerce and industry.⁴

After the city was incorporated in 1875, the economy had tremendous growth. Most of the city's early frame commercial buildings in the downtown were demolished or destroyed by fire during this period and were replaced with two and three-story brick blocks. The growth of the city's downtown reflected the growth of retailing in Waupaca, but overall, the city's commercial economy was dominated by the potato trade of the late nineteenth century. Local farmers had good luck growing potatoes and eventually potato traders developed a larger market for potato growers. By the 1880s, dealing in potatoes was the most important commercial activity in the city and potato warehouses sprang up along the rail lines of the city. By the turn of the twentieth century, Waupaca was the leading potato shipping center in the country.⁵

During the early twentieth century, the city's downtown commercial district expanded both in buildings and in types of modern stores, including department stores. Industry was still dominated by the lumber mills and granite quarries and the city had slow and steady growth. The Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II in the 1940s put a hold on most of the economic growth and development in the city other than war-related production. After World War II, the lumber industry was in decline, but a new industry soon took over as an anchor for the city's industrial economy. During the 1950s and 1960s, the Waupaca Foundry expanded to fill in an entire 13-acre site where an old lumber mill had stood. The Waupaca Foundry continued to expand during the late twentieth century and today employs almost 2,000 people in several casting plants at two large sites in the city. The foundry was joined by smaller industries, such as a manufactured housing company, a potato chip factory, and a knitting mill.⁶

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-14.

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Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6 Mead Bank
Waupaca, Waupaca County, WI

While the city's industrial base grew and developed after World War II, the city's commercial base changed dramatically. In the 1960s and 1970s, the downtown business district, although still important, was losing business to nearby communities with modern shopping malls and large discount stores. By the 1980s, many of the traditional businesses in downtown Waupaca were replaced by specialty retailing and a new shopping area had emerged on the city's west side.⁷

Site-Specific Background

This building was constructed in 1862 for Henry C. Mead's private bank, the first banking house located in Waupaca. It originally sat on the corner of East Union and Jefferson streets, less than a block away from its current location. East Union Street runs west into South Main Street, the major commercial street in the city. During the mid-nineteenth century, East Union Street had frame commercial buildings that have all been replaced with historic brick blocks and a modern bank building. Historic lore suggests that a fire around 1870 caused the building to be rebuilt, but no direct evidence exists to prove this or to pinpoint the exact date it may have occurred. In any event, it appears that a later nineteenth century storefront was added to the building some time prior to its relocation this site around 1900, probably in the 1880s.⁸

Henry C. Mead, the early banker who constructed this building, was thought to be an eccentric man because he lived alone and had few friends, was exacting in his monetary dealings to the point of being "miserly," and worked late at night, often sleeping in the back of his bank building. On October 8, 1882, he failed to appear for his usual meals at a neighboring hotel. When an employee of the hotel checked the bank, she found Mead dead in the back of the building and his office ransacked.⁹

It was assumed that money was the motive for the murder because several thousand dollars was taken. But, another \$1,800 was left in the bank and some notes and bank papers were also stolen. Notes and papers were later found in a nearby alley. At the time, Waupaca only had a rudimentary police force and detectives from Chicago were hired to investigate. They arrested a non-resident who was seen in town the day of the murder and may have come into some money. However, the evidence was highly circumstantial, and the trial resulted in a hung jury.¹⁰

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 49; Sanborn-Perris Maps for the City of Waupaca, on file in the Archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

⁹ Cartwright, p. 49.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

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Section 8 Page 7 Mead Bank
Waupaca, Waupaca County, WI

For years, rumors swirled about the Mead murder, including rumors that it had been the work of local men who were known to have lived a "wild life" during the early 1880s. Since some of these men became prominent in the community, the rumors took on even more significance. In 1892, 10 years after the crime, Judge Charles Webb called together a grand jury to try to put an end to the speculation and solve the case. The prosecutor concentrated on a group of people with Waupaca ties as prime suspects, and eventually, three former residents of the city were charged as principals and seven others as accessories before and after the fact. The principals were tried, but again acquitted. One of these men was later tried for perjury and went to prison, where he soon died.¹¹

