



Alexandria Times

Established in 1797 as *The Alexandria Times and Advertiser*

Out of the Attic

Bank of Del Ray

Alexandria Times, August 13, 2009

Image: Bank of Del Ray. Photo, Alexandria Library Special Collections.

As the Town of Potomac grew in the early 20th century, businesses opened along Mount Vernon Avenue, including grocery stores, barber shops and automotive services. In 1923, a group of businessmen established the Bank of Del Ray to serve the community. The board of directors included town officials and local attorneys.

The board named Clay T. Brittle to be cashier, and in July the Bank of Del Ray opened for business inside a drugstore on Mount Vernon Avenue. Within a year, bank president John R. Harding and the board began plans to open a \$25,000-facility at the southwest corner of Windsor and Mount Vernon avenues, just across the street from Harding's own home.



To celebrate its grand opening in June 1924, the Bank of Del Ray hosted an evening reception that drew more than 500 people and resulted in deposits exceeding \$10,000. By year's end, it had \$25,000 in deposits and more than a hundred customers.

In May 1929, six gunmen robbed the bank of \$2,500 but that loss was covered by insurance. That year, the Bank of Del Ray was targeted again when its own cashier embezzled more than \$60,000. In January 1930, the bank closed for an audit and only reopened to pay customers a partial refund of their deposits, approximately 43 cents for each dollar. Clay Brittle was convicted of embezzlement and sentenced to six years in prison.

The old bank building was used as offices for a loan company in the 1930s and a real estate agent in the 1940s. Today, the Bank of Del Ray building is home to Thai Peppers restaurant.

"Out of the Attic" is published each week in the Alexandria Times newspaper. The column began in September 2007 as "Marking Time" and explored Alexandria's history through collection items, historical images and architectural representations. Within the first year, it evolved into "Out of the Attic" and featured historical photographs of Alexandria.



**Office of Historic Alexandria
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These articles appear with the permission of the Alexandria Times and were authored by Amy Bertsch, former Public Information Officer, and Lance Mallamo, Director, on behalf of the Office of Historic Alexandria.