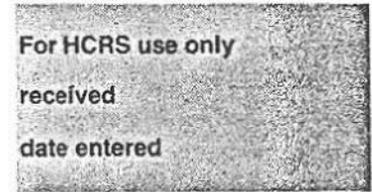


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**



**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic FIRST NATIONAL BANK (Preferred)

and/or common PEOPLE'S FEDERAL BUILDING ; Liberty Trust Co.

2. Location

street & number 101 South Jefferson Street N/A not far publication
 city, town Roanoke N/A vicinity of Sixth congressional district (M. Caldwell Butler)
 state Virginia code 51 county (in city) _____ code 770

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

name MFW Associates (Horace G. Fralin, Elbert H. Waldron, Arnold P. Masinter)
c/o Arnold P. Masinter, Managing Partner

street & number 4227 Colonial Avenue, S.W.

city, town Roanoke N/A vicinity of _____ state Virginia 24018

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Roanoke City Hall

street & number N/A

city, town Roanoke state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for Survey records Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
221 Governor Street

city, town Richmond state Virginia 23219

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The First National Bank Building is located at 101 South Jefferson Street, the main commercial street of downtown Roanoke. It was erected after the plans of Norfolk architect John Kevan Peebles. Following its completion in 1910, the granite and buff-colored-brick, seven-story building was called in a contemporary newspaper account a "Temple of Finance" in the "French Renaissance" style. Classical derivations are found in the Roman Ionic columned main entrance, in the structure's exterior detailing, and in the main banking hall, the Doric columns of which are derived from the Temple of Apollo at Delos. At the time of its erection the First National Bank was the most advanced fireproof structure in Roanoke and introduced the latest technological improvements in plumbing, heating, and the electric elevator.

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The building's first and second stories are built of North Carolina granite with the stone on the first story worked in rusticated banding. The main (east) entrance is found on South Jefferson and is framed by two large Roman Ionic marble columns. The doorway is divided into three parts. The first part contains replaced plate-glass double doors topped by a large plate-glass transom, also a later substitution. The second part contains the original carved stone aedicule with a cornice topped by a ramped blocking course and supported on consoles. The door frame is embellished by carved rosettes. The third part of the doorway consists of a multi-light transom that is original. The first-story windows on the east and north elevations are recessed in concave frames with keystones; the stonework is finely cut and fitted. On the east (main) elevation, the windows have bronze mullions and panels; on the north elevation the windows all have bronze mullions with panels on all but the three center windows. Fenestration on the second story consists of paired 1/1 hung-sash windows topped by lintels with center keystones; the windows on the main elevation have iron grilles. The second story is separated from the brick upper stories by a stone belt course with carved stone panels set between the second- and third-story windows. The paired windows on the third through the seventh stories have inset brick panels beneath the sills. The end bays on both Jefferson Street and Salem Avenue are flanked by rusticated brick banding. The South Jefferson and Salem elevations are distinguished by an elaborate overhanging cornice of terra cotta. The cornice is supported by squared brackets ornamented by frets. The brackets terminate into pendants that are molded in the form of grapes. The brackets are further embellished by guilloches. Dentils run the length of the cornice; carved rosettes and rectangular panels add further embellishment. The roof is topped by a balustrade.

The main entrance leads to a small vestibule from which access is gained to the offices located above the main banking hall. As originally planned the building had one hundred offices. A stair and an elevator, one of the first electric elevators in Roanoke, service the upper floors. Sliding bronze doors framed within a shouldered architrave lead to the main banking hall. The vestibule and main banking hall, the latter now carpeted, have marble tiled floors. The banking room was described in an early newspaper account of 1910:

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1910 **Builder/Architect** John Kevan Peebles

