

Sophronia Dean, National Bank President

By Karl Sanford Kabelac

SOPHRONIA HUBBARD WAS BORN IN PENNSYLVANIA ON AUGUST 2, 1840. In 1869 she married Warren H. Dean, a widower, in Toledo, Ohio. The next year they moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, where he was involved in real estate. They then moved to a farm in Mower County, which is in southeastern Minnesota on the Iowa border. He died quite suddenly in 1880, leaving her with four young children.

When her two sons, William and Warren, were grown, she and they founded a bank in Adams and a few years later purchased the State Bank of Rose Creek. Both communities are in Mower County.

The bank in Adams, founded in 1898, became a National Bank (charter #8059) in 1906. Initially she was the vice president, and her son, William, the cashier. But in 1907 she became the president. She was also the president of the State Bank of Rose Creek where her son Warren was the cashier.

After living in Mower County, she then lived in Northfield and Minneapolis. She returned to Mower County in 1918 and made her home with her son Warren near Rose Creek. It was there that she died on January 2, 1928. Her son William, the cashier of The First National Bank of Adams, assumed the presidency of that bank at her death.

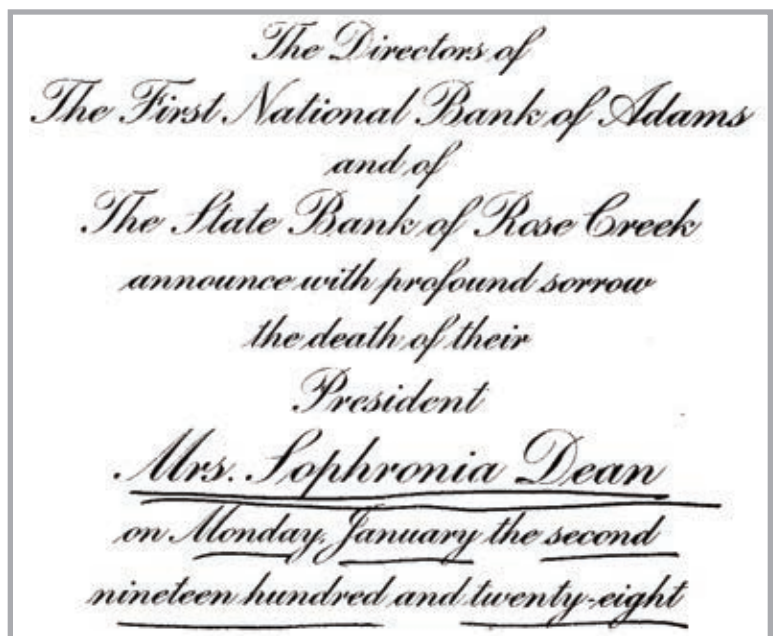
In the late 1910s, the bank had begun plans for a new building and employed George Grant Elmslie, a noted Midwestern architect, to design it. The First World War and then financial concerns at the bank delayed the building, which was completed in 1924. Built in what is termed the "Prairie School" design, it was a one story rectangular brick building, with an inviting fireplace in the public space, and a community meeting room in the basement. Several thousand visitors toured it when it opened on November 11, 1924.

William Dean wrote to the architect's assistant the next year, "I think we have one of the most distinctive little bank buildings in the land ...". The bank was able to enjoy its unique building for almost eight years, until it closed in August 1932, a victim of the Depression.

Today the building is occupied by a gift shop and an insurance agency. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.

Letterhead from 1914 of The First National Bank of Adams, Minnesota with Mrs. S. Dean as president.

Notice of the death of Mrs. Sophronia Dean, bank president.



Sources and acknowledgements

An obituary for Mrs. Sophronia Dean appeared in the *Mower County News* for January 5, 1928. Letters from the late 1920s to the late 1940s by her son, William W. Dean, the cashier and then president of the bank, are compiled in the book, *From the Corner Window*, published in Adams in 1991. Written to his children, they give us a glimpse into the bank and its history. Especially helpful is his discussion on pages 81 through 84 of the building of the new bank building in the 1920s and then its closing during the Depression. The architectural history of the bank building is discussed in the 1984 University of Illinois dissertation by Craig Robert Zabel, *The Prairie School Banks of Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis H. Sullivan and Purcell and Elmslie*, chapter 10, "The Last Banks of George Grant Elmslie," especially pages 465 through 472. The website of the Northwest Architectural Archives at the University of Minnesota Libraries in Minneapolis contains color preliminary sketches, blueprints, floor plans, and both interior and exterior photographs of the bank. Twenty-seven images can be viewed online by searching for "Northwest Architectural Archives," then, in the relevant search boxes, bank Adams, and select the collection "Williams Gray Purcell Papers." The assistance of the Mower County Historical Society is gratefully acknowledged. ♦

Are There More Women National Bank Presidents?

Since 1999, Karl S. Kabelac has been writing a series of articles in *Paper Money* on women National Bank presidents during the National Bank Note issuing period (1863-1935). As the bank's president, such a woman would have signed (or later had her facsimile signature on) the National Bank Notes issued by her bank. A short article on Karl and how he became interested in this topic appeared in *Paper Money*, March/April 2009, p. 124.

