

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## THE CITIZENS NATIONAL BANK



The November 2nd issue of the Albion Advertiser carried an article and an interior photo of the old Citizens Bank in downtown Albion, reflecting the building's present condition and giving credence to the barricades placed in front of the structure by the village. This is a safety measure to prevent falling building parts from injuring passerbys. Anyone passing through downtown Albion cannot help but notice this restrictive cordon on North Main Street. That in itself, emits a negative impression, let alone the photo of debris the paper published. The present owner has owned the building since 1988. However, it would be my feeling that no building could get into such a condition in just six years unless there had been neglect over a long period of time. Indeed, the Medina paper reported that the building was a "Health and Safety threat" back on June 15, 1979.

The last viable business to use it was Medina Plumbing and Heating. Prior to that it was Dale's Supermarket. Architectural preservationists will tell us the deterioration to a building starts very slowly by first creeping, then crawling, walking, jogging and finally running at full pace. Dan Buyer in his article states: "The outside facade still shows at least some of the historic splendor it had in years gone by ..." Speaking strictly as a preservationist, it will be a sad loss to the Albion business district street scape if this facade is ultimately lost. We can only hope that mutual cooperation from various sectors will congeal to save this landmark.

In perspective, I thought our older readers might like to remember the Citizens Bank in a more positive state. The exterior photo showing the bank's clock was taken in late 1923 shortly after the building was enlarged. Our interior picture was taken on December 22, 1923 at the formal opening of the

bank's new quarters. The structure has a frontage of fifty feet and is made of brick with carved limestone trim. The front doors were bronze as were all the sidelights, chandelier, grills, and check desk in the center. The counter screen and wainscoting were made of colored Italian marble. Seven stained glass windows filled the clear story as the main banking room was twenty feet high. The bank stated in 1923, "On the left of the vestibule will be found a desk and chairs for the use of the lady patrons of the bank." Note such in the photo. The bank also advertised "A special rest room has been provided off the main lobby for the use of lady patrons. The furnishings of this room are of wicker in a silver gray with cushions of blue velvet."

The Citizens National Bank was established in 1884 first making use of the former Burrows Bank location on North Main Street (left of the front door). In 1923 the bank expanded to the south including the front entrance and the three windows to the right.

In 1923 the banking personnel consisted of: J. Coann Curtis, Pres.; R. Titus Coan, V.P.; C. Royce Sawyer, Cashier; J.R. McGregor, Asst. Cashier; Harry E. Colburn, Ass't. Cashier; Geo. L. Houghton, Ass't. Cashier; Edwin Phillips, Teller; Walker M. Hannington, Teller; H. Palmer Lyon, Int. Dept.; Hume R. Shipman, Note Teller; Marie A. Grace, Safe Deposit Vaults; Bessie F. Coffey, Safe Deposit Vault; Anna K. Coffey, Mail Clerk; Marie J. Coffey, Bookkeeper; Katherine M. Grace, Bookkeeper; Isabelle O'Brien, Bookkeeper; Frances Colburn, Stenographer and Margaret Moffatt, Statement Clerk.

Unfortunately, the great depression took its toll and the Citizens National Bank was forced to close on January 11, 1932.