



BTC BANK: Celebrating a Century of Community Minded Banking



BTC BANK

Celebrating a Century of Community Minded Banking

1919–1999
Bethany Trust Company

1999–2019
BTC Bank

By Sarah Findley

Findley





THE *Bethany Trust Company*
BETHANY, MISSOURI





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BTC decked out its parking lot to welcome guests for its ninetieth anniversary celebration on September 18, 2009.

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The Donning Company Publishers
731 S. Brunswick
Brookfield, MO 64628

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Cataloging-in-Publication Data on file at the Library of Congress
ISBN: 978-1-68184-239-4

Printed in the United States of America at Walsworth

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BTC's service area is represented by seven highly experienced farming and business professionals. Pictured from left to right are 2019 members Ron Wolf, Ed Oram, Allan Mulnix, Everett Harding (past member), Danny Marsh, Kirby Payne, Jerry Findley, and president and CEO Doug Fish. Not pictured is Andrew McCrea.

FOREWORD

Yesterday, today, tomorrow; what we were, what we are, and what we will be. The pages of this book tell our story from the beginning to today, through the Great Depression, the Ag Crisis of the 1980s, and most recently, the Recession of 2008. During each of these events, the banking industry was transformed.

Thirty years ago, there were almost 13,000 commercial banks in the United States; today, there are less than 5,000. Thirty years ago, we were one bank in one community with \$65 million in assets. As this book is being printed, we are one bank in twelve communities with more than \$500 million in assets. Thirty years ago, there were twenty-two locally chartered banks in those twelve communities, and today there are only seven.

Branch banking is one of those transformations over the past thirty years. And there is no better proof of that than this simple fact: today, there are thirty-eight branch banks in those twelve communities. We, BTC Bank, have added eleven of the thirty-eight.

Needless to say, we have been a leader in north central Missouri over the past one hundred years and most definitely over the past thirty years. Tomorrow what will we be? We will be an ag bank driven by the desire to serve and be part of successful, thriving communities. Will that be twelve communities, eighteen communities, twenty-four communities? That is the unknown. However, we will be driven by our mission, vision, and core values, as we have for the past one hundred years.

Thank you for supporting BTC Bank through all these years and for your interest in our history. It's a pleasure to serve our community.

Doug Fish

President and CEO

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Just like a successful banking institution, the creation of this history book is propped up by its community. Without a century of supportive customers and engaged citizens, there would be no history to tell. Through the course of learning and writing this story, countless friends and professionals helped bring the best parts of this story to life.

Among those owed special thanks are Phil and Kathy Conger and the staff of the *Bethany Republican-Clipper*, who have led by example for generations with their commitment to preserving our community's history for posterity. In addition to a boundless archive of news, they provided a colorful perspective of the community from the respectful angle of reporters, as well as many of the photos used in this book. Another trove of historical photos exists in the capable hands of Tom Strade, a photographer whose love for his community is apparent in the maintenance of a thorough archive of historical photos he has acquired from fellow professional photographers in Bethany's history. He graciously provided a glimpse into the community's past, allowing us to use photos from his collection in this book. The Genealogical Society's collection of Phil Conger's ancestors' newspaper archives is a gem of history waiting to be discovered here in our hometown.

Special thanks are also due to Ashley Shisler, marketing director for BTC Bank, who managed this project and braved the basement storage in search of photos, minutes, record books, and keepsakes. Personally, I appreciated her willingness to hire a local author to tell this story.

Were it not for the board of directors who served during the initiation and completion of the project, this story might not have been told. Their dedication to the past, present, and future of BTC Bank is unmatched, and the respect employees of the bank have for them speaks volumes about the foundation of this fine institution.





Jerry Findley
Doug Fish
Everett Harding

Danny Marsh
Andrew McCrea
Allan Mulnix

Ed Oram
Kirby Payne
Ron Wolf

The faithful current and former employees, board members, and volunteers who cordially welcomed me into their homes, spent time with me on the phone, responded to emails, and patiently explained the inner workings of this well oiled machine are certainly the backbone of this organization, of their families, and of the community spirit that made this bank and this book possible.

Paula Addison
Dillon Bird
Jesse Bird
Ron Cornett
Doug Fish
Eric Funk
Richard Graner

Verna Herzog
Kevin Lloyd
Cole Osborn
Sylvia Pearl
Ashley Shisler
Valarie Shisler
Sam Sperry

Frances Stratton
Paul Thomas
Clint Vanatta
Wayne West
Tom Witten
Marilyn Wilkinson
Marcia Willis

Last, but certainly not least, a most heartfelt debt of gratitude is sent to heaven for the exhaustive research done by Peggy Rinehart. Just when I thought the benefit she provided to BTC Bank could not be any greater, I found “the book.” A true labor of love, it is obvious she poured her heart and soul both into her career and into the creation of this history book/photo album combination. Once thought to be lost forever, amassed with interviews, autobiographies, data, and original photos, this eighty-fifth anniversary compilation is truly a priceless contribution to this project. In memoriam, Peggy has been a true inspiration as a business-woman, and the impact she made on this book—and this writer—will never be forgotten. I hope I have made her proud.

Sincerely,
Sarah Findley



CHAPTER ONE A New Financial Mart

On the evening of September 12, 1919, in the offices of Barlow, Barlow and Kautz, a temporary board of directors created a temporary organization with the intent of creating a very permanent corporation and a very permanent impact on a tight-knit community in northwest Missouri.

That corporation would be named Bethany Trust Company, and both the bank and its community would eventually see more than one hundred years of growth, mutual success, and inspiration for the people involved.

Barlow, Barlow and Kautz was a prestigious law firm located on the southwest corner of the square in Bethany. The first location of Bethany Trust Company would soon be housed in the first floor of the Barlow building, featuring “very commodious quarters erected several years ago especially for just such a purpose,” according to a September 17 issue of the *Bethany Republican*, one of Bethany’s prominent newspapers at the turn of the century.

During their September 12 meeting, the board of directors-elect appointed Mark Butler and Gilbert Barlow as inspectors of the election of directors. Votes were cast, and the board of directors of Bethany Trust Company had its first leadership in place.

According to the board of directors’ minutes, S. L. Gibson of Chillicothe was elected to a one-year term and would act as temporary chairman of the board, I. E. Nelson was elected to a two-year term and would act as temporary secretary of the board, H. N. Burgin was elected to a three-year term and was elected vice-president, and Joseph S. Neff was elected to a two-year term and was elected president. At this time in the bank’s history, the president of the board also served as an employee of the bank. Ernest Harvey was elected secretary of the Trust Company with a salary of \$1,500 for the first year.

In other first-time business, the board of directors agreed to purchase the business of I. E. Nelson for the sum of \$25,000. Nelson was retained at \$1,800 per

Temporary Organization.

Motion made and carried that S.L.Gibson act as temporary chairman. Carried

Motion made and seconded that I.E.Nelson act as temporary Secretary. Carried

Motion made and seconded that the Corporation be named Bethany Trust Co. Carried.

Motion made and seconded that Seven directors be elected, three to serve one year, three to serve two years and two to serve three years. Carried.

Chair appoints Mark Butler and Gilbert Barlow inspectors of election of directors, votes cast, resulting in the election of the following directors.

S.L.Gibson, one year
 W.T.Templeman, one year
 J.E.Noll, Two years
 Joseph Neff, Two Years
 I.E.Nelson, two years,
 W.C.Cole, three years,
 H.N.Burgin, three years.

Call for first meeting of board of directors.

S.L.Gibson
 Temp Chairman

I.E.Nelson
 Temp. Secy.

September 12, 1919.

The board of directors elect met in the office of Harlow, Barlow and Kautz.

Motion made and seconded that S.L.Gibson act as temporary chairman. Carried.

Motion made and seconded that I.E.Nelson act as temporary secretary. Carried.

Motion made and carried that Joseph S.Neff be elected President. Carried.

Motion made and carried that H.N.Burgin be elected Vice President. Carried.

Motion made and carried that the entire business of I.E.Nelson be taken over for the price and sum of Twenty-five thousand (25,000.00) Dollars, and in connection therewith said I.E.Nelson is to be retained to manage the Abstract, Farm Loan and insurance business at a salary of Eighteen Hundred (\$1800.00) Dollars for the first year. Carried.

Motion made and seconded that I.E.Nelson is elected Secretary of the board of directors. Carried.

Motion made and seconded that Ernest Harvey be elected Secretary of the Trust Company at a salary of Fifteen Hundred (1500.00) dollars for the first year. Carried.

Motion made and seconded that S.L.Gibson, W.C.Cole and I.E.Nelson be appointed committee on fixtures and supplies. Carried.

Motion made and seconded that the following be named as correspondents for the Bethany Trust Co., Viz: Mississippi Valley Trust Co., St. Louis, Mo. Mechanics and Metal National Bank, New York, Traders National Bank, Kansas City, Mo., Chillicothe Trust Co. Chillicothe, Mo., and a St. Joseph bank to be named later. Carried.

Chair appoints J.E.Noll, W.C.Cole and I.E.Nelson as Auditing Committee.

Motion made and duly seconded that Bethany Trust Co. carry burglary insurance amounting to \$25,000.00.

On Motion the board adjourned.

Joseph S. Neff President. I.E. Nelson Secy.

Left: The first known minutes from the board of directors of what would become the Bethany Trust Company feature an important first step: setting up a temporary organization and electing officers.

Right: Minutes from the early days of the Bethany Trust Company board of directors included formal order. Burglary insurance totaling \$25,000 was a comprehensive amount in 1919, compared to today.

year to manage the abstract, farm loan, and insurance business portion of the bank's operations—a hallmark of trust companies' offerings at the time.

At the end of the night, Bethany Trust Company boasted a full lineup of directors, featuring well-known Bethanians including President Neff, Vice-President Burgin, J. E. Noll, S. L. Gibson, W. T. Templeman, I. E. Nelson, and W. C. Cole. Election of the latter foresaw that a descendent of the Cole family would be a leader for Bethany Trust Company for generations to come.

Initial stockholders included S. L. Gibson, Ernest Harvey, George W. Barlow, Gilbert Barlow, L. R. Kautz, I. E. Nelson, Mrs. Wren Nelson, Mark Butler, Blanche Sigler, W. C. Cole, J. E. Noll, J. F. Noll, W. E. Alexander, W. T. Templeman, J. H. Cuddy, Joseph S. Neff, J. A. Frisby, M. Maud Casebolt, Julia F. Casebolt, Henry N. Burgin, K. Vanhoozer, George W. Myers, W. H. Hockridge, C. Garvin Gunn, and Allen Boyer.

Closing business for the first meeting of BTC's board of directors included a motion made and duly seconded that the Bethany Trust Company

You'll Feel
WELCOME
Here



To keep our patrons so well served, so fully satisfied that they will come again and again—is the policy of the Bethany Trust Company.

The friendly relationship existing between our customers and this bank is evidenced by their steady increase in number.

Make this bank your headquarters fair week. Our rest room will be open all day during the fair. Make use of it.

BETHANY TRUST CO.
BETHANY, Mo.

