

1159

**United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

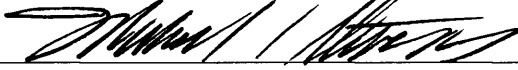
**historic name** Citizens State Bank of Gillett  
**other names/site number**

**2. Location**

**street & number** 137 East Main Street  
**city or town** Gillett  
**state** Wisconsin **code** WI **county** Oconto  
**code** 083 **zip code** 54124  
**not for publication**  
**vicinity**

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
Date 10/16/08

**State Historic Preservation Officer-WI**

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
  - entered in the National Register.
    - See continuation sheet.
    - determined eligible for the National Register.
      - See continuation sheet.
      - determined not eligible for the National Register.
        - See continuation sheet.
        - removed from the National Register.
        - other, (explain:)

*Edson H. Beall*

12.4.08

*[Signature]*

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	contributing	noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> site		structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		1	0 total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property  
listing.

N/A

Number of contributing resources  
is previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE - financial institution

HEALTH CARE - medical business/office

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements

Foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Rubber

other Stone

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Citizens State Bank of Gillett  
Name of Property

Oconto County  
County and State

Wisconsin

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

### Period of Significance

1904-1932

### Significant Dates

1904

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

unknown

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Citizens State Bank of Gillett

Oconto County

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous Documentation on File** (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 396935 4971412  
 Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Eugene J. Hackbarth  
 organization  
 street & number 933 Oakdale Avenue  
 city or town De Pere

state WI

date January 15, 2008  
 telephone (920) 336-0996  
 zip code 54115

Citizens State Bank of Gillett

Oconto County

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs** Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

<b>name/title</b>	Evelyn Hauser-Fredrick	<b>date</b>	January 2008
<b>organization</b>		<b>telephone</b>	(920) 855-2474
<b>street&amp;number</b>	137 East Main Street	<b>zip code</b>	54124
<b>city or town</b>	Gillett	<b>state</b>	WI

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
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**National Register of Historic Places**  
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Citizens State Bank of Gillett  
Gillett, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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INTRODUCTION

The Village of Gillett, Wisconsin, was incorporated in 1900 with a population of 400.<sup>1</sup> It was named after Rodney Gillett, a sawmill owner and businessman, first postmaster and first town chair of Gillett. Soon after, the Citizens State Bank of Gillett was built in 1904. This was the first building constructed for that sole purpose in the Village and helped to meet the community's growing financial needs. The prominent location and fine architectural elements helped raise the status of Bank President Loeb J. Newald. An article in the February 23, 1928 issue of *The Gillett Times*, entitled "Gillett From Its Early Days to Present" reads: "The present Citizens State Bank was erected in 1904. This has proven to be a substantial institution in hard times."<sup>2</sup>

Loeb J. Newald hired L.B. Stuelke to open the first bank around 1901 at 113 E. Main Street, Gillett, WI. The business quickly outgrew the building and Mr. Newald had the current Citizens State Bank built in 1904 at the corner of North Lake and East Main streets, the center of Gillett's commercial downtown. The building's progressive design and detailing sets it apart from the other buildings in the commercial district. The architect and builder are unknown.

PRESENT APPEARANCE

The Citizens State Bank of Gillett is a one story, brick building with a substantial attic frieze. The building is located at the corner of North Lake and East Main streets, with a corner entrance. The building's prominent architectural features include large, plate glass windows topped by arched windows, interlocking brick at the corners, decorative bands of 5" x 5" terra cotta medallions, rough-faced stone belt courses, and a bracketed metal cornice with a raised pediment over the entrance. The main elevations are faced with a smooth, salmon colored brick laid with small mortar joints. The overall appearance is one of a continuous uniform surface highlighted by horizontal bands of contrasting materials and texture.

