

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina
COUNTY: Cleveland
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Banker's House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
319 North Lafayette Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Shelby

STATE:
North Carolina

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
Tenth

The Hon. James Broyhill

COUNTY:
Cleveland

CODE:
37

CODE:
045

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mr. and Mrs. George Blanton, Jr.

STREET AND NUMBER:
319 North Lafayette Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Shelby

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Cleveland County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Shelby

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:
 Federal
 State
 County
 Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
STATE:
CODE:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Banker's House is one of the major Second Empire style houses in North Carolina. Viewed from the street, the first floor of the two-and-one-half-story, stuccoed brick house is virtually obscured by the luxuriant growth of shrubs and trees. The front walk, once lined with English box, is now covered by them. The surprisingly irregular composition of the Banker's House can best be explained by its floor plan rather relying completely on external description. First glance at the main facade gives the mistaken impression of a symmetrically balanced house. This illusion is heightened by the use of porches, bays and proportions. The house is basically a "T" shaped building placed on a corner lot with the crosspiece of the "T" parallel to the secondary street (north) and its stem forming the main facade, facing east. The "T" plan is camouflaged by a square, three-and-one-half-story tower tucked into the angle of the "T" on the east side, with the remainder of the main facade filled by a one-story porch. The tower extends somewhat beyond the arm of the "T" and this is balanced by a bay window at its north end. The tower contains the entrance to the hall that runs through the top of the "T" stem, leaving one large room to the left (south) and two slightly smaller rooms to the right which comprise the crosspiece of the "T." To complete the outline of the house, there is a one-story porch along the south side of a one-story rear wing which houses the dining room and butler's pantry (now used as a kitchen).

The front entrance (at the base of the tower) is an arched, double door. It has three vertical panels in each leaf, the top two having delicately frosted glass. The door has heavy, wide moldings, and the panels are repeated in the door reveal. This door is protected by a small, flat-roof porch supported by chamfered, square pillars with molded neckings, each with an applied flower midway the height of the pillar. These are joined by a heavy balustrade with bulbous, turned balusters on the north and south sides. The molded porch cornice has short, wide dentils and is supported by elaborate brackets each of which terminates with an inverted fleur-de-lis descending from a scroll base. Between the brackets is a richly molded and paneled frieze which is punctuated at the mid points between the brackets by large, multi-faceted floral bosses. With some slight variations, this is the cornice treatment used throughout the house. The tower has a secondary entrance in its south face, a single door similar to the front double door. The porch it serves is treated in a manner similar to the front entrance porch. There are two large bay windows on the house: one, previously mentioned, is at the eastern terminus of the top of the "T" and the other facing south from the base of the "T." Both have tall, slender, segmental-arched, triple windows in their sides; both bay windows are ornamented in the same fashion as the porches. Each exterior wall of the house and tower has been treated as a recessed panel with concave corners and the windows have been placed within these panels (except for the east wall of the tower where the corners are convexed), generally in pairs. The windows have a wide masonry surround, hood-like at the top, narrowing along the sides and spreading abruptly with a molded stage to its full width once again to extend just below a heavy masonry sill. The windows, for the most part, are segmental-arched and have two-over-two sash. The east face of the tower is the chief deviant from this norm by having paired, round-arched windows at the second and third levels. The third level of the tower has a small balcony supported

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by consoles similar to the cornice brackets and a balustrade similar to the other porches. At the four corners of this balcony are unusual finials, with several turned stages concluding in a bulbous point.

The mansard roof of the main block is covered by rounded slate of various colors arranged in floral patterns. This mansard roof features gabled dormers containing paired windows of one-over-one sash with concave corners only at their tops. The outer edge of the dormer has a fanciful molding profile at the top and bottom and a Greek cross having rounded edges adorns the top corners. A large, incised, fleur-de-lis almost fills the gable of the dormer to complete the ornamentation. On the main facade, dormers flank the tower; in addition there is one dormer on the south side, two on the north side and three on the rear. The tower itself has a low, pedimented gable on all four sides, from which rises a tall, inwardly sloping mansard roof which terminates in a flat roof. There is a large, tall dormer in each face of the mansard roof of the tower. Each has a segmental-arched window with two-over-two sash protected by a gable roof similar to the other dormers. Just below the gable ridge, in the dormer face, is an incised pommée. The face of the dormer concludes on either side with a scroll-like base. Two elaborately molded chimney caps pierce the flat upper roof of the main block, flanking the tower.

