

HISTORY OF THE FULTON STATE BANK CLOCK

By Barbara Mask

On August 30, 1912, M.S. Ingwersen, cashier of The Fulton Bank, announced that a new clock with Westminster chimes was being mounted on front of the bank. It was nine feet high, three feet wide and fifteen inches deep. The face was thirty inches in diameter and made of pearl white glass with Arabic numerals. The clock was operated by electricity and controlled by an eight-day master clock, which was placed inside of the bank. It remained attached to the building until July 1915 when an iron standard was installed on the sidewalk near the curb. The case was ensconced in bronze. There were only a couple of times that the clock needed repair work and it soon became a familiar and dependable fixture on Fulton's Main Street. It remained so for over a half century.

The clock, sometimes referred to as the Janus-face, is reference to Janus, the god of beginnings and endings and thus, time. The god is usually a two-faced one since he looks to the future and the past. The Romans dedicated the month of January to Janus. Most often, however, the clock was called, "Time."

THE CHIMES

The new timepiece was equipped with several tubular bells from four to six inches in length and had both Westminster and Cathedral peals. At the quarter hour it sounded four strokes of the Westminster chime; on the half hour, eight strokes of the cathedral; at the three-quarter hour there were twelve strokes and on the hour there were sixteen strokes of the Westminster chimes. The regular hour stroke then followed the peals of chimes. The clock was illuminated by electric lights at night.

ABSENT

The clock worked, without incident until 1947, when a truck driver struck it and destroyed both the pole and the clock. He was delivering produce to the grocery stores on the west side of the street: Amman's Royal Blue and Bob's Certified Foods grocery store. The decision was made to replace the landmark timepiece



The clock was mounted on the building from August 30, 1912 to July 1915.
Photo Circa 1912-1915



This photo taken circa late 1940s shows downtown main street without the clock.

with an exact replica, but there were delays because of a shortage of materials during the post-war years. An additional delay was caused when a high wind on New Year's Eve caused damage to the hands before the outer glass case had been installed. The Fulton Journal reported, "that one hand was pointing due south and the other to the north, but not at the correct time." This writer has always been perplexed at a postcard scene of Fulton's Main Street taken in the 1940s with no clock visible, but now has learned why the clock was absent in that scene. The name of the driver, who was responsible for the demise of the familiar face, re-

mains unknown.

MAIN STREET MOOD

Sometime in the 1950s, Wayne Bastian began writing a column, titled, "Main Street Mood." He personified the clock, naming it "Time," and periodically commented on Fulton happenings from the clock's observatory position and ever-constant presence. The writings provided a look at us as Fulton residents and an opportunity for Bastian to offer his musings in an insightful way; most frequently, in a humorous style. The columns were published for about ten years.

Continued

THE END OF TIME

On several occasions, one or the other side of the Janus-faced clock refused to work and Main Street pedestrians would be discombobulated. One March day in 1959, the clock struck nineteen times and amused the locals who realized the chiming mechanism must be having 'a sun stroke.' Then, on September 23, 1965, the familiar face was removed from its place of prominence on the Doric column. Jim Shipma, Public Works Director, was the supervisor of the equipment and other two men, who, with the assistance of a crane, lowered the clock to the ground. People who had done no sidewalk superintending for months, according to Bastian, "fell readily into the correct stance and expert advice was bandied around at a rate not equaled since the time of the Big Flood; a few months earlier.

The demise of the bank clock was due to drowning. The Mississippi River did not reach Main Street at 1010 4th Street, but the basement of the building was flooded and the life-center components, housed there, were damaged beyond repair. "The 'TIME' died at 11:40, but no one knew if it was a.m. or p.m.

THE REPLACEMENT

The Fulton State Bank's new clock (name changed from The Fulton Bank to Fulton State Bank in 1927) was installed and a thermometer was added. Now, passers-by could read the time and temperature as the sides spun slowly and unceasingly over the heads of Main Streeters. The chrono-thermometer was attached to the Carthage marble front of the bank as the original timepiece had been mounted on August 30, 1912. The new instrument was cast acrylic and the letters and numbers were fused on. It was illuminated. The cost was \$3800. This writer is curious as to how many remember the newer one? Almost everyone remembers the original one and many recall the beautiful chimes and the ambience it created in the downtown business district.

THE THIRTY-YEAR MYSTERY

Like other research projects, many questions are answered and others surface. One article in The Fulton Journal stated that the old clock was taken to

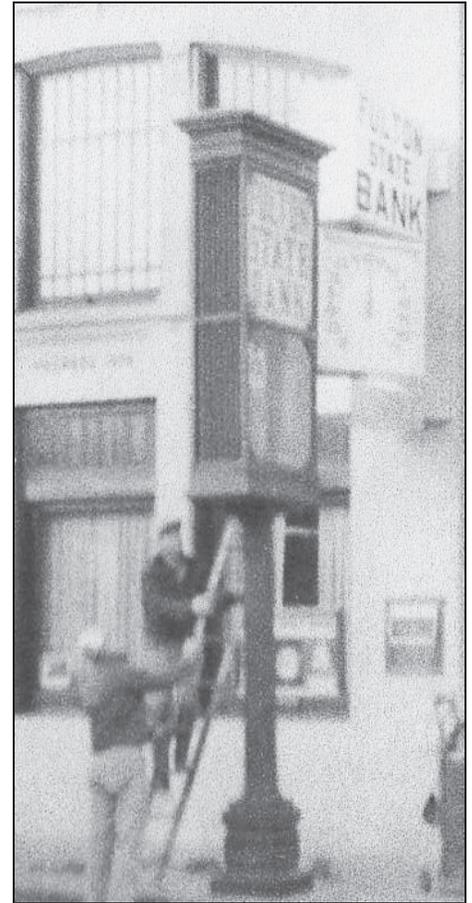


Circa 1950

Hampton, Illinois by an antique dealer, named Martin Hansen. Another reported that a Chicago firm purchased it and moved it to that city in September, 1965. The clock, reconstructed, is now located in the bank room in the Main Street building at Heritage Canyon. Joe Clarkson, former President of The Fulton State Bank, recalls that the Bank donated money to re-build the clock in the 1990s. Where was it for thirty years? How did it find its way back to Fulton? Did Harold Wierenga know where the clock was located? Did he, or someone else, retrieve it thirty years after 'Time' departed the city street, where it was loved and missed by all once it was gone. Does anyone know?

FULTON STATE BANK CLOCK TODAY

The Fulton State Bank Clock is currently located in the bank room at Heritage Canyon. It was returned to Fulton in the 1990s; apparently by Harold Wierenga. Costs to restore it were paid by the Fulton State Bank. The clock face was donated by Ruth Anderson and Henry Norman repaired the leaded stain glass (mother of pearl stone). Warren Wiersema painted the name of THE FULTON STATE BANK as it appeared when it stood on Main Street. Jay Brondyke built the standard (pole) to replicate the pole that supported the clock for over fifty years.



September 1965 - the old and the new clock



Fulton State Bank Clock in Heritage Canyon