1920

carry burglary insurance amounting to \$25,000—a modest amount in today’s world, but crucial in 1919 for the protection of the business’s \$100,000 in capital and \$10,000 in surplus. According to the *Republican*, “This [would] be one of the solid financial institutions of this part of the state, and we speak for it a volume of business that will be gratifying to those behind the enterprise.”

Local newspapers originally published BTC’s intentions to open its doors for business between October 1 and October 15, 1919, with S. L. Gibson as “the prime mover in perfecting the organization,” and the bank’s choice of cashier to be shared within days of its first board meeting. However, Bethany’s “new financial mart” would have a few hoops to jump through before its grand opening.

In retrospect, September 19, 1919, would serve as the official first day for Bethany Trust Company, but its customers would have to wait until the new year to conduct their business.

BTC’s board of directors trudged through the fall and winter of 1919, promoting its abstracting and insurance underwriting services, farm loans—offering “the best there is”—checking and time deposits, and 4 percent interest rates in its savings

DIRECTORS: C. W. Burgess, President; C. A. Springer, Vice-President; E. H. Frisby, John S. Slatten, M. H. Moulton, Ed Skinner, J. B. Bryant.

The Stockholders and Officers
—of—
**The Bethany Savings
...Bank...**


assure their friends and patrons that their hearty support will be given

The Harrison County Fair
and ask your co-operation in making it a great success.

W. W. MYERS, Cashier
W. C. BARLOW, Asst. Cashier
HARLEY L. COLLINS, Asst. Cashier

1916

J. L. COLE, President
EZRA H. FRISBY, Secretary
L. G. PRENTISS, Cashier
A. CUMMING, Vice-President
J. H. ROSS, Ass't Cashier



**HARRISON
COUNTY
BANK**
BETHANY, MO.

**Capital and Surplus \$150,000.00
Total Resources Over \$500,000.00**

DIRECTORS
J. L. COLE
A. CUMMING
EZRA H. FRISBY
W. R. KINKADE
J. F. NOLL
W. F. CUDDY
W. M. DUNN

We treat all business transactions as strictly confidential.
The most careful business men deposit their money in a bank.
Our chief aim is to serve and protect the best interests of the patrons of this bank. Our ample resources enable us to do this to the entire satisfaction of our customers.

LET US SERVE YOU
PRR 1/2 1919

Longstanding Bethany banks greeted Bethany Trust Company with competition in 1919. Ads like these graced the pages of newspapers and fair programs every year.

Facing page: One of the first advertisements promoting the new Bethany Trust Company. Ads like this ran in the program for the county fair.

department. Cut-and-dry advertisements of the day were open and communicative: “We invite your patronage and if we can in any way serve you, please feel free to call on us. If not in need, come in and see us anyway. We will be glad to greet you.”

BTC’s gladness to greet friends from the community would certainly stick as a customer service trademark for a full century to come ... something its founding mothers and fathers would surely be proud of today.

“Some Swell Place”

As the winter of 1919 approached, newspaper articles shared news of the appointment—and eventual resignation—of well-known Bethany businessman Walter T. Lingle. On October 8, 1919, the *Bethany Republican* announced the new money mart having chosen Lingle as its cashier—an esteemed position within the community at the time. Touted as one of few “Notable Bethanians” in the *Harrison County Bicentennial History*, Lingle was manager of Bethany Mill and Elevator Company for a number of years. He also served as secretary for the Harrison County Fair Association for ten years. The *Republican* called him “one of the keenest business men of our city,” saying “the new financial concern made no mistake when they selected Mr. Lingle for the responsible position of cashier.”

Not long after that publication, papers issued an announcement that Lingle had declined the offer to serve as cashier, citing obligations to his numerous other businesses. Unthwarted, BTC announced on November 5 that it had selected a new cashier and assistant cashier.

I. E. Nelson of Bethany would serve as cashier and Walton Todd of Blythedale would serve as the assistant. The *Republican* commented “that the choice is a good one goes without saying,” but assured more updates, as the bank planned to open its doors by the end of the year.

By December 31, 1919, newspapers reported: “The Bethany Trust Company is as busy as bees ... getting ready to open up for business. Their new fixtures are here, all but the marble work, which will not arrive for several days. An expert from the factory is superintending the placing of the elegant fixtures, and it is a plain case that when they are all properly installed, it is going to be some swell place.”

Citing “much disappointment in getting the bank furnishings,” BTC reported a big force of workers getting the rooms of the Barlow building ready for the bank’s soft opening on January 1, 1920. After what seemed to be a challenging three months, Bethany Trust Company was finally ready to open, starting the new year with a new chapter. The *Bethany Democrat’s* New Year’s Day issue shared what surely was the feeling of all involved: “May this new banking institution live long and prosper, as it will be one more link in the chain that makes Bethany the best town on the map.”

The Early Years

The Harrison County Bank, the First National Bank, and the Bethany Savings Bank gave Bethany Trust Company healthy competition in a community where folks entrusted their hard-earned dollar

Fire destroyed this frame building in the early 1900s, clearing the way on the west side of the square to build the modern brick Barlow building, which would later become the home of the Bethany Trust Company. *Photo courtesy of Juanita Clift.*





The west side of the square circa 1921–1924 featured Bethany Trust Company on the far left (south), Blankinship Clothing Co., a café, a saloon, and Bethany Hardware. *Photo courtesy of Juanita Clift.*

to grow on itself. Downtown life was bustling. Bethany Trust Company was the newest tenant on the southwest corner of the square, which had been destroyed by a fire in the early 1900s. In 1913, George and Gilbert Barlow completed the more modern brick structure that would eventually become the site of Bethany Trust Company. The upstairs offices of the Barlow building, which was rebuilt following the fire, were used by professionals including doctors, dentists, and lawyers. A barbershop resided in the basement and even a café, with a shoe shop near the rear of the building.

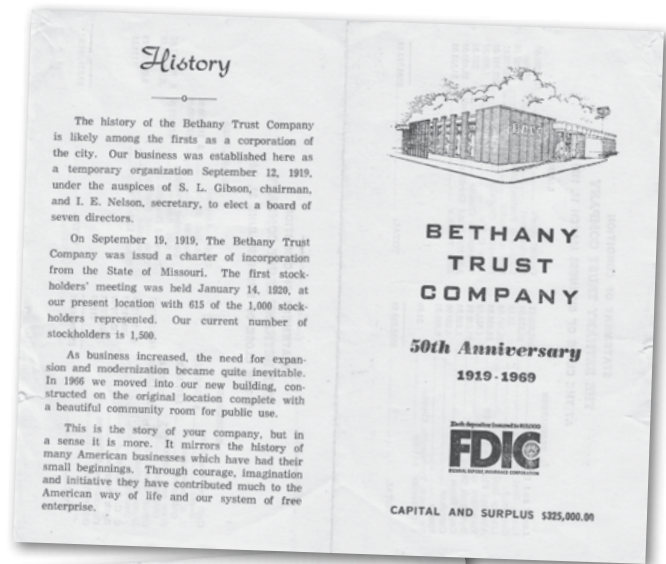
Blankinship Clothing shared the west side of the square with the bank, and eventually the Gamble Store joined the west-side businesses after moving into the Raymond Wheeler building to the north. Multiple theaters, drugstores, and hardware stores flourished on the square as well.

The Bethany Trust Company reported its opening statement from January 1, 1920, on the seventh of that month, with a balance of \$238,245.75.

In 1969, Bethany Trust Company printed commemorative statements featuring the statement of condition at the close of business on March 10, 1920. The outside of the pieces, pictured here, featured a brief history of the bank, including stockholder meeting attendance information that is not reported anywhere else.

As the Great Depression loomed on the near horizon for the whole country, life in Bethany was simple, driven by agriculture as it is today, and focused on a community that supported itself. One-quarter of Americans lived on farms. Most families lived on forty acres of land and were self-sufficient.

As the Dust Bowl, then the Great Depression, then World War II ravaged America, local families felt the effects. Federal programs aided local farmers, Civilian Conservation Corps camps were located at the fairgrounds with personnel and families adding to Bethany's population, and the Soil Conservation Service Offices created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt also assisted farmers and provided employment opportunities in the community.



STATEMENT OF CONDITION THE BETHANY TRUST COMPANY AT THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS MARCH 10, 1920	
RESOURCES	LIABILITIES
Loans and Discounts \$207,285.43	Capital Stock \$100,000.00
Loans, Real Estate 40,330.00	Surplus Fund 8,857.76
Overdrafts 55.18	Undivided Profits (\$10M paid in) 4,696.11
Liberty Bonds 25,000.00	Due to Banks 222,791.86
Abstract Plans and Books 4,863.79	Individual Deposits 1,078.50
Furniture and Fixtures 83,367.18	Time C D's 375.88
Due from Other Banks 1,365.34	Treasurer's Checks 25,400.00
Cash Items 4,628.90	Liberty Bond Certificate of Deposit 25,000.00
Currency 1,981.32	Bills Payable
To Error, Treasurer's Checks 24.00	
(Corrected 3-11-20)	
TOTAL \$238,245.75	TOTAL \$238,245.75

STATEMENT OF CONDITION THE BETHANY TRUST COMPANY AT THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS JUNE 30, 1969	
RESOURCES	LIABILITIES
Cash and Due from Banks \$ 778,812.18	Capital Account: Capital Stock \$ 150,000.00
U. S. Government Obligations 1,477,462.30	Surplus 175,000.00
State and Municipal 778,372.48	Undivided Profits and Reserves 378,471.86 \$ 703,471.86
Other Bonds 1,096,312.50 \$4,111,840.33	Demanded Deposits 2,365,895.42
Loans (including overdrafts) 4,887,072.35	Time and Savings Deposits 5,694,852.48
C. C. C. Loans 500,000.00	Other Liabilities 124.18
Bank Premises 142,506.00	
Furniture and Fixtures... 29,322.76	
Other Assets 611.55	
TOTAL \$9,074,346.92	TOTAL \$9,074,346.92



CHAPTER TWO Mid-Century Banking and Leadership

For farmers, the post-war period of economic growth for the country showed them the best of times and the worst of times. Sons and fathers returning from World War II enjoyed the benefits of a more and more industrialized farming landscape but soon recognized the effects of overproduction on the market. The number of farmers in America began to shrink as the size of a farm required to make a living increased. Times were changing.

In his autobiographical notes, longtime bank director Herb Adair recalled his time as the secretary of Bethany Trust Company. “Mr. John Nally was treasurer (there couldn’t have been a nicer man to work with). ... We had two bookkeepers, Lily Linville and Eunice Gibson.”

It was in 1956 when Frances Stratton answered the call from J. S. Nally for a job she said she didn’t even apply for. Upon reference by Eunice Gibson,

Stratton was hired as a bookkeeper and started the same year as future bank president Don Ebersole.

