United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM  

1. NAME OF PROPERTY  

HISTORIC NAME: People's National Bank Building  
OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER: Tyler Town Centre  

2. LOCATION  

STREET & NUMBER: 102 N. College Avenue  
CITY OR TOWN: Tyler  
STATE: Texas  
CODE: TX  
COUNTY: Smith  
CODE: 423  
ZIP CODE: 75702  

3. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION  

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this (x 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 (x meets) (__ does not meet) the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant (x nationally) (__ statewide) (__ locally). (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  

Signature of certifying official  
State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau  

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

Signature of commenting or other official  
State or Federal agency and bureau  

4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION  

I hereby certify that this property is:  

(x) entered in the National Register  
( ) determined eligible for the National Register  
( ) determined not eligible for the National Register  
( ) removed from the National Register  
( ) other (explain):  

Signature of the Keeper  
Date of Action  

Edson R. Beall  
8/22/02
5. CLASSIFICATION

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY: private

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY: building

NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY: 1

CONTRIBUTING

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0 TOTAL

NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER: 0

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING: Historical and Architectural Resources of Tyler, Smith County, Texas

6. FUNCTION OR USE

HISTORIC FUNCTIONS: Commerce: Financial Institution = bank

CURRENT FUNCTIONS: Commerce: Business = office building

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Modern Movement: Art Deco

MATERIALS: FOUNDATION BRICK, CONCRETE
WALLS BRICK, CAST STONE, STONE: limestone
ROOF ASPHALT
OTHER GLASS, CONCRETE, METAL, WOOD

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-7).
Built in 1932, the People’s National Bank Building is a landmark in downtown Tyler and is one of two outstanding Art Deco office buildings in the city. The People’s National Bank Building is a 15-story, two-part vertical block constructed by the prominent Tyler contracting firm of Campbell & White from plans drawn by renowned Houston architect Alfred C. Finn, and financed by Samuel A. Lindsey, one of Tyler’s most influential businessmen. In 1936, the building was enlarged with a rear six-story section fully integrated and compatible with Finn’s original design. Located in the heart of Tyler’s central business district on the west side of the courthouse square, the buff brick building occupies a highly visible corner at North College Avenue and West Erwin Street. The building’s design incorporates a symmetrical facade on College Avenue, its primary elevation, and an asymmetrical one on the other three elevations. Clad in buff brick and polished black granite, the building features stepped massing, symmetrical fenestration patterns, and a formal entry with fluted detailing. The street level facades are finished in polished, fluted black granite, which frame the plate glass windows on College and Erwin. Inside, the building has been altered little, and retains its original marble and limestone lobby, grand Art Deco banking room, elevators, staircases, and interior walls and floor finishes. Modifications were made in 1969 to the windows to accommodate air conditioning and the original metal casement windows were replaced with fixed pane glass within the original openings; black glass was fitted over the original sills and spandrels. Street level metal frame windows and doors also were replaced with aluminum and plate glass. All window changes could be restored. The building originally housed the People’s National Bank on the mezzanine, retail stores, newspaper and other offices on the first floor and offices for oil industry firms, insurance, engineers, physicians and attorneys on the upper floors. Today, the building continues to provide professional office space, although the bank has relocated. Despite window and door modifications, which are the building’s only exterior alteration, the People’s National Bank Building is preserved in excellent condition, retaining its architectural and historic integrity to a high degree.

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

The People’s National Bank Building is in the heart of downtown Tyler on the west side of the courthouse square. Sited on the northwest corner of North College Avenue and West Erwin Street, and fronting onto North College, the building’s vertical, stepped massing, symmetrical facade and polished black granite street level treatment is a prominent visual presence in downtown Tyler. Surrounding the building are a mix of one-to 10-story commercial, public and religious buildings; scattered parking lots are to the west. The remainder of the block containing the People’s National Bank Building was redeveloped in the 1980s with a multi-story black glass office building and bank. In the immediate area, only the 1929 Jenkins-Harvey Super Service Station and Garage at Elm and College, the 1904 Carnegie Library (NR 1978) also at Elm and College and the 1890 Marvin Methodist Church (NR 2000) at Erwin and Bois D’Arc retain their historic integrity. The remaining surrounding development reflects construction or major exterior remodeling of primary facades in the post 1951-period. The People’s National Bank Building remains an important landmark and, indeed, its visual prominence is enhanced by the alteration of the surrounding area. The focal point of the current square is the 1956 courthouse, located on the east side of Broadway, and the hardscaped park west of Broadway. Further changing the historic character of the square is the 1980s redevelopment of all of one block and portions of another facing the square and extensive on-going alterations to most 19th and early 20th century buildings fronting the square.
THE PEOPLE’S NATIONAL BANK BUILDING

The People’s National Bank Building faces east onto North College Avenue and the courthouse square and has a secondary entry on West Erwin Street. The building was constructed in two stages from plans drawn by renowned Houston architect Alfred C. Finn, FAIA. Begun in 1932, the original building included the 15-story central block flanked by stepped wings (Photo 1) and a rear four-story section fronting on Erwin Street; a partial basement is in the front of the building. In 1936 a rear six-story section was added atop the original four stories. The six-story addition was fully integrated into the original design, and was likely built from plans drawn by Finn. The current building bears no trace of the staged building program. The People’s National Bank Building features restrained Art Deco massing and detailing inspired by Classical Revival designs. Constructed by the prominent Tyler contracting firm of Campbell & White, the building was financed by Judge Samuel A. Lindsey (Smith County Historical Society a), Chairman of the Board of People’s National Bank in 1932, and one of the city’s most successful entrepreneurs. The building’s primary materials are steel, concrete and brick with granite, marble, stone, aluminum and bronze detailing.

