

Robinson Eliot S
Form 5
January 28, 2009

FORM 5

UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549

OMB APPROVAL

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Form 3 Holdings Reported Form 4 Transactions Reported

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP OF SECURITIES

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, Section 17(a) of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 or Section 30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

1. Name and Address of Reporting Person *
Robinson Eliot S

2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol
STERLING BANCORP [STL]

5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer

(Check all applicable)

(Last) (First) (Middle)

3. Statement for Issuer's Fiscal Year Ended (Month/Day/Year)
12/31/2008

____ Director _____ 10% Owner
 Officer (give title below) _____ Other (specify below)
Exec VP Sterling National Bank

650 FIFTH AVENUE, 4TH FLOOR

(Street)

4. If Amendment, Date Original Filed (Month/Day/Year)

6. Individual or Joint/Group Reporting

(check applicable line)

NEW YORK, NY 10019

Form Filed by One Reporting Person
 Form Filed by More than One Reporting Person

(City) (State) (Zip)

Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned

| 1. Title of Security (Instr. 3) | 2. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year) | 2A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year) | 3. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) | 4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5) | 5. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned at end of Issuer's Fiscal Year (Instr. 3 and 4) | 6. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4) | 7. Nature of Ownership (Instr. 4) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| Common Stock | 12/31/2008 | | J | 336 (1) A \$ 0 | 3,278 | D | |
| Common Stock | | | | | 9,795 | I | By 401(k) |

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.

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Table II - Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned
(e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)

| 1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 3) | 2. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security | 3. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year) | 3A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year) | 4. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) | 5. Number of Derivative Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4, and 5) | 6. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year) | 7. Title and Amount of Underlying Security (Instr. 3 and 4) |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Non-qualified stock options (right to buy) | \$ 17.99 | Â | Â | Â | Â | 03/15/2012 ⁽⁵⁾ 03/15/2017 | Common Stock 10 |
| Incentive Stock Option (right to buy) | \$ 8.69 | Â | Â | Â | Â | 02/12/2000 ⁽²⁾ 02/12/2009 | Common Stock 12 |
| Incentive Stock Options (right to buy) | \$ 6.94 | Â | Â | Â | Â | 02/11/2001 02/11/2010 | Common Stock 11 |
| Incentive Stock Options (right to buy) | \$ 14.6 | Â | Â | Â | Â | 02/06/2003 ⁽³⁾ 02/06/2012 | Common Stock 14 |
| Non-qualified Stock Options (right to buy) | \$ 26.94 | Â | Â | Â | Â | 12/19/2005 ⁽⁴⁾ 03/22/2011 | Common Stock 10 |

Reporting Owners

| Reporting Owner Name / Address | Relationships | | | |
|---|---------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-------|
| | Director | 10% Owner | Officer | Other |
| Robinson Eliot S 650 FIFTH AVENUE 4TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10019 | Â | Â | Â Exec VP Sterling National Bank | Â |

Signatures

/s/ Robinson,
Eliot S 01/28/2009

**Signature of
Reporting Person

Date

Explanation of Responses:

* If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, see Instruction 4(b)(v).

** Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations. *See* 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).

(1) These common shares were acquired through a shareholders' dividend reinvestment program.

(2) Options became exercisable in two installments on the first anniversary of the grant, for a term of 10 years from date of grant (first exercisable date listed).

(3) Options became exercisable in three installments on the first anniversary of the grant, for a term of 10 years from date of grant (first exercisable date listed).

On December 15, 2005 the Board of Directors voted to accelerate the vesting and exercisability of any outstanding unvested and unexercisable non-qualified stock options granted to officers on March 22, 2005 effective as of December 19, 2005; provided, however, that transfer of shares acquired by such exercise is restricted until the date that the option would have been exercisable prior to such change. Such restrictions on transfer will expire as to 10% of the grant on the first anniversary of the date of grant, an additional 15% of the grant on the second anniversary of the date of grant, an additional 25% of the grant on the third anniversary of the date of grant and the remaining 50% of the grant on the fourth anniversary of the grant.

(4) Non-qualified options become exercisable commencing on the fifth anniversary of the grant for a term of 10 years from grant date (first exercisable date listed).

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space provided is insufficient, *see* Instruction 6 for procedure. Potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB number.