From there, Stratton recalls working six days a week running old posting machines with Edith Adair and Marie Slaughter. Back then, she says old posting machines were divided alphabetically in trays. At the end of a banking day, bookkeepers added all the deposits as well as the withdrawals made on customers’ accounts and then checked and double-checked to make sure their drawers—or “cages” as some called them—balanced. Then the checks were delivered to the banks from which they were written, with out-of-town checks

Above: Area townspeople gather around the square during “Crazy Days,” an event held each year featuring dress-up contests, festivities, and special sidewalk sales, drawing crowds to Bethany’s downtown scene during the mid-twentieth century. Engaging businesses like Bethany Trust Company created the backdrop for one of the area’s beloved traditions.

running all the way through the Federal Reserve in Kansas City. It's important to note that until major technological advancements at the turn of the next century, posting essentially carried on in this manner with few changes over the course of the next fifty years.

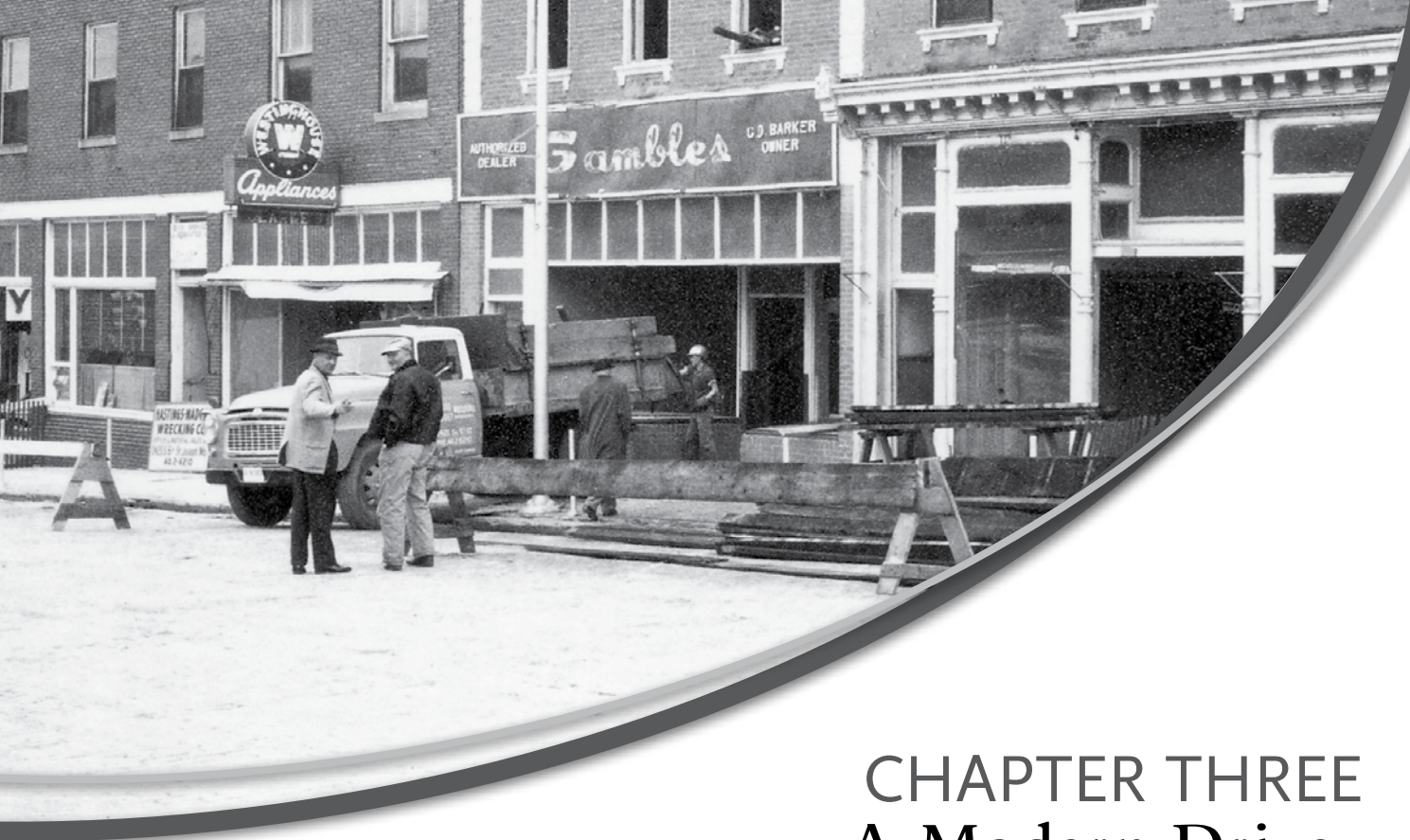
One change that did occur, however, came in the form of a major facelift for Bethany Trust Company's downtown location. Since 1919, the bank had operated on the southwestern-most corner of the west side of the square in downtown Bethany. In 1965, bank leaders decided it was time for some serious modernization.

Below: Employees gathered in the lobby of the bank for a celebration in the early 1950s. From left to right are Herb Adair, M. C. Cole, Lydia Bridges, Dorothy Adkins, Loree Slaughter, Edith Adair, Eunice Gibson, Edwin Scott, and John Nally.



Above: Floral arrangements decorated the lobby of the bank for a celebration in the 1950s.





CHAPTER THREE A Modern Drive- Through Bank

In early 1965, Bethany Trust Company contracted Hastings-Madget Wrecking Company to demolish its original home in the Barlow block, along with two more of the oldest buildings on the west side of the square. Bethany Trust Company purchased the properties that housed Clarkes, the Gamble Store, Shroyer Music Company, and the Fox Hole in order

to expand the bank's business and provide real estate to build its first-ever drive-up teller window.

During demolition, hard brick from exterior walls was to be salvaged and soft brick was to be used for filling basements of wrecked buildings. The Bethany Hardware building across the street was



Hastings-Madget Wrecking Company of St. Joseph, Missouri, was contracted to demolish the old Bethany Trust Company location along with several businesses nearby in order to create the space needed to construct a new bank, parking lot, and drive-through. According to the contract, "all salvage except the vault door, air conditioner, nite [sic] depository and marble [was] to become the property of the wrecking company."

leased by Bethany Trust Company and remodeled to serve as a temporary banking headquarters during demolition and construction. Descriptions of the new building promised modern-day luxuries like air conditioning, gas heat, a paved parking lot, and a full basement featuring a community room for meetings, kitchen, lounge, and wash rooms.

The official opening of the Bethany Trust Company drive-up window was preceded by a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 9 a.m. on Monday, January 10, 1966. According to newspaper articles, the honor of making the first deposit at the drive-in window went to M. C. Cole, president of the bank, who came early at 8 a.m. to be certain to be the first to use the new service offered by the bank.

After just a few days of operation in its stately new location, Bethany Trust Company hosted an open house to nearly 2,000 visitors from Missouri and Iowa. A line of attendees stretched around the city block and took until after 6 p.m. to filter through the new facility.

An exciting day in the bank's history was also a very exciting day for one new employee. Marilyn Wilkinson could have started her job as a book-keeper at Bethany Trust Company at the old location, but she said she wasn't ready at that time, so she turned down a job offer then, and started her new job on January 16, 1966. An initiation by fire, Wilkinson's first day on the job included giving tours of a brand-new building she had never been inside before. Over the course of her career, Wilkinson would work her way up to executive secretary. She recalls with a smile giving tours again during the eightieth anniversary celebration for the bank: "I was better at giving tours by then."

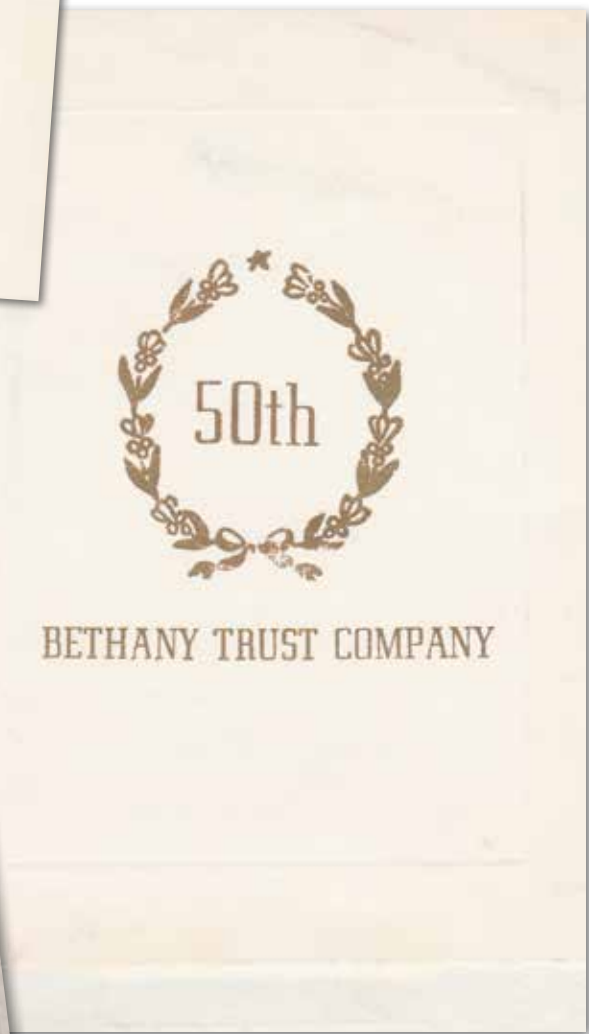
But before eighty, there was fifty. And just like that, Bethany Trust Company celebrated half a century in banking. In 1969, with Don Ebersole at the helm as the newly appointed executive vice president, Bethany Trust Company celebrated its fiftieth birthday and reached a milestone \$10 million in assets.



Bank Builders and Designers of Springfield, Missouri, was contracted to carry out the design and plan they created with architects and engineers Matthews and Hillman. This rendering was illustrated by Dick Wilcox.

022-21110

The officers, directors and employees of the
 Bethany Trust Company
 Bethany, Missouri
 cordially invite you to attend the formal opening
 and inspect our new bank building on
 Sunday, January sixteenth, 1966
 from 1:00 to 3:00 p. m.



"IT'S OUR BIRTHDAY"
 1919 - 1969



IT IS INDEED A GREAT PLEASURE TO SAY WE HAVE COMPLETED 50 YEARS IN BETHANY. OUR PRESENT DIRECTORS, OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES HAVE REALIZED THAT YOU, OUR VALUED CUSTOMERS, HAVE MADE THIS POSSIBLE AND WE SINCERELY THANK YOU.

50

YEARS YOUNG FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19
 We invite you to come in and enjoy cake and punch all day Friday.

THE **Bethany Trust Company**
 BETHANY, MISSOURI



1919 THE CHAPTER FOR THE BETHANY TRUST COMPANY, WAS ISSUED SEPTEMBER 19, 1919, AFTER THE BANK WAS ORGANIZED SEPTEMBER 12, 1919 UNDER THE AUSPICES OF S. L. GIBSON



1966 AS BUSINESS INCREASED, THE NEED FOR EXPANSION AND MODERNIZATION BECAME QUITE INEVITABLE. WE MOVED INTO OUR NEW BUILDING CONSTRUCTED ON THE ORIGINAL LOCATION.