The main entry faces College Avenue and is composed of centrally placed glass and aluminum doors set in a massive polished, black granite portal with fluted detailing (Photo 2); a storefront bay flanks each side of the entry. The verticality of the entry reinforces the vertical fenestration of the building floors, where metal casement windows originally drew the eye upward to the stepped wings and ultimately the penthouse tower formed by the building’s central block. Window alterations in 1969 obscured original metal spandrels and sills, and the fixed pane glass now in place emphasizes the vertical nature of the original fenestration patterns (Photo 1). At the roof line of the penthouse tower, a parapet wall with bas-relief detailing and fluted pilasters encloses the flat roof. Round arch windows embellish the 15th floor. The 1936 addition at the rear (west) uses massing and materials identical to the 1932 construction integrating the new section into the original design. At street level the black granite used for the entry portal continues around the Erwin Street (south) facade in a horizontal decorative band divided by granite clad piers into five retail bays. The eye is drawn to the main side elevation entry in the second bay from the corner by piers that project slightly from the main mass of the building. Three more retail bays, each with a plate glass window, stretch west from the secondary entry (Photo 3).

Above the street level facades is horizontal banding that serves as a belt course and divides the retail portion of the building from the offices on the upper floors. The asymmetrical west (rear) elevation (Photo 4) features the 10-story building section and illustrates its slightly offset position relative to the 15-story main building mass. Fenestration follows the regular form used on the other building facades but lacks the spandrels of the other facades. Vertical bands of rectangular fixed pane black glass are set within original openings. A pedestrian door provides access from the adjacent alley, and a single plate glass window on the mezzanine level, added after the end of the historic period, provides additional light for the banking room. The massing and fenestration of the north elevation is identical to the south elevation, but this facade abuts a 1980s three-story, black glass building, which replaced 19th century two-story brick commercial buildings.

The rectangular plan building measures approximately 60 feet fronting on North College by about 180 feet fronting on West Erwin Street (Smith County Appraisal District b) and reflects the corner lot’s shape and limited space (Figure 1). Sited in an urban block, the area’s commercial nature precluded any landscaping or outdoor amenities. A paved parking lot is west of the building. North of the building is a 20-story building erected in the 1980s, which occupies the remainder of the block fronting on College.

Inside, the People’s National Bank Building’s first 10 floors have similar square footage, although the area is arranged differently on the first floor and mezzanine. Floors 11 through 15 are successively smaller in area as the penthouse rises (Figure 2). The first floor, originally retail space, largely retains the original configuration and all of its original materials. A double escalator greets the visitor upon entry from College Avenue, providing access to the lavish...
mezzanine level banking room (Photo 5). To the north of the escalator are the original elevators, which stop on every floor, including the mezzanine. Stairs are toward the rear of the building. Original marble, limestone, granite, brushed and polished aluminum and brass finishes create an elegant first floor environment. The mezzanine level houses the banking room, which is flanked on the north and south elevations by yet another a mezzanine used for a variety of customer services; private offices are at the east and west ends. Marble flooring, wood paneling, and decorative Art Deco detailing, set in walls painted gold and atop rounded columns, are suitably lavish for one of Tyler’s premiere banking and office addresses. Offices occupy the remaining floors, which are more utilitarian with vinyl tile flooring, wood and plaster walls and wood and glass interior doors.

SUMMARY OF PHYSICAL CONDITION AND INTEGRITY

The People’s National Bank Building is an excellent example of a two-part vertical block and at 15 stories is Tyler’s tallest, most elaborate historic commercial building. Financed by Samuel A. Lindsey, designed by renown Houston architect Alfred C. Finn, FAIA and built by the locally prominent contracting firm Campbell & White in two stages--1932 and 1936--the building blends conservative Art Deco massing and details with elements of formal Classicism and displays a very high level of craftsmanship. The building’s exterior and interior character-defining elements—brick and stone work, parapet, entry and storefront configuration and detailing, ground floor lobby, mezzanine level banking room and upper floor common areas—are maintained in excellent condition and retain a very high level of integrity. Installation of fixed pane glass within original window openings and over sills and spandrels and replacement of original storefront plate glass windows and doors in 1969 are the only exterior alterations; windows changes could be restored. Primary interior spaces also remain intact. For these reasons the People’s National Bank Building retains a high level of location, materials, design, workmanship, feeling and association within the period of significance.
8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

X B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

X 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 value, 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: N/A

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Commerce, Architecture, Community Planning and Development

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1932-1952

SIGNIFICANT DATES: 1932, 1936

SIGNIFICANT PERSON: Lindsey, Samuel A.

CULTURAL AFFILIATION: N/A

ARCHITECT/BUILDER: Finn, Alfred C. (architect); Campbell & White (builders)

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (see continuation sheets 8-8 through 8-16).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

BIBLIOGRAPHY (see continuation sheets 9-17 through 9-18).

PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS): N/A

- 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:

x State historic preservation office (Texas Historical Commission)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1932 from plans drawn by well-known Houston architect Alfred C. Finn, FAIA, and compatibly enlarged in 1936, the 15-story People’s National Bank Building is one of two Art Deco style office buildings in Tyler. Conceived and financed by one of Tyler’s most influential and successful businessmen, Samuel A. Lindsey, to serve Tyler’s growing need for office space during the early years of the East Texas Oil Boom, the building housed oil companies, geologists, attorneys, engineers, insurance companies and became the city’s most prestigious business address during the 1930s and 1940s. The building’s design and stylistic treatment are a conservative interpretation of the Art Deco aesthetic and reflect architect Finn’s established style and local tastes. The People’s National Bank Building is significant for its architecture, for its association with Samuel A. Lindsey and for its associations with the Tyler business community during a period of rapid population growth and economic development fostered by the discovery of the East Texas Oil Field in 1930-1931. The People’s National Bank Building is one of 13 Art Deco buildings in Tyler, all commercial or governmental resources, each distinguished by distinctive massing treatments and architectural detailing within the oeuvre of Art Deco design. The People’s National Bank Building is maintained in excellent condition and retains a high degree of integrity. It derives its primary significance from its architectural form and its association with Lindsey and Tyler’s oil boom economy, which spanned more than 40 years and fostered intensive community development. For these reasons, the People’s National Bank Building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under Criteria A, B and C in the areas of significance of community development, economics, and architecture within a period of significance extending from 1932 to 1952.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN TYLER

Settled in 1846, when Smith County was created from Nacogdoches County, Tyler incorporated in 1850 and served as the seat of Smith County as well as the site of branches of State and Federal courts. From its earliest settlement in the 1840s, when businesses located around the courthouse square, until the arrival of the railroad in 1873 the marketing and shipping of Smith County agricultural products formed the basis for Tyler’s economy. But almost at once this base was augmented by small scale manufacturing such as blacksmithing, milling, logging and tanning as well as legal and government services. As a result Tyler’s economy was diversified at an early date, even though the scope was small and the territory served limited. With the arrival of the International & Great Northern Railroad in 1873 and the establishment of the Tyler Tap Railroad in 1877 and its subsequent merger into the St. Louis Southwestern Railway (Cotton Belt, thereafter), manufacturing, food processing, food distribution, saw and planing mills, and banking and insurance firms became important components of Tyler’s economy (Whisenhunt 1983:29). The railroad made an enormous impact on Tyler and the surrounding area, more than doubling business (Smallwood 1995:ch.12a, p. 11). In the late 19th century this diverse economy fostered 15 labor unions representing workers in various fields (Smallwood 1999:426). Local bank failure occurred in 1891 and then the nationwide Panic of ’93 slowed the economy but by mid-decade economic troubles eased and Tyler’s position as a Federal, state and local government and legal services center bolstered the economy and Tyler’s influence statewide. “During the last quarter of the nineteenth century Tyler enjoyed a reputation as the political capital of Texas: the so-called ‘Tyler Crowd’ furnished governors, senators and lesser officials galore, and for more than a generation, its influence in both [Democratic] party and state affairs had to be reckoned with.” (White 1940:1245).

The area around the courthouse square remains Tyler’s commercial core, and retains many pre-1900 buildings. However, most have been altered with facade modernizations dating to the 1950s and 1960s. These changes significantly modify understanding of the original, or historically significant, roles of many buildings. A few downtown buildings have been restored or rehabilitated to reveal underlying historic fabric that once again connects the historical record with the
 Throughout the 1890s and for the next 30 years, agriculture, manufacturing, wholesale and retail commerce, banking, insurance and legal services continued to fuel the economy. The Tyler Chamber of Commerce was established in 1900 as the Tyler Commercial Club to promote business interests. Meat processing, storage and shipment, canning, storage and distribution of grain, fruit and vegetables were joined by several wholesale grocery firms in the early 1900s including the Moore Grocery Company, which was established prior to 1900. The wholesale grocery industry expanded in 1903 when John B. Mayfield, a resident of what would become the Charnwood Residential Historic District started a second wholesale grocery, the Mayfield Grocer Co. By 1914 Mayfield's firm had grown to six branch facilities (Tyler Public Library d:215). Telephone service was established in Tyler in 1896, and Tyler had two phone companies until the 1940s. One was the S.A. Lindsey Telephone Company, which by 1905 had 25 miles of telephone lines in city (Texas State Library b). Samuel A. Lindsey was a prominent attorney, judge and businessman also involved in land speculation in south Tyler including the area that would become part of the Azalea District. In 1932 Lindsey developed the 15-story People's National Bank, a Tyler landmark and testament to the community's economic health during one of the worst years of the Great Depression.

 Better roads throughout Texas facilitated commerce and in 1918 a Tyler-Dallas motor truck service was established to carry freight and passengers. The seven hour, 106-mile trip included several stops (Texas State Library c). As roads continued to improve truck, bus and auto travel became more attractive spurring by the 1920s development of gas stations and vehicle repair garages throughout central Tyler. By the mid 1920s Tyler retail enterprises included 30 businesses involving the automobile, eight auto salesrooms, five hotels, 12 barber shops, four bakeries, 18 cafes and restaurants, eight furniture stores, six hardware stores, 27 grocers, three theaters, eight shoe stores, 10 drug stores, three large department stores, three banks, 24 drygoods stores and many more (St. Louis Southwestern Railway: 14). Suburban development included neighborhood grocery stores, dry cleaners and other service establishments. Tyler remained a legal center with a U.S. District Court, as well as the various Smith County courts; none of the associated buildings survive.

 In 1930, Tyler was on the threshold of its greatest economic era, a 30-year-plus period of unprecedented growth and development. In October 1930 oil was found in nearby Rusk County when Dad Joiner's Daisy Bradford #3 proved to be a producing well. In March 1931 Guy Vernon Lewis brought in the first producing oil well in Smith County, located near the community of Arp, southeast of Tyler. As more wells came in drillers, riggers, geologists, pipers, surveyors and others moved to Tyler, and refineries and exploration companies developed headquarters in Tyler. The boom affected just about every aspect of life in East Texas, and oil added greatly to the Tyler and Smith County economy (UT, Austin PCL:a).

