

Museum Musings Article- Krum News
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Krum Bank Robberies
By Kathryn Dodd

When folks visit the museum one question that comes up quite frequently is “*Has the bank ever been robbed?*” Farmers and Merchants State bank had at least five bank robberies in their history. These five robberies are outlined below:

June 9, 1925: Two hooded men roared up to the bank’s west side, jumped out of a stolen Cadillac with six shooters in hand and raced into the bank. Yancy Story and Wilbur A. Martin netted \$ **3,100** in cash and \$ **1,550** in liberty bonds. Assistant cashier Reuben Rucker was able to make out one number of their license plate and the vehicle was found to have been reported stolen by a Denton man.

A local Krum man, Fred Barnett who was at a filling station across from the bank when it was robbed, opened fire on the bandits as they fled. He didn’t hit the robbers but his bullet hit the garage down the street and a bullet narrowly missed a man in the garage. Lewis Koiner, who lived north of Krum, was the only person who was positive about how the robbers were dressed. He described them as being in baggy unionalls and as the robbers passed him as they came into town he saw them as they put on their masks close to the Hugh A. Parks home north of the bank. The robbers abandoned their stolen Cadillac on the Old Denton Gainesville dirt road east of Blue Mound where the robbers had a car stashed for the get away or an accomplice waiting to take them away.

The robbers had been involved in many robberies and other crimes around the Denton County area. Yancy Story had been tried in 1918 for the murder of Otis Myers at the Krum post office. He was acquitted for the Myers murder. After the 1925 Krum robbery, Wilbur A. Martin was eventually convicted for the murder of Deputy Sheriff R.B. Parsons in Denton. Yancy Story at one time had 26 indictments for various crimes. He was given 99 years after the first trial for the Krum bank robbery but this sentence was later remanded, At a second trial in Sherman, a jury was unable to agree on a sentence and at the third trial in 1929 he was given 5 years.

March 12, 1954: Howard L. Walker came into the bank three times during the day of the robbery. He first came in asking about a loan and was asked to come back in the afternoon as bank president Howell Knox was out for lunch. Mr. Walker did return in the afternoon but his loan was denied by President Knox because he did not live in the territory served by the bank. He said he lived in Weatherford but intended to move to Denton. Mr. Walker came back a third time armed with an automatic pistol and locked Mrs. Ruth Hilliard and Wendell Knox in the vault after stealing \$1,200 in cash. He was given a 30 year sentence for the Krum robbery.

March 19, 1959: A blond, unarmed, cowboy clad nineteen year old Charles Roy McCrory walked into the bank asking about a savings account. An article in the Paris Texas News from March 20, 1959 says that McCrory later told his captors and newsmen that he handed a note to Mrs. Hilliard which read : “*I want to borrow \$2,000 for two years. Give me all your \$5, \$10, and \$20 bills. My looks is my security.*” He went on to say “*When she put her hand into the drawer,*” he laughed, “*I thought she was going for a gun and she nearly scared the living daylight out of me, I made a noise*” and she said , “*I’m just getting the money for you.*”

After McCrory left the bank Mayor Pen Flower and Jake Chism gave chase but they lost his trail. He was apprehended 65 minutes later at a Grapevine filling station with the entire \$1,885 stash in the glove box. As he laid handcuffed on the ground surrounded by Grapevine police officers, Denney

Dodd, who was working at Allen Butane in Grapevine, walked up to see what all the commotion was about. Charles looked up at him and said “Hello Denney.” Evidently Charles knew Denney from his years at Krum. Denney said he said hello and quickly walked away as he didn’t want anybody to think he was connected in any way with Charles or the robbery.

After being captured in Grapevine, Charles McCrory was brought back to the Krum bank so that Mrs. Hilliard and Mrs. Schalter could identify him. According to the robber he attended school at Krum for a couple of years and chose the Krum bank to rob because it’s in “*a small town without much law.*” He and his father lived in Wise County and had moved there two months prior to the robbery to share crop. Their 70 acre crop was wiped out in a dust storm and they lost their tractor because they couldn’t make the payments. In November 1959 Charles Roy McCrory was given two five year suspended sentences for the robbery.

March 24, 1959: Unknown burglars robbed the bank during the week-end. They were unable to open the time locked safe and escaped with only \$100 in nickels. Sheriff Wylie Barnes said he thought the burglars gained access to the bank through an unlocked lodge hall on the second floor. After gaining access to the lodge hall above the bank building they used a sledge hammer to knock out a hole in the concrete floor above the room containing the vault. They couldn’t open the safe and couldn’t access the rest of the bank as they could not leave the vault area.

February 11, 1970: A newspaper article in the Denton Record Chronicle from 1971 showed this robber was in prison in Kansas and had admitted to the Krum robbery. No name or other details are known.

If you want to read more about the F & M bank robberies we have a book at the museum with newspaper clippings about these robberies as well as photographs.

If you have a special collection (thimbles, toys, knives, dolls) that you would like us to showcase at the museum for a month or longer please give Della a call.

Currently at the museum we have a Salt & Pepper collection belonging to Minnie Denney Hampton Oliver, sister of Blanche Denney Dodd. Please plan to visit the museum and look at this special collection.

Please visit the Krum Heritage Museum online at www.krumheritagemuseum.com