BETHANY TRUST COMPANY BANK

Bethany Trust Company's fiftieth anniversary was celebrated with full flair, featuring large newspaper ads like this and engraved personal invitations.

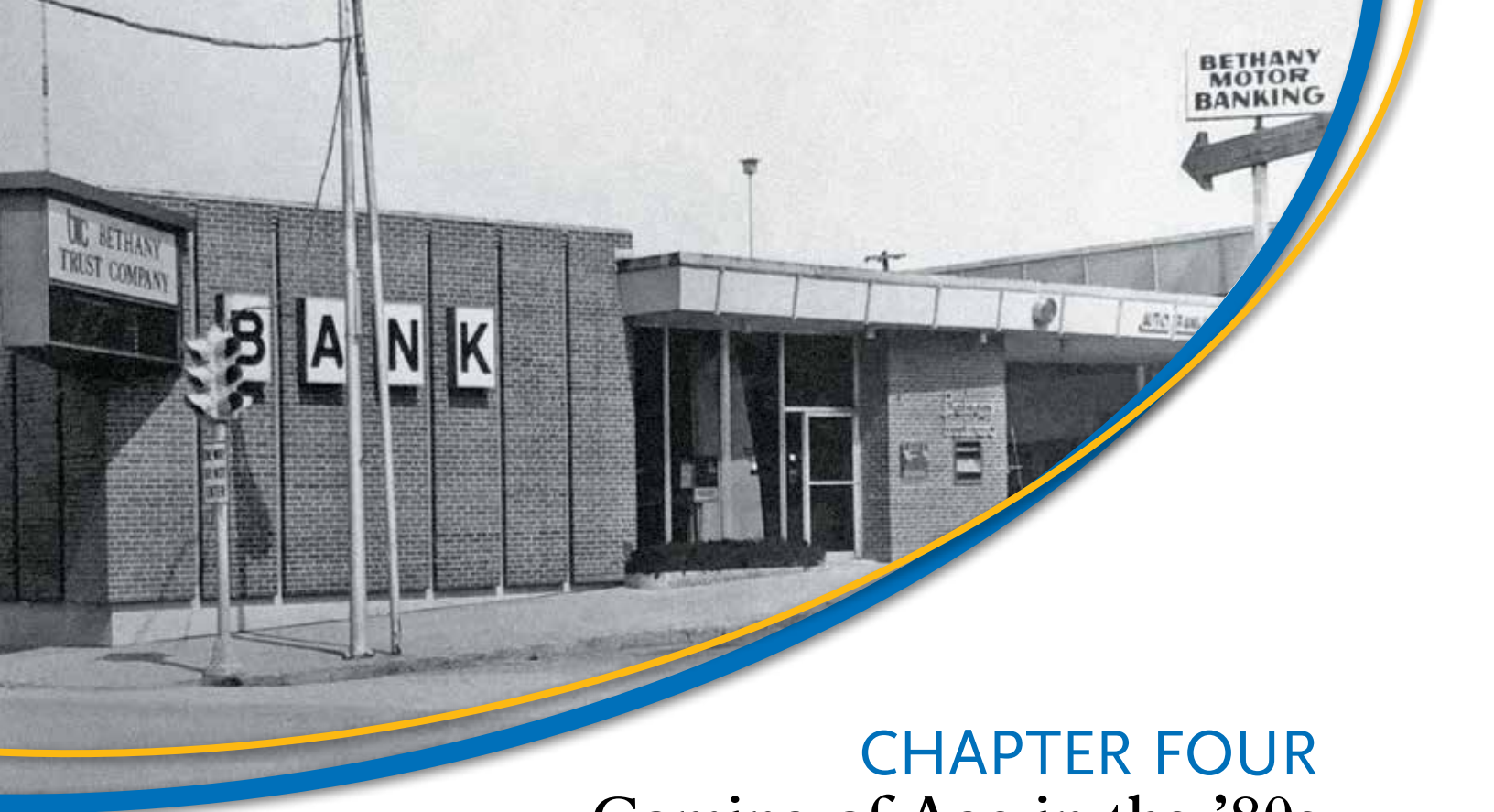


Employees in the bookkeeping department paused work for anniversary festivities during the daylong celebration in 1969.

During the 1969 annual meeting, notable staff changes were announced, including naming Don Ebersole as executive vice-president—succeeding Herb Adair, who would be retiring—as well as introducing a new employee, John Linch, who would be assuming the duties of trust officer and who would lead the bank into the farming crisis of the 1980s, little more than a decade in the future. Other names the bank would come to revere in the future were appointed in 1969, including assistant treasurer Helen Spence and secretary Peggy Rinehart.



Employees greeted visitors on the main floor of the bank. Standing from left to right are Terry Collins, Barbara Underwood, Nina Taylor, Helen Spence, and Loree Slaughter. Peggy Rinehart is seated at her desk.



CHAPTER FOUR

Coming of Age in the '80s

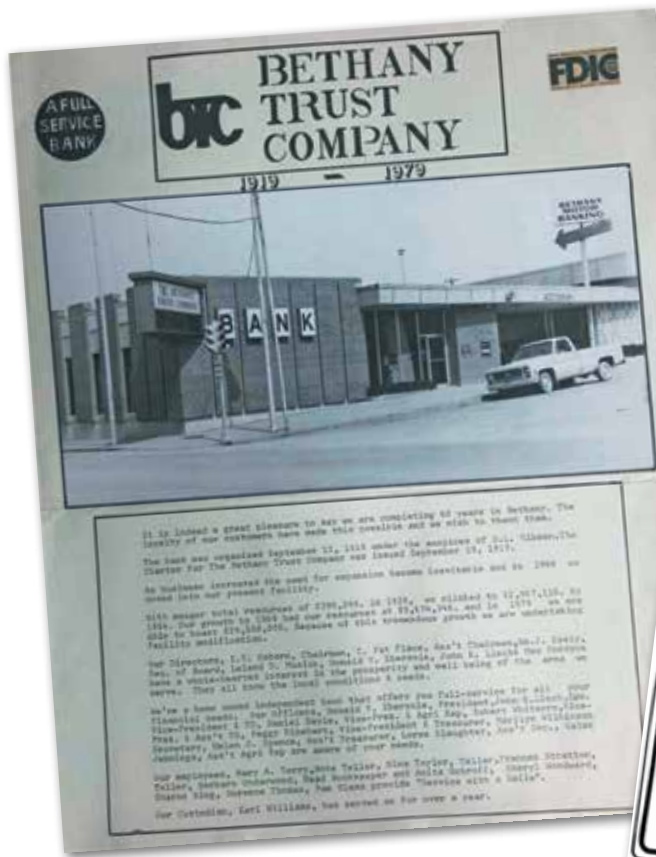
For a farming community, saying the 1980s were trying times is a vast—if not insulting—understatement. For a bank whose primary client base is made up of farmers, the 1980s were a painful, scary, and heart-breaking time. While farmers across the country were losing their family businesses to high interest rates and low commodity prices, Bethany Trust Company worked hard to create stability and support for its customers. Because the bank survived, many customers' businesses survived as well.

When signs of trouble for farmers started becoming apparent in the late 1970s, former loan officer and bank president Ron Cornett attributed Bethany Trust Company's survival to its ability to see the trouble coming and plant its feet firmly in the ground. For loan officers at the time, this meant working quickly to secure loans as best they could during a time when farmers had been accustomed to handshake deals and unsecured lines of credit. To many, this did not go over well. To some, it was the only chance they had to keep their farms.

During the 1980s, Cornett recalled meeting farmers at 10:30 p.m. at the bank or visiting them on their farms to work face to face and come up with a plan to ensure they could keep their farms. "I told some of them, 'You'd be better off if you'd just get out,'" Cornett said. But so many wanted to stay. They had to. Farming is a way of life around here.

When other lenders stopped advancing money and some banks were closing their doors, Bethany Trust Company made direct loans to farmers. They worked to ensure they didn't force bankruptcy or foreclosure on farms. Second liens on real estate were taken out to shore up loans. Cornett credited these early efforts to secure loans as the thing that gave Bethany Trust Company an advantage over other banks. That promise to stand by their borrowers is something that may not have put the bank in the best position at the time, but "it was the right thing to do," Cornett said more than thirty years later.

Then and there, Bethany Trust Company made major changes that would impact lending policies forever.



Left: The seventieth anniversary of Bethany Trust Company came and went with less fanfare than those preceding or

following it. Practicality and modesty led this advertisement for the bank, which featured one of the first renderings of a new, modern logo at the top, designed by Kathy Conger at the *Bethany Republican-Clipper*.



Right: Leading up to the ag crisis of the 1980s, BTC officials recalled seeing the issues on the horizon. Empowering messages distinguished advertisements like this one at the beginning of the decade, as the banking institution prepared for impact.

Securing loans and cash flows and keeping the bank in as good a standing as possible with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation and state examiners was the top priority for loan officers. Sometimes this meant sending board members to plead cases for the bank and community in front of examiners, coming within dollars of closing its doors.

Like area farmers, Bethany Trust Company persisted. A gut-wrenching decade dragged on, and each year, the board and officers tried to improve its position. Customers stuck with Bethany Trust Company through payoffs when they could have filed bankruptcy and been more prosperous. Sticking their neck out for one another proved to be the only way to survive the financial strife of a lifetime; sticking together would be the way the bank and its community would be around to tell the story today.

Supporting the Next Generation of Farmers

As much as farmers needed support during the farming crisis, it became apparent to Bethany Trust Company that the next generation of farmers was also watching. A renewed commitment to area 4-H clubs, Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapters, and county fairs gave Bethany Trust Company the opportunity to empower tomorrow's agricultural leaders.

Showing up for future farmers started early for Bethany Trust Company and did not waver as a priority during difficult times. Pictured here at the 1986 county fair are, from left to right, Martin Andres, Christy Barber, a livestock judge, Ron Cornett, and Brad Fenimore, front.





Bethany Trust Company doubled down on the word “trust,” both in its name and in its customer service during the farming crisis of the 1980s. While larger institutions were treating customers like numbers, the hometown bank worked extra hard to make sure the people it shared its community with didn’t forget who was here to help them through the difficult time. Ads like these from the *Bethany Republican-Clipper* ran in newspapers throughout town in the early 1980s.

“Being involved in youth ag is important,” said Ron Cornett. “The board has always wanted us involved in community activities. While it helps promote the bank, it also supports our youth. The future of a bank isn’t its current customers, it’s the next generation, and we need to show them we are here for them.”

From purchasing livestock from youth showmen and women, to providing Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) scholarships to students, Bethany Trust Company has worked to build a network for

the community’s youth. Today, individual branches of BTC Bank support their local chapters, clubs, and fairs, promoting ag across Missouri and Iowa. In 2004, BTC Bank sponsored an all-new livestock pavilion at the Northwest Missouri State Fair grounds and continues to sponsor livestock shows to this date.

Rinehart Blazes a Trail

As the bank and its community healed from the impact of the farm crisis, a new path was being paved for women in banking with the appointment of Peggy



Pictured here, members of the Northwest Missouri State Fair board of directors, BTC Bank leadership, and spectators participate in a ribbon-cutting for the livestock pavilion update in 2004.



