

# NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT

## PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

### PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM (CD, EMAIL, FLASH DRIVE)  
ELECTRONIC FILES MUST BE WORD OR WORD COMPATIBLE

**1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE** *(must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)*

Street address: 5700 N. Broad St.

Postal code: 19141-2308

**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: North City Trust Company/Beneficial Saving Fund Society

Current/Common Name: Beneficial Saving Fund Society

**3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

☒ Building

☐ Structure

☐ Site

☐ Object

**4. PROPERTY INFORMATION**

Condition: ☐ excellent ☐ good ☒ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins

Occupancy: ☒ occupied ☐ vacant ☐ under construction ☒ unknown

Current use: partial occupancy by small businesses

**5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

*Please attach a narrative description and site/plot plan of the resource's boundaries.*

**6. DESCRIPTION**

*Please attach a narrative description and photographs of the resource's physical appearance, site, setting, and surroundings.*

**7. SIGNIFICANCE**

*Please attach a narrative Statement of Significance citing the Criteria for Designation the resource satisfies.*

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1931 to 2008

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: constructed 1931

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Thalheimer & Weitz

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: F. L. Hoover and Sons

Original owner: Frank H. Schrenk & Robert M. Bernstein

Other significant persons: none

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:**

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

- ☒ (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,
- ☒ (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,
- ☒ (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- ☒ (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,
- ☐ (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,
- ☐ (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,
- ☒ (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,
- ☐ (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or
- ☐ (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

Criteria A & B excluded in designation; Criterion D added for Art Deco style

**8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

*Please attach a bibliography.*

**9. NOMINATOR**

Organization Preservation Alliance for Greater Phila. Date 4/7/2020

Name with Title Adrian Trevisan, consultant Email patrick@preservationalliance.com

Street Address 1608 Walnut St, Suite 1702 Telephone 215-546-1146x5

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19103

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: 4/7/2020

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 10/30/2020

Date of Notice Issuance: 11/2/2020

Property Owner at Time of Notice:

Name: 5700 N BROAD ST LP

Address: 1200 Callowhill St, Ste. 403

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19123

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: 12/3/2020; rec. Criteria D, E, & H

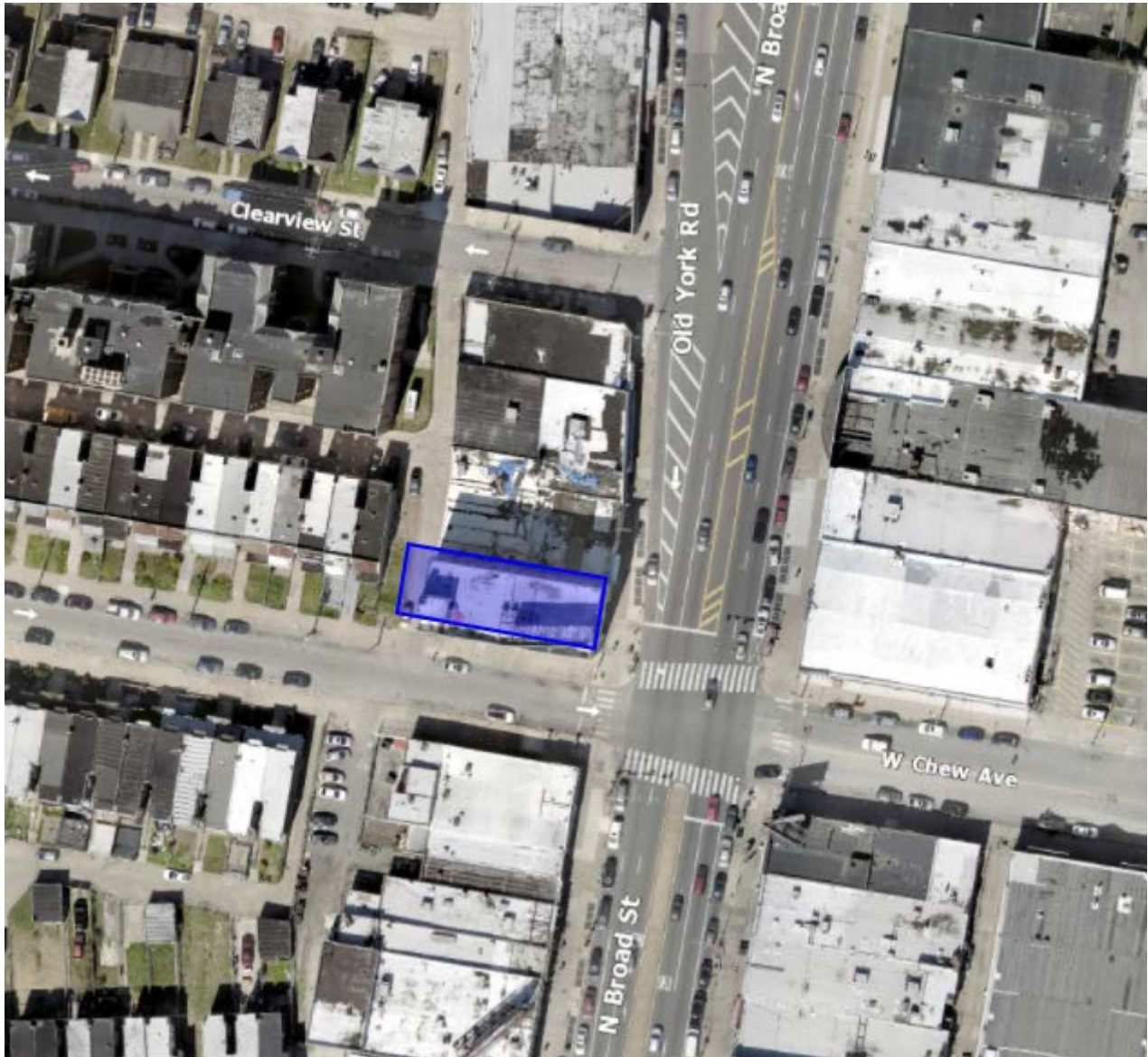
Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: 1/8/2021

Date of Final Action: 1/8/2021; Criteria D, E & H

☒ Designated ☐ Rejected

12/7/18

## 5. Boundary Description



*Figure 1: 5700 North Broad St. (parcel 882062700). CityAtlas, City of Philadelphia.*

Beginning at a point on the corner formed by the intersection of the Northwestern side of Broad Street (113 feet wide) with the Northeast side of Chew Street (66 feet wide). Containing in front or breadth on the said Broad Street 41 feet 7 inches and extending of that width in length or depth Northwestern between parallel lines at right angles to the said Broad Street, the Southwestern line thereof along the Northeast side of Chew Street, at the Northeast line thereof extending partly through the center line of a certain 4 inch partition wall and partly through the centerline of a certain 13 inch partition wall 116 feet, including on the rear end thereof the soil of a certain 16 feet wide driveway extending Northeastwardly from Chew Street and Southwestwardly from Clearview Street.



## 6. Description

The building at 5700 North Broad Street is a three-story Art Deco block at the northwesterly corner of N. Broad and Chew Streets in the Olney section of Philadelphia.

Constructed in 1931 to serve as the headquarters of a local bank, it has served as a local landmark since then due to its distinctive architecture and height as it projects above its one-story surroundings. The ornate Broad Street and Chew Avenue facades are faced in limestone with a granite base and terra cotta Art-Deco details greet people exiting the Olney Transportation Center one block to the south, while the north and west façades are brick.



Figure 2: 5700 North Broad Street. Photograph by Adrian Trevisan, 2020..

The front or east façade of the building on Broad Street boasts a tall, recessed entrance, approximately 20 feet high by 18 feet wide, centered on the wall, contained a door and windows set in metal ornamentation. The limestone surrounding this entrance has carved scrolls or waves the top. The entrance is flanked symmetrically with two copper bolts, which historic images show used to hold lanterns. The face of the façade has a carved sign surmounted by a shield with an eagle's head and wings; the sign is currently covered with painted wood. Above each sign, even with the top of the entrance, is a circular seal surrounded by a wreath containing an allegorical person. The right (north) seal contains the word "Work" and a man holding a



Figure 3: Entrance to 5700 North Broad Street. Photograph by Adrian Trevisan, 2020.

hammer; the left (south) seal contains the word “Liberty” and a woman holding shield and olive branch. Above the entrance is a sign which is currently covered by painted wood. Period illustrations show it displaying the name of the occupant, first, “North City Trust Company,” then “Seaboard Mutual Casualty Company.” This level is completed by a band of dentils running along the top.



*Figure 4: Facade medallions. Photographs by Adrian Trevisan, 2020.*



*Figure 5: Detail of 1941 postcard showing lanterns flanking entrance. Courtesy of the Newberry Library.*

The two floors above the double-height feature five bays of windows. The central three columns project slightly from the face of the façade, and are separated by blocks of green and gold tiles. These tiles are arranged with three strips of gold tiles separated by two strips of green tiles, with pairs of downward pointing chevrons in the green tiles. These windows are surmounted by gold tiles and carved limestone, again containing pairs of downward-pointing chevrons. The flanking windows are slightly

narrower than the central ones, with each pair separated by a carved limestone panel. They are surmounted at roof level with a row of shield-like decorations.



*Figure 6 Upper floors of front, east, facade. Photo by Adrian Trevisan, 2020.*

The South façade of the building on Chew Street features similar detailing to the East façade. The first floor maintains the height of the East façade and contains three groups of three windows. Each group is slightly recessed, and the three windows in each group are separated by fluted limestone. The walls between the groups are plain limestone. At the extreme right and left the sign with shield and eagle motif is repeated; the one to the right (near Broad Street) contains a night deposit hatch, the one on the left is covered by painted wood. The circular seals with Liberty (right) and Work (left) are also repeated above. A small, square, decorated medallion projecting from the surface is centered over the center window of the left and right groups of three windows; there is no medallion over the center group of windows.





*Figure 7 South Facade. Photograph by Adrian Trevisan, 2020.*

Above this floor are two columns of 13 windows, arranged in vertical pairs as a single column, a group of three, a group of five, a group of three and a single column. The single column and groups of three repeat those on the front façade. Each vertical pair of windows in the central group of five is separated by a limestone panel similar to the single windows, but rather than carvings the panels contain three unadorned concentric square cuts into the panel. A diamond pattern runs across the panel below each of the top windows. The roof level row of shield-like decorations from the front façade is also repeated above the single windows and the group of five windows on the façade. A billboard facing south has been erected on the roof above the six windows closest to Broad Street. It currently displays an advertisement for a lawyer, but when erected by the Beneficial Savings Bank in 1950 probably displayed the name of the bank.

