

Revisiting One's Childhood Hometown

FNB of Greenville, MS Becomes Court House

BY FRANK CLARK

MY FAMILY LIVED in Greenville, Mississippi, from 1964 to 1965. In 1997 on the way to the International Paper Money Show in Memphis, I visited Greenville for the first time since we moved to Dallas in 1965. Besides returning to my old neighborhood, I wanted to see what the First National Bank of Greenville looked like. Since I was a child when we lived there, I did not have any recollections of the bank or building.

However, my numismatic leanings blossomed in Greenville. I visited my first coin store, bought my first "Blue Book" and Whitman folders there. What follows is what I learned on my visit.

The First National Bank of Greenville was the first federally-chartered bank in Washington County in 1887 with Charter #3765. The founding President was James F. Negus.

A neo-classical revival building was built in 1903. Mr. Negus selected marble and stained glass in Italy for his new two-story bank building. This building was in use by the bank for 75 years. In 1989 it was acquired



Series 1929 Type 1 \$20

and renovated by the city. Today, it houses the Greenville Municipal Court. It still retains much of the charm of the old bank building, along with an innovative and distinct current day use.

There are four large columns on the front porch that has a stepped entry way. "CH. 1887" is above the front door that faces west. An iron door covers the front door. The words "First National Bank" are above the north side entrance. On the northwest corner of the building is a bronze plaque stating that this bank is listed in the *National Register of Historic Places*. Iron bars cover the doors and windows. The porch and immediate inside floor consists of brown and white tile.

The teller area consists of five windows: three teller windows; one collections window; and one note-clerk window. Tile columns next to the teller windows are made of marble and brass with ten globe lights on top. Six ornate "FNB"s decorate these six columns. The floor area behind the teller's location is made of wood.

The court room begins behind the teller windows. The judge sits in the back in the center of the room in front of the bank's old vault. The words "ABSOLUTE SECURITY" are above the vault and therefore also above the judge. These words were intended for the bank and vault, but somehow seem appropriate for a courtroom. A winding staircase to the



Looking west on Main Street in Greenville, MS. The First National Bank of Greenville is the first building on the right.

right of the judge leads to the second floor offices.

A large stained glass skylight is located in the very high ceiling above the teller area. Its colors are red, white, purple and blue in a lily design. Eight additional stained glass windows are located on the front and side walls. Colors for these windows are green, gold and red. Each window has the same design: a torch with a wreath and ribbon.

There is a fireplace on each side wall. Two globe lights are on each mantel. The left fireplace had been turned into a safe for the night depository. Extensive wood paneling lines the walls. To complete the description of the building: there are two ceiling fans, three wall heaters and a marble writing ledge along the front wall.

I visited the former bank building while court was in session. It was crowded and

metal detectors had been installed. I was glad that I had finally made it back to Greenville. ❖



The FNB of Greenville was built in Federal Greek Revival architecture. Today it houses Greenville's Municipal Court.

A Bit More on Short Snorters . . .

OUR RECENT (NOV/DEC 2001) issue honoring the veterans of World War II and the 60th anniversary of Pearl Harbor brought a great deal of positive response. It's always something of a crap shoot whenever we attempt "something off the beaten track," but evidently short snorters struck a responsive chord with a number of our readers.

While the compliments were nice, four respondents took time to update writer Richard Giedroye's remarks on the HAWAII note (shown right). Richard wrote: "HAWAII overprint \$1 Silver Certificate of Series 1935A is signed by 10 individuals, two of whom identify themselves as officers. The note also indicates these people had been in Canton (Ohio?), Palmyra and Pearl Harbor. The PBM-3-6466 at the bottom of the back may be a unit designation. This note is still being researched further."

The consensus of our letter writers is that the PBM was a twin engine aircraft, but the details offered vary.

"I read the article 'Defaced Notes Share Exciting Stories,'" Mike Stratton wrote, "and was intrigued by the Hawaii overprint. The PBM attracted me and I thought I had seen that designation before. If the signatures are Navy personnel in Hawaii, then I submit that PBM could be the type of plane they were flying. The *PBM Mariner* was a twin-engine seaplane used for long range ocean patrols. It resembles a B-24 bomber only with two engines. The web site

www.motionmodels.com/ww2navy/Am227-ar.jpg shows a model of this plane. The number after PBM on the note could be the tail number of the plane, and the 10 signatures could correspond to the crew. Something to think about," the Texan opined.

Arizona writer John Marchildon adds some details. "The \$1 short snorter refers to Palmyra Island and Canton Island, which were important places in WWII and south of Pearl



Harbor. I see GI CLIPPER. Maybe a Pam Am clipper was used to transport personnel. NATS could be Navy Air Transport Service. Great article!"

Floridian Dave Schlingman concurs. "As a retired airline pilot and WWII aircraft owner, the reference to PBM-3 is a twin engine WWII aircraft type. This is probably the aircraft (#6466) that these boys flew."

Washington writer Mike Tauber provides perhaps the most complete update. "Being somewhat of a history buff, I found the stories on short snorter notes very interesting. . . . I believe that I can explain the meaning of the numbers on the Hawaii overprint note.

"The PBM-3 was the U.S. Navy's designation for the WWII *Mariner* flying boat built by the Martin Airplane Co. of Baltimore. The *Mariner* was a large, for the time, twin-engined, well-armed aircraft that normally carried a crew of seven. The aircraft could carry two tons of bombs, depth-charges, or torpedoes and was used in an anti-shipping and anti-submarine patrol role, and also rescue. The number 6466 was likely the serial number of the aircraft. Therefore, the note may have been signed by the crew members, et al. Lastly, the name Canton probably refers to the sea port city in China, not Ohio."

Thanks to all who took time to write. -- Fred Reed ❖