

National Bank President **Mrs. J. H. Moore**

by Karl Sanford Kabelac

OLLIE THOMPSON WAS BORN ON October 1, 1873, in Red River County, TX. She received her early schooling at Robinsville in Red River County, and then at the Masonic Female Institute at Bonham in nearby Fannin County. After graduating she taught for several years until her marriage to John H. Moore on December 18, 1894.

The young couple moved to Kentucky where he received his medical degree in 1897. They then settled in Deport, Lamar County, Texas (a small part of the community is in adjacent Red River County) where he practiced medicine.

Deport is about 100 miles northeast of Dallas. It was named for an early settler, Devolson (Dee) Thompson. A century ago Deport's population topped a thousand; in 2000 its population was about 700. Historically it was a cotton growing and livestock region.

In 1902, Dr. Moore was one of the founders of the First National Bank of Deport (charter #6430) and served as the bank's cashier. In 1910/11 he became president of the bank. He gave up his medical practice to guide the bank and manage his land holdings in the Deport area.

After his sudden death on November 27, 1926, Mrs. Moore was elected president of the bank. Her 28-year presidency spanned the years of the Great Depression and the Second World War. Although she retired from the presidency in 1954, she remained a director of the bank until her death at the age of 86 on September 16, 1960. In her role as bank president she signed Series 1902 \$10 and \$20 bills and her facsimile signature appeared on Series 1929 Type 1 and Type 2 \$10s and \$20s issued by the bank.

In addition to her banking responsibilities, Mrs. Moore was active in both local and regional affairs of the Presbyterian Church, the Parents-Teachers Association, and various women's clubs. In 1950 she

was a delegate to the White House Conference on the Development of Children and Youth and the next year she was honored as one of the Texas Women of the Year. Her obituary noted that in many ways she was Lamar County's "First Lady."

She was survived by their three children, Maurice, a New York City lawyer and director of several companies including Time, Inc.; Allene (Mrs. John W. Sharbough) who also lived in the New York City area; and John H. Jr., a Deport insurance agent and civic leader who served as director of the FNB of Deport from 1935-1986.



Mrs. J. H. Moore's facsimile signature on one of the 7,380 Series 1929 notes issued by the bank.

The FNB of Deport was taken over by Guaranty Bancshares of Mt. Pleasant, Texas, in 1992. In August 2004 they closed the Deport office, thus ending the 102-year history of the bank in Deport.

Sources and acknowledgements

A detailed obituary of Mrs. Moore appeared in the *Paris (TX) News*, September 18, 1960, pp. 1, 4. An obituary of Dr. Moore had appeared in the same newspaper on November 28, 1926, p. 2. The recent history of the bank is found in Guaranty Bancshares (Mt. Pleasant, TX) SEC 10K reports on the internet. The assistance of Betsy Mills of Paris, TX is gratefully acknowledged. ♦