



## Annie F. Morrill, National Bank President

### by Karl Sanford Kabelac

**K**ENT, WASHINGTON IS A COMMUNITY IN KING COUNTY IN western Washington State, located between Seattle and Tacoma. Today it is an urban area reflecting its great growth after World War II. But a century and more ago it was a rural agricultural area.

James Merrifield and his wife Annie were early settlers in the area. She was born in 1865 in West Virginia of parents who were natives of Maine. He died in the Alaska Gold Rush of 1898, leaving her with a young son.

Several years later she married Merton M. Morrill, a widower with several children. Also an early settler in the area, he had come to Kent in 1887. A merchant, he had made three financially successful trips to Alaska during the Gold Rush to sell merchandise. He also had served as mayor of Kent and a term in the state legislature.

He founded the M. M. Morrill Bank in Kent in 1901. A decade later, in declining health, he converted it to a national bank early in 1912 (charter #10174) to give it a broader managerial base.

He died at the age of 58 on May 7, 1913, at their home in Kent. His widow, Annie F. Morrill, then succeeded to the presidency. She served for about a decade, relinquishing the office in 1923.

She continued to live in Kent, where she died in the family home on February 1, 1955, at the age of 89. Her obituary noted she was a "Kent pioneer, banker and civic leader," active in several local organizations and had been a candidate for mayor of Kent in the early 1920s.

The bank remained independent until July 1937, when it was taken over by the Peoples Bank and Trust Company of Seattle. The bank building still stands in downtown Kent, and is now a religious book and gift shop.

### Sources and Acknowledgements

An obituary for Merton M. Morrill is found in *The Kent Journal* for May 8, 1913, and one for Annie F. Morrill in the *Kent New-Journal* for February 10, 1955. Of the several histories of Kent, the most useful for banking history, albeit with several typos and factual errors, is C. E. Cameron, *History of Kent Washington, U.S.A. and Its Heritage* (1978), p 211-2. The help of Andrew Wickens of the Kent Regional Library is gratefully acknowledged. ♦

Series 1902 First National Bank of Kent national bank note with the signatures of Annie F. Morrill as president and D. T. Coleman as cashier. (Courtesy of Lyn Knight Currency Auctions)