

# Mrs. M. S. Pierson, National Bank President

By Karl Sanford Kabelac

**H**ASKELL, TEXAS IS A COMMUNITY OF SOME 3,000 PEOPLE ABOUT 50 miles north of Abilene and 200 miles west of Dallas. It is the county seat of Haskell County, which was organized in 1885 and named to honor Charles R. Haskell, a soldier in the Texas Revolution.

Marshall Samuel Pierson (1838-1909), a native of Alabama and a Civil War veteran, settled in the community in 1890. He immediately became active there, helping to found The Haskell National Bank (charter #4474) that same year. He was elected the first president and served for nearly twenty years until his death in 1909.

In 1886, as a widower with five children, he married Margaret Nancy Rice. She was then 23 and a native of Laclede County, Missouri. She had grown up in Texas and become a schoolteacher. They became the parents of six children.

At his death in 1909, Mrs. Pierson became president of the bank and by the mid-1920s their son, Alfred C. Pierson, was the cashier. During the Depression, the bank was reorganized, becoming the Haskell National Bank (charter #14149). Mrs. Pierson and Alfred continued as president and cashier respectively. She retired in 1947, having served as president for 38 years. Alfred succeeded her and served until 1967.

In the 1910s, she had moved to Abilene so that her children could receive the educational advantages of that city. She died in Abilene on October 17, 1948, at the age of 85. Tributes then and later noted her long bank presidency, her responsibilities in overseeing family ranching and farming interests, and her activities in church work.

Series 1929 note of The Haskell National Bank with the facsimile signatures of Mrs. M. S. Pierson as President and her son Alfred C. Pierson as Cashier. (Courtesy Frank Clark)



The Haskell National Bank continues to this day. Its main office is in Haskell, with a branch opened in Abilene in 2000. The stone building built for it in



Series 1929 note of the Haskell National Bank with their signatures. Note that they signed different signature forms for the reorganized bank, as their signatures are slightly different from the previous bank's notes. (Courtesy Heritage Auction Galleries)

1891 still stands in downtown Haskell, but the bank moved to newer quarters in 1959.

#### Sources and acknowledgements

A biographical sketch of Marshall S. Pierson appeared in B. B. Paddock, *Twentieth Century History and Biographical Record of North and West Texas*, 1906, vol. 1, pages 559-560. An obituary appeared in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* for March 27, 1909. One for Mrs. Pierson is found in *The Haskell Free Press* for October 21, 1948. The latter newspaper carried a series of historical ads relating to the bank during its centennial year. They appeared in the issues for February 8, March 22, April 26, July 5, and July 19, 1990. Rex A. Felker, *Haskell, Haskell County and its Pioneers*, 1975, contains a picture of the bank (page 30) and a section on the M. S. Pierson Family, pages 242-245. The enthusiastic help of Wanda Ham of the Haskell County Historical and Genealogical Society in Haskell is gratefully acknowledged. ♦

## Write the Editor and speak your mind

Hi Fred,

In regards your article "Two bills from the same wheresgeorger show up" in the January/February 2012 issue of *Paper Money*, no sooner had I received the issue and read your article, I found a one dollar note s/n B30255659J with a faded red rubber stamp circling the Federal Reserve emblem "www.wheresgeorge.com."

In the December 2011 issue of *Scientific America* (page 52) there is an article written by David Wienberger, entitled "The Machine That Would Predict the Future" which would analyze data taken from web-like principles such as interconnection and arguments. Scientists took data from the Where's George Project in 2009, which tracks the location of millions of one dollar bills as they move across the U.S., to model how 2009's H1N1 flu virus would likely spread. Although they accurately predicted how the flu would spread, they could not account for the number of people who actually became infected. David Wienberger is a senior researcher at Harvard University's Berkman Center for Internet and Society.

Henry Brasco

Dear Editor of *Paper Money*,

As with any enterprise, someone needs to step forward and accept the challenge from time to time. For the SPMC and *Paper Money* this can mean serving on the Board of Directors or submitting articles or...deciding what to print. If the volume of articles is such that what's left in the box gets published, it is hard to blame the editor for what appears.

However, it is true that some people will buy a newspaper every day just to read only a small part of it. If you were to try to publish a paper with just the local news and nothing else; no obituaries, no sports, no bridge column, no crossword, well, it might sell but probably not well. It would be remarkable to find someone who reads every page of a paper or *Paper Money*. Perhaps it would help if readers would write in and suggest some topics; why were certain colors used for seals? Why were they changed as in red to blue, for example. Perhaps one of our regular authors can share a thought about why they chose a topic. We may not make everybody happy all the time...but we may make a great publication even better!

John Gavel ♦