Peggy Rinehart broke through a glass ceiling in banking with her appointment as CEO in 1985. She joined Bethany Trust Company in 1958 and retired in 1994. She continued supporting the Banner Club after retirement and was known to host coffee meet-ups in the community room of the bank for members.

Rinehart as Bethany Trust Company’s first female vice-president and her role as interim CEO in 1985.

Rinehart’s trailblazing began early when she joined Bethany Trust Company in 1958. “I have gone

through every position at the bank,” she said in an interview with the *Republican-Clipper*. “I learned the banking business from the ground floor up.”

She helped organize the Gold Key Account Club, which would become the current-day Banner Club, and planned many of the club’s activities throughout the balance of her career, retiring in 1994. The effects of Rinehart’s dedication to Bethany Trust Company and her community were felt long after her retirement, even after her untimely passing in 2016, both with the fond memories her colleagues shared with her and with the extensive research she conducted in creating a scrapbook for the bank’s eighty-fifth anniversary in 2004—a resource that was invaluable in the creation of this book.

BANNER CLUB

In the late 1980s, Peggy Rinehart set out to develop a fun, engaging customer perk for dedicated clients of the bank. By 1989, the beginnings of what would come to be known as the Banner Club were forming, featuring dinner parties, entertainment, and even road trips for customers in this prestigious members-only club.

After several iterations over the years, the Banner Club today consists of more than 600 members—each of whom carry a cumulative deposit of \$5,000 or more, or loans of \$75,000 or more. Each member is age fifty or older and enjoys events and trips with the group. Since 2006, Verna Herzog has led the group to three dinner theater plays each year, a dinner party event every November at the local American Legion hall, and a vacation trip to Branson for a weekend of entertainment and tourism on a coach bus.

“I think it’s a great service that we offer,” says Herzog. “It gets people out and about that might not otherwise get to go.”



Members of BTC’s Banner Club and guests participate in annual trips like this one to Branson, Missouri, for shows, dinners, and fun.



CHAPTER FIVE Technology, Updates, and the Beginning of the Future

With the struggles of the '80s in the not-so-distant rear view, Bethany Trust Company powered forward with full steam as the new millennium approached. The year 1989 marked an important milestone in the recent history of the bank, when the first-ever in-house data processing equipment was installed. The IBM AS 400 was provided by the Kirchman Corporation out of Orlando, Florida, and featured three screens for the employees at the bank: one for bookkeeping, one for tellers, and one for loan officers. This data processing system serviced the bank until the fall of 2018, when the company contracted with Jack Henry & Associates out of Monett, Missouri.

Above: Messages both functional and festive were shared on this new electronic display installed on the corner of Bethany Trust Company's building in the late 1970s.

Right: The 1993 renovations to the bank building warranted celebration and an open house.



With technology on its side, and under the new leadership of Richard Graner, the bank was ready to get serious about growth. It was in the early '90s that Bethany Trust Company established a holding company, Bethany Bankshares, Inc. Putting people in the position to buy and sell stock gave liquidity to the bank's stock and put the bank in an excellent position to increase in assets. Establishing the holding company made Bethany Trust Company a community owned bank and protected its legacy from being bought out by a conglomerate. With original stockowners' descendants scattered across the country, the project required advertising and legwork to ensure permission was received from existing stockholders who received a ten-to-one swap along with the guarantee that their stock

could stay in their families and their hometown bank would remain just that for the rest of its years.

According to Graner, the path to growth was illuminated by these important accomplishments.

The year 1993 provided Bethany Trust Company with an opportunity to celebrate, and a full remodeling project was completed in April. The bank's lobby and offices were redecorated for the first time since 1979, featuring newly tiled floors, wallpaper, wall treatments, privacy cubicles, and a collection of old photographs of Bethany landmarks on the walls of the lobby. An open house was hosted for the community and showed good faith that the bank was leaning into the next century with enthusiasm and style.

SESQUICENTENNIAL



Former CEO Peggy Rinehart and current CEO Richard Graner rode in a float pulled by bank president Ron Cornett driving Chick Osborn's John Deere tractor in Bethany's sesquicentennial parade on June 24, 1995. According to snapshots, Herb Adair and Don Ebersole were scheduled to ride, but hot temperatures and illness kept the veteran bankers on the sidelines and in the shade for the weekend.

In 1995, the City of Bethany celebrated its sesquicentennial birthday, and Bethany Trust Company supported its community with full flourish. Peggy Rinehart came out of retirement to join bank president Richard Graner on the bank's parade float.



CHAPTER SIX

Growth

Change was in the air at Bethany Trust Company. The bank was officially set up to own and operate multiple banking locations and to expand its services. Whether or not the everyday customer was aware of this in the late 1990s, growth was a major part of the mindset belonging to the leaders of Bethany Trust Company as the institution and its community neared a new millennium.

Like farmers today, Bethany Trust Company realized that if it wanted to support its growing family, it would need to grow itself—to run more branches, invest in technology, employ the number of people required to satisfy modern-day banking regulations, and continue to serve as a leader in its community. Ron Cornett said, “We stayed an ag bank—that’s our shingle we hung out from the beginning, it’s what we knew, and what we set out to do. It made us what we are today.”

Continuing to pursue ag loans and support farmers would be the driving force behind Bethany Trust Company’s expansion into new territories.

Hiring good people, putting trustworthy employees in positions of power, and mutual trust between bank leaders and board members had proven to be a good business model during the twentieth century. It would prove to be an age-old practice that converted to twenty-first-century business very well.

First Stop: Gallatin, Missouri

In 1997, Bethany Trust Company announced plans to purchase the Bank of Gallatin and its branch facility in New Hampton. After acquiring controlling interest in the Bank of Gallatin in 1968, owners Vance and Avis Parman purchased the First State Bank of New Hampton in 1971. After her husband Vance’s death in 1978, Avis continued to lead her family’s banking business, merging the Bank of Gallatin and the First State Bank in 1988.

Above: Numerous BTC Bank employees gathered at one of the community’s favorite photo op spots, the bridge, on BTC’s main campus in 2010. Many of these employees moved on to work at new BTC branch locations as the bank expanded into new communities.



The Bank of Gallatin's location on the square would soon become the new home of BTC's Gallatin branch. This photo dates back to approximately 1980.

In an interview with the *Bethany Republican-Clipper* in 1997, Parman said she believed that the Bethany Trust Company provided a natural fit for her family business. “They have a lot of the same philosophies that we have—serving the small communities,” she said.

In the same interview, Bethany Trust Company president Richard Graner shared the bank’s enthusiasm about adding another community bank to the organization. “We feel that (small-town banks) are able to provide better services to their customers than big-city banks,” Graner said. That sentiment was shared by Parman, apparently, who reportedly turned down other offers from large chains wanting to infiltrate her northwest Missouri community.

While change was—and remains—difficult for many longtime bank customers, the purchase of the Bank of Gallatin and First State Bank in New Hampton went through in 1998, marking the year that Bethany Trust Company went from a single downtown location in Bethany, to a multi-branch operation serving customers across Harrison County and into Daviess County.

With the addition of new bank branches to the Bethany Trust Company family, bank leadership

found an opportunity during its eightieth year to embrace its regional outlook and fully integrate the hometown bank within new communities. On September 20, 1999, Bethany Trust Company officially began operations as BTC Bank and set its sights on a new era of growth and serving its community.

Some say that change is the only constant. For bank patrons in Gallatin at the turn of the twenty-first century, truer words had never been spoken.

In 2004, demolition of the original Gallatin BTC branch began in April. Gallatin’s *North Missourian* newspaper documented the changing faces of the landmark building on the downtown square, reminiscing about its early days as the Farmers Exchange Bank on a dirt road.

Exterior demolition started on the building’s west side, with plans to reuse an ornate metal support post and stone slabs from the east side of the building. Then branch president Roy Pendleton, Clint Vanatta, and Cynthia Crone saw the project through from demolition to construction where the new bank location stands today, working diligently to ease folks into a modern era of banking. During that time, Pendleton, Vanatta, Crone, and their team worked from a flower shop the bank purchased less than two feet from the new building site.

Today, the Gallatin branch of BTC stands at the corner of West Jackson and Main Streets in downtown Gallatin. The first new branch constructed in the BTC family was completed in 2004.





Gallatin BTC Bank employee Tracy Michael teaches students about coins through the community's Partners in Education program.

In 2019, branch manager Clint Vanatta recalls the challenges of bringing a new building and new way of doing business into a community made up of tradition and history. “When something changes, because people are accustomed to the ‘old,’ they may have concerns about the ‘new,’” he explained. Tearing down a building, albeit decrepit, meant tearing down a piece of history on Gallatin’s square. Vanatta and Crone weren’t surprised to face some animosity. However, customers who were committed to banking there felt like the transition was a good one and offered even more opportunities and services than they had before.

Vanatta says that at the time of new ownership and new construction, the overall customer feeling was good. “After building a new building, you kind of change missions when you hire a new manager and assistant manager who are eager to grow business,” he says.

Today, the modern building sits at the corner of Jackson and Main Streets in downtown Gallatin and stands as a cornerstone of BTC’s commitment to growth and expansion in their community. And as the community was about to see in the next decade, it was just the beginning.



BTC Bank employees Jessi Bird and Erin Hillyard present a donation check to Sherrie Hogue for the Albany Backpack Buddies program.

2000: Albany

In 2000, BTC opened its doors to its west-facing neighbors in Albany. Despite a fierce high school sports rivalry at the time, 2019 branch president Jesse Bird said, “You wouldn’t know if there were any challenges moving a Bethany bank into Albany at the time because of Mark Bridges, the manager at the time.”

Bird attributes much of the branch’s success to the Albany native’s hard work and community spirit. Since joining the team in 2009, Bird has carried on in Bridges’s footsteps, supporting the local FFA chapter, supplying T-shirts for the county fair, and providing donations to the school.

In 2010, the Albany branch underwent a substantial addition and renovation, adding space for privacy and additional support for customers.

When asked what the best part of working for BTC and being part of the growing family is, Bird had no hesitation. “The reason I’ve been here for fifteen years is that we are a very family-oriented bank, and family comes first,” said Bird. “BTC is very community minded—it’s not just the slogan. We help the community every chance we get.”

A highlight of his community involvement, he recalls, is donating the money needed for the display



The Albany branch of BTC is located at the corner of Highway 136 and North Hundley Street.

screen at the local school to highlight their historical photos and archives. “I’ve never been told I can’t give money to a school or anything worthwhile in the community,” Bird said. “I like working for a place that helps the community and is good to their employees and is just a good place to work.”

Y2K

No modern history is complete without mention of the public fear induced by the impending rollover of digital date format when we began the year 2000 as a society fully reliant on computerized systems. Possibly no industry faced as much fear as the banking industry, whose customers relied on it for infallible accuracy and the protection of their assets. Members of the small community of Bethany were not immune to the worry that something unpredictable might happen when computers rolled over at the end of New Year’s Eve 1999.