The West, or rear façade of the building, is made of yellow brick. Where on the East and South facades the ground story consisted of tall windows stretching the full height of the story, here there are two rows of smaller windows. The upper row consists of six windows, grouped into two groups of three. The three closest to Chew St (to the south) have been closed with orange brick. The window closest to Chew Street has an ornate metal box bearing the words “Vault Alarm” attached to it. Based on its appearance this could be an original feature of the bank, although its placement on a bricked-in window is puzzling. The row below consists of five windows. The three closest to Chew Street are filled with brick; there is an air-conditioning unit attached to the wall next to the window closest to Chew Street. The window farthest to the North is centered below the window above it. The window to the center is slightly offset to the north from the window above it. There is blank wall, rather than a window, between them, with an air-conditioning unit attached to the wall above it. These two windows have plain vertical iron bars covering them.



*Figure 8 Rear, West , facade. Photograph by Adrian Trevisan, 2020.*

The second and third stories appear to originally have had eight windows, grouped as four vertical pairs. One pair is above each of the outermost windows on the story below, with the remaining two pairs placed above the central windows. The windows to the right

have been filled with orange brick as those on the first story. Those to the left have double hung windows, separated by orange brick. A band of yellow brick runs across the façade at the height of the top of the windows. Red brick different than that used to fill the windows has been used to continue this band of brick across the window openings. The original appearance of the windows is not obvious from their current state; the orange and red brick may date from modifications done by different owners. Several rows



of patterned yellow brick divide the ground floor from those above, at the level of the dentils on the East and South facades.

To North, the building abuts a single story building. Above this building, the façade mimics that of the rear in material and appearance. The adjoining buildings block direct observation of the ground floor, but Google Maps confirms that there are nine windows, grouped in three groups of three as on the South façade. All have been filled with the orange brick used on the rear façade. The rows of patterned yellow brick dividing the ground floor from those above seen on the rear façade continues across this façade as well. Above this, the second and third stories have 13 vertical pairs of windows, arranged in the same, one, three, five, three, one pattern as on the South façade. Some have been filled with orange brick, while others have one or two double-hung windows. There is no red brick as there is on the rear façade. There seems to be no pattern determining which windows are filled and which are not. Above the top row of windows a large sign has been painted on the side of the building. The words “BENEFICIAL SAVINGS BANK” are painted in white on a black background. This is very visible to motorists driving sound on Broad Street.



*Figure 9 North facade. Photograph by Adrian Trevisan, 2020.*

## 7. Significance Criteria for designation

**A. Have significant character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation or be associated with the life of a person significant in the past;**

**B. Be associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation**

### North Philadelphia

The North City Trust Company building at 5700 N. Broad Street was constructed during a period when neighborhoods in North Philadelphia were rapidly filling in, spurred by the opening of the Broad Street Subway. Built as a symbol of the burgeoning economic prosperity and expansion in the area, it became instead a reminder of the financial ruin visited on many Americans by the Great Depression.

The part of Philadelphia which is today the intersection of North Broad Street and West Chew Avenue was until the 1920s, open farmland. Scull and Heap's 1750 "Map of Philadelphia and Parts Adjacent," shows one house on the east side of the intersection (Figure 10) of Old York Road and Shoemaker's Lane. Subsequent maps from 1808, 1843, and 1855 do not show the house, and instead show farmland. (Figure 11) By 1862 the land to southwest of the intersection had been platted, but no houses had been built. (Figure 12) By 1910, the large Widener Industrial Home for Crippled Children had been built to the southeast, and the Fern Rock Terminal development was filling in slowly, but Wister's farm remained. (Figure 13) An aerial photo from 1928 shows streets lined with rowhouses—all apparently built within a eighteen year period. (Figure 14)

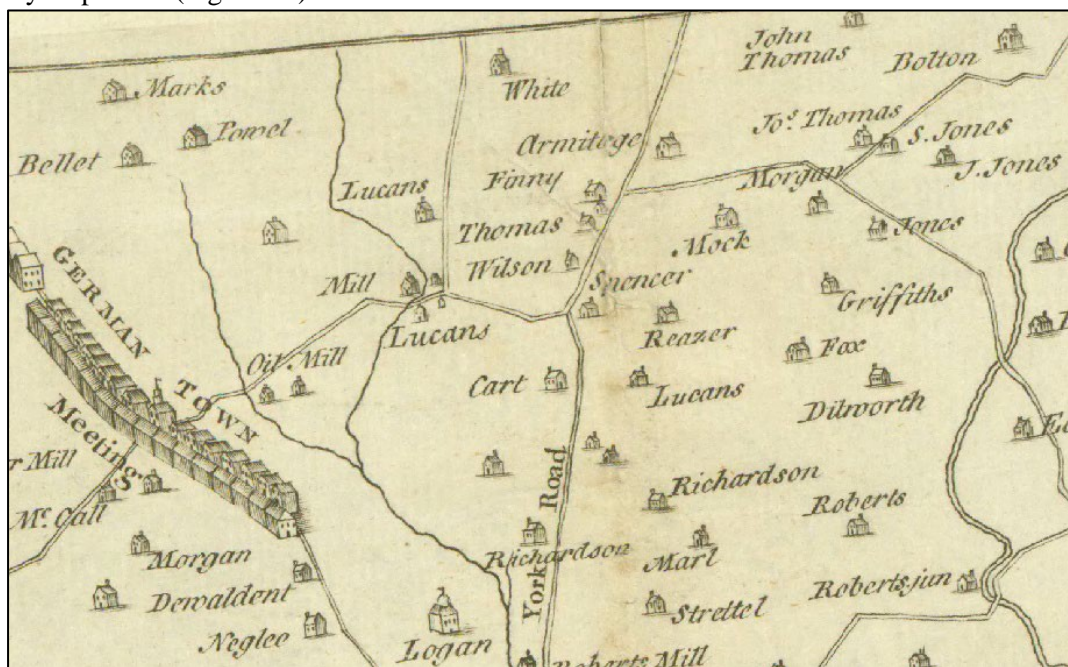


Figure 10 Detail, 1750 "Map of Philadelphia and Parts Adjacent," by Scull and Heap. 5700 North Broad is approximately at intersection of two roads near Spencer farm. Courtesy of the Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.





Figure 11 Detail from 1855 "Map of the newly consolidated City of Philadelphia," by R. L. Barnes. 5700 North Broad is approximately half way between intersection and P, Butler house. Courtesy of the Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

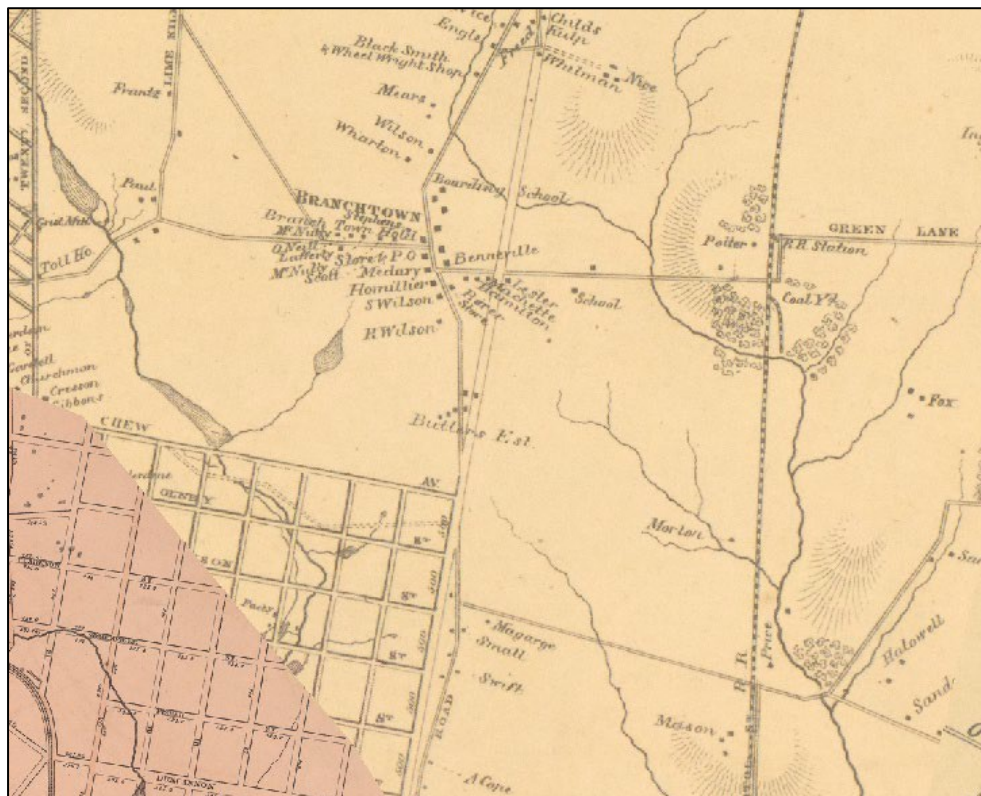


Figure 12 Detail from 1862 Philadelphia Atlas, by Samuel L. Smedley. 5700 North Broad is approximately at word "AV." Courtesy of the Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.



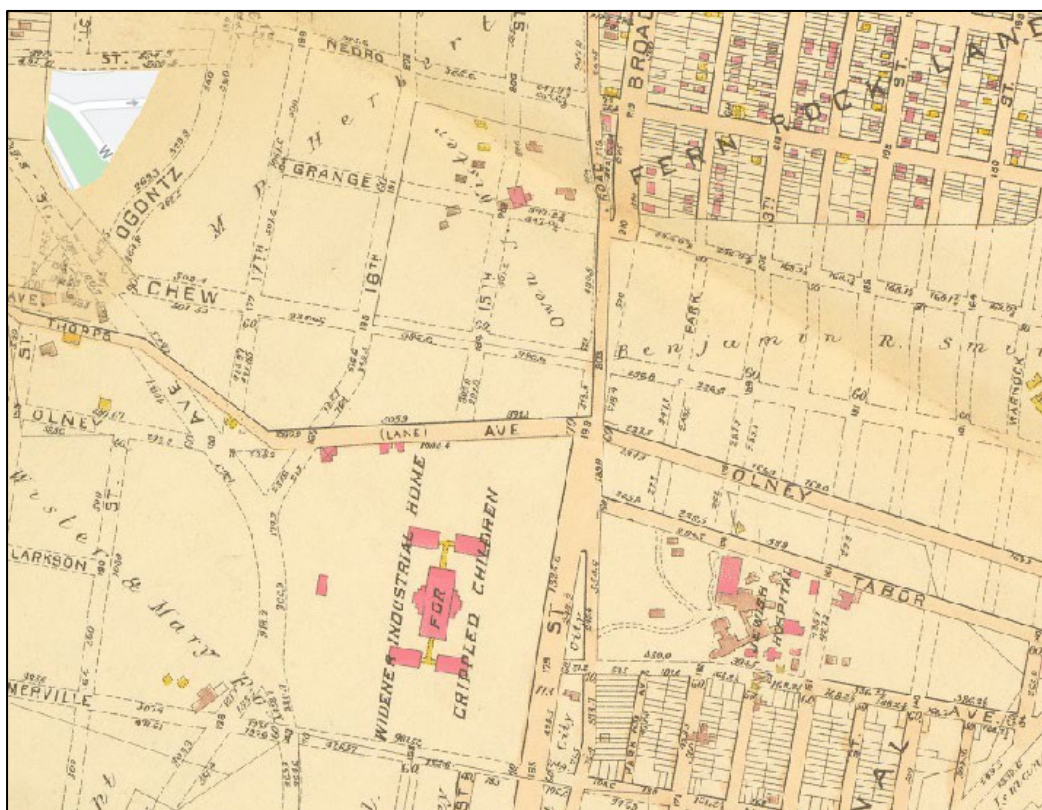


Figure 13 Detail from 1910 "Philadelphia Atlas" by G. W. Bromley. Property shown as Owen Wister's farm. Courtesy of the Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