The grand jury and subsequent trials were supposed to put an end to the Mead murder speculation, but because the proceedings never revealed what actually happened, the case continued to fascinate the public. One of the most popular theories of the case persisted through the twentieth century. This theory speculates that several young Waupaca men hatched a plot to steal money and papers from Mead, papers that might have involved one of the participants. The plan was to knock out Mead, steal the money and papers, then flee. Because of the type of wounds and the placement of blood and the body in the bank building, this theory conjectured that Mead was hit on the head while sitting at his desk, but revived and saw the robbers. Recognizing the men, he was shot to protect their identities. Speculation about the identity of one of the robbers became local legend because he was a prominent businessman. Although one of the participants supposedly confessed to the local sheriff on his deathbed, no transcript of the confession exists and the truth of the murder has never been revealed. But, it still fascinates the public today.¹²

After Mead's death, the building was used for a variety of purposes: a meat market, an egg storage facility and a millinery. Around 1900, the Mead Bank was moved for the construction of a new building on the site. It probably would have been torn down if not for the fact that it was the location of a notorious murder. The building was moved to its current location and has been maintained in a relatively historic condition, especially on the exterior, for 100 years. The automobile dealership next door used it and it is still owned by this business today.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: ARCHITECTURE

The Mead Bank is locally architecturally significant as a good example of a vernacular front gabled commercial building with Greek Revival inspired details that was constructed during the

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

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Waupaca, Waupaca County, WI

city's pioneer era. At one time, Waupaca's downtown was filled with similar buildings that housed the early businesses of the community. But, these buildings were either razed for larger structures or burned. This type of development is typical of most Wisconsin communities, as early frame commercial buildings gave way to large brick blocks in downtown commercial districts. It is unusual for pioneer-era frame buildings with much of their historic appearance to still be extant.

The Greek Revival style of architecture was the first national style commonly seen in Wisconsin. It was popular between 1830 and 1870. Greek Revival buildings are formal, orderly, and symmetrical. Although most Greek Revival style buildings are of frame construction, the style also adorned brick, fieldstone, and quarried stone buildings. In Wisconsin, the Greek Revival style was primarily interpreted on simple houses in the form of symmetrical massing, regular fenestration, simple cornices, friezes, returned eaves, corner pilasters, and entrances decorated with a transom and/or sidelights. Greek Revival commercial buildings are rare, but also feature many of the same details. Historic photographs of large Greek Revival commercial buildings show that they had similar details, but on a larger scale. Small commercial Greek Revival buildings usually feature simple details like returned eaves and pilasters.¹³

Waupaca is unusual in that it has two fine examples of pioneer-era Greek Revival commercial buildings. One is the Browne Law Office, located near the Mead Bank. It is also of frame construction with clapboard siding and has a full pediment supported by tall, square posts. Because of its architectural and historical significance, it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and is a local landmark.

The Mead Bank is of equal architectural significance to the Browne Law Office. It, too, has good, intact, Greek Revival inspired details, including a full pediment, corner pilasters, and symmetrical form and massing. What is of particular interest in the Mead Bank is that it also shows how many of these pioneer-era buildings were changed to reflect retailing at the turn of the twentieth century. The addition of the later storefront illustrates how original storefronts in small pioneer buildings were often changed and/or enlarged. It also illustrates the use of early show windows that were often divided because large panes of glass were still expensive or unavailable.

There are only a few downtown storefronts in Waupaca that have original or historic storefronts. Those that do, have storefronts that are large and generally feature single-pane show windows

¹³Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management Plan in Wisconsin, Vol. II*, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Architecture, p. 2-3.

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with transoms. The Mead Bank's storefront is unusual due to the divided show windows and the overall small size of the storefront.