 Tyler benefited greatly from the discovery of the East Texas Oil Field. As the largest town in the five county oil field area before the oil boom, it provided the most developed infrastructure and a wide range of business and professional services. At the junction of several state and U.S. Highways, Tyler had good communications, rail and truck service, a number of banks and related financial institutions, hotel and office space, a system of paved roads, and a variety of neighborhoods offering housing types to people of all income levels. As a result Tyler became the East Texas headquarters for many oil companies beginning with the discovery of the Van gas field west of Tyler in the 1920s. With the discovery of the East Texas field in 1930-31, 33 companies established offices in Tyler and almost all of the larger independent operators in the field set up land-leasing headquarters.

 The East Texas Field fostered construction of refineries, and a rail network around the field made it possible to move the oil efficiently. The field's crude oil was of good quality needing only minimal equipment to make gasoline. At
least 95 small refineries were initially built, but after a few years as production evened out, that number dropped to 76. One of these was just east of downtown Tyler. Called LaGloria, the refinery turned out gasoline and originally was known as the McMurrey Refinery. It remains in operation. Trucking also became big business, with big rigs hauling refined gas from the local refineries.

Legal services became even more important after the discovery of oil as related law suits and corporate activities surged; the need for office space grew. Throughout the 1930s agriculture, especially dairying, continued to be important to Tyler’s economy. By the mid 1930s, 48 dairies had permits to retail or wholesale dairy products in Tyler. Roses, blackberries, peaches, pecans, and vegetables also were important local crops. Lumber and related milled wood products significantly contributed to local prosperity with 25 saw mills county-wide in 1937 (UT, Austin PCL:a). Additional principal industries in the county in the 1930s included canning factories, foundries, machine shops, a rail car factory, a grist mill, peanut products, and the manufacturing of crates, boxes mattresses, work clothing and house dresses. Services included 16 passenger auto agencies, six commercial auto agencies, 19 auto tire dealers, seven bakers, 33 cigar stands, 36 confectioners, 13 delicatessens, 15 department stores, 26 druggists, 38 dry goods stores, 134 independent grocers and seven chain grocers, seven lumber companies, and 59 restaurants, and a pottery, among many others (Tyler Public Library:f).

In the 1940s oil and gas production and services related to that industry were the primary economic engines. In February 1940, the East Texas Industrial Exhibit Association sponsored the second annual Industrial Exhibit to showcase Tyler manufacturing, distribution and service capabilities. In addition, a number of local industries expanded in 1940, adding more space and personnel. Prominent among these are Sledge Manufacturing Company and Tyler Iron and Foundry Company. Both had government contracts associated with pre-World War II mobilization activities. Surveys were made of plant and tool capacities in Tyler to assist local firms in securing national defense contracts. To attract business and support local companies seeking government work, the Tyler Chamber of Commerce’s Industrial Committee prepared facts and statistics for certain defense industries sending briefs to government bureaus and agencies reporting the advantages of Tyler including its large supply of surface water and underground water available from reservoirs at Blackburn Dam on the Neches and Prairie Creek Reservoir in Smith County (Tyler Chamber of Commerce b).

Writing in the early 1940s, Tyler’s business boosters could boast of the community’s great economic advantages. The Chamber of Commerce described Tyler as the “Center of the East Texas Oil Industry,” a statement well founded. “The people of Tyler and of all other cities and towns within or adjacent to the oil field have been told that they have not known what the late depression meant” (Tyler Public Library d). As a result of the boom, Tyler school population increased from 4,261 students in 1930 to more than 6,000 in 1936. Assessed valuations for 1930 were $17,477,254, for 1935 they were $28,679,113 (Tyler Chamber of Commerce b). While prosperity was a reality for those involved in the oil business, other aspects of the economy were affected, with minorities, unskilled laborers and tenant farmers largely bypassed by the boom.

As important as the East Texas field was to the local and regional economy, it proved vital to the success of the Allies in World War II. Texas oil fields produced 80 percent of all oil needed by the Allies, and the East Texas Field provided the major portion. As World War II began, oil producers and the government realized overland transit of oil was the only safe way to ship oil from the fields to east coast ports, from where it would be transferred to the battlefront. To secure transit, two pipelines were laid, one from the East Texas Field to the refineries of New York and the Philadelphia area, stretching about 1,400 miles. Called Big Inch, it measured 24 inches in diameter and every day during the war it delivered almost 300,000 barrels of crude oil. The other pipeline was known as Little Inch, and it measured 20 inches in diameter. It ran from Beaumont to Big Inch near Little Rock, Arkansas. From there it paralleled Big Inch eastward. Every day of the war it delivered almost 200,000 barrels of aviation gasoline, motor gasoline and other refined products for use by the Allies (New Handbook of Texas:774). U.S. military presence also fueled the Tyler economy through the local
Signal Corps Radio Operator Training School, the U.S. government’s lease of the Tyler airport for use as a government field, and the establishment in 1943 of Camp Fannin (Whisenhunt 1983: 69-78), an infantry training center northeast of Tyler that employed 2,500 civilians. In 1945, the camp became a military separation center and the airport returned to civilian use.

Oil and gas, industrial and manufacturing enterprises and the machine shops of the St. Louis and Southwest Railway (Cotton Belt) were Tyler’s primary post-World War II businesses. The railroad was the largest industrial employer in the city in 1947 with 523 employees and an annual payroll of more than $1,000,000. Business and residential development continued as new office buildings were erected in the late 1940s and the 1950s. One of the most visible is the 1953 modernist Petroleum Building on South Broadway. The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, a prominent social and service club present in Tyler since 1891 erected a Modernist lodge building in 1949 on South Broadway, opening their doors to the community for dances, private parties and other social activities. Residential construction continued as in-fill in established neighborhoods throughout south Tyler, including the Azalea District and in northwest Tyler. New neighborhoods of tract-type housing also appeared in southeast Tyler and northwest Tyler. By the end of 1951 there were 3,607 wells in the East Texas field, and more than 109,000,000 barrels of oil were produced. Members of the Texas Geological Society met in Tyler December 17, 1931, and 59 geologists gave papers estimating the field’s potential barrels. The average estimate was 2.1 billion barrels. In time the field proved to have far more oil than these experts predicted. “Cumulative production of crude oil and natural gas liquids in northeastern Texas through 1950 was approximately 4 billion barrels. By January 1, 1993, when the Texas Railroad Commission calculated the field at 100 percent production, it had produced more than 5 billion barrels of oil (New Handbook of Texas:774). After more than 60 years, some wells still operate.

