

Elizabeth Lucas

National Bank President

By Karl Sanford Kabelac

AS THE CIVIL WAR DREW TO A CLOSE, THE GRIFFITH'S Bank of Columbus, IN evolved into the First National Bank of Columbus. It was organized early in the spring of 1865, received National Bank charter #1066, and opened for business on June 20. Columbus, located in the south-central part of Indiana and the county seat of Bartholomew County, had a population of 3,300 by 1870.

One of the founders of the bank was Francis J. Crump. He and Randolph Griffith were the largest shareholders, each owning 20% of the new bank. Over the next two-thirds of a century, Crump and other members of his family served as presidents of the bank, he in 1880-1881; his son-in-law, Captain

William J. Lucas, from 1882-1901; his son, Francis T. Crump, from 1901-1917; his grandson, Francis J. Crump II, from 1921-1927; and then his daughter, Elizabeth (Crump) Lucas, from 1927-1932.

Elizabeth Lucas had been born on July 4, 1845, near Columbus. She was the youngest child of Francis and Emella (Smith) Crump. Her father was a native of Virginia and her mother a native of North Carolina. Francis had been a early settler in the area, arriving in 1821.

In 1865 she married Captain William J. Lucas, a Civil War veteran. He was a partner in a dry goods store in Columbus. In 1880 he became a director and cashier of the bank, and in 1882 its president, serving until his death in 1901. They had four children.

Elizabeth Lucas had become a director of the bank in 1903 and succeeded to the presidency in 1927 at the death





Home of the bank from 1875 until the new building opened on the same site in downtown Columbus in 1926, the year before Elizabeth Lucas became its President.

of her nephew, Francis J. Crump II. Already in her 80s, her health failed several years later, and she died in her home in Columbus on January 31, 1932. Her obituary noted that she was prominent citizen, active in church and social circles, and took great interest in her business affairs. Charles F. Dehmer, who had begun at the bank as a messenger in 1893, and had become cashier in 1917, succeeded her as president.

Series 1929 \$50 National Bank Note -- one of 978 issued by the bank. It bears the facsimile signature of Elizabeth Lucas, president from 1927 to 1932. Beginning with Series 1882 notes, the bank issued only \$50 and \$100 notes. (Courtesy Andy MacKay)



The bank remained independent until the late 1980s. It was then taken over by another bank and, as a result of subsequent take-overs, is now a branch of the National City Bank of Indiana, which is headquartered in Indianapolis.

Bibliography

- The [Columbus] Evening Republican*, obituary for Captain William J. Lucas, July 9, 1901.
The [Columbus] Evening Republican, obituary for Elizabeth Lucas, February 1, 1932.
The First National Bank of Columbus, Centennial booklet (1965).