The Old Maries County Bank Building

By Gary Knehans

The blocks still exist, much like the scattered pieces of a puzzle. Lying in a pile outside of Vienna, however, they have lost the cohesiveness and shape they once possessed. At one time, these concrete blocks formed the structure of Maries County's second bank building, which was constructed in 1907.

You'll find similar stone-like blocks still in existence in Vienna these days, at the Visitation Catholic Church, the Old Jail Museum, and the Vienna newspaper office. These concrete stones were all manufactured by a blockmaking machine, owned by Father Fugel, the energetic and enterprising priest of Visitation Catholic Church in the early years of this century.
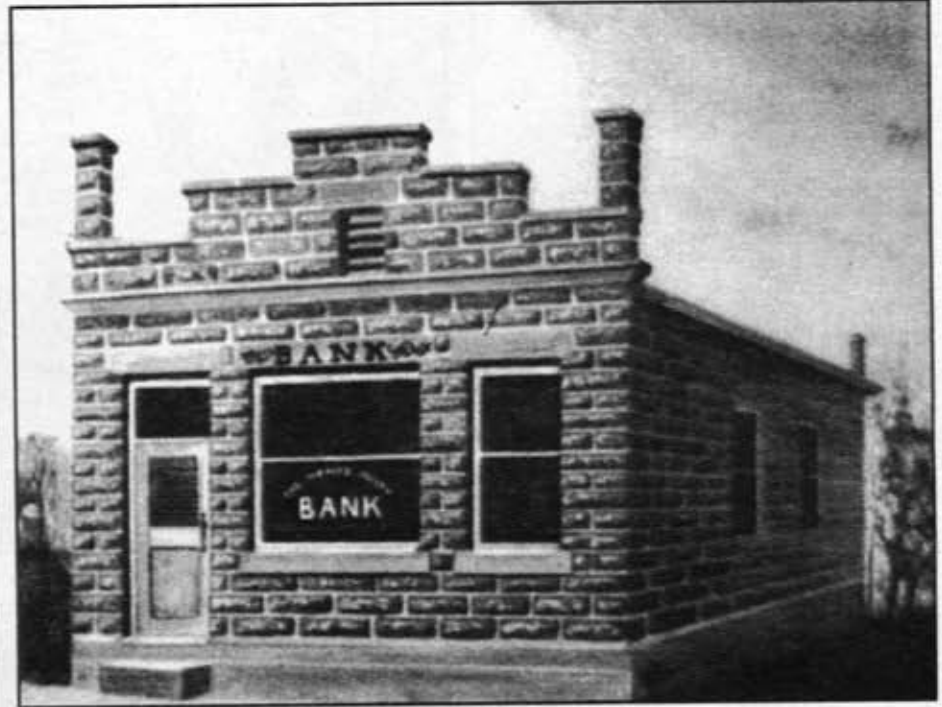
The bank building constructed of these locally manufactured blocks housed the Maries County Bank until 1961, when the current bank building was erected. The old building, however, remained standing until it was torn down in 1973.

The Historical Society of Maries County has inherited some of the old bank's interior appointments. These are being readied for future display at the Society's Old Jail Museum complex.

Maries County Bank is approaching its 100th anniversary in a few years. It was founded August 17, 1900, by Thomas A. Felker and John P. Coates. Upon organization the bank's surplus fund was $25,000 and its capital stock, $10,000.

Before the birth of Maries County Bank, the local banker was a man by the name of Cox, who strongly disdained paper and silver money. Gold deposits were all that he accepted. His "safe" was nothing more than a bag made of squirrel skin. When Mr. Cox passed away, his sons fervishly searched for that bag filled with gold, but failed to find it. The old banker's treasure remains lost to this day.

MARIES COUNTY Bank building constructed in 1907.