The Citizens State Bank building rests on a full basement (1,462 sq. ft.) which contains the original vault, storage space and an employee break room. The foundation walls are 30 inch thick concrete and stone. Basement floors are poured concrete. All bank building exterior walls that rest on the foundations are three-course brick with a limestone belt course. Sheltering these walls is the building's rolled rubber flat roof. The main, single-door entry is at the southeast corner with three concrete steps and a single black wrought-iron rail. A one-story, vinyl-clad gabled addition (1995) with gabled entry extends from the rear (north) elevation of this building. The addition's foundation is concrete and the roof has asphalt shingles. The addition is set back from the street elevation and does not compromise the integrity of the building.

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<sup>1</sup> Gillett received its city charter in 1944.

<sup>2</sup> *The Gillett Times*, Gillett, WI, February 23, 1928.

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Citizens State Bank of Gillett  
Gillett, Oconto County, Wisconsin

The bank building is an example of the one-part commercial block, a commercial block form identified by Richard Longstreth in his recently published book *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*:

The one-part commercial block has only a single story, which is treated in much the same variety of ways as the lower zone of the two-part commercial block. Essentially, it is a fragment of the larger type and should not be confused with the one-story shop, freestanding and capped by a pitched roof, which could be found in settlements in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Rather than appearing somewhat like a small house or service facility on a sizable farm or plantation, the one-part commercial block is a simple box with a decorated façade and is thoroughly urban in its overtones.<sup>3</sup>

**EXTERIOR**

As originally built (before the addition was added in 1995), the bank had a rectangular plan consisting of the 43 ft. x 34 ft. block, whose principal façade faces Main Street. The east and west facades both measure 34 ft. in length. The north façade measures 43 ft. in length with a 26 inch square two story chimney located 12 ft. from the east end. The southeast corner features the main entry.

Certain features are repeated on the street facades of the bank. The overall design consists of large openings with arched tops set within frames, and a series of horizontal divisions that divide the elevations. The building rests on a rubble stone and brick foundation. At the level of the base of the door, a stone belt course wraps the building. A second belt course is found several feet above. This level corresponds to the base of the east elevation windows, but falls somewhat above the bases of the south elevation openings. A horizontal band of decorative medallions wraps the building at the level of the arched window tops. Two additional rows of matching medallions demarcate an attic story, which contains slightly inset brick panels. The main facades are topped by a metal cornice, with large brackets terminating the cornice at the outer corners.

The corner entry, unlike any other downtown Gillett building, demonstrates the prominence of this building in the community. Interlocking brick at the corner marks the transition to the major side elevations. A single door is centered on this angled façade. The door is capped by an arched window. In the attic level, a small rectangular panel is centered over the opening. Partially obscuring the panel is a burglar alarm box. Further marking the prominence of the corner entry is the rounded pediment that gives the date of construction – 1904- and the building's function – BANK.

The east elevation (Lake Street façade), to the right of the main entry, contains two replacement plate glass windows with rough cut limestone sills that are part of the second level belt course. The windows were recently reopened after being bricked in for many years. Historic photos confirm that the windows are of the same dimension as the originals. The windows are framed by segmental arches constructed of row-lock brick, set in concentric rows. The windows are set within a slight recess. Three levels of horizontal bands of brick make the

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Washington D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1987), p. 54.

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Citizens State Bank of Gillett  
Gillett, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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transition from the window recess to the main wall plane. Rectangular recessed panels are centered over each opening within the attic level. Windows at the basement level have been infilled with stone and mortar.

The south elevation (Main Street facade) to the left of the main entry continues the same motifs, although the elevation has three bays. The openings on this elevation have been altered somewhat from the building's historic appearance. This elevation originally contained a window in the far right bay and a door in the far left bay. Both were topped with arched windows. The original base of the window corresponded to the stone belt course. Changes to this elevation were made in 1987. At this time a slightly longer window was installed. Its sill is slightly below the belt course and is of cast concrete. A matching widow was installed in the central bay. While historic photos show that this was a windowless bay, the bay had the same inset panel as the other window bays of the main elevations. At this time, the door in the far left bay was replaced with a single plate window of the same dimensions as the original door opening. The framing and decorative features found on the east elevation are repeated here. Inset attic panels are only found over the two outer bays. At some point the cornice was modified (cut-out) to make room for a tall street light pole. Windows at the basement level have been infilled with stone and mortar.

