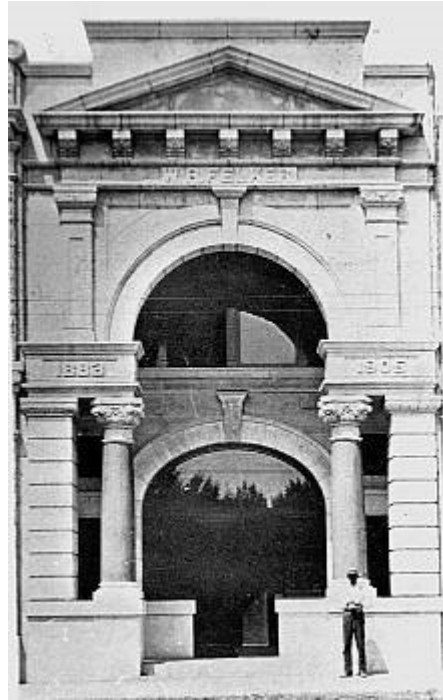


Photo of the Month

The Bank of Rogers Building (1905-1907)



The Bank of Rogers newly opened in 1907
(Neg. #N010215)

The Bank of Rogers was founded by W.R. Felker in 1883, Rogers' first financial institution. It had two homes before Felker and son J.E. planned to build a grand new bank at 114 South First Street, the center of Rogers' business and commerce.

The area's leading architect, A.O. Clarke, designed the building and it took two years to complete. The exterior featured a limestone facade with red granite columns beneath a Romanesque arch. Inside there were mahogany doors, window casings, wall pilasters, and furniture; marble baseboards and center desk; a mosaic tile floor; and a massive three-story vault.

Circular tellers' cages were located in the middle of the building, above which was a skylight with a catwalk going around it. Sometimes mischievous boys climbed onto the catwalk and annoyed the tellers by dropping pennies on their heads. The half-inch-thick skylight fell in 1912, probably due to rotting of the wooden frame, and was later replaced. The second floor had two suites of office rooms and large meeting room, while the basement held the steam heating plant.

Construction of the building was a significant sight. Mabel Owens Black recalled in 1988:

They hauled the cornerstone for the Bank of Rogers out of the hollow at Lake Atalanta. . . . They would take the wagon box off of the wagon and put the stone on just what they called running gears. Just the wheels and a pole to hold them together. They didn't get it on early enough to get out before dark. John Myler, father's boss, said he walked ahead of the horses and carried a lantern so they could see how to get up that hill . . . to Walnut Street.

The new Bank of Rogers opened in July 1907 and lasted seven years until it failed. By 1918 the building

became home to the Farmers State Bank, and then to the American National Bank in 1937. When that bank closed in 1962, the building was vacant off-and-on for 13 years; short-time occupants included Skaggs Real Estate, Jeffa Scott Tax Service, Carl W. Knox Insurance Company, and Sun-Kay Ambulance Service. In 1975 the building became the first home of the Rogers Historical Museum, then served as the offices for KFAA TV-51 between 1987 and 1995. The production staff of architecture firm Perry Butcher & Associates called the building home in the late 1990s, and, beginning in 2000, its current occupant is the Daisy Airgun Museum.

The second floor of the bank has had a number of occupants as well. In 1907 the floor was occupied by the offices of the Rogers White Lime Company. In the 1910s there were a number of law offices there, including Duty & Duty, Earl Blansett, E.M. Fowler, and W.N. Ivie. In the mid-1920s the Security Mutual Life Association and the National Old Line Insurance Company were officed there. By 1930 Nance & Anderson, attorneys, and the attorney for the City of Rogers made the building home. During the American National Bank's tenure the second floor served the bank, but from 1954 to 1970 the second floor was occupied by KAMO radio station.

The Bank of Rogers building has served the Rogers community well during its nearly 100 years. It's been honored by being placed on the National Register of Historic Places.