Adding to the architectural significance of the Mead Bank is its high level of integrity: Almost all of its historic exterior features are extant. The enclosed sidelights and transom of the main entrance are only minor alterations. In particular, the period show windows are intact, along with the historic entry doors, themselves, and these features are among the most important of the building. The interior has had some loss of integrity, but this is primarily due to the covering up of historic details. It is likely that most of these details are still extant under the modern wall and floor surfaces. Specifically, the peg board and paneled wall surfaces, the plywood floor and ceiling surfaces, and the composition tile flooring appear to only cover up the old surfaces. If these newer materials were removed, it is likely that original details would be revealed. Also, the original doors and most of their trim are extant, along with the period windows of the south elevation. So, overall, the integrity of the building is good and clearly reflects the historic appearance of the building.

The Mead Bank is architecturally significant and eligible for the National Register because it is a good example of a pioneer-era commercial building with Greek Revival influenced details that is still extant in downtown Waupaca. It also significant because its storefront is unusual in downtown Waupaca for its size and its composition. It is not the large plate-glass storefront commonly seen on the brick blocks of the downtown, but a smaller version with historic glazing that is not common in Waupaca or elsewhere. The building is an important artifact from the mid- to late nineteenth century that can tell us a lot about this period of commercial building construction in Wisconsin.

AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE: COMMERCE

Financial Institutions

In 1837, most of southern Wisconsin was offered for sale to white settlers after the Black Hawk War ended the last Native American attempts to reclaim their old lands in Wisconsin. This period coincided with an economic depression in the United States that was closely tied to problems with banking and currency policy at the national level. During the 1830s, President Andrew Jackson was enmeshed in a long-term power struggle with the powerful Bank of the United States that resulted in the national bank tightening its credit policies. At the same time, state-chartered banks issued their own paper currency that drove inflation. The combination of tight credit and almost worthless paper money being used for rampant land speculation in new

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territories like Wisconsin, along with a general over-expansion of the economy, resulted in an economic depression that began in 1837.¹⁴

In Wisconsin in 1837, four banks had territorial charters to operate in Green Bay, Milwaukee, Dubuque, and Mineral Point and they were given the ability not just to loan money, but to issue their own currency. After the national depression began, each of these banks fell under suspicion as to their solvency, and one-by-one, each bank was closed, primarily because they had over-extended their cash flow in proportion to their hard currency reserves. But, in one case, in Mineral Point, the bank had engaged in outright fraud. The result of these bank failures and the general failure of banks throughout the country was that there was the scarcity of hard currency and even reliable bank notes fluctuated wildly in their value. This situation left the earliest pioneers with little financial backing and a strong distrust for banks.¹⁵

During the early 1840s, attempts were made to re-establish some banking facilities in the Wisconsin territory, but the uncertain economy and territorial political wrangling doomed these attempts, and the continued disagreement over a national bank in Washington did not help the economic growth of the territory. The uncertain and disjointed banking system in the country extended the tight money supply in the territories and the distrust for banks and bankers grew, as well.¹⁶

Things did not change in Wisconsin during its early years of statehood. In fact, there were no commercial banks in the new state for the first five years, since the state constitution prohibited banks unless approved by referendum. The lack of banking facilities resulted in a shortage of currency and few opportunities for both businessmen and the general public to engage in important banking functions such as receiving loans, establishing savings deposits, transferring funds, or exchanging currencies. Individual citizens with the means sometimes engaged in the loan business, but even with these private "banks," there was not enough credit available or currency available to meet the needs of the people in the new state. So, in 1851 and 1852, voters overwhelmingly approved banking referendums and the state established the regulations for this industry. By 1859, the state had 108 state chartered banks.¹⁷

¹⁴ Alice E. Smith, *The History of Wisconsin Vol. I: From Exploration to Statehood*, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1985, pp. 273-278.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 278-294.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 294-306.

¹⁷ Richard N. Current, *The History of Wisconsin Vol. II: The Civil War Era, 1848-1873*, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976, pp. 104-106.

