

Citizens National Bank of Weatherford

by Frank Clark

The founder of this bank was James Robertson (J.R.) Coutts. He was a native of Tennessee and in the mid-1850s, he slowly moved his family to Texas. The birth of his daughter Mary occurred in Lawrence County, Arkansas in July 1856. The Coutts family eventually settled in Weatherford in Parker County in 1858 when J.R. was 25 years old.

Coutts served with the Texas Frontier Guard during the Civil War as Weatherford was very close to the edge of civilization. Parker County is the county immediately to the west of Tarrant County where Fort Worth is located. Weatherford is the seat of Parker County.

After the war, Coutts undertook a long cattle drive to California and returned to Weatherford in 1868 with \$50,000 in gold. He formed a banking partnership with John A. Fain, which was named Coutts and Fain Bank. It was located on the courthouse square.

Fain would leave the partnership in 1871 and was replaced by W.E. Hughes. The bank was now known as Hughes, Coutts and Company. Hughes only stayed until 1873 and the new partner was one Henry Warren. The bank was now known as either J.R. Coutts and Company or as Henry Warren & Company as two different sources each state a different name. Perhaps the name depended on who was in charge that day. Anyway, Warren left the bank in 1882 and Coutts then applied for a national bank charter. The charter was granted on June 10, 1882 and the name of the bank was changed to the Citizens National Bank, charter number 2723.

The bank built a two-story stone building on the corner of the courthouse square and North Main Street in 1885. The bank expanded into adjacent buildings over the years. Remodeling in the late 1980s restored the original stone building and doubled the overall size of the banking house. Its address is 101 N. Main Street. Today the bank is under the First Financial Bank, National Association umbrella.

The bank was chartered shortly before the end of the First Charter Period. It issued only the \$10 and \$20 denominations during the National Bank Note era. The note types the bank issued were First Charter Series of 1875, Third Charter Red Seals, Date Backs, and Plain Backs, and Series 1929 Type 1 and 2 notes. The Citizens assumed by consolidation the non-note issuing Parker County National Bank, charter number 12762, on December 6, 1927.

Coutts would go on to eventually become the wealthiest man in Parker County. At one time he owned about 24,000 acres in Parker and the surrounding counties. Mr. Coutts daughter, Mary Coutts Burnett, bequeathed her \$3,000,000 estate to Texas Christian University in December 1923. The funds were used to build the Mary Coutts Burnett Library.

Several officer pairings through the large size years of National Bank notes for the Citizens were:

1885 President J.R. Coutts, Cashier W.F. Altfather;
 1894 President J.R. Coutts, Cashier A.N. Grant;
 1901 President J.R. Coutts, Cashier G.A. Holland;
 1909 President G.A. Holland, Cashier J.O. Tucker;
 1927 President G.A. Holland, Cashier Coutts Holland.

There were two officer tandems during the small size National era. The first Type 1 officers were President G.A. Holland and Cashier J.S. Campbell. The second Type 1 and Type 2 duo was President Fred Smith and Cashier J.B. Witherspoon.

The first note pictured is a Series 1875 \$20 Friedberg 435 with the faded penned signature of President J.R. Coutts and the clear penned signature of Cashier A.N. Grant. The second note is a Series 1902 Plain Back \$20 Friedberg 650 with bold purple rubber stamped signatures of President G.A. Holland and Cashier J.O. Tucker. The linen postcard depicts an aerial view of Weatherford and an arrow marks the location of the Citizens National Bank.

