

Former Bank of Japan Hiroshima Branch: After the Bombing

Perhaps the most impressive thing about the former Bank of Japan Hiroshima Branch is not that the building survived the atomic bombing, but that the bank began serving customers again on August 8, 1945, a mere two days after the blast. The building's resilience was matched only by that of its employees.

The bank was one of the few in the city that escaped major damage in the bombing and there was still plenty of money in its vault. However, the blast destroyed many crucial records, including customers' personal identification documents. This meant reopening even for basic banking was risky. While the bank manager's superiors in Tokyo debated what to do, the manager made an executive decision: in order to help the people of the city get back on their feet, he would simply trust them, regardless of their documentation.

Moreover, the manager allowed the city's other banks to serve their own customers from the Bank of Japan building using money from its vault. Tellers from every major bank set up along the building's thick marble counter. With all the banks working together, people were able to withdraw money in the aftermath of the tragedy, beginning the city's long road to recovery. Most importantly, there was not a single case of fraud reported during the time the bank did not require identification.