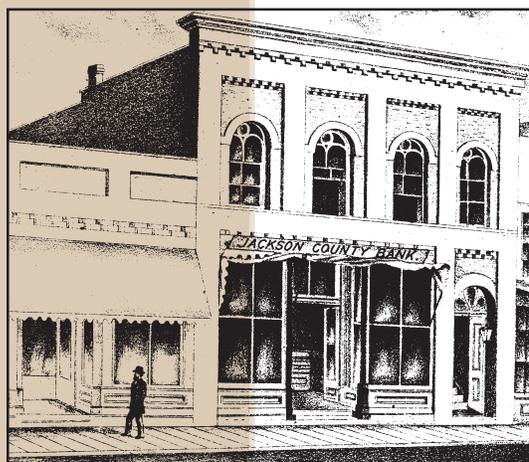


**T**he cornerstones of Jackson County Bank have remained constant throughout the years. They are conservative-orderly growth, commitment to serve our communities, excellent employees, and dedication to customer service. In an era of ever-widening opportunities, deregulation, and competition that has dramatically transformed banking,



*we realize we cannot live on our past successes. As in the past, we remain focused on molding ourselves to the times and changing with them. We have made changes to our facilities and we are offering products and services that make us a vastly different organization than we were even 10 years ago. We will continue to be innovative and imaginative to survive and to be successful.*

*As the Jackson County Bank begins its next 130 years, we continue to build on our long*

*history of achievements to provide a solid financial future for our customers, our communities, our employees, and our shareholders.*

**Gene Ransom, President**

## The Establishment and History of Jackson County Bank

A heading in the December 16, 1876 Banner said: "Jackson County Bank . . . The above is the name of the bank of discount, just brought into existence in this village, and will go into operation on the second of next January (1877) with a paid-up capital of \$25,000."

"The Jackson County Bank will help develop and build up Jackson County. We are determined to make this Bank an honor to Jackson County and we will help in bringing out its vast resources."

--Jackson County Bank Founders, 1876

The bank began business in the former Banking House of Bowman location (the current location of Skolos-Millis Law Office).

A new bank building was located on the southwest corner of Main and South First Streets and completed in November 1882. The Bank continued business in the building until it was destroyed in the October 6, 1911 flood.

The Jackson County Bank, First National Bank and the Village of Black River Falls suffered devastating losses on that day when floodwaters of the Black River destroyed most of the business district. The bank buildings and land washed away, leaving only the vault of the Jackson County Bank standing.

The height of the Great Depression had reached Jackson County in late 1932 and 1933. In the Fall of 1932, county bank officials met to discuss the

financial crisis. They determined the best solution would be to consolidate the remaining banks and form one large bank with a main office in Black River Falls and branch banks in each village.

With this in mind, a Business Holiday was called for the days between January 1 and January 15, 1933 and the six banks of the county closed--the Jackson County Bank and First National Bank, both of Black River Falls; Bank of Melrose; Farmers and Merchants Bank of Hixton; State Bank of Merrilan; and Alma Center State Bank; all old and long-established institutions.

The Banner said: "There had been no concerted run on any of the banks responsible for the move. Neither was any bank in immediate danger of being forced to close, but the continued depression and its effects were bringing about a crisis. In which community it would first occur could not be foretold. Jackson County people have retained remarkable composure throughout the depression. The income of rural communities has been falling off steadily. The farmers and businessmen have seen their revenues dwindling to almost the vanishing point. Those who had been able to lay away funds for dismal days were obligated to draw upon their bank deposits. The drain was long continued and there were no receipts to offset them. Others indebted to banks could not obtain the money with which to repay. Investments made by the banks in prosperous years declined in value along with all else in this land of depression. Disasters cannot be avoided. Their effects can be conquered."

The new bank, to be known as Jackson County Bank, combined the assets and took over the liabilities of all the other banks. Before the merger was completed, the Bank of Melrose determined it would reopen alone and did not join in the consolidation.

It was determined in February 1961 to purchase the Hotel Freeman on the southwest corner of Main and Water Streets. The hotel was razed and construction of the new bank began in April 1963. The new facility provided for a drive-up banking window, teller windows, office rooms for transacting business, bookkeeping quarters, storage and behind-the-bank parking. A large community room was located in the basement. The new bank opened for business on July 13, 1964. In 1983 an extensive remodeling project doubled the size of the Bank to its current size.

