History: One story at a time

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Montgomery Historical Publications Co.

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Early businessman & Twain cousin laid foundation for Farmers & Merchants Bank

George A. Hawes co-founded Farmers & Merchants Bank

MARY LOU MONTGOMERY

A trio of men, each of who would ultimately leave behind a legacy of business finesse, lived under the same roof when the census taker came calling in 1850 Hannibal, Missouri. Brothers William Anderson Moffett, 31, and Erasmus M. Moffett, 29, both born of a Baptist

Continued on page 5

Hannibal, Mo., April 20 1875

Received of the Farmers' AND Merchants' Bank,

OF HANNIBAL, MISSOURI,

One Hundred 00/100 DOLLARS,

CHARGEABLE TO ACCOUNT OF

No. E. J. Bridgford

This check image, from the Steve Chou collection, represents a Farmers & Merchants Bank transaction on April 20, 1875.

Land purchase

In 1909, W.R. Pitts, a member of F&M Bank's original board of directors, purchased property for a new

Page 2

Paved walkways

A flagstone pavement was put down on the Main and Center street fronts of the F&M Bank.

Page 3

In the night

Chicago gang chief suspect in F&M Bank robbery.

Page 3

Deaths

1899: Col. Garth dead

Col. John H. Garth, said to be the wealthiest man in Marion County, died at noon Thursday, Oct. 12, 1899, at the family home in Hannibal.

He assisted in organizing the Farmers & Merchants bank and was its vice president; since 1880 he has been its president, until he resigned owing to ill health.

– Quincy Daily Journal

1949: Bank president dies unexpectedly

John T. Holme, president of the Farmers and Merchants Bank of Hannibal, died unexpectedly March 3, 1949, at his home in Hannibal.

Published at Hannibal Missouri by Mary Lou Montgomery, editor and publisher, 39 Surrey Hills, Hannibal, Mo. 63401-2881

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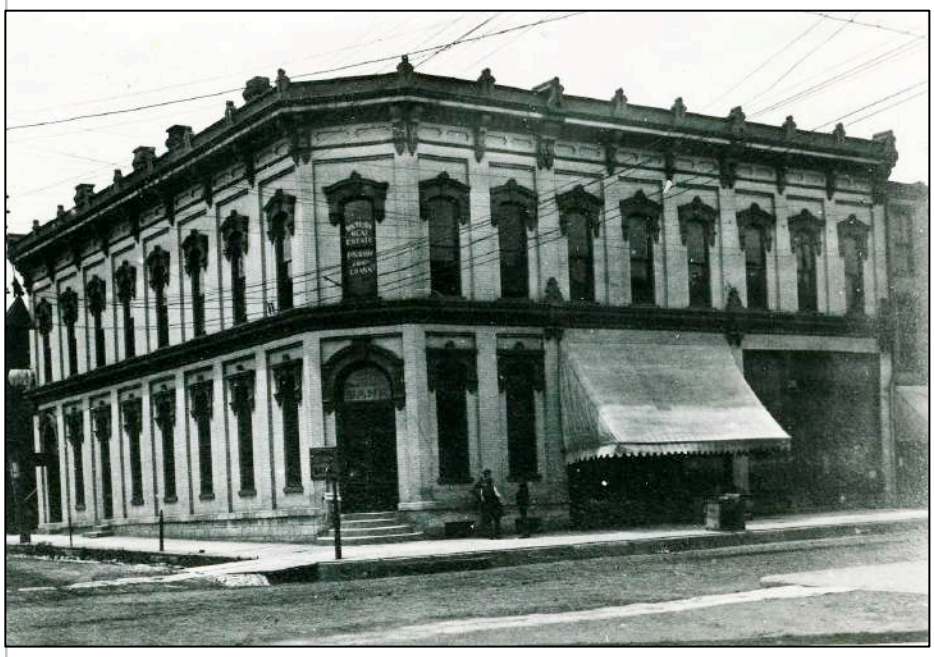
F&M Bank's location at 212-214 Broadway, late 1950s or early 1960s. Steve Chou photo collection.

1909: Hannibal property purchased for new F&M Hannibal bank building

An article in the Dec. 6, 1909, edition of the Quincy Daily Journal reported that W. R. Pitts, representing the Farmers & Merchants Bank, purchased two properties to accommodate the planned construction of a new bank building. The properties represent lots at 212 and 214 Broadway.