THE PEOPLE’S NATIONAL BANK BUILDING

The People’s National Bank Building was built in 1932 at an undisclosed cost (Smith County Mechanic’s Liens) in response to regional and local demands for more office space as the oil boom brought new business to Tyler. Located on lot 5 of Block 9, at the west end of the courthouse square, the People’s National Bank Building is within the original Tyler town plat on the site of the former Goldstein and Brown mercantile store. The People’s National Bank Building replaced the two-story brick Goldstein and Brown building that partially burned in 1930 or 1931. On May 23, 1931, Goldstein and Brown sold the property and damaged building to People’s National Bank (Smith County Deed Records). Within five days, on May 29, the bank announced plans to raze the damaged store and replace it with a skyscraper (Tyler Public Library a). By October 1931 Houston architect Alfred C. Finn’s office had prepared renderings for the new bank, which were published in the Tyler Journal on October 21. Within two weeks an article appeared in the same paper describing the proposed building as “...the most imposing business structure in East Texas north of Beaumont and Houston and east of Dallas (Tyler Public Library c).

By April 1932 construction was underway on the 15-story building with the pouring of the foundation by Universal Contracting of Houston, subcontractors to the Tyler firm of Campbell & White (Smith County Mechanic’s Liens). Financing for the building, touted as one of the largest construction projects in the country in 1932 (Tyler Public Library c), was provided by Samuel A. Lindsey (Smith County Historical Society c), Chairman of the Board of People’s National Bank, through the People’s National Company (Smith County Deed Records), a corporation apparently established to fund the building and protect both Lindsey’s personal assets and those of the bank. Lindsey was an astute businessman who invested widely in Tyler real estate and developed other downtown buildings in the late 1920s and early 1930s, including a 1929 filling station and parking garage at Elm and College, and the Gulf States Telephone Co. Building in 1931, immediately north of the parking garage.
Although no total amount for construction of the People’s National Bank Building appears in any discovered record, funds amounting to $910,000 in cash and bonds are detailed in a variety of trust deeds during 1931 and 1932 (Smith County Deed Records). Much of the building material is thought to have come from, or through, Gulf State Lumber Co. (Beall interview), a Tyler firm established by Lindsey in 1928; he served as president from 1929 until 1945 (Beall:B5). Despite the size of the new bank and office building, within two to three years it proved insufficient to accommodate the continuing demand for office space. To remedy this, a six-story addition was constructed above the four story wing fronting on West Erwin Street (Tyler Public Library e). Perfectly integrated into the original design, plans for this addition were likely developed by Finn’s office; Figure 7 shows the building with the addition.

Fully occupied before the end of 1932, the new building was formally opened on November 5, 1932, at an evening reception that included guided tours of the elegant, mezzanine level Art Deco banking room and the office tower. People’s bank was one of Tyler’s oldest financial institutions dating from 1896 or 1897. It occupied a number of locations downtown and in 1916 was operating from a building on the north side of the square. The 1932 building heralded the bank’s success and provided it with a permanent form of advertising. A full page ad in The Tyler Journal on November 4 under the headline FAITH!, announced the opening and invited the community to visit the new banking center. The building remained one of Tyler’s premiere business addresses, housing locally important firms including Pollard & Lawrence (attorneys), a number of insurance companies, physicians and dentists, oil operators, pipeline companies, drilling firms, including Ed Laster, the driller who brought in the Daisy Bradford #3 and started the oil boom, and refining firms such as McMurrey Refining Co. First floor spaces were devoted to retail uses including a pharmacy, cigar stand, a clothier, real estate businesses, newspaper offices, a barber shop, an engineering firm and a number of insurance and attorney offices (Tyler Public Library d).

With business booming in Tyler during the 1930s, office space became scarce as the existing late 19th and early 20th century one-to-three story retail and office buildings filled up with oil related businesses. As the community comprehended the magnitude of the East Texas oil strike, a building boom ensued with 1931 building permit values reaching more than $1,000,000 by May 1931 (Tyler Public Library a). Officers and directors of People’s Bank, which included such local leaders as Sam R. Greer (president), A. Golenternek (merchant), Edgar H. Vaughn (physician) and H. E. Lassater (attorney), under Lindsey’s leadership lost no time in acquiring the prime Goldstein & Brown site for a new office and banking building.

The building continued to serve as Tyler’s premiere office building through the 1950s. In 1969, air conditioning was installed and the fixed pane glass now in place on the upper floor windows was installed within the original window openings and over extant sills and spandrels. But even this expensive measure did not keep business downtown or the People’s building fully occupied. As suburban shopping malls, office parks, and residential development were constructed in south Tyler much of the local population and businesses followed. The People’s building began to lose tenants. The bank was bought out, eventually becoming part of the Nation’s Bank network. In the early 1980s a new 20-story bank and office building was erected north of the People’s building and banking operations relocated there. However, the Texas economic bust of the late 1980s resulted in many vacancies in the new building and a glut of downtown office space. In 1997 Tyler Towne Centre purchased the 1932 people’s building and while the elaborate, and virtually unaltered Art Deco banking rooms remains vacant, the office and retail space is occupied by attorneys and other professionals.