Richard Graner, bank president at the time, recalled the banking industry as a whole spending \$300 billion to ensure nothing happened to the nation’s banking systems. In Bethany Trust Company’s case, the data processing center had it all under control, yet Graner admits a few employees stayed late at the bank to see what happened at the stroke of midnight. When nothing happened—although it was not a surprise—a small celebration was had to ring in the new year.

Out of the many concerned citizens, Graner remembered an older gentleman who came into the bank right before the new year and took the penalty in order to remove his money from his



BTC Bank got in on Bethany’s all-school reunion activities in 2000, featuring historic photos in their ads welcoming alumni home for the weekend. This newspaper clipping serves as the only copy of this rare photo of the bank’s front door dating back to the 1940s.

accounts. He eventually returned and re-deposited the money after the imminent threat had passed.

With the dawn of a new millennium and the infiltration of technology into every part of banking, some of the bank’s longest-serving employees found it to be the right time to say goodbye to the banking jobs they used to know. For Frances Stratton, this decision was made easier with the addition of computers at every teller’s station and

the added responsibility of serving as the hub for multiple banking locations. Marilyn Wilkinson agreed that she, frankly, was dreading the new technology and its learning curve, but credited Richard Graner with being encouraging as technology began to take over the offices. Stratton retired in 2000, and Wilkinson retired in 2004. To date, they remain some of the longest-serving employees in the bank's history, and together, they shaped the way BTC has treated its customers and operated its business.

Looking back, Graner identifies the early 2000s as a catalyst for change for BTC. He remembers the beginning of the internet, introducing BTCbank.com to the public, and making banking available to customers online. "It was a real change, but we knew we had to keep up with it," he says. "We had set the wheels in motion. We needed to be expanding," Graner recalls.

He continues, "Looking back, not much had been happening ... then it really took off." Graner credits today's expansive reach of BTC Bank to the technology that became available to the organization. "Technology didn't exist when banking started. Without the current technology, there's no way we could have the locations we do."

Richard Graner retired as bank president in 2003, but the wheels had, in fact, been set in motion. Thanks to capable leadership and an investment in the company's technological infrastructure, the expansion of BTC Bank was just beginning.

2003: Pattonsburg

BTC's Pattonsburg location passed through the hands of several owners before landing amongst the community owned institution to which it belongs today. The Bank of Coffey owned a location in downtown Coffey, as well as a location in "old" Pattonsburg, Missouri, located in the Grand River



Top: The origins of the Pattonsburg branch of BTC Bank date back to the Pattonsburg First State Bank (1882–1987) with its historic location, pictured here, in old downtown Pattonsburg.

Bottom: The Pattonsburg branch of BTC is located in the heart of "new" Pattonsburg, on the southeast end of Main Street. Today, the branch has expanded to include two spots on the busy street, providing additional space and privacy for customer service needs.

floodplain, which was devastated by the Flood of 1993. Following the flood, Pattonsburg relocated its municipality four miles north to higher ground, and local businesses began to rebuild a prosperous new main street, which is the home of the current Pattonsburg BTC branch today.

After closing its Coffey branch and making Pattonsburg its main headquarters, the Bank of Coffey sold to Guarantee Bank and Trust in 1997, then to the First Bank of Missouri in 2002, before being purchased by BTC on February 8, 2003.



Each summer, hot rods and vintage cars park in front of BTC as part of the Pattonsburg Car Show. Branch president Sam Sperry and his team have a raffle and giveaways each year in support of the show. *Photo courtesy of the Pattonsburg Car Show Facebook page.*

Today, branch president Sam Sperry and three staff members run a bustling full-service bank on Main Street in “new” Pattonsburg. There, the bank is heavily involved in the annual Pattonsburg Car Show, a major tourist draw to the quiet community,



BTC Bank employees Rhonda Lambert and Tracy Parton present a donation to a community member during the holidays with loan officer Tracy Crone and branch president Sam Sperry.

and also supports the senior center, FFA chapter, and 4-H club.

“The bank had been purchased and sold several different times,” Sperry recalls. “I think the community was interested in BTC establishing a long-term relationship—finally, a local bank to make its home in the community.”

CRIME

Fans of crime stories may be a bit disappointed to learn of the relatively uneventful criminal history at BTC Bank. But no bank history is complete without at least one robbery. And although records do not exist in BTC’s possession of many notable robberies in its one hundred years, one was effectively pulled off in 2003 when an armed male walked into the New Hampton branch of BTC Bank demanding money. According to newspaper articles at the time, he was wearing a ski mask and a bandana, and he walked out of the bank with an undisclosed amount of cash. No arrest was ever made in the cold case, and it wasn’t long after this event that the New Hampton branch was closed.



Security footage from BTC’s New Hampton branch captured a masked individual requesting money from a bank teller at gunpoint in 2003. To date, no arrests have been made in the last bank robbery committed in BTC’s history.

In 2005, Mary Combs, a teller at BTC Bank in Bethany and Albany, alerted authorities to suspicious check-cashing behavior that would eventually lead to the federal conviction of four California residents and the recovery of more than \$100,000 in stolen US Treasury checks and cash.

At the time of publication, Pattonsburg was undergoing renovations and additions to its Main Street location, expanding operations into an adjacent building that was previously used for storage, and adding privacy features and space for customer service.

2005: Bethany

As businesses started leaving Bethany's downtown square and heading for the highways, BTC leaders began to take notice. When new businesses kept joining the development along Miller Street in the early 2000s, BTC knew it was time to go where the masses were. Not long after Walmart built its supercenter on undeveloped land south of Miller Street, BTC completed the purchase of real estate north of the big box store, right along what was already Bethany's busiest stretch of road. When BTC broke ground on its newest location in 2005, "Hospital Hill" began its transition to a banking corridor through a bustling farming community.

Copeland Construction Company of Chillicothe, Missouri, completed construction of the 2,500-square-foot East Miller BTC Bank location in 2005. Immediately, many departments relocated to the new facility, but operations continued in the downtown location.

Original intentions were to keep both locations operational in order to support customers in the downtown area as well as those coming into town from off Interstate 35 and from local highways. Continuing business in the bank's original location served functional as well as sentimental purposes for Bethany's longest-standing locally founded banking institution.



Today, the main headquarters of BTC's flagship location are located on Miller Street in Bethany's business corridor adjacent to Interstate 35. A copper cupola was replaced in 2018 following a lightning strike during a summer storm that set the roof of the bank ablaze. Additional administrative offices are located to the west of the main building and feature expansive meeting rooms and space for community involvement. BTC's office building was built in 2017 to house administrative and executive employees providing non-customer-facing support to the organization.

Over the course of the next few years, as tenants continued fleeing Bethany's downtown business scene, economics instructed BTC's board of directors to close its downtown branch and move all operations to the Miller Street location. As much as bank leaders hated to abandon its downtown roots, the developing business atmosphere on Hospital Hill was calling.

In September 2008, BTC moved loan officers, bank executives, loan processors, and most other bank

personnel into the new building, following book-keeping and other departments earlier in the summer.

As the final customers transferred the contents of their safety deposit boxes to a new state-of-the-art facility, BTC admittedly said goodbye to a few customers who were not ready to witness the end of an era. But from sadness came great joy for the

CITY LIBRARY

The Bethany City Library moved several times over the course of its years, including to the north side of the square, where a fire forced volunteers and city officials to move contents out until they were able to make repairs. Books and files were temporarily moved back to the north side of the square until construction on the current Law Enforcement Center jeopardized the structure of the building, and the decision was made to retain library contents at the Masonic building located on East Miller Street. They remained there until 2008, when the city struck a deal with BTC and the city library was moved into its new permanent home on the corner of West Main and Fifteenth Street, where it stands today.

"We were able to sell the building to the city for a modest amount that worked out great for both parties," recalled Ron Cornett, then president of BTC Bank.

In a full-circle moment, it was former bank president Richard Graner, serving as the mayor of the city of Bethany in 2008, who signed the documents closing on the purchase of the building.



Pictured here at the center, Madeline Osborn, age ten, was the last customer to transact business at BTC's original bank location before it closed on Friday, September 19, 2008, eighty-nine years after opening under the guidance of her great-great-grandfather, W. C. Cole. Annabelle Terry, left, an employee of BTC since 1968, waited on Madeline, who was accompanied by her father, Cole Osborn, and grandfather, E. V. "Chick" Osborn, far right. *Photo courtesy of the Bethany Republican-Clipper.*



BTC Bank continues to this day to support the area youth, the schools, and local youth organizations. Pictured here, BTC Bank Bethany employees Mikala Smith and Ashley Bugbee present a \$5,000.00 donation check to South Harrison R2 School Superintendent Dennis Eastin for stadium renovations.



Chillicothe BTC Bank employees pose with junior and youth livestock goers at the Livingston County Fair. BTC sponsors and buys livestock each year at local livestock fairs.

community as BTC sold its original location to the City of Bethany for use as a new library.

When BTC built its new location, Paula Addison was tapped as branch president. Today, she touts twenty-six years of banking experience—all of which she credits to her career at BTC. “Everything I’ve learned, I’ve learned here from those before me,” she says.

Addison’s day-to-day duties are a bit different than those in satellite branches, and that’s not just because she’s working out of a branch serving the biggest customer base. Being at the epicenter of BTC’s operations means she has the opportunity to work alongside BTC’s executive vice-president, Jerry Hill, who shares his nearly thirty years of leadership experience with her as a fellow loan officer.

As the first and only female branch president, Addison has paved the way for women in a formerly male-dominated industry and says that BTC has been a good place to work. “It’s made it easier to raise a family and have a job at the same time,” Addison says. “It’s amazing to see how much we have grown over the years.”

2007: Chillicothe

When branch president Paul Thomas looks back on moving into BTC’s highest-populated market, he says it was scary and exciting all at the same time.

While he was no stranger to Chillicothe, having worked at another bank there for eight years, the opportunity to come on board with a small-town bank moving into his hometown was promising.

BTC’s Chillicothe branch started as a shell of a building, with Thomas and his team out promoting the bank, trying to drum up business before they were even able to open the doors. Literally starting at zero, being on the ground floor was exhilarating for this veteran banker, as he hoped his prior customers would join him on his new journey.

“But there’s of course also that worry ... is that going to happen? You hoped and you thought it was going to work and be successful,” Thomas



BTC’s Chillicothe branch is located at the intersection of Highway 36 and Highway 65 in the bustling business district of BTC’s largest community.

AREA YOUTH BENEFIT CORP.



BTC's Area Youth Benefit Corp. presents checks to schools, organizations, and clubs throughout Missouri and Iowa, like this one for Makerspace Program Technology in Albany school district classrooms. Pictured from left to right are Brooke Crawford, Spenser Cottrill, and AYB coordinator Ashley Shisler.