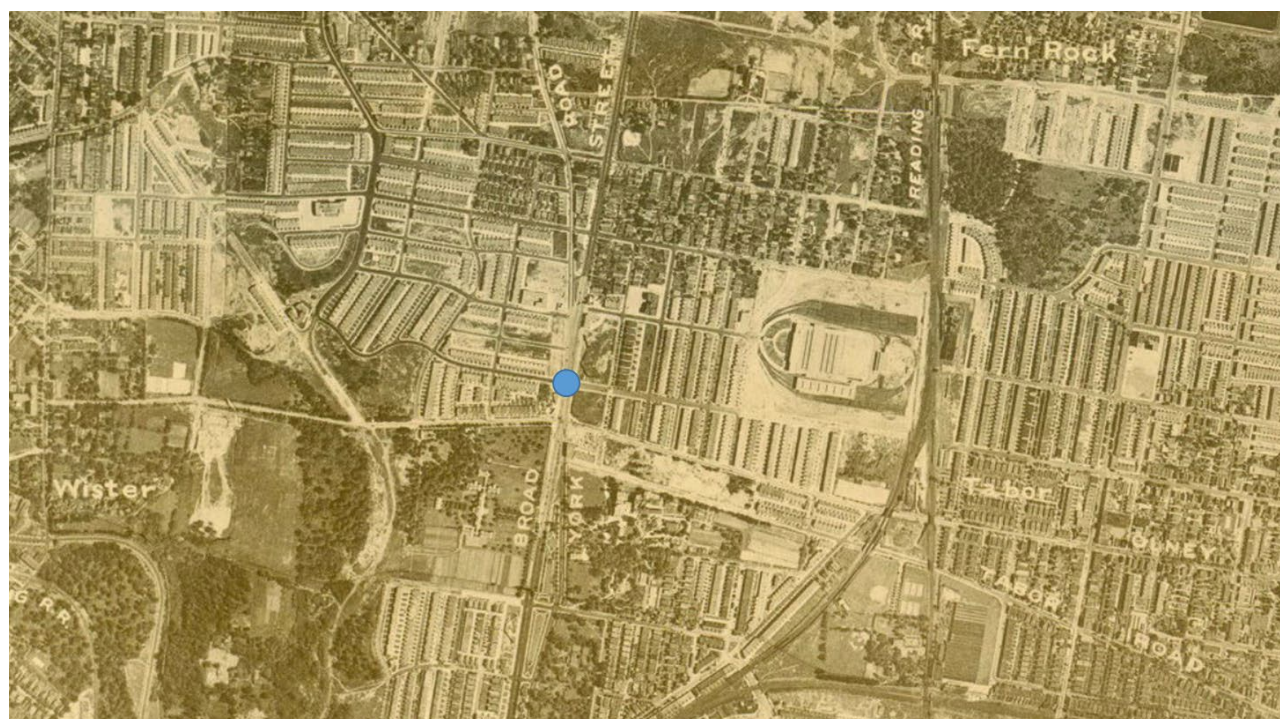


Figure 14 Detail, "Aerial Survey of the Philadelphia Region," circa 1928. Blue dots marks 5700 North Broad. Note greater housing density compared to 1910 Atlas. Courtesy of the Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network.

### Frank Schrenk

As the rowhouses were built, a local lawyer saw an opportunity to open a bank. Frank H. Schrenk was a Philadelphia boy who had attended Central High School before enrolling in the University of Pennsylvania and receiving a B.S. In Economics from Wharton in 1909, a master's degree from the Graduate School in 1912, and a law degree in 1915. While at Penn he had been an instructor in finance, as well as serving on the bowling, boxing, and swim teams, and captaining the water polo team.<sup>1</sup> Following graduation he had dabbled in real estate,<sup>2</sup> served as secretary for a steel plant in Conshohocken<sup>3</sup> and vice president of a luxury automobile company,<sup>4</sup> and had briefly come to the city's attention in a lurid crime that received front-page coverage. In 1922 21-year old Catherine Rosier was accused of shooting her husband—Schrenk's friend Oscar Rosier—and Rosier's secretary to death. In addition to outlining the prosecution's case, Schrenk took custody of Rosier's nine-year old son by a previous marriage, leading to him being accused of kidnapping by her lawyer.<sup>5</sup>



Figure 15 Frank H. Schrenk. Courtesy of Theta Chi.

Schrenk was also active in the Theta Chi fraternity at Penn, and in addition to being elected as its National Vice President for several terms, wrote the Creed still recited by the fraternity today.<sup>6</sup>

The factory of Fox Motor Car Company, of which Schrenk served as Vice President in 1922, was on Grange Avenue, near the Fern Rock Transportation Center. Perhaps this drew Schrenk to the area and alerted him to its dynamism and the imminent arrival of the Broad Street subway. In any case, on January 2, 1926 he and a partner, lawyer Robert M. Bernstein, purchased a lot at the intersection of Old York Road, Broad Street and Chew Street from Owen Wister,<sup>7</sup> which they then subdivided into two smaller lots.

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<sup>1</sup> Schrenk Named as Captain, *Christian Science Monitor*, 7 Nov 1914, p 30.

<sup>2</sup> "Investment Opportunity 10 Small Houses" *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 10 Sep 1916, p. 34. "For Sale or Rent Central Parkway Corner," *Evening Public Ledger*, Philadelphia, 15 Nov 1919, p 21

<sup>3</sup> "Steel Plant Reopened," *The Times-Tribune*, Scranton, PA, 10 Jul 1920, p 12

<sup>4</sup> "The Fox Air-Cooled Car," *Automobile Digest*, July 1921. Reprinted in *Old Cars Weekly News and Marketplace*, 24 Jun 2010. [www.oldcarsweekly.com](http://www.oldcarsweekly.com)

<sup>5</sup> "Attorney's Battle Over Rosier's Son," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 4 Feb 1922, p 3

<sup>6</sup> "Theta Chi Elect Officers Today," *The Evening News*, Harrisburg, PA, 9 Apr 1921, p 6. "Theta Chi Ideal," <https://www.thetachi.org/ideals>

<sup>7</sup> Owen J. Wister had died in 1896, followed by his wife in 1908, leaving their son Owen Wister, author of *The Virginian*, to inherit the land. Deed: 2 January 1926, Owen Wister to Frank H. Schrenk and Robert W. Bernstein, Deed Book J.M.H. No. 2292, p. 1 and following



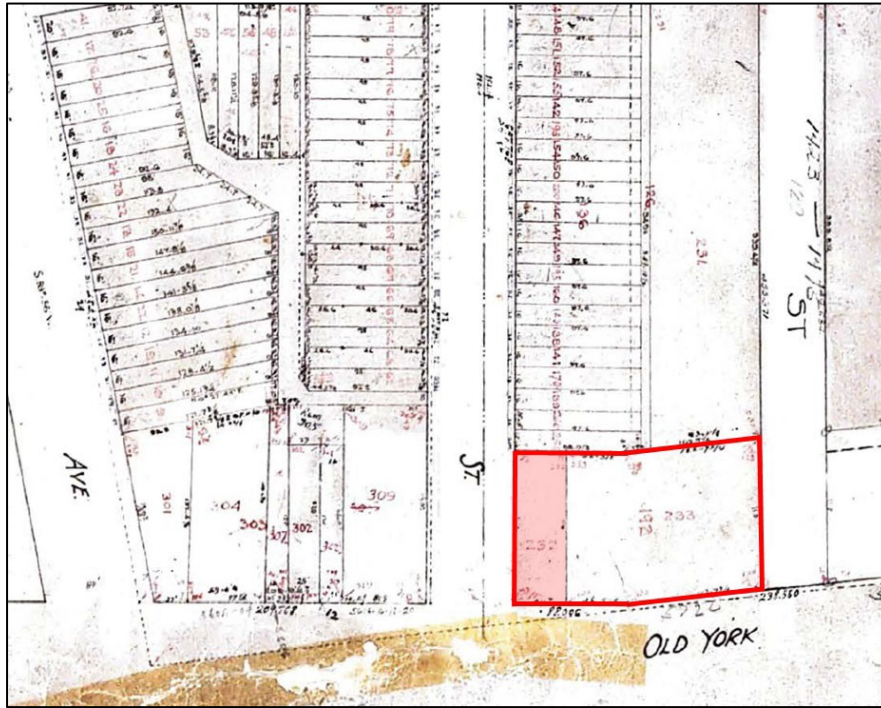


Figure 16 Detail, plat map 135 N 25. Red line delineates property purchased from Wister by Schrenk and Bernstein. Red shaded box is 5700 North Broad. Courtesy of Philadelphia CityArchives.

### North City Trust Company

On November 23, 1928 notice appeared in a local newspaper that the North City Trust Company had opened for business. While no record of the company's original building exists, newspapers accounts report that initially the bank operated out of offices at the corner of Broad and Chew, the smaller of the two subdivided lots. The 1929 Stock Market Crash appears not to have affected the new bank. By February 1930 it had \$500,000 capital, \$330,000 surplus and profits, and \$1,771,000 resources.<sup>8</sup> After an initial plan to occupy the ground floor of a fifteen-story mixed use building to be constructed by Philadelphia real estate developer, William Freihofer fell through, the bank announced plans to build a new three-story headquarters at the corner of Broad and Chew, replacing two existing one-story buildings.<sup>9</sup> The bank would occupy temporary offices nearby during construction. The bank had engaged Thalheimer and Weitz as architects and, perhaps as a sign of the times, was entertaining bids from twenty construction companies.<sup>10</sup> By October 24, 1930 F. L. Hoover and Sons had been selected for the project, which was budgeted at \$275,000 for "three stories, mezzanine

<sup>8</sup> "North City Trust Co.," *Lancaster New Era*, Lancaster, PA, 4 Feb 1930, p. 16.

<sup>9</sup> "Application for Permit for Erection of New Buildings," Philadelphia City Archives. 17 July 1930.