One lot was occupied by the Schweitzer building, which had previously been used by the Hannibal Trust Company. The adjoining building to the east, known as the Meyer building, was occupied by a tailoring establishment. Mrs. M. Loetterle had a millinery business at 212 Broadway in 1909. At the turn of the 20th century, William Schweitzer was proprietor of Schweitzer's saloon at 214 Broadway.

Among the businesses located in the Schweitzer building in 1907, prior to demolition, were Pacific Express Co., United States Express Co., and Wells Fargo Express Co., 212 Broadway.



Farmers & Merchants Bank 1903. NW corner of Main and Center. Built 1876. HAC

Pavement work 1875

A flagstone pavement is to be put down on the Main and Center street fronts of the Farmers and Merchants Bank. The stones were placed on the ground yesterday. Hannibal Clipper, April 17, 1875

Work was today resumed on the Farmers & Merchants bank sidewalk, a consignment or rock of the proper dimensions having been received. Hannibal Clipper June 7, 1875

October 6, 1931

Holdup men loot bank at Hannibal

1931: F&M Bank bandits believed linked to Chicago gang crime spree

Five brazen man entered Hannibal's Farmers & Merchants Bank at 11:15 a.m. Oct. 6, 1931, yelling for employees and a customer to lie down on the floor. One of the unmasked men went to the office of John T. Holme, located on a balcony at the front of the bank, and saw to it that he, too, laid down.

Within a matter of just a few minutes, the men gathered up all the cash and negotiable securities, and fled.

Believed to have left along the U.S. 36 Business Route which doubled as Broadway, Hannibal's main corridor, Hannibal Police Chief Sparkman alerted Moberly police, who were dispatched to the junction of Highway 24 and 63 to keep an eye out for the travelers, believed to be in a green car.

No one was ever convicted of this crime.

- Source: Quincy Daily Journal

The building at right is Levering Hospital, named after A.R. Levering, co-founder of Farmers & Merchants Bank, who donated the funds to build this Hannibal health care facility. At left is the nurses' residence, which Levering also funded. STEVE CHOU COLLECTION

A.R. Levering provided funds to build hospital named in his honor

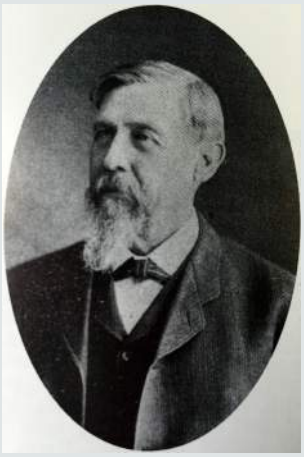
Hannibal's Levering Hospital, in operation beginning in 1903, was a gift to Hannibal from A.R. Levering of Hannibal, then-president of the Farmers & Merchants Bank of Hannibal.

Mr. Levering made a contribution of $25,000 to the city for the purpose of constructing the hospital, then added an additional $5,000 when it was determined that the original gift would not be enough to complete the project.

Nine years later, Mr. Levering made a donation to the city of $7,500, for the construction of a nurses' home adjacent to the hospital.

Among the original board of directors for the new hospital were Dr. J.R. Baskett, Lyman P. Munger, George D. Clayton and P.D. Fisher.

Mr. Levering was born around 1840 and died Nov. 19, 1912.



A.R. Levering
Photo: Mirror of Hannibal

Continued from page 1

minister in pioneer Virginia, and George A. Hawes, 37, a mid 1830s Kentucky immigrant to Marion County, Missouri, would partner together for a time - personally and professionally - before forging out to successfully demonstrate their individual business acumen.

George A. Hawes, a cousin to Sam Clemens through the Quarles family lineage, would go on to serve as co-founder with Aaron Levering of Hannibal's Farmers & Merchants Bank in 1870. Hawes' success in the banking field was built atop his 20-plus years of business experience garnered from his early days in Hannibal. It is that experience that ultimately would help prepare him for the launch of the banking venture, which still serves the community 145-plus years later.

Hawes was well established in the mercantile business at Hannibal when the Moffett brothers first arrived in Marion County as early as 1847. They joined him in partnership with the dry goods business. In addition, Hawes served as treasurer for the city of Hannibal in 1849.

