

## ABOUT TEXAS MOSTLY

### Farmers & Merchants Bank PILOT POINT, TEXAS

by FRANK CLARK

**P** ILOT POINT is located on a high ridge in the north-eastern corner of Denton County. The name of the community comes from a large grove of post oak timber extending out into the prairie on this high ridge. Since there were no roads in the early days, people navigated by visible landmarks. This grove of trees could be seen for miles, and was used by travelers as a "pilot" to mark their location.

well-respected. The first cashier of the bank was C.L. Stone, a banker from Henryetta, Oklahoma, who was recruited to oversee the bank's day-to-day operations.

The following is a roster of the officers throughout the bank's existence:

#### President

D.W. Light  
D.W. Light, Jr.  
G.E. Light

#### Vice-President

D.W. Light, Jr.  
G.E. Light  
Joe B. Burks

#### Cashier

C.L. Stone  
G.E. Light  
Gordon Elmore  
J. Earl Selz  
B.A. Bugby

#### Assistant Cashier

G.E. Light  
R.L. Massey  
R.A. Chance

As did many banks, Farmers and Merchants Bank of Pilot Point failed during the Great Depression. The bank's directors began voluntary liquidation on November 28, 1931. On De-



American Exchange National Bank,  
32-1  
DALLAS, TEXAS

### Farmers & Merchants Bank,

(UNINCORPORATED)

PILOT POINT, TEXAS, Jan 19 1925 No. 18439

PAY TO THE  
ORDER OF

U.S. Nat'l Bank - Dallas \$20,000

THE SUM OF \$20000 AND 00 CTS.

DOLLARS

G. Elmore  
CASHIER

Although the Farmers and Merchants Bank of Pilot Point didn't issue currency, checks with a vignette of the bank's beautiful building have survived. This one is a cashier's check signed by Gordon Elmore, directing the American Exchange National Bank of Dallas to transfer \$20,000 of the Farmers and Merchants funds on deposit in that bank to the Merchants and Planters National Bank of Sherman, Texas.

Hence the site and the community that later developed there became known as "Pilot Point."

Pilot point was settled in 1846. In 1860 a town was plotted and laid out; by 1898 the population had grown to 2,000. Pilot Point became an important center in Denton County, reflected by the fact that there were three banks in the town at the turn of the century. The three banks were The Pilot Point National Bank, the First State Bank of Pilot Point, and the Farmers and Merchants Bank. This article will offer a brief history of the Farmers and Merchants Bank.

Farmers and Merchants Bank opened for business on January 2, 1896 in an elegant building on the west side of the town square. The founder and first president of the bank was Colonel D.W. Light, assisted by his two sons, D.W. Light, Jr., and G.E. Light. The Light family was prominent in Pilot Point and

cember 1, 1931 the process was complete and another small-town Texas bank passed from the scene.

The bank building itself enjoyed a brief moment of glory in the 1967 film "Bonnie and Clyde." The exterior of the building was used in a scene that depicted Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow exiting a bank after a robbery and escaping, despite a "shootout" with authorities. Today, the bank building houses an antique shop.

#### References

- Bates, E.F. (1976). *History and Reminiscences of Denton County*. Denton, TX: Terrill Wheeler Printing, Inc.
- The Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas Archives.
- The Pilot Point Mirror*. January 10, 1896.