<sup>10</sup> "Logan Skyscraper to Coast \$3,000,000," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 13 Mar 1929, p. 2. This building—which was to have been designed by Ralph Bencker—was to have been built one block south of 5700, "in 'the large lot on the west side of Broad street extending from Olney avenue to Chew street.'" "Trust Plans N. Broad St. Building" *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 28 Sep 1930, p. 66.



and basement” with “two additional stories to be built at a later date.”<sup>11</sup> Two days later a handsome drawing appeared in the *Inquirer*, marred only by a caption specifying three stories, while showing five. Construction proceeded apace and on April 1931 the bank announced that it had leased the third floor of the building to the Prudential Insurance Company of America.<sup>12</sup> Three months later the building was finished, and two months later the second floor was leased to the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.<sup>13</sup>

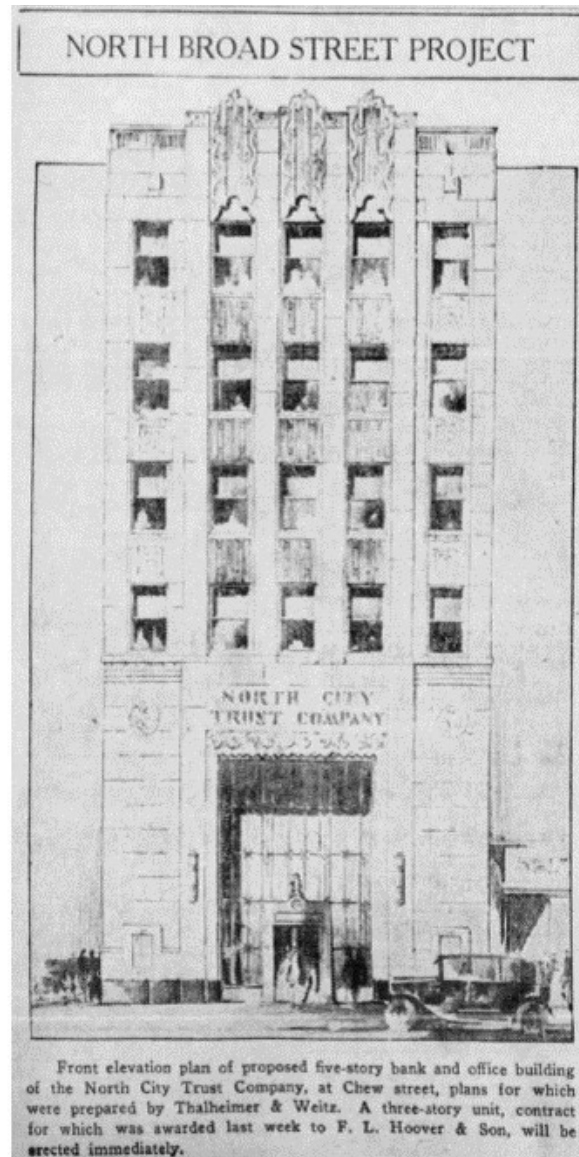


Figure 17 Illustration of 5700 North Broad Street in the October 26, 1930 *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Note that this illustration has five stories, while the actual building only has three. Courtesy of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

<sup>11</sup> “Property at Northwest Corner Thirteenth and Reed Streets Conveyed,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 24 Oct 1930, p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> “Activities in Real Estate,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 24 Apr 1931, p. 23.

<sup>13</sup> “Bank Building Completed,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 19 Jul 1931, p. 16; “Activities in Real Estate,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 13 Sep 1931, p. 55.

As Schrenk travelled to Atlanta in February 1931 to meet the other national officers of Theta Chi and plan for the fraternity's 75th anniversary, it would seem that events were going well for the North City Trust Company, but signs of trouble would soon arise. In October the board of directors of the Franklin Trust, which had suffered a run on deposits the previous December, voted to close the bank and turn it over to the Pennsylvania Banking Department. The Chamber of Commerce of Northern Philadelphia adopted "resolutions voicing confidence in the banks of Germantown, Olney, Oak Lane, and other sections of northern Philadelphia" in a meeting held at the North City Trust Company building. Earlier that day the Germantown Business Men's Association had adopted a similar resolution.



Figure 18 Photograph accompanying February 8, 1931 article in *The Atlanta Constitution* reporting on the planning meeting for Theta Chi's 75th anniversary. Schrenk is second from the right in the back row. Courtesy of *The Atlanta Constitution*.

The Franklin Trust failure followed closely on the heels of that of the Olney Bank and Trust Company, so the businessmen were worried and wanted to take action while they could. Schrenk must have been worried as well. Franklin Trust's \$3,000,000 capital, \$7,574,000 surplus and net profits, \$40,310,326 total resources dwarfed North City's corresponding \$500,000 capital, \$330,000 surplus and profits, \$1,771,000 resources.<sup>14</sup> Dr. William D. Gordon, Pennsylvania Secretary of Banking had issued a statement which in part read

"Last December, upon the closing of the Bankers' Trust Company, malicious and unfounded rumors were circulated about the Franklin Trust Company which resulted in a terrific run on it. This unjust assault was

<sup>14</sup> "Franklin Trust Closed; N. Phila. Banks Endorsed," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 6 Oct 1931, p. 1.

successfully rebuffed by the Franklin Trust Company because of its excellent position of liquidity and its sound position. The depositors were paid dollar for dollar upon request and eventually they realized that the bank had been unfairly maligned and was in a strong financial position. Concurrent with the position the run abated and the bank continued to function regularly.<sup>15</sup>

Depositors continued to withdraw money over the next months until it could not maintain legally required reserves and closed. If public panic could drive a bank as large and solid as Franklin Trust to failure, North City Trust could certainly follow.

It was all a matter of depositor confidence, so Schrenk moved preemptively to support that confidence. Shortly after this meeting, North City Trust announced that it was introducing a new type of bank statement for its customers,

“On the belief that the average depositor does not fully understand the usual form of bank statements which are ‘prepared primarily for accountants and examiners.’...The new statement contains but six items and is designed to show first; the degree of liquidity of the bank’s resources or the ability of the bank to pay its depositors unconditionally when they demand their funds and, second; the margin of protection which the bank provides for the fund of its depositors.”<sup>16</sup>

Then, in November of that year, a new group called the North City Organization, with Frank H. Schrenk as its president, conducted a survey of consumer confidence and announced that it revealed “a better than 25% increase in retail sales, a marked increase in bank deposits and a general improvement in customer sentiment” during the past three months.<sup>17</sup>

Under Schrenk’s leadership, the North City Organization—described as consisting of businessmen in the vicinity of Broad Street and Olney Avenue—continued to encourage consumer (and depositor) confidence. After re-electing its officers, including Schrenk, in its annual meeting in the North City Trust Company building, it first endorsed plans for expanded bus service to the neighborhood.<sup>18</sup> A month later the Organization protested cuts in services on the Broad Street subway. Schrenk gathered “representatives of 21 business and civic associations of the northern section of Philadelphia and Bucks and Montgomery counties” and “real estate owners and business men of the section adjacent to the Olney ave. [sic] terminal of the subway” in the community room of the North City Trust Company to confront representatives of the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company and demand changes.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> “Franklin Trust Closed; N. Phila. Banks Endorsed”

<sup>16</sup> “North City Trust Co. Adopts New Statement,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 11 Jan 1932, p. 15.

<sup>17</sup> “North Philadelphia Conditions Better,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 7 Nov 1932, p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> “Indorse [sic] Bus Line Plan” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 17 Jan 1933, p. 15.

<sup>19</sup> “Tube Service Cuts Charged to P.R.T.” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 21 Feb 1933, p. 15.



Schrenk had reacted as best he could to the local situation, using the North City Trust Company's meeting facilities to support his efforts to reinforce the bank's long-term health. But at this point macro events occurred that swept away his accomplishments. On February 14, 1933 facing a run on one of Michigan's largest banks after the breakdown of its efforts to secure a loan from the federal government, the governor of that state closed all the banks and declared a state bank holiday. This, the fourth banking panic of the Great Depression would prove to be the most severe.<sup>20</sup>

Concerns about banks spread from Michigan to other states, including Pennsylvania. Rather than declare a bank holiday in the Commonwealth, however, on Monday, February 27 the legislature unanimously passed, and the governor immediately signed, a resolution which allowed banks—with the approval of the Secretary of Banking—to refuse to make immediate full payments to depositors withdrawing their money. Any new deposits were to be placed in separate accounts which were not subject to the withdrawal limitations. On the following Friday, three small banks in Philadelphia announced that they had applied to the Secretary of Banking for protection under the resolution; the North City Trust Company was one of them. Schrenk issued a long statement which read in part, the “temporary moratorium is the only present measure available to allay the panicky fear possessing so many people...In my opinion, the situation is temporary and will be relieved by Federal legislation making for Government guarantee of bank deposits.”<sup>21</sup> The next day a fourth bank sought protection, and all of the banks reported “heavy deposits;” the North City Trust reported “nearly 100 new accounts, mainly from old depositors.”<sup>22</sup> North City Trust had avoided the fate of Franklin Trust, but only barely; while still open, it could not give its customers access to the money they had deposited with it, severely limited the services it could provide.

By the time of Roosevelt's inauguration on March 4, two and a half weeks after the declaration of the Michigan bank holiday, all 48 states had been affected, and had either declared bank holidays or enacted payment restrictions. On March 5, Roosevelt proclaimed a national bank holiday to run from March 6 to 9. On March 9 he signed the Emergency Banking Act (EBA) which retroactively declared the bank holiday to be legal, allowed the government to reopen the banks selectively, directed the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to purchase stock in undercapitalized banks, and amended the Federal Reserve Act to allow for the creation of new Federal Reserve Bank Notes backed by various bank assets. After signing the EBA, Roosevelt extended the bank holiday indefinitely. On Saturday evening, March 12 he delivered his first

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<sup>20</sup> Dighe, Ranjit S. “Saving Private Capitalism: The U.S. Bank Holiday Of 1933,” *Essays in Economic and Business History*, The Economic & Business History Society, 2011;29(1).

<sup>21</sup> “Three Small Banks Invoke Right to Curb Withdrawals,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 3 Mar 1933, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> “Heavy Depositing of Funds Reported; 1 Bank Joins List,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 4 Mar 1933, p. 1.

“fireside chat” to the nation in which he explained the cause of the bank holiday and the steps he had taken to respond to it, and announced that banks would be gradually reopened. That Monday banks were reopened in the twelve Federal Reserve cities, followed by banks in other cities on Tuesday and Wednesday. On Thursday the review was completed and all qualified banks, amounting to about 70% of the banks and 90% of the deposits had been reopened.<sup>23</sup>



Figure 19 Headline, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 13, 1933. Courtesy, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Under a banner headline reading, “50 BANKS IN PHILADELPHIA REOPEN TODAY; ROOSEVELT TELLS NATION TO BANISH FEAR” the morning edition of the March 13, 1933 *Philadelphia Inquirer* informed readers that “Fifty banks have been licensed as 100 per cent sound by Federal or State authorities and will resume normal banking operations in Philadelphia this morning.” After a list of the names of the banks, a brief paragraph noted, “The three State-controlled banks...which were operating on a limited withdrawal basis prior to the moratorium, today will resume on a limited basis.” The Federal legislation that Schrenk had called for ten days earlier had not been forthcoming, and the North City Trust Company was still on precarious footing.<sup>24</sup>

#### National Depositors' Committee

With characteristic energy, Schrenk moved quickly. On May 19 *The Wall Street Journal* reported that, “A plan, devised by a group of presidents of banks in Philadelphia, has been forwarded to President Roosevelt by Frank H. Schrenk, president of North City Trust Co., here as chairman, to provide for simultaneous reopening of closed banks.”<sup>25</sup> The article went on to summarize the proposal, which called for the complete revamping of the RFC bank program, and extending credit to the limited-withdrawal banks eliminating any

<sup>23</sup> Summarized from Dighe, p. 41-42.