The west elevation, which faces a pedestrian alley between this and the adjacent building, has two single windows with rough-cut limestone sills. The frames are clad with aluminum. These windows are bracketed by segmental arches constructed of row-lock brick, set in three concentric rows. The third opening (far north) has a single light two-paneled replacement door with an upper fixed transom single-pane light. The frame is clad with aluminum and the opening is capped by a segmental arch of row-lock brick, set in three concentric rows. Three concrete steps connect the sidewalk with first floor. A single white sheet metal aluminum downspout is attached to the brick near the southwest corner. Ground cover, flowers and shrubs enhance the side alley. A concrete sidewalk leads from the Main Street side (south) of the building to the (north) parking lot. The west elevation is faced with bricks that are of lesser quality when compared to the east and south elevations. The vinyl-clad addition is attached and in line at the north end.

A 1995 addition is attached to the north elevation. Historic photos show a two-story brick commercial building over the site where the addition and parking lot are now located. The bank building was separated from the adjacent building by a narrow alley. The bricks of this elevation also are of lesser quality when compared to the main facades. Telephone and electric utility services are attached at the east end. A two-story matching brick chimney and exhaust fan are to the right (west) of the utility services. At the northeast corner, where the addition joins the bank building, one finds an attractive garden filled with flowers, bushes and shrubs.

**INTERIOR**

The Citizens State Bank of Gillett was the first building in the city built specifically to house a bank. On April 1, 1937, thirty-three years after its opening as a financial institution, the building was sold and never again used as a financial institution. Later occupants included a grocery store, clothing store, glove factory and the current Gillett Dental Care, S.C. office. Interior remodeling was done for each use; however, interior decorative finishes remain. In addition, these uses adapted the building's large open interior. Preserved through



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all of the remodeling projects were the original oak trim, stamped metal ceilings, and the upper stamped metal wall panels along the Lake Street side of the current reception area. Because interior partitions do not extend the full height of the room, the entire original stamped metal ceiling has been left exposed and is visible. The dentist office retains the same sense of openness that would have been present when the building served as a bank.

The first floor space remains at 43' wide by 34' deep. The southeast corner remains the principal entrance at the corner of East Main and Lake streets. One passes through a small vestibule. The vestibule ceiling (a remodeling project) has an 8 ft. ceiling which retains the arched-top window above the entry door. The reception area has a newer oak counter. Floors are carpeted throughout. Passing to the right of the receptionist and angling slightly left one enters the dental clinic's work area. The Dentist's office is on your right. To the left are three examination/treatment rooms.

Located to the left of the Dentist's office are the stairs to the full basement. Basement exterior walls are 30 inches thick made of stone and mortar. Housed in the basement are a files stack, a breakroom, HVAC, cleaning supplies, and the original bank vault. Plumbing has been up-dated using PVC pipes. A/C has been installed. The ceiling is 2' x 4' drop-in panels. Floors are carpet over concrete. Fluorescent tube lights are used.

#### ALTERATIONS

Historic photos show that the building was originally topped by decorative wrought iron metal cresting along the two main facades. As noted earlier, the left most bay on the Main Street elevation was originally a door with an arched window. The former door was replaced with a plate glass window of the same dimensions in the 1980s. The central of the three bays was a blank wall, although the historic photo does show the faint indications of the arched brick surround. It is unknown if the space originally held a window that was filled in, or if built without the window, when the building acquired the opening. With the exception of these changes, the exterior of the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

Dr. Evelyn K. Hauser purchased the building on December 21, 1984. Between that date and July 4, 1985, electrical, plumbing and HVAC utilities were updated, two windows on the east elevation were re-opened after having been bricked over for many years, and interior remodeling was completed. On the south elevation, a large double-glazed window was installed where a window and door once were. The width of the new window opening perfectly matches the width of the two adjacent south side windows. Front and side doors were replaced in the original openings and new concrete steps were constructed. Exterior brick was chemically cleaned and tuck pointed in 1987.