There were literally tens of thousands of male National Bank Presidents during this period and the following 59 women presidents. As Karl wraps up the series, he hopes to provide some concluding observations on these women as a group. But he is also wondering if there are any more.

Thus, if any *Paper Money* reader knows of one not on the following list, he would be grateful to learn of her. He can be reached at karl@rochester.rr.com, or 105 Raleigh Street, Rochester NY 14620.

List of Known Female National Bank Presidents

AZ Tombstone. Mary M. Costello. (Article by Peter Huntoon) PM, July/August 1989
 CA Marysville. Phebe M. Rideout. Not yet published.
 CA Modesto. Myrtie McHenry (later Langdon). PM, July/Aug 2009
 CA Oroville. Phebe M. Rideout. PM, May/June 2006
 CA San Pedro. Katharine R. Mahar. PM, Jan/Feb 2010
 CO Canon City. Magdalene S. Raynolds. PM, March/April 2011
 IA Albia. Caroline B. Drake. PM, May/June 2009
 IA Albia. Nannie M. Mabry. PM May/June 2009
 IA Marion. Louisa B. Stephens. PM, May/June 2008 (Addendum, PM, Sept/Oct 2011)
 IA Pomeroy. Mary R. Moody. Not yet published
 IA Sanborn. Elizabeth Harker. PM, Jan/Feb 2011
 IL Greenville. Myrtle T. Bradford. PM, May/June 2003
 IL Greenville. Nancy R. Bradford. PM, May/June 2003
 IL Streator. Levancia H. Plumb. PM, Jan/Feb 2012
 IL Sullivan. Mary R. Shuman. Not yet published
 IN Columbus. Elizabeth Lucas. PM, July/Aug 2004
 IN LaGrange. Katherine R. Williams. PM, March/April 2008
 KS Moline. Mrs. H. R. Ellsworth. PM, Sept/Oct 2009
 KS Ness City. Mary C. Bennett. PM, May/June 2008
 MD Elkton. E. S. Tome (later France). PM, Nov/Dec 2010
 MD Port Deposit. E. S. Tome (later France). PM, Nov/Dec 2010
 ME Limerick. Frances E. Mason (later Moulton). PM, May/June 2007

ME York Village. Elizabeth B. Davidson. PM, Sept/Oct 2012
 MN Adams. Mrs. S. Dean. Not yet published
 MN Fairfax. Mrs. E. F. Sell. Not yet published
 MN Mabel. Betsey Tollefson. PM, July/Aug. 2000
 MO Albany. Mrs. R. L. Whaley. PM, March/April 2010
 MO Edina. Laura Biggerstaff. PM, July/Aug 2009
 MS Vicksburg. Mrs. B. B. Willis. Not yet published
 NC Raleigh. Mrs. M. C. Williams. PM, March/April 2011
 ND Fingal. Laura A. Batcheller. March/April 2010
 ND Lidgerwood. Mary O. Movius. Sept/Oct 2011
 NE Elgin. Carrie McBride. PM, March/April 2004
 NE Lexington. Henrietta R. Temple. PM, March/April 2009
 NE Lexington. Jennie M. Temple. PM, March/April 2009
 NE McCook. Mrs. V. Franklin. PM, March/April 2008
 NM Farmington. Harriet B. Sammons. PM, Sept/Oct 2010
 NM Portales. Mary C. Williamson. PM, July/Aug 2008
 NY East Rochester. Kate Gleason. PM, May/June 1999
 NY Groton. Welthea M. Marsh. PM, May/June 2005
 NY Mexico. Nellie T. Peck. PM, Nov/Dec 2006
 NY Perry. Eliza D. Page. PM, March/April 2002
 NY Pulaski. Ella M. Clark. PM, March/April 2010
 NY Pulaski. Helen A. Clark. PM, March/April 2010
 NY Silver Springs. Addie Duncan (later Monroe). Not yet published
 OH Middletown. S. Jennie Sorg. PM, May/June 2012
 OH Monroeville. Anna M. Stentz. PM, March/April 2009 (Addendum, PM, March/April 2010)
 OH Utica. Cora B. Clark. PM, March/April 2009
 OK Altus. Mrs. J. A. Henry. PM, March/April 2009
 OK Anadarko. Mrs. G. M. Cox. Not yet published
 TX Bartlett. Mary A. Bartlett. Not yet published
 TX Brownwood. Mrs. S. R. Coggin. PM, July/Aug 2012
 TX Daingerfield. Mrs. Lou Bradfield. Not yet published
 TX Deport. Mrs. J. H. Moore. PM, July/Aug 2007
 TX Galveston. Mrs. R. Waverly Smith. PM, March/April 2012
 TX Gregory. May M. Green (later Watson). PM, Jan/Feb 2012
 TX Haskell. Mrs. M. S. Pierson. PM, March/April 2012
 TX Marlin. Mrs. Emma Reed. PM, July/Aug. 2012
 TX Mt. Pleasant. Annie M. Moores (later Towler). Not yet published
 WA Kent. Annie F. Morrill. PM, Jan/Feb 2010
 WI Columbus. Catharine E. Chadbourn. PM, Nov/Dec 2008 ♦