<sup>24</sup> “50 Banks In Philadelphia Reopen Today; Roosevelt Tells Nation To Banish Fear,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 13 Mar 1933, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> “Bank Opening Plan,” *Wall Street Journal*, New York, 23 May 1933.

restriction on withdrawals.<sup>26</sup>

Newspapers across the country carried articles reporting that Schrenk, the president of the North City Trust Company, had contacted “5000 presidents of closed and restricted banks, asking them to get in touch with their chief depositors who would contact other depositors and appoint delegates.”<sup>27</sup> On June 10 he was elected as national chairman of the newly created National Depositors’ Committee (NDC) at a meeting of “three hundred perspiring and uproarious men and women” in Washington DC. “Proclaiming themselves the authorized representatives of 20,000,000 depositors in the closed and restricted institutions, the irate 300 stood and demanded Congress not to adjourn before helping them.” (One Harrisburg paper noted that the 300 were “representatives of closed and restricted banks in the Third Federal Reserve District...in Eastern Pennsylvania, Southern New Jersey, and Delaware,” and had been taken to Washington by special train.<sup>28</sup> If so, Schenck was ensuring that—as he had with the North City Organization the year before—he would appear as the leader of a mass movement.) To further burnish the image of the NDC, Schrenk enlisted A. Mitchell Palmer, who had been Woodrow Wilson’s Attorney General, as special counsel for the Committee, as it urged Grand Jury investigations into the process that had declared their banks insolvent.<sup>29</sup>

Following the creation of the NDC, Schrenk began a lobbying campaign to get its program enacted. The Committee developed an Eleven-Point Plan which he publicized, both in articles, and in letters to individuals who had written to him expressing their support. These individuals ensured that Schrenk’s letters were published in their local newspapers.<sup>30</sup> To solidify the NDC’s legitimacy he announced the creation of NDC Chapters in each state and began a search for state-level leadership.<sup>31</sup> He also looked for allies, and on June 18 issued a joint statement calling for reversal of the RFC actions with Vincent Bendix, president of The Committee for the Nation, a group advocating the abandonment of the gold standard in order to increase the price of commodities.<sup>32</sup> As a result of these, he announced, President Roosevelt had agreed to discuss the matter with him at the White House after returning from vacation at the end of June.<sup>33</sup>

But in doing this, Schrenk apparently adopted positions that made him enemies in Washington. He told a

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<sup>26</sup> “Nine Point Program Embodying Reform for Complete operation of Banks Now on Restricted Basis,” *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, New York, 27 May 1933, p 3637.

<sup>27</sup> “Washington Letter,” *The Selma Times-Journal*, Selma, Alabama, 15 Jun 1933, p 4

<sup>28</sup> “Depositors to Visit Capital,” *The Evening News*, Harrisburg, PA, 9 Jun 1933, p 5

<sup>29</sup> “Bank Aid Asked By Depositor at Washington,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 11 Jun 1933, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> See “Depositors in Closed Banks Make Progress,” *Republican and Herald*, Pottsville, PA, 19 Jun 1933, p 4, and “Depositors to Obtain Relief,” *Shawnee Times-Record*, Shawnee, OK, 23 Jun 1933, p 1 for examples of these letters.

<sup>31</sup> “Dockweiler Named To Head State Group,” *The San Francisco Examiner*, San Francisco, CA, 29 Jun 1933, p 26.

<sup>32</sup> “Two National Groups to Aid Closed Banks,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Chicago, 19 Jun 1933 p 1. Bratter, Herbert M. “The Committee for the Nation: A Case History in Monetary Propaganda,” *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (Aug., 1941), p. 531-553

<sup>33</sup> “Depositors to Obtain Relief,” *Shawnee Times-Record*, Shawnee, OK, 23 Jun 1933, p 1



mass meeting in Atlantic City, that an unnamed “big Wall street bank” was attempting to open a new bank in Detroit in order to gain hidden control of the automotive industry.<sup>34</sup> He went to Akron, Ohio, to weigh in on a Grand Jury investigation of school savings there, and supported a speaker calling for “bombarding” the Governor, State Bank Superintendent, and state Attorney General with letters urging action on bank closures.<sup>35</sup> In a widely-published Op-Ed article entitled “‘Frozen Bank’ Victims Given ‘Run-Around’ in Washington,” Charles P. Stewart described the NDC as having “intimidating numerical backing, unmistakably...a serious worry to Washington officialdom,” and noted that “Committees of stockholders are stronger in concentrated influence, but they do not suggest as many votes.” The piece ends with the statement, “Whether or not the depositors’ committee gets what it wants for itself, at least it has succeeded in blocking several bank reorganizations, which it regarded as to the stockholders’ advantage at the depositors’ expense.”<sup>36</sup> Finally, at the end of August, the NDC was allowed to meet with the Comptroller of the Currency—no meeting with Roosevelt ever seems to have taken place—to present the plan. “Outstanding in the depositors’ memorandum...was the assertion that a good many conservators are hindering bank reorganization. The memorandum declared that nearly all of the conservators were former officers or employees of the banks they now manage and that they are, in many cases, drawing larger salaries than they did in the official banking capacity.”<sup>37</sup> In efforts to reopen the North City Trust Company, Schrenk and the NDC mixed warnings of conspiracies with accusations of malfeasance, and claimed to be backed by 1/6 of the population of the United States. It is no wonder that an earlier article had concluded that the NDC “has been greeted no more cordially in official quarters than advocates of the Michigan plan.”<sup>38</sup>

By mid-September, George Durno reported in his “The National Whirligig” column that “Comptroller of the Currency J.F.T. O’Connor seems to be getting all hot and bothered by a relatively new lobby organization here known as the National Depositors’ Committee. [...] The depositors’ committee has two jobs to do. The advertised objective is to force treasury officials to open closed banks so depositors can get at their money. The private purpose is to defeat the deposit insurance feature of the new banking law. [...] Recently the depositors wrote letters to about 30 small bankers near Washington calling them to conference over the deposit guarantee idea. [...] One of the 30 letters was conveyed to O’Connor. He, in turn, took it to the White House. Soon thereafter O’Connor spoke before the annual convention of the American Bankers’ association. Without mentioning the name of the NDC he read a few lines for the letter in

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<sup>34</sup> “New York Group Aims to Control Detroit Banking,” *Battle Creek Enquirer*, Battle Creek, MI, 24 Jun 1933, p 1

<sup>35</sup> “Probe’s First Ballot Is Due,” *The Akron Beacon Journal*, Akron, OH, 6 Jul 1933, p 1

<sup>36</sup> Stewart, Charles P. “‘Frozen Bank’ Victims Given ‘Run-Around’ in Washington,” *The Morning Post*, Camden, NJ, 25 Jul 1933, p 8.

<sup>37</sup> “Depositors Ask For Speedy Action On Restricted Banks,” *Harrisburg Telegraph*, Harrisburg, PA, 30 Aug 1933, p 3

<sup>38</sup> “5,000 Banks Still Unopened,” *The Journal Times*, Racine, WI, 27 Jun 1933, p 2

questions and said: 'This is an example of the vicious and unwarranted propaganda being sent to small banks all over the country.'" Durno then wrote that the NDC "drew its original financial support from New York interests," and concluded "there's gold in them thar hills!"<sup>39</sup> So after three months of effort, Schrenk had not only not gotten his plan approved and his bank reopened, he was now labeled a mercenary shill for New York bankers.

On October 1, 1933 Philadelphia learned that the Federal government would reopen banks and would "provide immediate payments proportional to the liquid assets of [the] institutions." The article in *The Inquirer* went on to explain that, "Naturally, not all closed banks are to be reopened and particular attention will be paid to those institution[s] forced to lock their vaults after the historic March 5 banking holiday."<sup>40</sup> They would also learn that Frank Schrenk had returned to his office after dinner with his family the night before and committed suicide by putting a gun in his mouth. "Among the correspondence on [his] desk when he was found were several recent telegrams which had been exchanged between him and President Roosevelt and General Hugh S. Johnson, national recovery administrator."<sup>41</sup> While associates claimed that the suicide was the result of overwork, it seems obvious in retrospect that Schrenk had been told that his bank, the North City Trust Company, would not be allowed to reopen, and had not been able to deal with the finality.

### Aftermath

Resolution of finances of the North City Trust Company dragged on for a number of years. A trust fund that Schrenk had set up in 1931 directed \$44,000 of his \$60,000 life insurance policy to the bank, where it was used to repay depositors.<sup>42</sup> Finally, in 1944 depositors were paid their final liquidating dividend of 6%, bringing the total paid to them of 39% of their deposits.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Durno, George, "The National Whirligig" *The Austin American*, Austin, TX, 18 Sep 1933, p 4

<sup>40</sup> "U.S. Cash Ready in Plans to Reopen Bank," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 30 Sep 1933, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid*

<sup>42</sup> "Bank Wins \$44,000," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 9 Apr 1935, p 2.

<sup>43</sup> "Final Bank Dividend," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 24 Nov 1944, p 26.

The fate of the building itself is a bit murkier. Schrenk and his partner, Robert Bernstein, had sold the property to Elsie S. Fabry for the nominal sum of \$1 in July 1930—before the building had been



*Figure 20 Lynford Bernhardt, age 23, owner of 5700 North Broad Street from October 1930 to June 1936. Photograph circa 1930 Courtesy of University of Pennsylvania Archives.*

constructed.<sup>44</sup> Fabry had in turn sold it to Lynford P. Bernhardt in October of that same year, again for the nominal sum of \$1.<sup>45</sup> A Lynford P. Bernhardt graduated from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School in February of 1930, and in a form for the university's placement service that he filled out in 1930 and updated in 1934 wrote that he had worked at the North City Trust Company from October 1930 to December 1933, beginning as a "clerk running checks," then working his way up through several teller positions to become assistant treasurer, before leaving "because bank closed and state department took it over."<sup>46</sup> Bernhardt owned the building throughout Schrenk's efforts to reopen the bank, and this only changed in 1936 when the property was purchased in a sheriff's sale by four partners doing business as Lee and Company.<sup>47</sup> Who Fabry was, and why she and Bernhardt became owners of the building are beyond the scope of this nomination.