A one-story vinyl-clad gabled addition (1995) with gabled entry extends from the rear elevation of this building. The addition's foundation is concrete and the roof has asphalt shingles. Because it is located on the back of the building, it does not detract from the bank's historic appearance. An asphalt parking lot extends from the addition to the North lot line.

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Inside, on the first floor, a hall leads to the North end addition. Two doorways were cut through the three-course brick walls into the addition at the first floor and basement levels. The addition houses an employee entrance, a foyer, plus a conference/training room. All rooms are carpeted, have plaster walls and use fluorescent lights. Most of the original ceiling and wall tin panels were preserved. The original interior woodwork over the arched windows was retained. Despite the alterations, the exterior integrity of the Citizens State Bank of Gillett remains to convey its historic function as an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century financial institution in the City of Gillett. The openness of the interior, which characterized the building's use as a bank, has been retained. Because the interior remodeling does not use full height partitions, the extent of the pressed metal ceiling that covers the entire interior remains visible.

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Gillett, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: SUMMARY**

The Citizens State Bank of Gillett building is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its significance under National Register (NR) Criterion "A" at the local level, in the history of commerce in the City of Gillett. The building located at 137 East Main Street served the community as Gillett's only financial institution from 1904 through 1920. The Period of Significance extends from 1904, when the building was completed, through 1932, when the bank closed. The financial institution was a casualty of the Depression. The years of the bank's operation coincide with a period of growth and development in the community and it represents the community's need for a local financial institution that could support and foster this economic expansion. The building continues to serve the Gillett area as a landmark and as a commercial office building.

**HISTORY OF THE GILLETT AREA:**

The Gillett area has a rich history. The area was once inhabited by the Native American Potawatomi and Menominee nations. In 1854, six years after Wisconsin became a state, the European hunter and trapper Tourtilotte settled in what is now Gillett. In 1854, it was part of Stiles Township. Rodney Gillett migrated from Minnesota in 1858 and began to harvest the region's abundant virgin pine. Virtually all of the logs floated past Gillett on the Oconto River to the saw mills in Oconto. Gillett became the business center for goods and services for area logging camps, industry equipment sales and services, as well as the transfer locus for cargoes moving into and out of the abundant forests.

The first election in the Town of Gillett was held on April 7, 1868, and Randy Gillett was elected Town Chair. The downtown area was platted in 1884, based on a survey by M.A. Eagleston. The village was incorporated in 1900 with a population of 400. The first village officers were; L.J. Newald, president; J. Sorenson, clerk; Hans Lykke, treasurer. The first trustees were I. H. Issaakson, Oscar Carlson, J.M. Melchoir, R. A. Miniely, G.H. Sohr, and August Foelker. L.J. Newald played an important role in the early days of the community, being its first village president, and opening the community's first bank. The community again chose the name Gillett, after Rodney Gillett, when it was chartered as a city by the State of Wisconsin on May 10, 1944.

Between 1883 and 1901 the railroad accelerated Gillett's commercial and residential growth. Gillett served as the terminal depot on the Chicago and NorthWestern Railroad. Young people with ambitious plans and a strong work ethic opened stores, saloons, a cheese factory, a butcher shop, a brickyard, a barbershop, and restaurants. Local businesses included the Great Northern Pail Company, a large vegetable canning factory, a sawmill, machine works, a weekly newspaper, a flour and grist mill, and a bank. The Gillett Rural Telephone Co. began operations in 1910. Business leaders organized the Gillett Advancement Association in 1920. Gillett also served as the center for education in the region. The first school was built in 1896, with an expansion in 1909, and the first separate High School opened in 1923. The Gillett Public Library opened in February 1927. A volunteer fire department was organized in 1905 under Fire Chief Gene Hackett. Between 1900 and 1920, Gillett grew in population from 400 to 1,000 people.<sup>4</sup> The area's farming and lumber industry provided a

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<sup>4</sup> Marie Darrow, *History of Gillett, 1856 - 1976* (Oconto Times Herald, 1962). (Edited from a series).

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Gillett, Oconto County, Wisconsin

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robust economic environment for supplies, manufacturing and transportation. The 2008 population numbers over 1,300.