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But, just as the banking industry was getting underway in Wisconsin, the financial panic and economic depression of 1857 hit. During the three years this depression effected Wisconsin, some banks had to suspend business and the ones that remained in business cut back on their loans and issuance of bank notes. Again, there was a scarce supply of hard currency and reliable bank notes. And, just as the country was recovering from this depression, the secession of the southern states caused another brief depression. In Wisconsin, though, its effects were short-lived. As the largest wheat producer in the country at the time, the state's economy boomed.¹⁸

The booming economy of the Civil War years in Wisconsin did not bring better financial services. At the start of the Civil War, money and credit were still tight in the state despite its wheat boom. In 1862, the situation was somewhat alleviated when the federal government began to issue its "greenbacks," a national bank note. And, in 1863 and 1864, national banking legislation passed, but few Wisconsin banks could meet the national criteria. So, just as it had been during the 1840s, 1850s, and early 1860s, during the later 1860s, Wisconsin still suffered from tight credit and a shortage of both hard and reliable currency. The situation was made worse because Wisconsin was one of a number of states in the south and west that did not get their fair share of national bank charters and national currency.¹⁹

State banks experienced a revival after 1870, expanding loans and establishing checking accounts to help businesses. Yet, the need for bank credit far exceeded the supply and state businessmen complained loudly about the inadequate money supply. Even during the early industrial boom years in Wisconsin during the late 1870s, banking in the state was conservative and banks remained tight with credit. Banks were seen as having a limited role in business, providing day-to-day commercial services and small, short-term loans. Most industrialists received their initial capital from their own pockets or the pockets of investors.²⁰

It was in this context that the Mead Bank operated in Waupaca. When the Mead Bank was founded in 1862, Waupaca was still much of a frontier community. As indicated above, even in more settled areas of Wisconsin, banking was a primitive service during this time. Capital was hard to come by and was often acquired from private sources. Because banks, even in larger cities, could not provide the financial services many people needed, private bankers stepped in to close the gap. These private bankers were, in many communities, the only source of financial services until the banking industry matured in the late nineteenth century.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 237-238; 374.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 375-376; 452-453.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 452-453; Robert C. Nesbit, *The History of Wisconsin Vol. III: Urbanization and Industrialization, 1873-1893*, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1985, p. 160.

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Section 8 Page 12 Mead Bank
Waupaca, Waupaca County, WI

The Mead Bank operated during a time when private banks were often the only source of capital and banking services. When Mead was murdered in 1882, the growth of state and national banks was just beginning in Wisconsin, although the first chartered bank in Waupaca did not arrive until 1890. During its time of operation, 1862-1882, the Mead Bank served a vital and significant historic function in Waupaca, providing banking services to the community at a time when there were very few other options available. Therefore, the Mead Bank is historically significant for its role as an important pioneer financial institution typical of the banking services available during that time.

The Mead Bank is locally historically significant for its association with the growth and development of banking in Waupaca, one of the city's most important downtown commercial functions during the historic period. The most important commercial activities in Waupaca during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were financial services, professional services, hotels, and retailing. Of these activities, one of the most important was banking. Local financial institutions were important to the development of Waupaca because they provided the capital that was a catalyst for the city's growth and development. Historically, Waupaca's banks were all located in the downtown commercial district, and today, most of the city's banks are still located in modern facilities downtown.

Early Wisconsin banks were often private banks, operated by a single individual or a group of individuals without a charter from the state or national government. The Mead Bank was such an institution. Henry C. Mead was from New York State. He came to Waupaca in 1858 and established his Exchange and Savings Bank in 1862. He conducted a general banking business, including a savings department. Mead was a successful banker and his bank may have eventually been converted to a state or national bank had it not been for his unfortunate murder in 1882. After his murder, there was no evidence to suggest that his bank was financially unstable, and its demise resulted in a banking void for several years in Waupaca.²¹

The Mead Bank building is historically significant because it housed the most important financial institution in Waupaca for 20 years, during the city's formative pioneer era. Only one other banking institution was established during the mid-nineteenth century in Waupaca: Evan Coolidge's private bank, formed in 1870. Coolidge's bank claimed to be a general bank, but Coolidge also did insurance underwriting and this bank had no savings department. Coolidge's bank failed in 1890 and its historic location has not been identified; it was probably located in a

²¹ Cartwright, pp. 48-49.