Lee and Company in turn sold it to James A. Andrew and his wife Eleanor in 1939 for \$95,333.12.<sup>48</sup> Two years later Andrew, who was president of the Seaboard Mutual Casualty Company, sold it to that entity for \$1.<sup>49</sup> Seaboard managed it until 1945 when the Beneficial Saving Fund Society purchased it as the site of its fourth branch office.<sup>50</sup> In 1950 Beneficial hired the Cutler Sign Advertising Company to erect a 48' x 17' sign on the roof bearing the Beneficial name;<sup>51</sup> presumably the sign painted on the north facing façade dates from the same time, and has been an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood since then. The branch office stayed open until 2008, when after 63 years Beneficial decided to close its doors. Three years later Beneficial sold it to the first of a series of limited partnerships.<sup>52</sup> Today some of the offices on the upper floors are occupied, but the grand mezzanine stands empty awaiting new occupancy.

<sup>44</sup> Deed: 30 July 1930, Frank H. Schrenk and his wife Jean R. and Robert W. Bernstein and his wife Edith L. to Elsie S. Fabry, Deed Book J.M.H. No. 2292, p. 1 and following (see note)

<sup>45</sup> Deed: 22 October 1930, Elsie S. Fabry to Lynford P. Bernhardt, Deed Book J.M.H. No. 3283, p. 242 and following

<sup>46</sup> "University of Pennsylvania Placement Service, Registration Blank for Alumni Division," University of Pennsylvania, originally completed April 2, 1930, additional information added after March 1934. On file with the University Archives.

<sup>47</sup> June 1936, William J. Hamilton Sheriff to Lee and Company, Deed Book D.W.H. No. 10, p. 405 and following

<sup>48</sup> 1 April 1939, George B. Lee, Edwin F. Schwarz, Raymond M. Rau, and Joseph B. Montgomery, trading as Lee and Company to James A. Andrew and his wife Eleanor E. Andrew, Deed Book D.W.H. No. 587, p. 581 and following

<sup>49</sup> 23 December 1941, James A. Andrew and his wife Eleanor E. Andrew to Seaboard Mutual Casualty Company, Deed Book D.W.H. No. 1449, p. 513 and following

<sup>50</sup> 1 November 1945, Seaboard Mutual Casualty Company to The Beneficial Savings Fund Society of Philadelphia, Deed Book C.J.P. No. 1056, p. 241 and following

<sup>51</sup> Philadelphia Building Permit No. 5034, dated August 4, 1950.

<sup>52</sup> 6 January 2011, The Beneficial Savings Fund Society of Philadelphia to ABA Real Estate I LP, Deed Book D.W.H. No. 10, p. 405 and following





Figure 21 Seaboard Mutual Casualty Company postcard, 1941. Courtesy of the Newberry Library.

**BENEFICIAL SAVING FUND**  
*Announces the opening on*  
**Monday, September 9, 1946**  
*of its*  
**NORTH PHILADELPHIA OFFICE**  
**5700 NORTH BROAD STREET**

In anticipation of the future growth of North Philadelphia, Beneficial Saving Fund is opening a branch office at 5700 North Broad Street to accommodate the residents of that area.

"... where deposits shall be perfectly secure." Prophetic, indeed, have been these words inscribed in the charter granted on April 20, 1853, to the incorporators of the Beneficial Saving Fund. Through the years, Beneficial has remained sound and steadfast until today it is serving over 120,000 Philadelphians and has resources totaling more than \$98,000,000.

This branch, located just one short block North of Olney Avenue Subway Terminal, will afford North Philadelphia residents the security, friendly services, and convenience of banking the "Beneficial" way.

**BENEFICIAL SAVING FUND**  
**1200 CHESTNUT STREET**  
 Broad Street & Snyder Ave.    826 E. Allegheny Ave.    5700 N. Broad Street  
**PHILADELPHIA**  
 Member of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation

Figure 22 Beneficial Savings Fund advertisement announcing the opening of a new branch at 5700 North Broad Street., on September 9, 1946. Courtesy of The Philadelphia Inquirer.

**E. Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth, or Nation.**

The architectural firm of Thalheimer and Weitz was formed in 1924 by childhood friends Clarence Thalheimer and David Weitz, while working in the office of John Windrim. Born in 1898, Clarence Thalheimer grew up in Philadelphia's Strawberry Mansion neighborhood, around 32nd and Norris Streets. He graduated from Central High School and immediately began working in an architect's office. Enjoying the work, he enrolled at the Drexel Institute and later the University of Pennsylvania. Upon graduation he



*Figure 23 Architects David D. Weitz and Clarence S. Thalheimer, stand with their model for the new PTC building at Third Street and Wyoming Avenue in 1955. Courtesy of the Temple University Digital Archives.*

joined the office of John Windrim, where he worked on commercial and public projects—"office and college buildings, hospitals and other public buildings."<sup>53</sup> David Weitz was born three years earlier than Thalheimer and grew up in the same neighborhood. He attended the University of Pennsylvania and received a BS in Architecture in 1917. After serving as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army and seeing brief service in France, he returned to Philadelphia and began work in architecture.<sup>54</sup> In 1954, Thalheimer's son Jack joined the firm and ran it after the original partners retired.

While the firm has a sizeable output of designs, both for new buildings and alterations of existing buildings, it does not yet seem to have been the subject of scholarly attention, and consequently no comprehensive list of the firm's project yet exists. Existing mentions and partial lists have been combined and arranged in chronological order in Appendix B, which is used as the basis of the following description. Although not exhaustive, the list provides a picture of the firm's activity over time, and shows that the firm's initial preference for Art Deco architecture changed after World War II to sleek modern designs, described as

<sup>53</sup> Van Atta, Burr, "Obituaries: Clarence Stern Thalheimer, co-founder of architectural firm," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, PA, 10 Oct 1984, p 54

<sup>54</sup> Tatman, Sandra L. and Emily T. Cooperman, "Thalheimer & Weitz," *Philadelphia Architects and Builders*, available at: [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/23989](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/23989), accessed 2 February 2020. Length of time that practice was in existence: founded in 1924, Van Atta, Burr, "Obituaries: Clarence Stern Thalheimer, co-founder of architectural firm;" cited in article in 1990, Nestor, Marilyn, "Press told to get site plan for garage proposal," *Asbury Park Press*, Asbury Park, NJ, 9 Aug 1990, p 22. "History of the 20th Machine Gun Battalion, USA in World War 1," available at <https://sites.google.com/site/the20thmachinegunbattalion/history-of-the-20th-machine-gun-battalion-usa-in-world-war-1>, accessed 2 February 2020.

“Jazzy architecture,” by one observer.<sup>55</sup>

According to the *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects: 1700-1930*, the headquarters for the new North City Trust Company was the twenty-first project for the partnership. Fifteen of those were new buildings and the remainder were “alterations and additions.” The fifteen new projects were a variety of

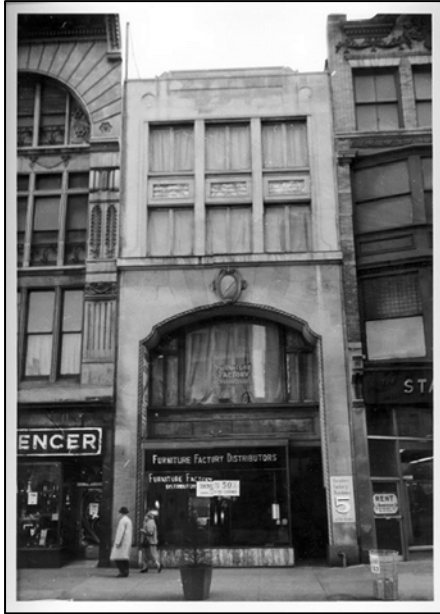


Figure 25 Thompson Spa Building, 712 Chestnut St. Philadelphia, PA. Courtesy of Philadelphia Architects and Buildings website.

types: nine were commercial, four were residential and two were mixed use.<sup>56</sup> A new façade for the Thompson Spa Building at 712 Chestnut St. and a new building for the Jaffe & Son store at 1226 Chestnut St. are the most notable, and share a large arched opening over the door with the North City Trust building.

The brief mention of the North City Trust building appearing in the “Activities in Real Estate” column of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, followed by the

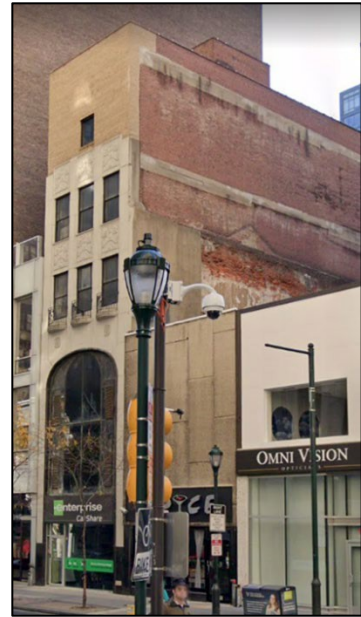


Figure 24 1226 Chestnut St. today. Courtesy of Google Maps.

rendering of the building on the Sunday, October 26, 1930 “Page Devoted to The Interests of Realty and The Building Industry” section of that same paper (Figure 17, above) appear to be the first mentions of Thalheimer and Weitz in the popular press, marking a step in the development of the firm.<sup>57</sup>

The firm’s practice focused in several areas. It designed or redesigned many movie theaters, several of which are still standing. Of the fourteen identified, nine are in Philadelphia and the remainder in surrounding towns. This type of project seems to have been more important in the early years of the firm’s existence, but tapered off later as it focused on other types of projects.

<sup>55</sup> Jeffrey L Baumoel, “A Study of Postwar Architecture in Center City, Philadelphia” (University of Pennsylvania, 1992), 176, n5, ScholarlyCommons.

<sup>56</sup> Sandra L. Tatman, *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects, 1700-1930* (Boston, Mass. : G.K. Hall, 1985), 781–82.

<sup>57</sup> “Activities in Real Estate,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Philadelphia, 23 Sep 1930, p. 22.



Name	Location	Type of Project	Date	Status <sup>58</sup>
Civic Theater	Allentown, PA	Design	1928	Cinema <sup>59</sup>
Stonehurst Theatre	Upper Darby, PA	Design	1929	Demolished, mid-1980s
Mt. Ephraim Theatre	Mount Ephraim, NJ	Design	1930	Demolished, 2007
Capital Theatre	Philadelphia	Redesign	1933	Retail
Bromley Theatre	Philadelphia	Design	1935	Retail, Preschool
Cheltenham Theatre	Philadelphia	Design	1935	Church
Castor Theatre	Philadelphia	Design	1936	Retail
Dante Theatre	Philadelphia	Redesign	1938	Education
Hunt's Shore Theater	Wildwood, NJ	Design	1939	Demolished, 2006
Broadway Theatre	Philadelphia	Redesign	1940	Demolished, 1971
Devon Theater	Philadelphia	Design	1948	Church
Lawrence Park Theater	Broomall, PA	Design	1957	Retail
Regency I & II	Philadelphia	Design	1967	Demolished, 1987
Duke and Duchess Theatres	Philadelphia	Design	1969	Demolished, 1987



Figure 26 Bromley Theatre, Undated photograph. Courtesy of Cinema Treasures website.