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Roanoke's former First National Bank building, built in 1910, is the work of John Kevan Peebles of Norfolk, one of Virginia's leading early 20th-century architects. Planned according to the most modern concepts of bank and office design and fireproofing, the building with its French Renaissance influence exhibits Peebles's practical training as an engineer as well as his mastery of the repertoire of revivalistic styles then in fashion throughout the United States. The structure served as the headquarters of the first bank founded in Roanoke following its incorporation by the General Assembly in 1882. Established to facilitate the financial transactions of the Shenandoah Valley Railroad, the First National Bank subsequently followed a career that closely paralleled the growth of the city into the leading financial and industrial center of Southwest Virginia. Although no longer serving its original function, the building remains one of the best-preserved and best-appointed Edwardian era bank buildings in the state.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Upon its completion in 1910, the First National Bank was Roanoke's landmark of modernity. At the time the bank was built, commercial buildings throughout America were becoming taller, and the multi-story office had come into prominence as the leading type of commercial structure. The sudden extension in height was the result of technological improvements in plumbing and fireproofing and the invention of the electric elevator which opened for use upper-floor space that was previously thought undesirable. The First National Bank was Roanoke's answer to the multi-story bank and office. Hailing its arrival, the Roanoke Times noted that the building possessed two elevators "of the latest traction design" and "electric construction." The newspaper also noted that "each office is supplied with a lavatory, and the plumbing throughout the building is the most improved sanitary construction."¹ The Times called the new edifice "A Temple of Finance," and, indeed, the classicism of its entrance and main banking hall indicates a strong Beaux Arts influence.

The building's architect, John Kevan Peebles, was called in his time "the Dean of Architects in Virginia" and "the foremost architect of the state."² A native Virginian, he was born in Petersburg and graduated from the University of Virginia where he was an instructor in engineering for several years. Upon leaving the University, Peebles practiced civil engineering in Cumberland Gap, Tennessee, before moving to Norfolk in 1892 to practice architecture. There he was associated with J. Edwin R. Carpenter, who received his architectural training at MIT and the Ecole Des Beaux Arts and no doubt imparted his knowledge of classical and Renaissance architecture to his colleague. One of Peebles's early works in association with Carpenter was Fayerweather Gymnasium at the University of Virginia. Carpenter later moved to New York, and Peebles practiced independently until 1917. During this time he served on the architectural committee for the restoration of the State Capitol at Richmond (1902-03), was a member of the board of design for the Jamestown Exposition

9. Major Bibliographical References (See Continuation Sheet #1)

Barnes, Raymond P. History of the City of Roanoke. Radford, Va.: Commonwealth Publishing Press, Inc., 1968.

"The First National Bank." Roanoke Times, December 31, 1910, p. 7.

"First National Bank in its New Home." Roanoke Times, December 28, 1910, p. 3.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1/10 acre (5,550 sq. ft.)

Quadrangle name Roanoke, Va.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	7	5	9	3	8	1	0	4	1	2	5	3	1	8	1	0
Zone				Easting				Northing								

B

Zone				Easting				Northing								

C

Zone				Easting				Northing								

D

Zone				Easting				Northing								

E

Zone				Easting				Northing								

F

Zone				Easting				Northing								

G

Zone				Easting				Northing								

H

Zone				Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property consists of a rectangular lot measuring 50'x111' located at the SW corner of Salem Ave., S.W., and S. Jefferson St. Roanoke Assessor's Records: Block #528222-80, Lots 73-74.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

organization Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission date January 1982

street & number 221 Governor Street telephone (804) 786-3144

city or town Richmond state Virginia 23219

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

H. Bryan Mitchell
H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director
title Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date FEB 16 1982

For HCRS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

FIRST NATIONAL BANK, Roanoke (city), Va.

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 9, 10, 7

Page 1

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"First National Bank's Noble Building." Roanoke Times, December 24, 1910, pp. 1-2.

"John K. Peebles, Dean of Virginia Architects, Dead." Virginian Pilot, August 1, 1934, p. 31.

Whitey, Henry F. and Elsie R. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, Inc., 1970.

10. BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION: The bounds have been drawn to coincide with the above-described lot, which is precisely the same as when the building was erected in 1910 and includes no additional acreage.

7. DESCRIPTION

The banking room, which occupies the first floor, is 45 feet wide by 80 feet long. It is divided into three spaces architecturally by two rows of columns. These columns are of steel, inclosed in a cast of artificial marble, which so well matches the real substance as to deceive many who have examined it. The screen of the working department centers in the marble columns, forming an open space for the public in the center sixteen feet wide, and extending back nearly the full length of the room. The screen is of Formosa marble, capped with bronze grill work, covering plate glass panels. The end of the screen in front of the vault is treated in a monumental manner, with bronze door. The vault itself is of monumental construction, and is faced with marble from the floor throughout the entire height, which is something over twenty feet. Over the door of the vault is a Western Union time clock the hands of which revolve inside the bronze dial, four feet in diameter.¹

