

VEVAY - 217 W Main Street

Serving the people of Ripley County and the community for 95 years!

The Friendship State Bank

was founded in 1912 by a group of local businessmen and farmers. The man they chose to manage their new venture was Wilkie S. Lemon, a local farmer whose main background was in horse and cattle trading. Lemon was willing to serve in this capacity, but requested a period of training at the Osgood Bank before assuming his duties.

He trained at the Osgood Bank in April of that year, and on October 26, 1912 he became the first cashier and manager of The Friendship State Bank. He was armed with six months of training and a two-page list of things you need to start a bank: pens, pencils, ledger sheets... money.

The first regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors took place on November 2, 1912. The bank's first loan application was approved for the Bear Creek Baptist Church. The board also agreed that twenty-five cents was the minimal loan they would offer. They also decided to install a telephone as soon as possible – the bank's first step into the high-tech world.

Wilkie Lemon superbly managed the bank, justifying the faith of those initial investors. It was due to his efforts that The Friendship State Bank weathered the Depression of the 1930s – a catastrophe for so many small banks. Ironically, one of the casualties of the era was the Osgood State Bank, which had trained Mr. Lemon.

Sensible growth management is a hallmark of The Friendship State Bank. The bank started out in a small building on Main Street. While retaining the structure and façade of the original bank, additions gradually increased the size of the bank throughout the years, as evidenced by the numerous cornerstones. The building now accommodates more than 6 times the original workspace.

This gradual approach was also applied to the bank's expansion to new locations: Dillsboro in

October, 1989; Cross Plains in August, 1992; Rising Sun in February, 1998; Versailles in October, 2000; and Vevay in 2006. Friendship Insurance was acquired in March of 2000 with locations in Dillsboro, Lawrenceburg, Versailles, Vevay, Friendship and Rising Sun.

This responsiveness to community needs is reflected in the branch management policy. Each manager is encouraged to run their branch like their own bank, and to reflect the community in which they serve. This personalized approach has been another key element of The Friendship State Bank's success at each location.

The Lemon family is in its third generation of bank management. Wilkie Lemon passed away in 1957 and his son, James W. Lemon, managed the bank until 1992. Since then, James William Lemon has continued his family's tradition. He and his brother Tracy N. Lemon are raising the next generation of bankers.

The Friendship State Bank continues to prosper in the 21st century, much as it did in the beginning of the 20th. However, 25-cent loans have made way for million dollar transactions, and the list of available services has grown to include the advantages of cutting-edge technology, including Internet banking, merchant check capture and more.

In the coming years, Friendship Bancorp, parent company of The Friendship State Bank, Friendship Insurance and Friendship Securities and Investments, will continue to focus on utilizing the strengths of each company to build the others, generating future business by sharing resources and knowledge for the benefit of each company and especially the people in the communities they serve.

Throughout continued growth, The Friendship State Bank will remain a community bank, responsive to the needs of both their growing number of customers and their shareholders.

The Friendship State Bank, since 1912, the same name, the same mission: sensible banking.