**SIGNIFICANCE: COMMERCE**

The Citizens State Bank of Gillett is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under *Criterion A*, at the local level, in the history of commerce. It is significant for the three decades (1904-1932) of use as a bank. It later merged with the Bank of Gillett, and its successors still serve the Gillett community. The bank contributed to the development of the Village and the surrounding rural community.

Before the bank opened, Gillett residents traveled 15-18 miles to banks in the neighboring cities of Shawano or Oconto. Local banks demonstrate financial strength and sound economic activity in communities. Community growth follows financial strength. Such was the case in Gillett when L.B. Stuelke and L.J. Newald opened the first bank in Gillette, WI in 1901 in the downtown at 113 E. Main Street. The Bank's Original Articles of Incorporation, dated May 13, 1903, show \$25,000.00 (250 total shares at \$100.00 each) invested by Frank J. Martin, Shawano, George H. Klosterman, Shawano, Nels H. Johnson, Gillett, Franz F. Koske, Pulcifer, and Ira J. Weens, Shawano. Under recently enacted state banking laws, Wisconsin banks were required to have a minimum of \$25,000 in capital. In 1904, to accommodate population and commercial growth, the Citizens State Bank of Gillett was built at the corner of East Main and Lake Streets. Additional Bank Shares were sold to finance the institution (\$10,000.00 on May 17, 1917 and \$15,000.00 on May 6, 1921). A *Gillett Times* article notes that, on February 13, 1927, the Citizens State Bank of Gillett Stockholder's Meeting Annual Report demonstrates a healthy increase of business in the amount of \$50,000.00.

With Gillett's business and population, growth came the need for a sound financial institution. Loeb J. Newald opened the first bank in 1901, at 113 E. Main Street, and served as first president. H.P. Lykke was first treasurer and James Sorenson was the first clerk. Just a few years later, the bank constructed this building to house the financial institution. It remained the only bank in Gillett until 1921, when the Bank of Gillett was chartered by J.M. Ankerson, Jacob Helf and others.

A few years later, Herbert H. Koske bought interest in the Citizens State Bank of Gillett. Through business relationships, he played a very important role in the business and industrial development in Gillett. When Herbert H. Koske died, Herbert A. Koske, his son, became President of the bank. H.A. Koske managed the bank until it closed temporarily in 1931. Under the leadership of a new President, Hans C. Sorensen, the bank re-opened in 1932, only to merge with the only other local bank, the Bank of Gillett, on December 27, 1932. After merging with the Bank of Gillett and the creation of the Gillett State Bank, the building was vacated and later served as the locus for other businesses. The Banking Commission of Wisconsin formally cancelled the Charter of the Citizens State Bank of Gillett on August 14, 1944.

During the years before the Great Depression, the Citizens State Bank and its officers played a key role in

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helping Gillett prosper. The *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directories* from 1901-1920 demonstrate the population and business growth in Gillett. Research shows that population almost tripled from 400 people in 1901 to 1,000 in 1920, while the number of businesses doubled during that same period, from 29 to 58.

Business growth brought community growth. The logging and lumber industries, and later the dairy and truck farming industries, brought more settlers and business entrepreneurs. The railroad and river transportation provided major growth potential. Early businesses met the essential needs such as general stores, flour mills, engineers, attorneys, farm implement dealers, a creamery, livery, blacksmiths, masons, contractors, brick yard, hardware store, saloons, harness makers, funeral home, furniture maker, shoemaker, dentist, physicians, meat market, druggist, insurance and real estate sales, hotel, and photographer. Media services were provided by the weekly newspaper (*Gillett Times*), plus telephone and telegraph companies. A solid bank brought stability. A second bank, the Bank of Gillett, opened in 1921, and spurred even greater growth. The population rose from 400 to 1400 between 1901 and 1927 and the businesses increased from 29 to 86.