As BTC's locations increased, need grew alongside it for contributions supporting 4-H clubs, FFA chapters, ag programs, and the other scholastic and extracurricular activities of young people. In 2012, BTC started the BTC Area Youth Benefit Corporation, with a mission to support the children in local and surrounding communities through volunteerism and the dedication of resources beyond that which is possible through the constraints of a banking institution. A 501(c)3 was registered in 2013, and since its inception, the nonprofit has donated more than \$77,000 to the youth in BTC's service areas.

The organization's biggest fundraisers include annual events such as a two-person scramble golf tournament, softball and mud volleyball tournaments, and a 5K fun run.



Participants in the annual Color Run 5k celebrate a successful fun run near the entrance to the Northwest Missouri State Fair grounds in 2018. This popular event is held every Labor Day Weekend as part of the many festivities and traditions surrounding the Northwest Missouri State Fair in Bethany.

BTC's first and only Iowa location sits at the corner of Highway 69 and Interstate 35 in Lamoni.



says. He credits BTC's reputation in all its other communities for its warm welcome to Chillicothe, but there were already five banks in town. He said it was nerve-wracking to take on a challenge like that. "Lo and behold, we had great success," he says with relief in his voice even a decade later.

The Chillicothe bank has grown in the last twelve years, and the branch president recalls growing five years ahead of their original one-year growth goals. Within the first couple years in Chillicothe, Thomas and his team were already talking about expanding.

Today, BTC in Chillicothe employs ten employees and has received an overwhelming response from the community. They are big supporters of the area youth, the school, and the FFA chapter. Thomas is on the school board and the YMCA board and he shares, "The community minded thing is something that every bank says, but every single situation I've been in with BTC, they've proven tenfold that they are here for their community. When they say they're community minded, it's amazing what our board of directors and chairmen and bank president really do to support the communities. I don't think I've ever been told no when I've called to ask for a donation for the community. ... This is the best decision I ever made in my career."

2011: Lamoni

"Kevin, if you can get three million in business, we'll probably build you a bank," Ron Cornett told Kevin Lloyd in 2006. The intention was to see if BTC could foster enough business to the north to warrant building its first-ever full-service location in Iowa.

What they didn't expect were the challenges awaiting them at the state line. It turned out there were hoops to jump through in order to get a Missouri-chartered bank in good standing as a bank in Iowa. So, while BTC's board of directors worked on the details, Lloyd went to work looking for ag loan business.

In a surprise twist, the financial crisis that was hitting the United States in 2008 led to some changes in banking regulations, and legislature at the time made it possible for BTC to hang a shingle in Lamoni.

"I worked out of my car while the bank building was being constructed, and I drove deposits from my elevator clients all the way back to Bethany before we were open as a branch," recalls Lloyd, who interviewed for this book while he was loading a grain trailer with soybeans to deliver to a client. "BTC gives me leeway to come and go, doing banking business on the farms and residences across Iowa."

Lloyd thinks that's what is important: giving employees the freedom to get the job done and to take care of customers where they are and how they need it.

"We had a pretty good book of business and felt confident we could make it work by the time we broke ground," Lloyd says.

He more than doubled Cornett's goal, and the full-service Lamoni branch of BTC Bank opened in July 2011. And they haven't looked back. Lloyd added Jodi Hensley to his team for home financing and residential loans for consumers and eventually had to add Doug Hickman to share the load.

With passion in his voice, Lloyd talks about visiting his customers on their farms and completing work out of his mom's old car, refinancing loans, processing payments, and even taking time to play a game of pitch at the end of a long day.

Today, Lloyd serves as branch president, and he and his team support a thriving university community in more ways than one. He remembers a time before the Lamoni branch was open and people were

disappointed because the town already had two banks. "That's the last thing we need,' they said, and I felt bad about that, but we kept to our cause," he says.

Shortly thereafter, the local movie theater was about to close because it couldn't afford to transition to the new technology of digital projection. BTC Bank contributed \$10,000 to Graceland University in an effort to keep the theater open, coming in as the third-highest donor to the cause and the only bank in its ranks. "We were one of the greatest contributors to this cause," Lloyd says. "Maybe they didn't need the bank, but that was the tip of the iceberg. Now the budget of what we put back into Lamoni has tripled. The community has definitely benefited from us being here. We are a part of the community, and our customers, who have been loyal, appreciate us. Whether you're a customer or not, we support you."

2014: Carrollton

Wayne West recalls working for another bank in Carrollton back in 2013 and calling BTC looking for a job in Bethany. A few days later, Doug Fish called him back, and they started talking about opening up a bank in what would become BTC's fourth-largest



BTC Bank employees and Lamoni Parks and Recreation director Brandon DeCook gather at the Lamoni BTC Bank for the presentation of the \$10,000.00 donation BTC made to the Lamoni Parks and Recreation department. The East ball field was renamed the BTC Bank Field in honor of the donation. From left to right are Chanelle Evans, Brenda Osborn, Doug Hickman, Brandon DeCook, Lanette Schaller, Brian Fonseca, Kevin Lloyd, Janet Reed, and Isabel Jordison.



Top: Carroll County Presiding Commissioner Stan Falke received a donation of \$500 for the Flood Relief Fund from the employees of BTC Bank in Carrollton. Pictured from left to right are Cohlby Jones, Pat Potter, Stan Falke, Shelby Cauble, Wayne West, and Megan Armstrong.

Bottom: The Carrollton branch of BTC Bank is located along Highway 65, a busy highway stretch of businesses near the Carroll County Memorial Hospital.

market, essentially replacing a bank that disappeared from the business community in Carrollton and making BTC a seven-location-strong hometown bank.

“We were able to keep Carrollton at the same number of banks in the community and people were familiar with BTC in Chillicothe. When word got out that folks were leaving the other local bank that was closing, they started opening accounts in Chillicothe, and then they came back to us when we opened here,” recalls West, who has been in banking for nineteen years.

The Carrollton location started as a loan production office in October 2013 out of a small

storefront office located next to a sub sandwich shop. Business took off so quickly that they added services and became a full-service bank in January 2014. It was easy to see that a large-scale building would be needed to serve the members of the Carrollton community.

In March 2015, West and his team relocated to their new building, which was located just across the street from their humble beginnings. The accessibility for checking on progress was a convenient and exciting element to this new development.

Today West and his team support their community through all the activities of local FFA and 4-H groups. They also try to support nearby Norborne, Tina Avalon, and other school districts in communities that don’t have a BTC location.

2015: Boonville

In 2015, BTC opened a loan processing center in Boonville. Located in historic downtown Boonville, the charming street-front banking location fit into BTC’s second-largest-populated community quickly. Neighbors seemed intrigued that a small-town bank could move into the community and succeed with so much competition. But, as branch manager Eric Funk explains, “We treat customers differently.”

Thanks to that commitment to service, it wasn't long before Funk and his team had grown the business to be "as much full service" as possible, offering deposit accounts, tellering, and loans in 2016. Serving both Boonville residents and the surprisingly large number of students commuting from northwest Missouri to the University of Missouri–Columbia, the Boonville branch quickly outgrew its handsome Main Street location.

In 2019, BTC completed construction on a new banking facility with major highway access in Boonville, featuring full services for its customers. The new location features a drive-up

teller window, ATM, and night-drop capabilities and provides employees and customers with easy access to major highways in the heart of Boonville's bustling business landscape.

Within its community, Boonville is heavily involved in its local FFA chapter, with loan officer Jon Fish having attended Boonville High School in his younger years. Walking into the school and rejoining his community from youth has brought important opportunities not only to the bank, but most importantly to the kids whose families share the rural community with BTC in Boonville.



The original Boonville branch of BTC Bank took up residence in a historic downtown storefront building.



Boonville BTC Bank employees pictured from left to right are Stephanie Schuster-Day, Susan Lenz, Hannah Farmer, and Jonathan Fish. Not pictured are Curtis Carter, Frank Oswald, Whitney Caton, and Adrian Price.



The permanent home of the Boonville branch of BTC Bank was completed in 2019, located conveniently along B Highway near Interstate 70, nestled in Boonville's busy business corridor near the county hospital. Strata Architecture of Kansas City, Missouri, provided this rendering in the fall of 2018.

2017: Beaman

Little more than thirty miles to the south, a much smaller community was in need of modern-day banking conveniences and a small-town commitment to customer service as well. Living and working near the small, unincorporated town of Beaman, Missouri, folks were eager to welcome checking, savings, and loan services close to home.

Necessity being the mother of invention, BTC's Beaman branch was no exception to the rule, and a modest white one-story building was erected right along State Highway HH, just a quarter-mile down the road from a busy egg processing facility. Serving a large Mennonite population, BTC in Beaman provides banking services much closer to home than what was



Beaman BTC Bank employees present a donation to the Pettis County Sheriff's Department. From left to right are Emily Woodall, Allison Asbury, Eric Funk, Kevin Bond, and Kayla Fenical.



Beaman's branch of BTC Bank is known for its unique pole building with metal siding and its rocking chair-adorned front porch, welcoming its more-than-50 percent Mennonite customer base to this tranquil setting.

available before. With the opening of this new location, many local workers and residents were glad to open checking accounts and use BTC for ag loans.

In the community, Eric Funk and his Beaman team are involved in the nearby towns' events, especially including the Smithton county fair, the Cooper County fair, and the activities involved with their 4-H and FFA week events. Outside the bank, two rocking chairs welcome customers to the neighborly experience to be had at BTC's most rural location.

For Funk and his team, managing operations in two different locations, technology couldn't be more important. From the modern conveniences of mobile banking and ATM usage by college students buzzing through Boonville, to the rustic pace of unincorporated Beaman, Funk and his team have to cover all their customers with the same level of support and care. He credits instant messaging for keeping him connected to his team while he's between locations and says the technology that both he and the customers enjoy today versus just a decade ago makes the banking job easier.

2018: Trenton

After nearly a decade of success in Chillicothe, BTC saw an opportunity to expand banking options for the citizens of Trenton. Doug Fish approached Tom Witten to open a bank, and having worked with one another before, the opportunity seemed like a good fit.

"Moving to a city where there were already four other banks, when we announced we were going to put a location there, people would say, 'Does Trenton need another bank?'" Witten recalls.

"Trenton will enjoy working with BTC because we're a community bank focused on working in its community," he assured. And Witten and his team never faltered.



The Trenton branch of BTC Bank features a unique structure of shipping containers on lease by a specialty company providing homes to banks settling into new communities.

He remembers that even before BTC had a branch in Trenton, the bank was supportive of ag programs there, including the North Central Missouri Fair and livestock sale, the FFA chapter, and other local events. Today, he says, they continue to try to support the community in whatever needs arise, including supporting the Grundy County R-V school located in nearby Galt.

“BTC offers community mindedness, and they deliver what they promise,” says Witten. “The tagline says ‘community minded,’ and we definitely back that up.”

At the time of publication, Witten and his team were operating out of a shipping container turned banking institution on lease from a company that provides housing for banks getting started in communities. In the past, companies would lease a mobile home or trailer for a bank to use as its facility while getting its business going and completing construction of a permanent location. After experiencing issues like mold and mildew in these structures, companies switched to shipping containers, and today, five of them sit at the intersection of Highway 65 and Highway 6 in Trenton while the branch’s stately permanent home is being built immediately to the west.



