

BANK OF MINDEN
(Holland-Crawford Insurance Company)
605 Main Street
Minden
Webster Parish
Louisiana

HABS LA-198
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS
FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
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- Location: The building is located at 605 Main St. (U. S. Highway 80, Dixie Overland Highway) between Pearl and West Union streets in Minden, Webster Parish, Louisiana.
- Significance: The architect or designer of the structure is unknown; however, the design is believed to have originated with bank officials and or directors. The building is elegant and sophisticated and bears a similarity to some of Louis Sullivan's work of the late nineteenth century which led many historians to suggest that the designers were quite familiar with the lieber-meister's work and probably supplied visual inspiration for the Bank of Minden. Although the Bank of Minden is not as refined as Sullivan's work, it is interesting that this diminutive bank of 1901 predates all of Sullivan's small mid-western bank projects.
- Description: The structure, located on a 24'-0" x 120'-0" lot, is comprised of masonry bearing walls and wood roof framing. The façade of this wonderful Romanesque Revival building is richly articulated with a multi-wythe monumental arch of interlocking green glazed brick headers, stretchers, and rowlocks resting on off-white glazed terra-cotta pedestals. The monumental arch is surrounded by a richly decorated boundary band of off-white glazed terra-cotta. The spandrels on each side of the arch contain an off-white glazed terra-cotta roundel featuring a bas relief of a brown pelican, the Louisiana state bird. Above the boundary band is a modillion cornice and parapet cap, both of off-white glazed terra-cotta. It is probably not coincidental that the color scheme of the bank is similar to that of paper money. The entrance doors, modified after the structure housed an insurance company, still contain the original casing with egg and dart molding and dentils below. The transoms have panels of glass cut in garland motifs and the doors located below the transoms each had a full vision panel of glass cut in a torch motif. These doors were removed when the Holland Insurance Company assumed ownership of the building; however, one vision panel was retained and relocated to the interior. The cut glass work is not original to 1901 but probably dates from the period of renovation work following the failure and reopening that occurred in 1933.
- History: The bank received its charter in Webster Parish, Louisiana in 1890. The building seen today was constructed in 1901 according to Webster Parish tax role records and was the first permanent home for the Bank of Minden. The site, 20'-0" x 120'-0", was sold to the bank by its president and adjacent land owner, Mr. Felix H. Drake in 1894. Drake also sold the bank a 4'-0" wide strip of his property, including the west-facing masonry wall of his existing building, increasing the total bank site width to 24'-0". The width increase

allowed the bank and the Drake Building to share a structural party wall. The facility operated as the Bank of Minden until it failed in 1933 as a result of the economic turmoil following the crash of 1929 and the subsequent depression. That same year, the bank reopened under its new name, Minden Bank and Trust Company. Shortly after the name change, the facility underwent an extensive interior renovation that included acoustical tile ceilings and recently introduced fluorescent lighting fixtures. The millwork located within the structure was more than likely installed during this renovation. The ubiquitous bank clock located in front of the facility was added in 1939 as a gift to the community. In 1956, after the construction of a new facility, Minden Bank and Trust Company sold its building at 605 Main St. to the Holland Insurance Company. In 1971, C. O. Holland's son-in-law, Wayne Crawford, joined the Holland Insurance Company. By the late 1970s, Wayne Crawford was named a full partner and the name of the company was changed to the Holland-Crawford Insurance Company. The building is still being used for a scaled-down and modest insurance enterprise since Crawford is mostly retired. Crawford's wife, Bettye Holland Crawford, inherited the property in 1994 from her mother, Eva R. Holland, and maintains ownership presently.

Sources:

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Historian:

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