Erected in response to Tyler’s growing oil-based economy during the late 1930s, the People’s National Bank Building is associated with important regional economic and development trends and an era of prosperity unprecedented in Tyler’s history. While the Great Depression gripped most of the rest of the nation, bread lines, declining tax revenues, and closed businesses were virtually unknown in Tyler. The oil boom built businesses, neighborhoods and personal fortunes, many of which remain as reminders of Tyler’s atypical experience during the nation’s worst economic crisis.
The building's convenient location on the west side of the courthouse square, combined with its modern, stylish design, and its height -- it was tallest building in Tyler for many years to come -- made it a desirable business address.

Designed by prominent Houston architect Alfred C. Finn, FAIA, the building joined other examples of Finn's trademark conservative work built throughout Houston and in other Texas cities including Fort Worth, Galveston, and Brenham. It was a point of pride for Tyler to have one of his designs as its most visible building. The building is an imposing buff brick mass finished on the first floor with polished black granite carved with horizontal and vertical banding that further delineates the retail spaces on the ground floor from the banking and office space above. Detailing includes cast metal spandrels, stone capped piers that rise the full height of each section of the building's stepped mass and divide the street facades into bays, round arch windows at the apex of the tower, and zigzag embellished cut stone pilasters at the top of each stepped mass.

Architecturally, the People's National Bank Building is an important local example of conservative Art Deco styling with elements of formal classicism. The building's asymmetrical, stepped massing, cast metal spandrels, stone detailed parapet and entry articulation recall the ordered formality of conservative versions of the Art Deco style influenced by Classical Revival design and built throughout the United States between about 1928 and 1940. The formal symmetry of the entry portal with its use of a keystone over the front entry and flanking fluted pilasters establishes the building as modern, but serious, paving the way for prestigious tenants. The People's National Bank Building represents an important transitional era in American architecture, when designers, building owners and tenants sought modernity but had not yet let go of established classical forms or adopted the avant guard principals of the International Style.

The Art Deco style is a modernistic architectural form that grew out of early 20th century attempts to redefine the character of architectural design. This style is not considered truly modern by architectural historians, but rather a transitional form that bridges the thinking of historicism and International Style modernism. The first major American impetus for modernistic design was in 1922 when the Chicago Tribune sponsored a world-wide competition for a new headquarters design. Although the Tribune selected a Gothic Revival design, "...second prize went to an Art Deco design by a young Finnish architect, Eliel Saarinen. His design was widely publicized and much of the architectural profession felt that he deserved the first prize..." (McAlester:465). As a result Art Deco styling became the most fashionable architectural form of the 1920s and 1930s, and it laid the ground work for the rejection of historicism and the acceptance of the undecorated, volumetric designs known as Modernism, or the International style.

Art Deco design uses boxy massing, typically more vertical than horizontal and flat roofs. Skyscrapers and other large, urban buildings often have stepped parapets to increase light and air circulation within the building and at the same time enhance the verticality and ornamental quality of the building. High style examples incorporate much interior and exterior ornamental detail in exotic metals, glass, carved stone and cast stone. Geometric ornament includes zigzags, chevrons, stylized flowers, fruit, vines and leaves, classical columns and pilasters, lozenges, fluting, reeding, sunrise and sunburst patterns and elements that reference mechanization including gears and wheels. More formal, Classicist versions, utilize keystones, fluted pilasters and round arch windows as ornamentation. The blend of stepped massing and Classicist derived ornament reflect both historical references and contemporary life and illustrate Art Deco's appeal and its position as a transitional architectural form. Most Art Deco design was applied to commercial buildings, with few residential examples. Tyler has 13 Art Deco influenced buildings, all commercial or governmental resources; the People's National Bank Building is perhaps, because of its size and height, the most visible example in the city, while the smaller Blackstone Building is a more modest illustration that includes fewer Classicist elements.
ARCHITECT AND BUILDERS

Alfred Charles Finn (1883-1964), a native of Bellville, Texas, grew up in Hempstead. Moving to Houston in 1900 he first worked as a carpenter and a draftsman, and then was employed by Sanguinet and Staats in Dallas, Fort Worth and Houston. Finn opened his own office in 1913 in Houston and his first job was supervising construction of the Rice Hotel. Through this job he met Houston entrepreneur Jesse Jones and began a lifelong association with him. By the mid-1920s Finn's office was one of the largest in Houston and specialized in "skyscrapers" (Wilson). Finn's work was conservative, and he used Classicism as an inspiration (New Handbook of Texas:1003). Among his designs are a number of residences in Houston and Galveston, and buildings in Shreveport, Louisiana, and Wharton, Bellville and Sealy, Texas. In Houston his commissions include the 17-story addition to the Rice Hotel (1926), the 16-story Lamar Hotel and Metropolitan Theater (1926), the 37-story Gulf Building (1929), and St. Paul’s Methodist Church (1930). His firm designed a number of buildings in Fort Worth in the late 1920s and early 1930s including the Fair Building, and the Electric Building. In 1931 he built the Forest Hill Abbey mausoleum in Kansas City, Missouri. In the late 1930s and the 1940s Finn was involved with public projects throughout Texas including the Sam Houston Coliseum and Music Hall, Jefferson Davis Hospital, a 12-building dormitory at Texas A&M, and the San Jacinto Monument. He served on the board of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and later became an architectural supervisor for the Federal Housing Administration. He continued to work into the early 1950s, when financial troubles created by uncollected funds for a public project may have lead to a paralyzing stroke in December 1953. While he continued working until his death in Houston in 1964, his daily involvement was limited (New Handbook of Texas Online). Finn became an American Institute of Architects member in 1920 and attained the status of fellow in 1949. He served on the City of Houston Planning Commission and was a member of a number of service and fraternal organizations.