Trenton’s official branch location is located just to the west of its temporary home and was slated for completion in the fall of 2019. Full-service banking will continue in the permanent space near the intersection of Highway 65 and Highway 6.



Employees and community members attend the Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting for Trenton’s temporary building on December 20, 2018. Holding the scissors at center is Trenton market president Tom Witten.

A unique set-up for the new location isn't all that makes BTC's current home in Trenton worth visiting. Albeit temporary, the structure allows the Trenton team to provide full-service banking to its customers, including drive-up banking and an ATM.

Construction is slated for completion in the fall of 2019, and the newest building in the BTC family will feature design elements similar to the Carrollton branch, including two drive-up banking lanes and an ATM in a third lane.

2019: Maysville and Osborn

BTC's newest—and oldest—branches bring more than one hundred years of history to the banking family.

The Bank of Fairport was originally located on the north side of the street in downtown Fairport, Missouri, before erecting a new building across the street in 1914. After the building burned in 1936, the bank relocated temporarily while another building was erected on its surviving foundation. This building underwent extensive remodeling in 1971 with the addition of a new boardroom and a vault for safety deposit boxes. A second addition was built on the north side of the facility in 1980.

In 1992, the Bank of Fairport purchased the former Mercantile bank building located in Maysville, Missouri, acquiring the Mercantile Bank lineage that included a history as The First Bank of DeKalb County–Stewartsville until 1988; The Belt American Bank, which merged with American National in 1990; and lastly, the Mercantile Bank before its purchase in 1992.

In the fall of 2002, The Bank of Fairport received a petition from the Osborn community with 290 signatures requesting a bank in its town. By 2004, an application to establish a branch, the purchase of real estate, and

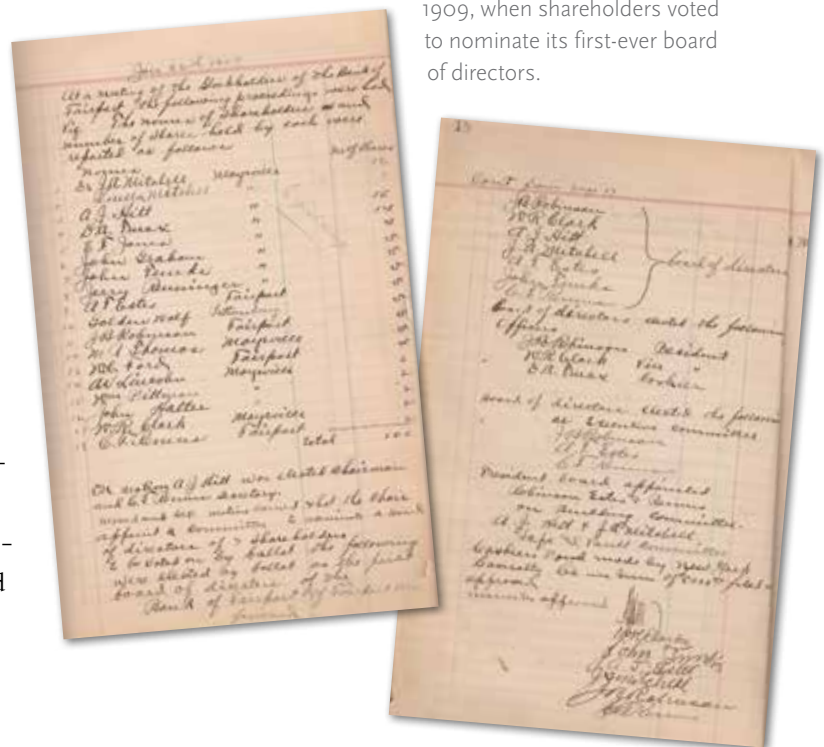
the construction of a new building were completed for the Osborn branch of The Bank of Fairport, opening a full-service facility in October 2004.

In 2004, The Bank of Fairport was given the opportunity to purchase the UMB Bank in Clarksdale, Missouri, and that acquisition was completed in 2005. A full-service branch was opened in Clarksdale in September 2005. Unfortunately, by 2012, the Clarksdale branch had closed, and the Fairport location followed in its footsteps by 2016. Residents of the communities supporting The Bank of Fairport began to feel the need for a change.

In 2018, negotiations were underway for BTC Bank to acquire this longstanding banking institution, and by the spring of 2019, the remaining two Bank of Fairport facilities were purchased with plans to convert them to BTC branches within the year. Leading this charge was Dillon Bird, vice president and market manager, with nine years of experience with BTC.

Bird spearheaded integrating BTC into its new community. “[We worked to] reassure people who were nervous about change, especially older

An original ledger kept by the board members of The Bank of Fairport includes meeting minutes dating back to January 26, 1909, when shareholders voted to nominate its first-ever board of directors.





The final customers place transactions during the last day of business at the Bank of Fairport facility in Maysville before the facility converted to a BTC Bank. Pictured here are customers Bert and Joyce Sherard, front, and employees who are continuing their careers at the bank, Kaitlyn Watson, Paula Edwards, Sylvia Pearl, and Rachel Fore.

generations uneasy about doing something different, that we are not reinventing the wheel,” Bird says.

Bird shares that the focus was always to continue with the good things that The Bank of Fairport already had put into place, as well as add other benefits they hadn’t been able to offer yet. “Giving folks a mobile banking app, instant-issue debit cards, mascot debit cards, and directly supporting the community and school are all exciting new things we could bring to the area,” Bird says. “Community involvement as a whole [was able] to increase significantly.”

Today, the bank’s philanthropy focuses on Maysville and Osborn Schools, as well as Stewartsville and surrounding towns and organizations.

The Maysville location received a facelift as well as an updated interior after both banks opened for business as BTC Banks on May 20, 2019.

The Osborn location was upgraded from a drive-through-only location, adding walk-up banking and tellering, as well as a host of other full-service options of modern-day banking. Cosmetically, the team operated out of the current building as-is while they grew into the new offerings and tested the waters in BTC’s newest territories.

Sylvia Pearl, longtime Bank of Fairport employee, has supported Bird throughout the transition,

providing a firsthand connection to the communities and twelve years of experience serving her customers in Maysville and Osborn.

“Our goal is to know everybody by name and provide personalized service to individuals,” Pearl had said of The Bank of Fairport, a mission these two historic banks shared.

Bird recalls feedback from a community leader—a retired judge and member of the chamber of commerce board, to be exact—and he carried that sentiment with him through the challenges of filling the large shoes of such a deep-rooted hometown bank: “The community should look forward to this and be appreciative of it, because this will create competition that will benefit the community.”

Bird and his team continue to fulfill that prophecy, adding support and opportunities to BTC’s newest hometown communities today.



Top: Today, the Maysville branch of BTC Bank occupies the previous Bank of Fairport Maysville building on Main Street.

Bottom: The Osborn branch of BTC Bank occupies the previous Bank of Fairport Osborn building on Clinton Street.



CHAPTER SEVEN

Eyes on Tomorrow

As BTC Bank turns the page, the future is coming fast. If change seemed inherent in the banking business before, then today it's more certain than ever. With exponential acceleration in technology happening literally every day and the world around us becoming smaller by the minute, BTC's community minded approach can be supported by the interconnectedness of us all.

Today, BTC's northernmost facility is located in Lamoni—185.3 miles from its southernmost location in Beaman.

Whereas a trip from Lamoni to Beaman in a 1920 Model T Ford would have taken at least five hours with top speeds around forty miles per hour (and a less developed highway system), bank associates are able to connect with one another and their customers in a fraction of a second over instant messaging applications and internet video conferencing today.

When cashiers would spend late nights balancing tellers' drawers and meeting up in the late evenings to exchange cancelled checks with fellow bankers at the turn of the century, customers now are able to see immediate account balance updates with intense accuracy on their mobile phones through BTC's iPhone and Android app.

Bethany Trust Company's staff of four employees in 1935 has grown to 130 in 2019.

Opening assets in 1919 of \$100,000 have amassed to more than \$500,000,000 today.

And this is just the beginning.

Above: BTC Bank was honored as an MBA Century Bank by the Missouri Bankers Association on Thursday, June 13, 2019, during the MBA's 129th Annual Convention. MBA President and CEO Max Cook awarded BTC Bank Executive Vice President Jerry Hill with the MBA Century Bank certificate.

In her collection celebrating BTC's eighty-fifth anniversary, Peggy Rinehart quoted priest and historian Bede Jarrett in what she knew would be a message that could serve her bank and her community for posterity: "Human love and the delights of friendship, out of which are built the memories that endure, are also to be treasured up as hints of what shall be hereafter."

For a community bank founded on the principles of what it means to be a community—living together, feeling a fellowship with one another, and sharing common interests and goals—no truer anecdote has been shared to date. It is surely BTC's commitment to its friends and neighbors that has created this century-old story to share, and it surely will be that commitment that will keep it in business for centuries to come.



In 2019, BTC Bank celebrated the careers of seven employees who have dedicated more than twenty-five years each to community minded banking. They are, from left to right, Paula Addison, twenty-six years; Tracy Michael, twenty-seven years; Susan Habben, twenty-eight years; Jerry Hill, twenty-nine years; Marcia Willis, thirty-eight years; Sandy Thomas, forty years; and Pat Miles, forty-nine years. They are gathered at one of the community's favorite photo op spots, the bridge over a water feature installed on BTC's main campus in celebration of its ninetieth anniversary in 2009.

IN MEMORIAM

RONNIE D. CORNETT 1948-2019

BTC Bank President 2003-2013



Ronnie Cornett was a longtime banker. He cut his teeth at the Bank of Coffey, joined Bethany Trust Company in the late 1970s, and eventually served as the multi-location BTC Bank president for a decade until his retirement in 2013. During that time, Ronnie's dedication to farming and his intense interest in economics were preeminent.

He played an integral role in the writing of this book. We agreed that there could be an entire book dedicated to the farm crisis of the 1980s beyond the invaluable insights he provided for one chapter alone. We laughingly said we'd return to his kitchen table for his own biography and really unearth some banking secrets.

For his contribution to this book and to the success of BTC Bank, Ronnie's colleagues, customers, and friends are forever grateful. We consider ourselves lucky to have published even a few pages from his story.

RESOURCES

Bethany Democrat newspaper

Bethany Republican newspaper

Bethany Republican-Clipper newspaper

Gallatin North Missourian newspaper

Harrison County Bicentennial History, self-published in the 1970s

Minutes of the board of directors of Bethany Trust Company

Unpublished collection of stories, interviews, and photos collected by Peggy Rinehart circa 2004



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sarah Hagler Findley is a farm-raised communications and marketing specialist. She holds a bachelor's degree in English with an emphasis in creative writing from the University of Missouri–Columbia and uses her formal training to help small businesses and nonprofits tell their stories. She has more than a decade of experience contracting with clients on traditional and new-media projects, from print advertising to web development and long-form journalism. An “old soul,” her passion for days gone by inspires her as she strives to collect treasures, recipes, patterns, anecdotes, and advice in both her personal and professional life.