Hawes and Erasmus Moffett joined into another business together in 1850, producing sugar cured bacon and hams. John Foreman of Ralls County delivered a lot of ten, 15-month old hogs to Moffett & Co., packing house, in December, the average weight of which was 366 pounds. One weighed 448 pounds, and the smallest one 324 pounds, as weighed on the city scale.

In June of 1851, the Moffett brothers and Hawes dissolved their mercantile partnership and closed their store, which had been located on Commercial Row, Main Street, Hannibal.

That same year, Hawes tested his hand as an agent for the Columbus Insurance Co., and also took a bride, Sarah Humphreys, daughter of Dr. James Hughes Humphreys Sr.

Dr. Humphreys was a 1822 medical class graduate of Transylvania College, Lexington, Ky. Dr. Humphreys, his wife, Joanna Hickey Humphreys, and their children relocated to Ralls County, Mo., in 1839, where Dr. Humphreys and his sons engaged in farming. In 1849, the Humphreys family moved to Hannibal, where Dr. Humphreys embarked in the drug business with N.P. Kunkle. That partnership would be short lived, however, as Dr. Humphreys died in August 1852.

In 1852, William Anderson Moffett married Pamela Ann Clemens – sister of Sam Clemens - at Florida, Mo.

Changing times

As the decade of the 1850s wound down and as the pre-Civil War sentiment gained momentum, each of the three businessmen, who forged such a bond as entrepreneurs in Hannibal, set out in different directions.

William A. Moffett and his wife Pamela moved to St. Louis, where he conducted a successful pre-war commission business. They had two children, Annie and Samuel. William Moffett loaned $100 to his brother-in-law Sam, so that he could train to become a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River. The onset of the Civil War and restrictions placed upon commercial river transit ultimately ruined William Moffett's business, and he died in 1865. His widow and her mother moved to New York state, to be closer to Sam Clemens, who had married and settled near Buffalo. Pamela Moffett died in 1904.

E.M. Moffett moved his family to Quincy, Ill., where he became involved in real estate and banking. He invested $200,000 in land near what would become the Western Park addition to Chicago and realized upwards of $750,000 from sales of portions of it. He was

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

also associated with Elijah Gove in the distillery business and bought that gentleman's home on the southeast corner of Eighth and Broadway, in Quincy, which remained the family residence for many years. E.M. Moffett died in Quincy on Nov. 16, 1878. His wife Sarah died in 1895, leaving behind an estate valued at a half million dollars. The last surviving member of the family, daughter Ella Moffett Lockwood, died in 1897, in Quincy. All are buried in Quincy's Woodlawn Cemetery.

George Hawes remained in Hannibal, and continued in the business of general merchandising until turning his interests to banking. He was instrumental with Aaron Levering in the establishment of the Farmers and Merchants Bank in 1870, Hawes serving as its president until 1880, when he left to establish the Commercial Bank of Hannibal, and thus served as its president. He died in 1891, and is buried in Bellefontaine Cemetery, St. Louis, along with his wife, who died in 1913. Their only child, James Humphreys Hawes, spent his career with St. Louis' leading publisher, Woodward & Tiernan Printing Co., serving as vice president and later as treasurer.

Wives maintained close relationship

Sarah Cox Moffett and Sarah Humphreys Hawes maintained a loyal friendship throughout their lives.

The Quincy Daily Whig, in describing the marriage of Mrs. Moffett's daughter, Ella, to Mr. W.R. Lockwood Jr., in December 1885, described the attire worn by Mrs. Moffett and Mrs. Hawes to the wedding and subsequent reception.

"Mrs. (Erasmus M.) Moffett, mother of the bride, wore a handsome black satin, trimmed in jet, with duchesse lace at the neck and cuffs, and pearl ornaments. Mrs. V.H. Surghnor, of Chicago, sister of the bride, wore wine colored satin and velvet, with point lace at the neck; ornaments, diamonds. Mrs. George A. Hawes, of Hannibal, wore a handsome black velvet dress; diamond ornaments. Mrs. J.H. Hawes of Hannibal, pink silk and crape, with garniture of ostrich tips; ornaments and diamonds."

Sarah Moffett died in 1895. When Mrs. Hawes learned of Ella Moffett Lockwood's serious illness in 1897, she traveled from St. Louis to Quincy to be at the bedside of her close friend's daughter at the time of her death.

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