The ceiling presently has acoustical tiles. The columns in the banking hall were derived from the Temple of Apollo at Delos. The bronze grillwork that originally defined the individual tellers' cages has been removed. A secondary staircase of iron is found on the west wall and leads to second-floor offices. The floors and baseboards of the second through the seventh floors are marble. The door trim on the second through the seventh floors is copper covered, and the glass transoms are wired glass; the window glass throughout the building is also wired as a fire-prevention measure. The newspaper account of 1910 describes in some detail the second-most lavish space in the building, the directors' room on the second floor:

Over the entrance to the building and above the vestibule is the directors' room of generous size, 26 by 22 feet. This room has beam finish, and is in mahogany and quartered oak. Silk brocade is used as a part of the exquisite finish. The president's office and cashier's office are both to the right of the entrance at the front. The location of these offices at the front is in strict accordance with modern banking methods, and is now almost universally adopted in the newest and best buildings.²

The directors' room with its massive but short columns has since been painted and carpeted so as to suggest nothing of its original finish.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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FIRST NATIONAL BANK, Roanoke (city), Va.

Continuation sheet #2

Item number 7

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7. Description

At the time that it was built, the First National Bank had the most modern mechanical systems. The Roanoke Times in its article "First National Bank's Noble Building" noted its modernity:

There are two elevators of the latest traction design, electric construction, and they run from the basement to the topmost office floor... Each office is supplied with a lavatory, and the plumbing throughout the building is the most improved sanitary construction. Special pipes are provided for all plumbing lines, so that any leak which may occur can readily be repaired without interference with any part of the building, and all pipes are so installed as to admit of direct inspection. The modern steam heating plant is so arranged that all or any part of the building can be heated.³

The article proudly stated, "No other building in Virginia is so equipped, and in fact it is very doubtful if there is any other building so equipped in the Southern States."⁴

The banking hall remains in an excellent state of preservation and is one of the few of its era to survive without significant alterations. The building is presently vacant. Current plans call for its return to a bank and office building.

RCC

¹"First National Bank's Noble Building." Roanoke Times, 24 Dec., 1910, p. 1.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

8. Significance

in 1907, and for many years served as chairman of the architectural committee of the University of Virginia. University buildings erected during his chairmanship include the stadium, nurses' home, an addition to the chemical laboratory, Clarke Memorial Hall, and the engineering building. Other buildings with which he is identified, some as a senior partner with Finley F. Ferguson, are Ghent Memorial Church, Monticello Hotel, Sacred Heart Church, First Christian Church, and the Bank of Commerce Building, all in Norfolk. The Hotel Elliot in Suffolk, Grace Covenant Church in Richmond, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond constitute his other principal Virginia commissions.

Peebles's Roanoke patron, the First National Bank was closely associated with the development of Roanoke as the headquarters of the Shenandoah Valley and Norfolk and Western railroads. The president of the Shenandoah Valley, Frederick J. Kimball, wanted a

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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FIRST NATIONAL BANK, Roanoke (city), Va.
Continuation sheet #3

Item number 8

Page 2

8. Significance

national bank to handle the financial transactions of his railroad. He approached the business and financial leaders of Roanoke and proposed that he would raise money for capital stock if they would raise the first \$25,000. They accepted the challenge, and the First National Bank was chartered June 24, 1882. Under the leadership of Henry S. Trout, First National's first president, the bank survived the financial crisis of the 1890s and grew so rapidly that it twice moved to larger quarters before establishing its headquarters in its modern building at the corner of South Jefferson Street and Salem Avenue. Newspaper accounts of the official opening document the civic pride felt by the people of Roanoke in the expanding financial institution, which was now capitalized at more than \$400,000. The newspapers saw in the growth of the bank an illustration of the city's advance as well as an assurance of the security and permanency of the wealth created so quickly within one generation.