When the Jackson County Bank was established in 1876, its founders were quoted as saying, "The Jackson County Bank will help develop and build up Jackson County. We are determined to make this Bank an honor to Jackson County and we will help in bringing out its vast resources."

**One hundred-thirty years later, the Jackson County Bank still honors this philosophy.**

8 Main Street  
Black River Falls, WI  
(715) 284-5341  
jacksoncountybank.com



# Jackson County Bank

## A History of Our Bank Buildings

The initial location of the Jackson County Bank was west of the



J.W. Wells Hardware on Main. (Location of the Skolos-Millis Law Office in 2007.)

The next building was located on the southwest corner of Main and South First Streets (the current location of Sherman Law Office). It was completed in November 1882 and business continued here until it was destroyed in the October 6, 1911 flood.



The flood of 1911 swept away over 80 buildings as well as the land on which they stood, including 42 acres. The bank building and land washed away, leaving only the vault. The money had been removed and taken to the home of John Mills. By the next day, the money was placed in a vault at the courthouse where banking business was conducted for a time.

Erection of a new bank building on the same site began July 1912 and the bank opened for business there in February 1913.

After the consolidation of the county banks in 1933, this became the Jackson County Bank bookkeeping department until the bank was built at the current 8 Main Street location.



After the county-wide consolidation of banks in 1933, the First National Bank building (currently the Overlien & Dobson building on Second and Main) became the operating location of the Jackson County Bank.



The Banner said of the First National Bank upon opening in 1913: "Though one of the finest and doubtless the most elaborately finished buildings in the county, it is yet



on conservative lines, it being carefully figured out that the field of caution will fully warrant and sustain the expense."



After much growth within the bank, and following much study, the Hotel Freeman located on the corner of Main and Water Streets (current Bank location) was purchased, and a new bank building was completed in its place in July 1964. The new facility was faced with black Norwegian granite and provided for the first drive-up window and a large community room. In September 1984, a major remodeling project was completed, doubling the size of the bank.



## People From Our Past

Bank ledger reveals that **John H. Mills** began working for the Bank in 1876 and was given "board and room for his wages." In 1889, Mills was Assistant Cashier and his wages were \$500 per year. John Mills was President of the bank from 1933-1942.

**Thomas E. Mills** was Chairman of the Board in 1987 when the Jackson County Bank celebrated its 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Tom was the son of John Mills. Tom had commented, "In the mid 1920's, I remember reporting for janitor work each morning before high school. I would sweep, dust, fill inkwells and shovel coal or wood into the furnace. One of my most important jobs was to adjust the damper so the temperature would be comfortable when the bank opened for business. Summers I worked as a relief teller and remittance writer, since checks from other banks had to be recorded by hand."

Throughout his lifetime, Tom Mills' community service reached into countless areas of life in Jackson County. Friends said of him, "He used to say 'I'm just a Jackson County boy.' He just loved where he grew up and wanted his community to prosper and for other people to enjoy it."

**Peeper (Philip) Mills** was President of the bank from 1964-1979. If you'd ever met Peep, you'd certainly remember him.

The La Crosse Tribune wrote of Peep, "He was the patron of the bake sale and the darling of the Avalon Cafe cooks, who catered to his special tastes after the death of his wife in 1975. He was the No. 1 rooter for the high school basketball and football teams and hadn't missed a game in 50 years, friends said. He was interested in his community's history, which was natural since his family was so much a part of the early days of Jackson County. . . Mills sat in his glass-enclosed office where he could see everyone who entered. Hardly a soul entered who was not greeted with a smile or a wave of the hand. Yet, he was unassuming. He wanted no part of public recognition or credit for anything he did. He refused to attend ceremonies honoring him for 55 years of banking. He refused recognition of his 50-year membership in the local Masonic Lodge".

Current Bank employees that were lucky enough to have worked with Peep talk of him fondly and with childish grins:

"I remember how Peep's office and desk weren't very organized. He had piles of files and papers on his desk, floor, etc. One time when he was gone, Marcia and I thought we would help him and organize his office. When he came back, he wasn't very happy with us because he said he couldn't find anything and he liked it the way it was. When we thought about it, he always did know exactly where everything was."

"He would take care of the outside yard work—shoveling snow here at the Bank in the winter and tending to the weeds in the summer. We had some customers who thought he was the maintenance person."