Allen M. Campbell and Hugh E. White were prominent, successful building contractors in Tyler. They worked together in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and then went on to practice individually and in other partnership arrangements. In addition to the People's National Bank Building, the partnership also built The Crescent Laundry. Campbell was responsible for many dwellings in Tyler, and later partnered with Luther F. Kay, Jr. Campbell, Campbell & Kay and C Construction (the successor firm) worked on the 1941, 1950 and 1984 additions to Marvin Methodist Church (NR 2000) among many other projects. Hugh E. White built the 1938 Blackstone Building, the 1949 Elks Lodge and many dwellings. Both men provided services for large public works projects throughout Texas.

CRITERION B SIGNIFICANCE - SAMUEL ASBURY LINDSEY

Samuel Asbury Lindsey (1866 (or 1863)-1961) was one of Tyler's most successful businessmen. A lawyer who became a judge, and a land developer who also was a financier, Lindsey served in many capacities beginning in 1887 and continuing until the late 1950s. Lindsey (Figure 8) was a native of Homer, Louisiana and came to Tyler in 1870 with his parents. Shortly thereafter the family moved to Oklahoma, At the age of 13 Lindsey set out on his own, working at any job he could find and educating himself. He attended Huntsville (Texas) Normal School and read law, passing the bar and beginning a practice in Tyler in 1887. He ran for Smith County attorney in 1890 but was elected to the state legislature serving one term. In 1902 he served as a Smith County judge, and then retired from public life, turning his energies to business ventures. In 1915 he bought controlling interest in People's National Bank and was its president until 1917 when he was appointed Secretary of the Federal Land Bank in Houston. He went on to become the president of National Bank of Commerce in Houston, and no doubt became acquainted with Alfred C. Finn and his work during his Houston years. Lindsey resigned from the Houston Bank in 1922 to return to Tyler. He had retained his interest in Tyler's People's National Bank, and soon became Chairman of the Board. He organized the Gulf States Telephone Company (Davis: 236),
the Gulf State Lumber Co., developed land in south Tyler and in the central city (Smith County Deed Records) and financed construction of many buildings including the People's National Bank, the 1929 Jenkins-Harvey garage at Elm and College and the 1931 Gulf States Telephone Co. Building. He died in Tyler in 1961 having lived a long and successful life.

Tyler retains many buildings associated with Lindsey, including three of the homes he built for himself and his family during his long life. The Gulf States Lumber Co. and the Jenkins-Harvey garage both survive, and other small business buildings also may be extant. Despite this legacy of extant buildings, the People's Bank Building made the largest visual, financial and commercial impact on Tyler in the 1930s and 1940s through its banking and office services. As financier, Chairman of the Board, and President of the bank, Lindsey was intimately involved in developing the building. He was associated with the People's building from its construction in 1932 until his death in 1961, and with its management during much of this period, which included some of his most productive years. Two of his early homes are City of Tyler Landmarks, and one is included as a contributing property within the Charnwood Residential Historic District (NR 1999), listed under Criteria A and C. The third identified residence is a grand Tudor Revival style dwelling built in the 1930s; it will become a contributing property within the Azalea Residential Historic District for which a National Register nomination is currently being developed. The Jenkins-Harvey Garage is currently being nominated to the National Register under Criteria A and C. The Gulf State Lumber Co., has been altered somewhat and may not be eligible for listing, as is the case with the Gulf States Telephone Co. Building. For these reasons, the People's National Bank Building appears to be the building most closely associated with Lindsey's business activities during Tyler's greatest period of development and it is surely the most prominent among Lindsey's many contributions. Therefore, the People's National Bank Building is eligible for listing under Criterion B for its associations with Samuel A. Lindsey.

**JUSTIFICATION OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The People's National Bank Building is an important local landmark signifying the role of the oil industry in Tyler's growth and development from the early 1930s through the 1950s. Built in 1932 from plans drawn by Houston architect Alfred C. Finn, using conservative Art Deco massing and Classicist detailing, the People's National Bank Building provided office space for firms operating within Tyler's growing petroleum based economy. The People's National Bank Building is most the closely associated of the many commercial buildings developed by Samuel A. Lindsey, a prominent Tyler businessman who financed the building's construction and was a leader in real estate development in Tyler. The People's National Bank Building is one of two architecturally distinguished Art Deco office buildings in Tyler, and it reflects the prosperity and development created by the ascendant East Texas oil boom. The building retains high levels of integrity of location, materials, design, workmanship, feeling and association within the period of significance and is maintained in excellent condition. Only the exterior windows have been replaced; the original openings and cast metal spandrels remain. The building's setting has been affected by new construction dating from the 1980s as well as by the alteration of nearby historic-era commercial buildings but the People's National Bank Building remains one of Tyler's most significant and intact office buildings. The boundaries of the nominated property conform to the extant building and the boundaries of the land on which it is located and the building conveys not only the rich heritage of early 20th century architectural styling, but provides an understanding of the financing developers' desire to build economically while promoting Tyler as progressive and sensitive to then current trends in architectural taste and community needs.