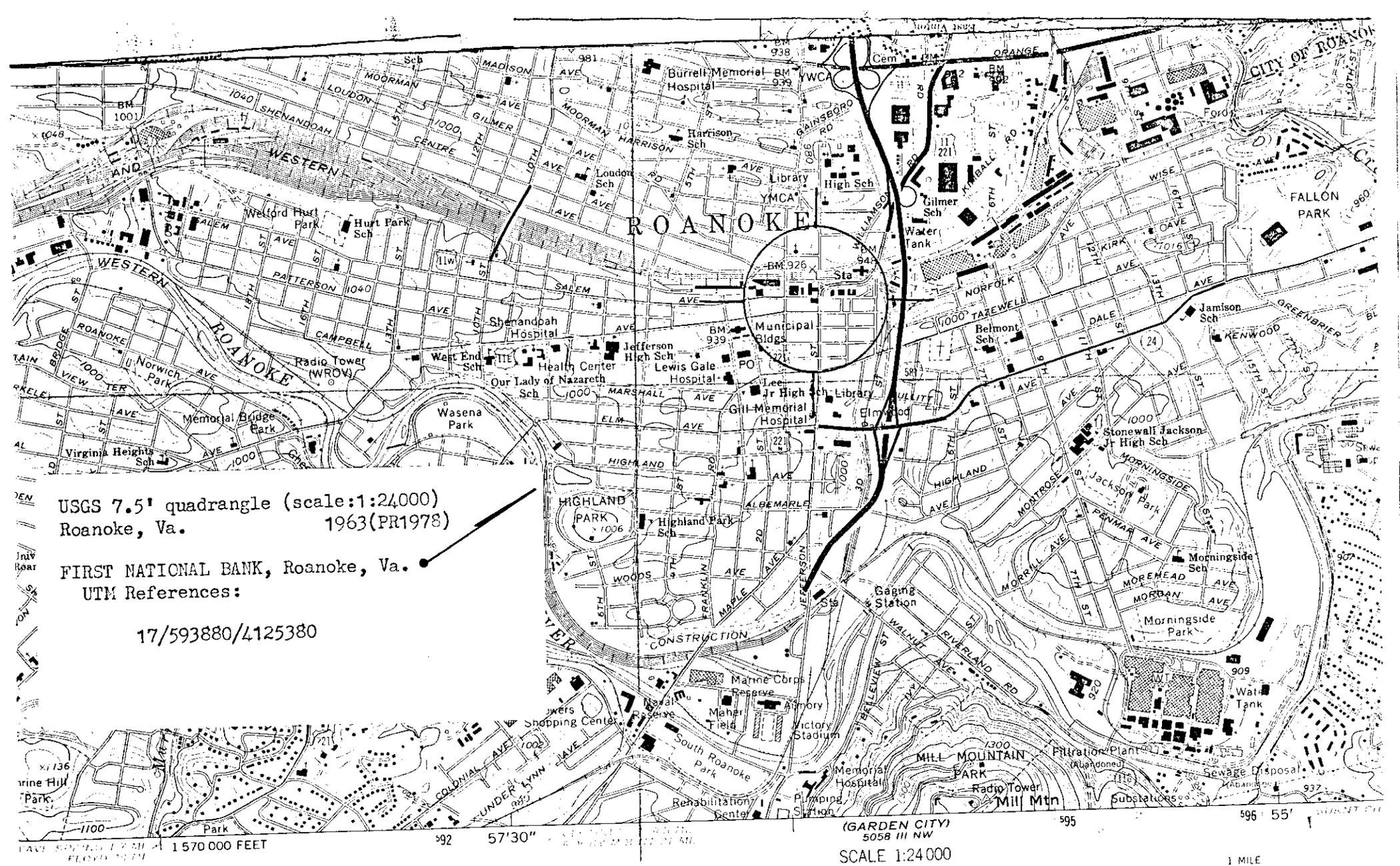
The building at 101 South Jefferson Street served the First National Bank until 1926 when it merged with the National Exchange Bank, becoming the First National Exchange Bank, located in the Exchange Bank Building. The First National Bank Building was sold to the Liberty Trust Company which occupied the ground floor with the Old Dominion Fire Insurance Company. In 1946 the Liberty Trust merged with The Colonial American National Bank of Roanoke, and the building was sold to North Carolina investors. In 1953 the building was purchased by the People's Federal Savings and Loan and in November 1981 became the property of MFW Associates of Roanoke, its present owners.

The banking hall is presently vacant. Current plans of MFW call for its return to a bank and office building under the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981. The banking hall remains in an excellent state of preservation and is one of the few of its era to survive without significant alterations.

VDS/RAC/RCC

¹"First National Bank's Noble Building," Roanoke Times, 24 December 1910, p. 1.

²John K. Peebles, Dean of Virginia Architects, Dead," Virginian-Pilot, 1 August 1934, p. 31.



Geological Survey

from aerial