"I remember Peep used to drive around an old blue car, complete with rust (he had a newer one but didn't like it). It had holes in the floorboard and would backfire going around the corner."

When it was reported that Peep Mills had died at the Jackson County Bank in July, 1979, friends said that it was no surprise that he had spent his last minutes in a place he loved.

# The People of Our Bank

Jackson County Bank has been a part of Black River Falls and the surrounding area for more than 130 years. We have grown from a small bank formed in 1877 with \$25,000 in capital, to a full-service bank today, offering the latest in banking products and technology at multiple locations throughout Jackson County. We take pride in our heritage and look forward to being your community bank, serving your financial needs as we grow together through the coming years.

## Current Employees Remember

"I remember doing the last checking statements of the year. They were always done on New Years Eve and every account holder received a year end statement. They couldn't be printed until they were manually balanced and then the statement machines would begin printing. Everyone, and I mean everyone from the president on down, stayed and stuffed statements until they were done. On a good night we were able to leave by 8 p.m."

"In the pre-computer years, we had to compute a new checking account number on a machine in the loan department. It was a huge thing that jumped around as it figured the new account number. This was the same machine we used to compute interest on loan accounts. Each loan customer received a hand-written notice with the interest computed and broken down into principal and interest. Ahh, the good old days!"



In this photo of a cow milking demonstration held in the Jackson County Bank lobby in the 60's, you may spot one of our current Board Members.

"Before debit cards, ATMs, direct deposit and internet banking, the Lobby of the Bank was the hub of activity. There were cow milking demonstrations, Jail and Bail activities and, of course, the automobiles displayed in the lobby. At Christmas, Bee would decorate the lobby to look magical with hundreds of feet of live pine garland and homemade decorations."

"My first day of work in 1971, I started out as a teller. I remember the lines--there were only four tellers and the lines would stretch across the lobby from the moment we opened

until we closed at three in the afternoon. I remember going home crying that night thinking there was no way I could learn everything I was shown that day. It is now 36 years later and I am reminded everyday of how things have changed since that day in 1971."

"I remember sorting the mail and coming across a letter addressed to 'Larry Cornstalk, Farm Loan Manager'".

Why has Jackson County Bank been operating for 130 years? ***It's the People*** that make the difference in our community and in our bank!

*At Jackson County Bank, it's all about the people.*

***A Long Term Deposit***

Ozzie Moe holds claim to the title of being the very first depositor and longest depositor of the Jackson County Bank at its present location. Ozzie explains, "When contractors were digging the



basement for the Bank, I walked across the street from my shoe store and threw a dime in the hole!"

Ozzie, 94, a downtown BRF businessman for many years, recently received the Black River Falls Rotary Club's 2007 Service Above Self Lifetime Achievement Award for his volunteerism and community involvement.

***It Keeps On Ticking***



Clock in the 1870s



Current Location

The Bank clock still keeps track of the time and day just as it did in the original Bowman-Humbird Building. The clock has graced the walls of every bank building since the 1870s.

***A good place to be.***

**15 Years**

is the average number of years of service for current JCBank employees.

**32 Employees**

have more than 10 years of service.

**19 Employees**

have more than 20 years of service.

***Coming this Fall***

**FREE  
8 X 10  
Family  
Portraits**

*Mark Your Calendars for  
Nov. 2, 3, 5, 6, 2007*

***Congratulations Jeannine Capaul and Jerry Jarrett,  
winners of the tickets to the Crystal Grand Music Theatre!***

The tickets were given away in conjunction with the Jackson County Bank's 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary during our June Dairy Days celebration. Our winners joined the Prime Time Club for the Nashville Legend show on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Be our guest at the 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Customer Appreciation Picnic for your chance to **win more great prizes!**

**PLEASE JOIN US!  
Customer Appreciation &  
130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Picnic**

**Thursday, August 16<sup>th</sup> from 4 - 7 p.m. at the Lunda Park**

**Join us for an Evening of Old-Fashioned  
FUN! FOOD! PRIZES!**

**Activities for the Kids**

**Bring your lawn chairs and listen to the music of the  
Dixieland Band from 5-6:30 p.m.**



***Celebrating 130 Years!***  
**JACKSON COUNTY BANK**

8 Main St., Black River Falls, WI 54615 (715) 284-5341 Member FDIC

[jacksoncountybank.com](http://jacksoncountybank.com)