<sup>58</sup> “Movie Theaters Designed by Thalheimer & Weitz - Cinema Treasures,” accessed March 2, 2020, <http://cinematreasures.org/firms/97?status=closed>.

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.mcall.com/news/local/allentown/mc-pictures-inside-look-renovations-on-civic-s-19th-theatre-of-allentown-continues-20180419-photogallery.html>; also listed in Tatman.

Another area of concentration for the firm was retail, both individual buildings and shopping centers. In addition to the two stores mentioned above, the earliest shopping center seems to have been a store and theater complex at York Road & Hillside Avenue in Jenkintown, PA, which the firm designed for E. T. Quinn in 1928, two years before the North City Trust Building. Sadly, this seems to have been demolished in the intervening years.<sup>60</sup> The firm returned to this sector after World War II, designing such projects as the W. T. Grant store in Center City (1953),<sup>61</sup> the Lord & Taylor Department Store and Bala Cynwyd Shopping Center in Bala Cynwyd (1956),<sup>62</sup> the Lit Brothers store in Camden, the William Penn Shop (a



Figure 27 Drawing of the W. T. Grant Co. at 11th and Market Streets, dated 1953. Courtesy of Temple University Digital Archives.

Division of Penn Fruit Company), Snellenburg's Suburban Department Store in Willow Grove, PA (1957),<sup>63</sup> the Cedar Shopping Center, Cheltenham, PA (1961), and the Oak Park Shopping Center in Springfield Township, PA (1961).<sup>64</sup> The firm received awards in the Commercial Category from, *Progressive Architecture* Magazine in 1959 for the Oak Park Shopping Center and the Cedar Shopping Center.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Tatman, *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects, 1700-1930*.

<sup>61</sup> "Architectural Drawing of Grant's in Center City Philadelphia - George D. McDowell Philadelphia Evening Bulletin Photographs - Digital Collections," accessed March 2, 2020, <https://digital.library.temple.edu/digital/collection/p15037coll3/id/1744/rec/1>.

<sup>62</sup> Baumol, "A Study of Postwar Architecture in Center City, Philadelphia."

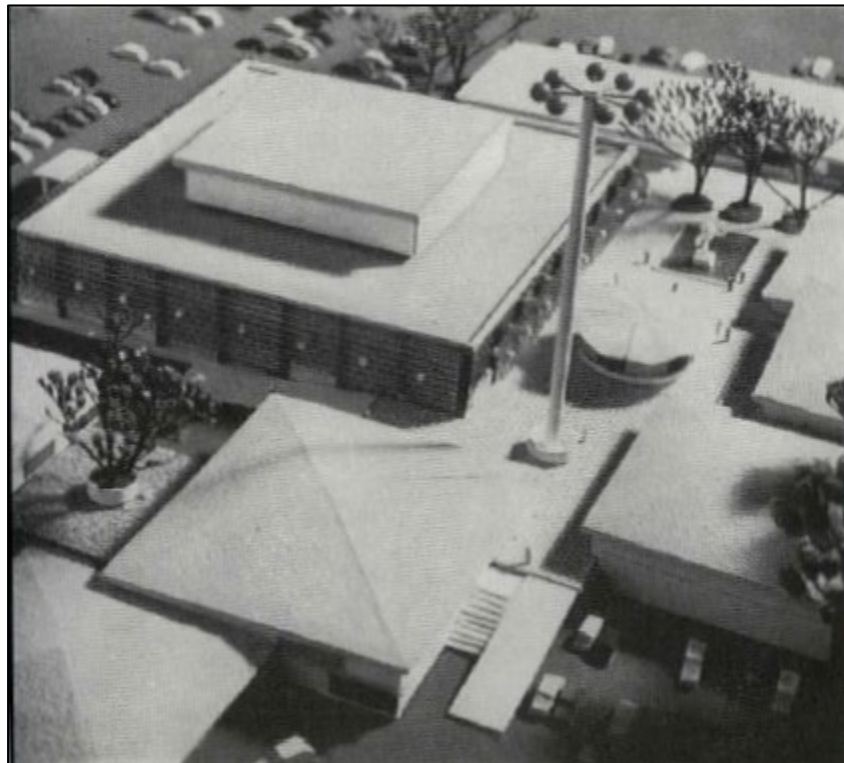
<sup>63</sup> Philadelphia Chapter American Institute of Architects, *Annual Year Book*, 1957, Philadelphia PA. p 102, 104, 105

<sup>64</sup> Koyl, George S., ed. *American Architects Directory*. 2d ed. New York: Published under the sponsorship of American Institute of Architects by R.R. Bowker, 1962.

<sup>65</sup> *Progressive Architecture*, Reinhold Publishing Corporation, New York, NY, 01-1959. p 120



*Figure 28 Lit Brothers Department Store, Camden, NJ. 1957 Philadelphia Chapter AIA Yearbook*



*Figure 29 Oak Park Shopping Center, Clifton Heights, PA. 1959 Philadelphia Chapter AIA Yearbook*



A third area of concentration was offices and banks; perhaps the firm referred to 5700 North Broad in early pitches. The 1950s were a prolific period for this type of project with the Remington Rand Building (1949),<sup>66</sup> the Bankers Security Corporation (1951?),<sup>67</sup> the Philadelphia Transportation Company (1956), the First Federal Savings Bank (1957), the Provident Tradesmen's Bank and Trust Company in Germantown (1957), and the Girard Trust Corn Exchange Bank, Philadelphia (1958), all completed during that decade. The next bank project, the Fidelity-Philadelphia Trust Co. Branch Bank in Feasterville, did not occur until 1965.<sup>68</sup> The firm received the Pennsylvania Society of Architects Award for the Philadelphia Transportation Company building.<sup>69</sup>



*Figure 30 First Federal Savings and Loan Association, Philadelphia, PA. 1957 Philadelphia Chapter AIA Yearbook.*

A final area of concentration was schools and government buildings. Projects in this area include the Benjamin Franklin High School (1956), Gratz College (1962), the Capitol Plaza in Trenton, NJ (1963), the Education & Psychology Building (aka Chambers Building) and the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences (aka Deike Building) at Pennsylvania State University (1963), the Stephen Decatur Elementary School (1964), and the Physical Education Center at Drexel Institute of Technology (1966). The firm received AIA chapter citations for excellence for the two Pennsylvania State University buildings and for the Capitol Plaza.<sup>70</sup> The firm was also involved in the design of Philadelphia's Suburban Station in 1930, although the

<sup>66</sup> "Thalheimer & Weitz (Fl. 1924 - ca. 1988) -- Project List -- Philadelphia Architects and Buildings," accessed March 2, 2020, [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display\\_projects.cfm/23989](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display_projects.cfm/23989).

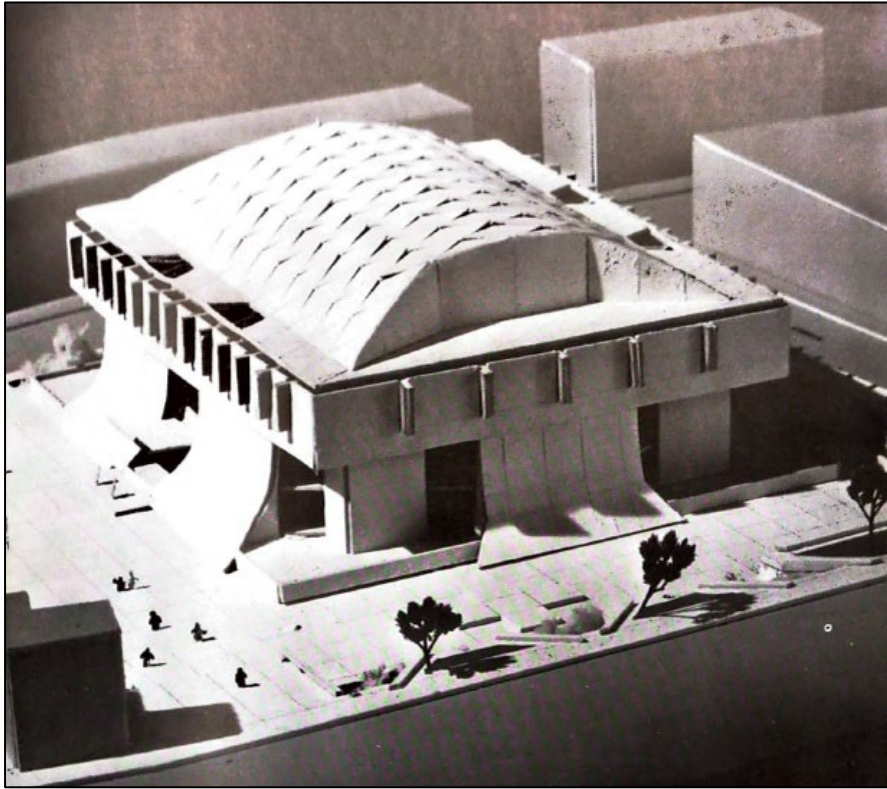
<sup>67</sup> *Fifty Years of Buildings by Turner*, Turner Construction Company, New York, NY, 1962, p 45.

<sup>68</sup> Philadelphia Chapter American Institute of Architects, Annual Year Books, 1956, 57, 58, 65

<sup>69</sup> Koyl

<sup>70</sup> Philadelphia Chapter American Institute of Architects, Annual Year Books, 1956, 62, 63, 64, 66.

details of its involvement are not described in sources.<sup>71</sup>



*Figure 31 Physical Education Center Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA. 1966 Philadelphia Chapter AIA Yearbook.*

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<sup>71</sup> "Suburban Station -- Associated Architects, Engineers, Etc.," accessed March 2, 2020, [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/pj\\_display\\_allarchitects.cfm/71879](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/pj_display_allarchitects.cfm/71879).



*Figure 32 Deike Building, College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, 1965. Courtesy of Pennsylvania State University Digital Collections.*



*Figure 33 Chambers Building, College of Education, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, 1969. Courtesy of Pennsylvania State University Digital Collections.*



In addition to these designs for new structures, the firm was involved in renovations to many buildings, including at least six buildings on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places.<sup>72</sup>

Thalheimer and Weitz's many designs in and around Philadelphia have had a significant influence on the appearance of the City. While the most well-known of those date from the firm's post-World War II modern period, the North City Trust Company building is a prime example of their pre-World War II Art Deco work.