The Gillett Advancement Association was created in 1920 by banking and manufacturing leaders to promote the interests of Gillett and the surrounding communities. New businesses started and well-established businesses grew. New businesses include a planing mill, The Great Northern Pail Company, a stone quarry, a second grist mill, a bottling works, a wagonmaker, a pickle and canning factory, the Wisconsin Butter and Cheese Company, the Frisbie Manufacturing Company (makers of saw mill and lathing manufacturer's equipment), the Warren Canning Company, two cigar makers, and a laundry. Leisure and cultural entertainment was enhanced for residents and tourists alike by the Gem Opera House, the Armory, and a billiard hall.

By 1924, the population of Gillett reached 1280, and Gillett Public Service began providing reliable electric service to the area. The Gillett Hospital, with sixteen beds, three attending physicians and fulltime healthcare, opened in 1924. A well driller and two ginseng growers began their farm operations in 1925. By 1926, the Village began constructing water supply and sewer systems throughout its boundaries. The 1926 public school roster shows 125 High School and 300 Grade School students.

An article in *The Green Bay Press-Gazette*, dated January 13, 1927 states: "Gillett - This prosperous village of over 1,400 inhabitants in the center of a rich farming district...is justly noted for its public improvement, completed and in process construction, its large manufacturing plants, its solid financial institutions, its successful business houses, its up to date school system, its churches, its progressive village officials, and better than all, its reputation for high ideals of citizenship."<sup>5</sup>

The article goes on to mention major businesses: Gillett Building Supply (25 employees), with annual wholesale/retail sales of lumber, windows and sashes were greater than \$30,000.00; the C. A. Straubel Company, wholesale cheese dealer, (2-6 employees) maintains a branch plant in the Village. The plant buys

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<sup>5</sup> *The Green Bay Press-Gazette*, Green Bay, WI, January 13, 1927.

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cheese from 25 Oconto County factories and ships over 75 train cars of cheese throughout the United States; Gillett Canning Company, (165 seasonal employees with a payroll of \$36,000) packed 560 acres of beans, peas or beets and shipped 100 train cars of produce and expanded their facilities by 7,680 sq. ft.; Fred Rueckert, a local cattle buyer, shipped 30 train cars of hogs and 30 train cars of cattle; the Great Northern Pail Company (100 employees with a payroll of \$110,000.00) manufactures wooden candy pails and commercial veneer plywood while using 100 Million feet of hardwood and 600 cords of Poplar, shipments go to as far away as Texas, New York, Missouri and New Foundland; the 27 room Hotel Gillett provides great accommodations for the traveling business people as well as tourists.

Overall, the period between 1895 and 1925 was a period of tremendous growth in the state. This growth brought with it a need for credit and more banks.<sup>6</sup> The Citizens State Bank of Gillett opened within this broader state context, with the Gillett area representing that growth in production and commerce.

As with many other small banks, the Citizens State Bank of Gillett was a victim of the Depression. The bank managed to survive the stock market crash, but closed its doors within a few years. The situation was dire by 1933, leading Governor Albert George Schmedeman to declare a two-week statewide banking moratorium. Banking in Wisconsin would not fully recover until 1942, when military production for World War II had begun to lift the entire country's economy.

#### OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN GILLETT

The Gillett State Bank (created in 1932 by the merger of the Citizens State Bank of Gillett and the Bank of Gillett) was purchased by First Interstate Bank in the mid-1980s. First Interstate Bank was purchased by Norwest Bank, Wisconsin, NA in 1994. Norwest Bank, Wisconsin, NA was purchased by Wells Fargo Bank after 1984. Gillett is currently served by the following three financial institutions: Wells Fargo Bank at 100 E. First Street, Community Bank of Oconto County, 204 E. Main Street, and Peshtigo National Bank, 149 N. McKenzie Street.

#### LATER USES OF THE CITIZENS STATE BANK BUILDING

The building served the region as a center of financial services between 1904 and 1932 and as the location for a wide variety of commercial and service businesses from 1932 through the present. The Bank building was sold by Warranty Deed on April 1, 1937, to Elmer and Leona Landin who operated a grocery store at the site for eleven years. The Landins sold the building on May 6, 1948, to Richard and Evelyn Cox who operated a clothing store until 1968. The Cox's sold the building to Oliver and Cecelia Schmidt who operated a glove factory. Oliver Schmidt sold the building to the current owner, Evelyn Hauser-Fredrick on December 21, 1984. The building now houses the Office for Gillett Dental Care, S.C.