The nominated property is significant for the way it reflects Tyler's growing economy and population during the early Depression years and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the local level of significance. It is also significant for its associations with Samuel A. Lindsey and its conservative Art Deco
styling, created by well-known Houston architect Alfred C. Finn, FAIA, and the way it reflects tastes during the Depression era. For these reasons the People’s National Bank Building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria B and C at the local level of significance. The building retains its original exterior brick and polished granite finishes and detailing, and its original Art Deco banking room on the mezzanine level. Although the original windows were replaced in 1969 to facilitate air conditioning, the original window openings and cast metal spandrels remain. The building retains its historic appearance and all other original materials. The building is worthy of preservation as an intact local landmark that through its office and banking functions document the impact of the oil industry on economics and development patterns in Tyler and provides interpretation of the contributions of Tyler businessman and financier Samuel A. Lindsey as well as local social and architectural trends between 1932 and 1951.

City of Tyler.
   a) Building permits.
   b) Plat maps 1880s-1950.


Smith County Appraisal District Tax parcel map and Building files.

Smith County Clerk
   a) Smith County Deed Records.
   b) Smith County Mechanic’s Liens Records, 13/181, April 26, 1932.
   c) Smith County Plat Records.

Smith County Historical Society, Tyler, Texas.
   a) Vertical File, People’s National Bank
   b) *Chronicles of Smith County, Texas* Vol. 29 #1, Summer 1990, pp. 35-38.
   c) Vertical File, Lindsey-Merrick Family.

Smith County Title Company, Tyler, Texas.
   Block files.

Texas State Library and Archives, Austin, Texas
   a) U.S. Census 2000, estimated population figures.
   b) Smith County Tax Rolls, various dates.
   c) *Tyler Tidings,* 1918.


Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce
   a) *Tyler,* February 1941.
   b) *Tyler,* April 1940.
   c) 37th *Annual Report,* 1937.
Tyler Public Library, Tyler, Texas, Local History Department.
   a) Tyler Journal, May 29-1931.
   b) Tyler Journal, October 21, 1931.
   c) Tyler Journal, November 6, 1931.
   d) Tyler City Directories, 1882-1960.
   e) Tyler Morning Telegraph, February 24, 1997.
   g) Vertical File, People’s National Bank.
   i) Tyler-Courier-Times Telegraph, various dates.

University of Texas at Austin, Architecture and Planning Library (APL).

University of Texas at Austin, Eugene C. Barker Center for American History (CAH).
   b) Vertical files
      Greer, Sam
      Lindsey, Samuel A.

University of Texas at Austin, Perry-Castaneda Library (PCL).

Whisenhunt, Donald W. A Chronological History of Smith County, Texas. Tyler, TX: Smith County Historical Society, 1983.


Williams, Diane E.

Wilson, Michael E. Alfred C. Finn, Builder of Houston. Houston: Houston Public Library, 1983.


Interviews

Beall, Alex. Personal interview with Diane Williams, February 16, 2001.
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF PROPERTY: less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Lot 5, Block 9, City of Tyler, Texas

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: Nomination includes all property historical associated with the building

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Diane Elizabeth Williams

ORGANIZATION: for the City of Tyler and Historic Tyler, Inc.  DATE: June 20, 2001

STREET & NUMBER: PO Box 49921  TELEPHONE: (512) 458-2367

CITY OR TOWN: Austin  STATE: Texas  ZIP CODE: 78765

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

CONTINUATION SHEETS

MAPS (see continuation sheet Map-#)

PHOTOGRAPHS (see continuation sheet Photo-29)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS (see continuation sheets Figure-19 through Figure-28)

PROPERTY OWNER

NAME: Tyler Town Centre, attn.: Robert Hulse

STREET & NUMBER: 102 N. College Avenue, Suite 1500  TELEPHONE: (903) 595-1966

CITY OR TOWN: Tyler  STATE: Texas  ZIP CODE: 75702
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Figure Page 19

People's National Bank Building
Tyler, Smith County, Texas

Figure 1: Site Plan
(Source: Tyler Town Centre)

North
No Scale

People's National Bank Building
102 North College Avenue, Tyler, Texas
Site Plan
Figure 2: Basement Plan
(Source: Tyler Town Centre)
Figure 3: First Floor Plan
(Source: Tyler Town Centre)
Figure 4: Second Floor (banking room) Plan
(Source: Tyler Town Centre)
Figure 5: Mezzanine Plan (mezzanine area of banking room)
(Source: Tyler Town Centre)
Figure 6: Third Floor Plan
(Source: Tyler Town Centre)
People's National Bank Building
Tyler, Smith County, Texas

Figure 7: Architectural drawing, West Erwin Street Elevation, 1931
(Source: Tyler Town Centre)
Figure 8: People's National Bank Building, 1940.
(Source: Tyler Chamber of Commerce)
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section Figure Page 27

People's National Bank Building
Tyler, Smith County, Texas

Figure 9: Portrait, Samuel A. Lindsey, ca. 1925
(Source: Davis)
Figure 10
East and north elevations looking southwest.
Source: c.1940 Tyler Chamber of Commerce magazine cover.
PHOTO INVENTORY

PEOPLE’S NATIONAL BANK BUILDING
TYLER, SMITH COUNTY, TEXAS
DIANE ELIZABETH WILLIAMS, PHOTOGRAPHER
DECEMBER 2000, JANUARY 2001
ORIGINAL NEGATIVES ON FILE WITH THE TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Photo 1 of 5: East and north elevations looking southwest.

Photo 2 of 5: Detail main entry portal, east elevation looking west.

Photo 3 of 5: Detail, storefront treatment, south and east elevations looking northwest.

Photo 4 of 5: West elevation looking east.

Photo 5 of 5: Interior, mezzanine level banking room looking east.
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME:

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TEXAS, Smith

DATE RECEIVED: 7/11/02
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 8/22/02
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 02000896

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 8/22/02 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N
People's Nat'l Bank
Tyner Smith Co., Inc.
Photo 195
People's Natl Bank
Tyler, Smith W. Jr
Photo 395