Though spacious, the interior is relatively simple when compared to the exterior. Rising along the north wall of the hall, a cantilevered stair ascends in one long run which is nearly the length of the long hall. The stair has paired, turned balusters, resting on treads ornamented with vine-and-bud brackets, and supporting a heavy molded handrail which originates at a large, turned newel. The stair continues in another long single run to the third floor. The interior architraves are wide, molded ones, as is the base-board. Large four-panel doors have very heavy moldings as do the panels of the door reveals. Interior blinds remain at many of the windows. The large, left room is the main parlor and has a standard late nineteenth century, dark marble mantel with arched opening, paneled spandrels, and a central cartouche. Other typical Victorian mantels occur as well. There is also a heavy, molded cornice in several rooms. During a renovation which took place in 1910, there were some minor alterations, such as replacement of the right (north) front room mantel and addition of bathrooms.

Several outbuildings remain to the rear of the house. A wellhouse is directly to the rear, and a one-story brick building which could have been a combination of servants quarters and kitchen is to the south of the well. A bit further back and to the north is a large, two-story, cross-gable frame stable with clipped gables. It is a replacement of one which burned in the first quarter of the twentieth century. It is finished in keeping with its close proximity to the house.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) ca. 1875

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Banker's House, a landmark of downtown Shelby, is among the state's finest examples of the Second Empire style, one of a small group distinguished by a central tower. The large, well-preserved house of stuccoed brick is notable for its handsome proportions, deceptively asymmetrical plan, and consistent use of rich ornament. Similarities to the Heck-Andrews House in Raleigh and the Cabarrus County Courthouse suggest that the Banker's House may be the work of architect G. S. H. Applegate. Since its construction in 1874-1875, the house has consistently been owned by prominent members of Shelby's banking profession.

The Banker's House was built for Jesse Jenkins on land he acquired from T. M. Dickson for \$175. Jenkins was the first owner of the house and founder of the town's first bank; thereafter, the history of the house he built and that of the banking business in Shelby have been continuously linked.

The designer of the house may have been G. S. H. Applegate, a native of New Jersey. Applegate first came to North Carolina in 1869, and settled in Charlotte in 1875. Here he boasted that he had designed "all of the best buildings, with only a few exceptions, in Raleigh, Goldsboro and Greensboro, and almost all over the State. . . ." No documentation has been found, and unfortunately the papers connected with the construction of the house have been destroyed. Applegate's work in western North Carolina, and more importantly, the similarities which exist between the Banker's House and Applegate's two other known designs in North Carolina--the Heck-Andrews House in Raleigh and the Cabarrus County Courthouse in Concord--seem to indicate that he was the designer of the Shelby mansion.

Jesse Jenkins was born in North Carolina in January, 1832. He was married to Harriett Brown on April 4, 1855, and became the father of one daughter. He served in 1861 as a lieutenant (and later as a major) in the "Cleveland Guards," and was appointed Clerk of the Cleveland County Superior Court about December, 1862. He served in this position continuously until 1875. In addition, he served as one of Shelby's town commissioners from about 1869 until at least as late as 1872, and as a state senator from 1874 to 1876. More important, Jenkins was a pioneering banker in the southwestern section of the state. Newspaper advertisements for "J. Jenkins & Co., BANKERS & BROKERS," appeared as early as December, 1872, and at least as late as March, 1876.

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In the meantime, a rival bank was being established in Shelby. In February, 1875, the General Assembly incorporated the "Cleaveland Savings Bank" under the direction of H. D. Lee, S. J. Green, B. Blanton and others. Thereafter, Jenkins apparently became involved in financial problems: in July, 1879, the sheriff of Cleveland County sold Jenkins's house at public auction to satisfy various writs of execution agains him arising from a lawsuit brought against him in the superior court. High bidder on the property was T. D. Lattimore, who later transferred his successful bid to H. D. Lee's wife Sarah. Jenkins is believed to have then moved to Meridian, Texas, where he died on December 4, 1889.