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<sup>6</sup> Theodore A. Anderson, *A Century of Banking in Wisconsin* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1954), p. 85.

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Architecture

The local commercial significance of the Citizens State Bank of Gillett is heightened by its high degree of integrity and its progressive architecture. While many smaller community commercial buildings were designed as examples of the Italianate commercial vernacular, the design of this building features clean crisp lines and a general openness through its use of large expanses of glass. The building was built to house a bank, the first building so designed in the city. Its exterior has been well preserved with only minor modifications and the building continues to stand prominently as a commercial landmark in downtown Gillett. The bank building's commercial significance is enhanced by the preservation of the interior woodwork, metal ceiling, and metal wall panels. Current research has not uncovered the names of the architect or builder, or the source of the colored brick.

The unknown architect who designed this bank building created a landmark for the city. Prominent features include interlocking brick at corners, a decorative band of 5" x 5" brick medallions, brick segmented arches, corbelled brick, a stone belt course, and an entrance door topped with a segmental arch. These elements share common features with the work of the Prairie architects that drew their inspiration from the work of Louis Sullivan, as well as some elements drawn from H.H. Richardson's work. It is only at the cornice level that the building addresses its more traditional commercial Italianate neighbors. Perhaps it was the expectation of the bank that it should be capped with a classically designed metal cornice on the main elevations and a raised pediment over the entrance.

CONCLUSION

The Citizens State Bank of Gillett is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under *Criterion A* in Commerce for its 28 years of service as a financial institution and center for commercial operations. Furthermore, this is the only building constructed during this period specifically for use as a bank. The site of the only bank in Gillett from 1904-1920, it was the center of financial services that helped spur significant business and population growth. The bank also represented the maturity of the growing community, indicating that it could support the investment needed in a local financial institution. When the bank closed in 1932, a result of the Great Depression, the building was sold and immediately took on a new role as a center for commerce in the downtown. Today, the landmark building serves the community as a Dental Clinic. The current proud owner of this building, Evelyn Hauser-Frederick, has taken this opportunity to assist in the building's preservation and service to the community.

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**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated boundary consists of two parcels. The first is related to the historic bank building:  
From SE Corner of Lot 1N 41'6" to S wall of Grenke Building, W 64' to E wall of P.O., S 41'6" to N line of  
Main St., E 64'. The second parcel includes the addition and the associated parking lot: Starting N 42' of SE  
Corner of Lot 1-N 42', W 91', S 64', E 91'.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundaries include all the land historically associated with the Citizens State Bank of Gillett, the addition  
and north parking lot. This is the current parcel associated with the building.

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**Items a through d are the same for photos 1-6.**

Photo 1

- a) Citizens State Bank of Gillett
- b) Gillett, Oconto County, Wisconsin
- c) Eugene J. Hackbarth, November 2007
- d) Wisconsin Historical Society
- e) Main Façade, South Elevation, South East Entry
- f) Photo 1 of 6

Photo 2

- e) Entry, Southeast Corner
- f) Photo 2 of 6

Photo 3

- e) East Elevation
- f) Photo 3 of 6

Photo 4

- e) South Elevation, View looking East
- f) Photo 4 of 6

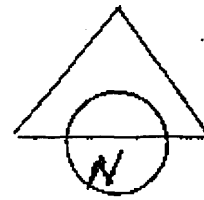
Photo 5

- e) Addition, View from Northeast
- f) Photo 5 of 6

Photo 6



- e) Interior Reception Area – Metal Ceiling and Wall Panels, View looking Northeast
- g) Photo 6 of 6

**FIGURE 1: CITIZENS STATE BANK OF GILLETT**  
 137 EAST MAIN STREET  
 GILLETT, OCONTO COUNTY,  
 WISCONSIN



Not Drawn to Scale

Contributing   
 Non-Contributing 

Nominated Boundary   
 Extraneous Legal Boundary 

*East Main Street*

**First Floor**

**Basement**

