

Anna M. Stenz, National Bank President

By Karl Sanford Kabelac

Anna M. Newcomer, a native of Ohio, was born in September 1843. Her first marriage was to Oren (or Orrin) W. Head, a widower, who died in 1882. Nearly two decades later she married Henry P. Stenz, a Monroeville, Ohio, banker and landowner.

He had been the cashier of the Exchange Bank in Monroeville, which became the First National Bank of Monroeville in 1879 (charter #2438). He served as cashier and then president of the national bank until his death on June 9, 1903. A week later, on June 16, Anna was elected president of the bank to succeed him.

She served a little over a year, when at the bank's annual meeting of July 11, 1904, she became the first vice president of the bank, and Pitt Curtiss of Norwalk became the president. The *Norwalk [Ohio] Daily Reflector* of that day reported that she had been a very efficient president "but her other large financial interests require so much of her time, that she finds it impossible to give the bank affairs the attention their great importance requires." However, she retained all her interests in the bank and stood ready to "give the officials the benefit of her knowledge and good judgment."

Curtiss apparently served for up to two years. She then resumed the presidency until the national bank was voluntarily liquidated shortly thereafter, on October 23, 1906. It reopened the next day as the Monroeville Branch of the Euclid Avenue Trust Company, a Cleveland bank. She was a stockholder in the new bank.

To this day, she is remembered in Monroeville as the donor of a monument to the soldiers and sailors of Monroeville and Ridgefield Township. The dedication events and ceremonies on September 29, 1904, brought thousands to the community. In her remarks that day she expressed her pleasure in presenting the memorial to the heroes who defended our country. She expressed the hope that it would teach "lessons of patriotism to the youth of this vicinity – an influence for good forever."

She died in Monroeville on May 16, 1914. An obituary noted that she "was a thorough-going business woman for a number of years, at one time president of a bank in Monroeville, and later associated with the S. N. & M. electric railway as a member of the board of directors."

Her will distributed an estate estimated at \$250,000, which was left to relatives of each of her two late husbands, her own relatives and friends, and various public institutions. In total there were over 65 bequests in the will.

Sources

Various dates are given for Anna M. Stenz's birth. I have used that in the 1900 federal census. Unfortunately, few issues of the Monroeville newspaper are available, at least on microfilm. Fortunately the Norwalk (the county seat) newspapers carried some Monroeville news. The *Evening Herald* carried Henry P. Stenz's obituary on June 10, 1903; Anna's election to the bank presidency on June 17, 1903, and again mentioned on June 26; her becoming first vice president of the bank on July 12, 1904, and the dedication of the monument in Monroeville on September 28 and 29, 1904. Her obituary is found in the *Norwalk Reflector-Herald* for May 16, 1914, and the probate of her will in the issue for May 21, 1914. The *Norwalk Reflector* also covered these events, with longer articles on her relinquishing the bank presidency on July 11, 1904, and the legal change in the bank's operation on October 24, 1906. ❖