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Section 8 Page 13 Mead Bank
Waupaca, Waupaca County, WI

frame building that was demolished. The most important early bank that developed in Waupaca after Mead's bank was R. N. Roberts' City Bank, which later acquired a national charter and was one of the founding banks of the First National Bank, still operating today.²²

Because the Mead Bank was the first full-service bank that operated in Waupaca, and was the most important bank during the mid- to late nineteenth century, it is historically significant. It was the financial institution that had the most prominent role in the economic development of the city during its formative years. From the amount of money and the many notes and papers that were taken during the robbery-murder of Henry C. Mead in 1882, the Mead Bank was engaged in considerable activity, particularly in the area of loans. This activity suggests that Mead's bank was an important component in the economy of the early city. The Mead Bank building is the only building that is extant that reflects the earliest history of financial services in the city. For these reasons, it is a landmark and eligible for the National Register.

CRITERIA CONSIDERATION B

Ordinarily, buildings that have been moved are not eligible for the National Register. But, under criteria consideration B, these buildings can be listed if they are architecturally significant, or when the building is the most important resource associated with a historic person or event. All of these apply in the case of the Mead Bank. It is architecturally significant because of its Greek Revival style and historic storefront. It is the only resource associated with Henry Mead's bank. The Mead Bank is also the most important resource associated with early banking in Waupaca, a significant commercial event in the city. The building is located only a short distance from its original location and it is sited in a manner that is appropriately related to its previous site and function. The building was moved around 1900, and it continued to be used for commercial purposes until recent years.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

Mead Bank
Name of Property

Waupaca
County and State

Wisconsin

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 333980 4913580
 Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
 Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
 Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
 Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Carol Lohry Cartwright, Consultant	date	10/1/2001
organization	for Waupaca Historic Preservation Commission	telephone	262-473-6820
street & number	W7646 Hackett Rd.	zip code	53190
city or town	Whitewater	state	WI

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Section 9 Page 14 Mead Bank
Waupaca, Waupaca County, WI

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Cartwright, Carol Lohry. *City of Waupaca, Wisconsin Intensive Survey Report Architectural and Historical Survey*. Waupaca: City of Waupaca, 1999.

Sanborn-Perris Maps for the City of Waupaca. On file in the Archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

Tax Rolls for the City of Waupaca, On file in the Library of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

Wyatt, Barbara ed. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986.

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Waupaca, Waupaca County, WI

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The site is a generally rectangular parcel that corresponds to its legal boundary description:
South 56 feet of the West 61 feet of lot 2, Block P, Original Plat.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of this property has been its historic site since it was moved to this location around 1900.

Mead Bank
Name of Property

Waupaca
County and State

Wisconsin

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title	Raynetta Stiebs	date	10/1/2001
organization		telephone	
street&number	1109 Royalton Street	city or town	Waupaca
city or town	Waupaca	state	WI
		zip code	54981

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section photos Page 1 Mead Bank
Waupaca, Waupaca County, WI

MEAD BANK, Waupaca, Waupaca County, Wisconsin. Photos by Carol Cartwright, June 2001. Negatives on file in the Historic Preservation Division of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

Views:

- 1 of 7: Site view, from the northwest.
- 2 of 7: Main elevation, from the west.
- 3 of 7: Close-up of main elevation.
- 4 of 7: Rear or east elevation.
- 5 of 7: Interior, front room of main block.
- 6 of 7: Interior, front room of main block, looking toward second room of main block.
- 7 of 7: Second room of main block, looking at door leading into rear addition.