



# Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

## Out of the Attic

### First National Bank

*Alexandria Times, January 8, 2009*

*Image: First National Bank. Photo, Library of Congress, HABS/HAER.*

The First National Bank opened its doors at 503-507 King Street 100 years ago, featuring a classic-revival style with bronze and marble details as well as modern safety enhancements.

Located on the north side of King Street between Pitt and St. Asaph streets, the bank was designed by the architectural firm of Vogt & Morrill. The firm was based in Washington, D.C., but Milton Dana Morrill, a former architect for the U.S. Department of Treasury, lived in Alexandria. Morrill was an early proponent of concrete construction and won awards for his innovative work.

Construction began on the First National Bank in the summer of 1908 and was completed in June the following year. The one-story building with a vaulted ceiling reached 50 feet high and 75 feet deep. The reinforced brick and concrete walls were faced with white marble, and the front featured a Doric pediment and a broken entablature. This design allowed an arched entrance with grille-covered windows to reach far above the bronze door.

Because of its concrete construction, the building was touted as being fireproof. The vault, directly opposite the entrance, was encased with railroad iron grille work and had doors thick with several inches of steel plates. Above the vault was a specially designed watchman's room where a security guard could observe the entire building but remain unseen himself.

The Washington Post wrote of the newly opened bank in 1909, "The front as well as the interior...is simple and impressive, and is the type of design and construction to last and be admired for many generations." Later known as the First and Citizens National Bank, it was demolished in 1968 during Alexandria's urban renewal.



*"Out of the Attic" is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as "Marking Time" and explored Alexandria's history through collection items, historical images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into "Out of the Attic" and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.*

*These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by Amy Bertsch, former Public Information Officer, and Lance Mallamo, Director, on behalf of the Office of Historic Alexandria.*