

## Banking in Montague

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The first bank in Montague was organized in 1882 as a private bank by George E. Dowling and Charles C. Cook, both lumbermen, and with Henry H. Terwilliger as cashier. Known as the Muskegon County Bank, it had office space in a portion of the Burrows and Jones store, which was located where the Meyer Plumbing shop was on Ferry Street – just north of Jimmy’s Pub.

In 1884 the bank moved to its new quarters on the corner of Dowling and Ferry where it remained in business until 1951.

In the Fall of 1901, the affairs of the bank were terminated following the death of George Dowling in 1896 and Mr. Cook having moved away. That just left Mr. Terwilliger to manage the bank.

Following Mr. Terwilliger's unexpected departure in November 1901, the bank was placed in the hands of Trustees. The bank building and business was assigned by the Trustees to C. D. Burdick and Francis Terwilliger. The private bank was organized and became known as the Farmers Bank, with a capital of \$16,634.12 and deposits of \$2,519.64.

In 1905 Francis Terwilliger, then sole owner, sold the bank to L. W. and E. P. Mills of Mason, Michigan, who continued the bank under its same name. Deposits were \$16,225.17, resources \$24,118.81.

In 1906 the bank hired a 17-year-old office boy named Adolph Anderson at the rate of \$2.00 a week. He would go on to serve the bank for the next 50 years and eventually became the bank President.

In 1911 the bank was incorporated as a State Bank under the name of The Farmers State Bank of Montague, Michigan with a capital of \$20,000.00 and John Vanderwerp of Muskegon as President. In November 1912 resources were \$145,748.87.

In 1916, the Mills family left Montague. E. P. Mills, who had been Cashier, was replaced by Adolph Anderson as the Cashier.

The bank was reorganized after the depression. In 1948, at the suggestion of the Banking Department, the name was changed to Montague State Bank.

In 1951, a new bank building was built on Ferry Street next to the Franklin House Hotel. The interior of the bank vault measured 9x12 feet with a door 6-inches thick. There was a 13 1/2x11 1/2 foot bookkeeping room, a 14 1/2x10 1/2 foot open office area, and a 9x10 foot private office. The lobby was 25 feet at its widest point, 11 feet at its narrowest and 31 feet long. The bank reopened at its new location on November 17, 1951. At that time, Adolph Anderson was vice president and cashier. This bank building later became home to the White Lake Senior Center in 1976.

In November 1955, the Bank's Board of Directors voted to merge with the Hackley Union National Bank and Trust Company of Muskegon as a branch office. The present staff was retained. Adolph Anderson, as President of the Montague State Bank, became a Vice President and a director of The Hackley Union National Bank.

In August 1952, J. Molyneau of Whitehall bought the State Bank building. His plans for the use of the building were indefinite at the time.

In the Spring of 1969, Hackley Union National Bank bought the lot on the southwest corner of Dowling and Water streets, near where the former Sportsmens Club/VFW was located. Construction of a new bank building began in December of that year. The new bank building was completed and opened for business on August 31, 1970. The official Grand Opening was held on September 12, 1970.

Additionally, a second bank came to town in late 1969 when the Ludington Federal Savings and Loan Association built a building on the corner of Ferry and Spring Streets. Mr. O. Laurin Anderson of Whitehall was named the bank manager. He had been the assistant cashier for the Whitehall branch of Muskegon Bank and Trust. After the bank left, the building was put up for sale. It was purchased by the City of Montague, extensively renovated in 1989, and became home to the current City Hall, Police Department, and the library. This is the fourth location for the City Hall. Interestingly, the first City Hall was located on the corner just across Spring Street.

Norman Pageot purchased the building in June 1972. He planned to do some remodeling and arrange for some living quarters on the second floor.

In April 1978, Hackley Union National Bank changed to Hackley Bank & Trust. The name changed again in November 1982 to Comerica Bank-Hackley. In May 1991, the name changed yet again to Comerica Bank. In April 2017, Comerica Bank closed the office and left the Montague area.

A branch of the Shelby State Bank, which has had an office in Whitehall since 1981, renovated the former Comerica Bank building and moved into the facilities in April 2019, thereby providing the town with banking facilities once again.

Over the years since the Bank moved out of the building on the corner, there have been several other businesses that have occupied the spot. Here is a partial list:

In June 1969 there was an announcement in the local paper indicating that Mr. & Mrs. A. W. Nelson would be opening Nelson's Used Furniture in the building.

In July and August 1971, Froggie's Emporium was opened in the building under the management of Carol Hack, NBC Art teacher. Some of the items featured were paintings, ceramics, hand-painted articles, hand-crafted purses, macrame and other assorted objects.

The Garden of Eden, a unique plant and gift shop, was opened in July 1975 by Tom Tabor and Sue Manok.

Marilou Bower opened Tailor's Corner in the old bank building in May 1980. She provided custom monogramming, repairs & alterations as well as dry cleaning.

Oddly Enough, a store featuring clothing, costumes, crafts, and collectibles was opened there by Jan Matthews and Nancy Allen Schultz from May 1981 until December 1983. They closed in January 1984 and moved to Traverse City.

Uncle Jesse's Attic was opened in the old bank building at 8701 Ferry in May 1986 by Monnie Shackelford. By September of that year, it was announced that a second location was needed so it expanded 2 doors down at 8695 Ferry. In March 1988, there were Going Out of Business sales advertised in the local newspaper.

Ads for the White Lake Harbor Gift Shop ads started to appear in November 1991.

The Prom Place was located there for a short time in 1993 based on some ads that appeared in the local paper.

A Bride's Time II was opened in the old bank building in March 1996 by Heather Mustaikis of Ludington, who also had another shop up there as well. By March 1998, a huge sale of all wedding gowns and prom dresses was going on and the shop here in town closed.

White River Gallery was started by the Arts Council of White Lake in August 1999 to support, exhibit, and sell art by Michigan artists. The Gallery continued at that location until 2009 when they relocated to 106 E. Colby Street in Whitehall.

Sweet Annie and Company was an eclectic Gift Shop and Artisan Boutique that opened in October 2017. Unfortunately, it closed in July 2020 due to the pandemic situation at the time and the loss of tourists in the White Lake area.

These are just some of the businesses that come to mind. There may have been others. Some of you will have memories of businesses that occupied some of the other storefronts next to the Bank building, but that will be for another time.