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<sup>72</sup> Number of buildings derived from comparison of the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places dated 8 January 2020 (available at <https://www.phila.gov/documents/philadelphia-register-of-historic-places/>.) to the list of Thalheimer & Weitz buildings compiled by Philadelphia Architects and Builders, (available at [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display\\_projects.cfm/23989](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display_projects.cfm/23989), accessed 2 February 2020). They are: Bellevue-Stratford Hotel, Land Title Building, Lit Brothers Store, Philadelphia Bourse Building, Philadelphia City Hall, Suburban Station, Warwick Hotel

**Appendix A**  
**Chain of Title: 5700 North Broad Street**

**16 August 1867, James W. Leigh and wife Frances to Owen J. Wister**

Property: deed is not legible but from 1895 Bromley Atlas it appears to be a large farm

Price: deed is not legible

Source: Deed Book T.G. No. 311, p. 227 and following

**2 January 1926, Owen Wister to Frank H. Schrenk and Robert W. Bernstein**

Property: one lot approximately 0.5 acres (22,000 square feet) running along North Broad and Old York Roads between Chew Street and Clearview Street (see Figure 16, p. 12 above)

Price: \$1

Source: Deed Book J.M.H. No. 2292, p. 1 and following

Note: Owen J. Wister and his wife Sarah B. Wister died in 1896 and 1908 respectively, leaving the property to their son Owen Wister

**30 July 1930, Frank H. Schrenk and his wife Jean R, and Robert W. Bernstein and his wife Edith L to Elsie S. Fabry**

Property: rectangular lot approximately 0.11 acres (4,823 square feet) at the corner of North Broad and Chew Streets, extending 116 feet along Chew Street and 41 feet 7 inches along North Board Street

Price: \$1

Source: Deed Book J.M.H. No. 2292, p. 1 and following

Note: 1) Schrenk and Bernstein divided the lot purchased from Wister into two unequal parts; this is the smaller, southern lot. 2) Search using the Philadelphia City Archives' online system returns an incorrect deed. Archives staff can provide the correct deed.

**22 October 1930, Elsie S. Fabry to Lynford P. Bernhardt**

Property: same as above

Price: \$1

Source: Deed Book J.M.H. No. 3283, p. 242 and following

**June 1936, William J. Hamilton Sheriff to Lee and Company**

Property: same as above, with addition of the description of the northern line of the property as "extending partly through the center of a certain four inch partition wall and partly through the center of a certain thirteen inch partition wall"

Price: \$50

Source: Deed Book D.W.H. No. 10, p. 405 and following

**1 April 1939, George B. Lee, Edwin F. Schwarz, Raymond M. Rau, and Joseph B. Montgomery, trading as Lee and Company to James A. Andrew and his wife Eleanor E. Andrew**

Property: same as above

Price: \$135,000

Source: Deed Book D.W.H. No. 587, p. 581 and following

**23 December 1941, James A. Andrew and his wife Eleanor E. Andrew to Seaboard Mutual Casualty Company**

Property: same as above

Price: \$95,333

Source: Deed Book D.W.H. No. 1449, p. 513 and following

**1 November 1945, Seaboard Mutual Casualty Company to The Beneficial Savings Fund Society of Philadelphia**

Property: same as above

Price: \$242,500

Source: Deed Book C.J.P. No. 1056, p. 241 and following

**6 January 2011, The Beneficial Savings Fund Society of Philadelphia to ABA Real Estate ILP**

Property: same as above

Price: \$314,000

Source: Deed Book D.W.H. No. 10, p. 405 and following

**12 January 2012, ABA Real Estate I LP to 5700 N. Broad Partners LP**

Property: same as above

Price: \$500,000

Source: Document ID #52435234

**19 December 2019, 5700 N. Broad Partners LP to 5700 N. Broad Street LP**

Property: same as above

Price: \$345,000

Source: Document ID #52866571



## Appendix B

List of buildings designed by Thalheimer and Weitz; does not include alterations

### Sources

- AAD American Architects Directory
- AIA Philadelphia Chapter American Institute of Architects' Annual Yearbook
- Baumoel Jeffrey L. Baumoel, "A Study of Postwar Architecture in Center City, Philadelphia"
- BDPA Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects
- CT Cinema Treasures website
- PA&B Philadelphia Architects and Buildings website
- PAM Progressive Architecture Magazine
- PSU Pennsylvania State University Digital Collections
- Temple Temple University's Digital Collections
- Turner 50 Years of Buildings by Turner Construction

### 1925

- Alemite Lubricator Co store 1522-24 Fairmount Ave., Philadelphia, PA [BDPA]
- Charles G. Levittie apartments & stores, 532-38 Carpenters La., Philadelphia, PA [BDPA]
- Peter Stephens, garage, 26th & Somerset Sts., Philadelphia, PA [BDPA]
- Thompson Spa Building, 712 Chestnut St. Philadelphia, PA [BDPA]

### 1926

- Logan Oakland Motor Co., sales & service building, 4718 N. Broad St., Philadelphia, PA [BDPA]
- Suburban Dev. Co, residences (16), 51st St. & Woodbine Ave., Philadelphia, PA [BDPA]

### 1928

- Quinn, E.T., bank, apartments, stores & theatre complex, York Rd. & Hillside Ave., Jenkintown, PA, [BDPA]
- Civic Theatre, 1020 Hamilton St., Allentown, PA, [BDPA]

### 1929

- Jaffe & Son, 1226 Chestnut St, Philadelphia, PA [PA&B, BDPA]
- Kenwyn Apartments Company, apartment house, Kenwyn Ave. & Oxford St., Philadelphia, PA [BDPA]
- Kershaw & Raney, Store 69th & Market Sts., Philadelphia, PA [BDPA]
- Stonehurst Theatre, Upper Darby, PA [CT]

### 1930

- Frederick Bauer, Store, 5705 N. 5th St., Philadelphia, PA [BDPA]
- Bee-Bee Construction Company, apartment house, SE 53rd St. & Wynnefield Ave., Philadelphia, PA [BDPA]
- North City Trust Co., 5700-02 N. Broad St., Philadelphia, PA [BDPA]

- 1933
- Mt. Ephraim Theatre, Mount Ephraim, NJ [CT]
- 1935
- Bromley Theatre, Philadelphia, PA [CT]
  - Cheltenham Theatre, Philadelphia, PA [CT]
- 1936
- Castor Theatre, Philadelphia, PA [CT]
- 1939
- Hunt's Shore Theater, Wildwood, NJ [CT]
- 1940
- Philadelphia Psychiatric Hospital, Philadelphia, PA [PA&B]
- 1948
- Baker's Shoe Store, Philadelphia, PA [Baumoel]
  - Devon Theater, Philadelphia, PA [CT]
- 1949
- Remington Rand Building, Philadelphia, PA [AIA]
- 1950
- Square Industries "Eglin's" Parking Garage, Philadelphia, PA [Baumoel]
- 1951?
- Bankers Security Corporation, Philadelphia, PA [Turner]
- 1952
- Edward Gideon Elementary School, Philadelphia, PA [PA&B]
- 1953
- W.T. Grant Co. Center City Department Store, Philadelphia, PA [Temple]  
<https://digital.library.temple.edu/digital/collection/p15037coll3/id/62621/rec/3>
- 1956
- Philadelphia Transportation Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania [AIA]
  - New Senior [Benjamin Franklin?] High School, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania [AIA]
  - Bala Cynwyd Shopping Center, Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania, including The Blum Store [AIA; Temple]
- 1957
- Provident Tradesmen's Bank and Trust Company, Germantown [AIA]
  - William Penn Shop, Division of Penn Fruit Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania [AIA]
  - Snellenberg's Department Store, Willow Grove, PA [AIA]
  - Lit Brothers Department Store, Camden, NJ [AIA]
  - Commercial Museum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania [AIA]

- First Federal Savings and Loan Association, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania [AIA]
- Lawrence Park Theater Broomall, PA [CT]

1958

- Penn Fruit Company, Strafford Shopping Center, Strafford, Pennsylvania [AIA]
- Philadelphia Transportation Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania [AIA]
- Fidelity Philadelphia Trust Company, Bala-Cynwyd Shopping Center, Bala-Cynwyd, Pennsylvania [AIA]
- Horn and Hardart, Castor-Cottman Shopping Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania [AIA]
- William H. Wanamaker, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania [AIA]
- Cheltenham Columbarium, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania [AIA]
- Girard Trust Corn Exchange Bank, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania [AIA]
- Asplundh Field House, Academy of the New Church, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania [AIA]
- Wernersville State Hospital, Wernersville, Pennsylvania [AIA]

1959

- Oak Park Shopping Center, Clifton Heights, Penna [AIA]
- Stand for Commonwealth of Pa [AAD]

1960

- New House of Detention, City of Philadelphia [AIA]
- Stand for Commonwealth of Pa [AAD]
- Snellenburg's Department. Store, Broomall [AAD]

1961

- Fair Oaks Apartment Development, Horsham, Penna [AIA]
- Cedar Shopping Center, Cheltenham, PA [AIA]
- Stand for Commonwealth of Pa [AAD]

1962

- Gratz College, Tenth & Tabor Road, Philadelphia, Pa. [AIA]
- Thomas E. Coe Building, West Philadelphia, PA [Temple]  
<https://digital.library.temple.edu/digital/collection/p15037coll3/id/38796/rec/12>

1963

- Capitol Plaza, Trenton, New Jersey (citation for excellence 1963) [AIA]
- Education & Psychology Building (aka Chambers Building), Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa. [AIA, PSU]  
<https://digital.libraries.psu.edu/digital/collection/psuimages/id/1076/>
- College of Earth and Mineral Sciences (aka Deike Building.), Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa. [AIA, PSU] Note: AIA calls it "Physical Education Building"  
<https://digital.libraries.psu.edu/digital/collection/psuimages/id/1117/rec/1>

1964

- Stephen Decatur Elementary School, Philadelphia, PA [Temple]  
<https://digital.library.temple.edu/digital/collection/p15037coll3/id/56144/rec/13>

1965

- Fidelity-Philadelphia Trust Co. Branch Bank, Feasterville, Pennsylvania [AIA]



- Barclay Theater, City Line Avenue, Philadelphia, PA [AIA]
- Mental Health Institute, Philadelphia Psychiatric Center [AIA]
- Commercial Complex, Abingdon, PA [Temple]  
<https://digital.library.temple.edu/digital/collection/p15037coll3/id/81734/rec/8>

1966

- Physical Education Center (Daskalakis Athletic Center), Drexel Institute of Technology, Philadelphia, Pa. [AIA]

1967

- Regency I & II, Philadelphia, PA [CT]

1968

- Duke and Duchess Theatres, Philadelphia, PA [CT]

## Appendix C

### List of awards received by Thalheimer and Weitz

#### Sources

- AAD American Architects Directory
- PAM Progressive Architecture Magazine

1954

- *Progressive Architecture Magazine*, Recreational Category: Design Award - Neighborhood Center, Philadelphia; Award Citation - Ashbourne County Club, Melrose Park, PA [PAM]

1957

- Award in Industry Category, Pennsylvania Society of Architects/AIA, Philadelphia Transportation. Co. Building [AAD]

1958

- Award in Industry Category, Pennsylvania Society of Architects/AIA, Education Buildings, Pa. State University [AAD]
- Award in Industry Category, Pennsylvania Society of Architects/AIA, Oak Park Shopping Center, Clifton Heights, Pa. [AAD]

1959

- *Progressive Architecture Magazine*, Commercial Category: Award Citation - Oak Park Shopping Center [PAM]

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