H. DeKalb Lee was born in North Carolina about 1830. He served as a captain (and later as a major) in the Sixteenth Regiment North Carolina Troops during the Civil War, and was severely wounded during the battle of Fredricksburg. After the war he practiced law and became the owner of at least twenty-five lots in the business district of Shelby. Lee, together with Burwell Blanton and S. J. Green (two of the original incorporators of the Cleaveland Savings Bank), bought out the holdings of their three former associates and joined in the new banking partnership of "H. D. Lee and Company" sometime between 1878 and 1880. This banking firm flourished for nearly a decade. A sketch of Shelby written in 1889 boasted that the Lee concern was "as safe as any bank in the State" and noted that it had been "a great convenience to Shelby and the surrounding country." Lee moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, in early 1888 and evidently rented his residence to one J. S. Martin. In 1894 Burwell Blanton's wife Pattie purchased the house from Mrs. Lee for \$3,500. The following year the banking enterprise bearing Lee's name was purchased outright by Burwell Blanton and his sons Charles and George, who changed the firm's name to "B. Blanton & Company."

Burwell Blanton was born in North Carolina on January 7, 1834. He was married to Frances Doggett in August, 1855, and became the father of five children. He was a merchant, a farmer, and the proprietor of a grist mill before becoming a banker. Blanton and his sons continued to operate the bank under the name "B. Blanton & Company" until June, 1903, when they obtained a federal charter and changed the firm's name to the "First National Bank." In October, 1907, Burwell and Pattie Blanton sold their residence to their eldest son Charles for \$6,000 and on May 18, 1908, Burwell Blanton died at the age of seventy-six.

Charles Coleman Blanton was born about 1858 and became a hardware and dry goods merchant at an early age. He is said to have spent eleven years as a banker in Meridian, Texas, and to have returned to Shelby about 1895 to join his father in the B. Blanton banking firm. He later became a prominent Shelby business leader during the early years of the twentieth century. He remained an active business and civic leader in Shelby for over forty years.

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In May, 1941, Charles Blanton sold his residence to his nephew, George H. Blanton, Jr., and on November 24, 1944, died at the age of eighty-six. The younger Blanton has served as president of the First National Bank since 1947 and, true to tradition, has resided in the "Bankers' House" throughout his entire career as a banker.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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A Brief Sketch of Shelby, A Thriving Town in the Piedmont Section of North Carolina. Shelby: C. P. Roberts, 1889.

Charlotte Observer. Obituary, November 25, 1944.

Clark, Walter, ed. Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-65. Raleigh and Goldsboro: State of North Carolina, 5 volumes, 1901, IV.

Cleveland Banner (Shelby). Advertisement, December 14, 1872; "SALE OF VALUABLE TOWN LOTS!!" April 25, 1874.

Cleveland County Records, Cleveland County Courthouse, Shelby, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds).

Cleveland County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Miscellaneous Papers).

Connor, R. D. W., comp. and ed. A Manual of North Carolina, 1913. Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission Division of Archives and History, 1913.

Daily Charlotte Observer. Advertisement, May 26, 1875.

Mountain Eagle (Shelby), June 19, 1861.

Private Laws of North Carolina, 1874-1875. c. LXIII, s. 1-13.

Ramey, S. Arnold, comp. Cleveland County, North Carolina, Marriages: 1851-1868. n.p.: By the Author, 1971.

Shelby Aurora. Notice, May 22, 1875; "Sketch of Shelby," December 14, 1906.

Shelby Banner. Advertisements, April 8, 1875; March 25, 1876; Notice, April 8, 1875.

Topkins, Robert M. Telephone conversation with Mr. George H. Blanton, Jr., October 2, 1974.

United States Census Office. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870; Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Cleveland County, North Carolina, Population Schedules.

United States Works Projects Administration. Pre-1914 Graves Index, State Archives.

Weathers, Lee B. The Living Past of Cleveland County: A History. Shelby: Star Publishing Co., 1956.

Research by Robert Topkins, survey specialist; architectural description by Catherine W. Cockshutt, survey supervisor

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Branson, L., ed. Branson's North Carolina Business Directory For 1884.
Sixth Edition; Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1884.
_____. The North Carolina Business Directory. Raleigh: J. A. Jones,
1872.
_____. The North Carolina Business Directory, 1877 and 1878. Fifth
Edition; Raleigh: L. Branson, 1878.
Branson's North Carolina Business Directory, For 1867-8. Raleigh: Branson
& Jones, n.d.
Branson's North Carolina Business Directory, For 1869. Raleigh: J. A.
Jones, n.d.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		35°	17'	42"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		81°	32'	24"
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 5 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Survey and Planning Unit

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives and History DATE: 10 January 1975

STREET AND NUMBER:
109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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 National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Robert E. Stipe
Title State Historic Preservation Officer

Date 10 January 1975

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

