

**PROGRAM**

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**Dedication**

**Official Texas Historical Marker**

**Commemorating**

**The Dissolution of**

**The Notorious Dalton Gang**

☆ ☆ ☆

**Thursday, January 25, 1968**

**3:00 P. M.**

**First National Bank**

PROGRAM

Master of Ceremonies.....Fred Erisman

Invocation.....Dr. Derwood Blackwell

Welcome.....Fred Erisman

State Marking Program.....Howard Coghlan,  
Texas State Historical  
Survey Committee

History of Bank and Robbery.....Fred Erisman

Unveiling of Marker.....George A. Kelly,  
Chairman of Board,  
First National Bank

Acceptance of Marker.....Dorsey D. Hopwood,  
President, First National Bank

Benediction.....Dr. LaVonne Brown

☆ ☆ ☆

Presented by  
The First National Bank of Longview, Texas  
Gregg County Historical Survey Committee

# Sanguine Raid by Remnants of Dalton

was told this article from Shreveport Times, April 23, 1939 - reprinted from Marshall Paper  
 This was copied by original paper owned by Mr. J. dependent of Mrs. Buckingham.

## Desperate Gun Battle Ensued

Unsigned Bank Notes Taken Led to Death of Notorious Bill Dalton in Oklahoma a Few Months After Robbery in 1894

By FELIX MCCORD  
 (Special Times Correspondent)

Longview, Texas, April 22.—P. T. Boyd, a 68-year-old local dairyman, told today how, as a youth of 23, he barely escaped becoming a victim of the deadly aim of Jim Bennett, one of Oklahoma's famed Dalton gang, during the hold-up of the First National Bank here on May 23, 1894.

Led by Bill Dalton, last of the four brother-desperadoes who murdered and robbed throughout the southwest just before the turn of the century, the bandit gang escaped north toward Red river with \$2,500 in loot and left behind one Longview man dead, one mortally wounded, one crippled for life, one shot in the groin—and Jim Bennett, their look-out and a crack Winchester shot.

Boyd gave a vivid eye-witness account of the desperate gun battle that followed the bank robbery when this peaceful East Texas town was thrown into a turmoil by the sudden reports of rifle and six-shooter fire, and the sickening whine of bullets from outlaws' Winchesters.

"I was at the courthouse when the first shot was fired," Boyd recalls, "listening to court argument in a lawsuit. None of us, at first, realized what was happening.

"But when I saw the city marshal pull his gun and start running for the door I joined him."

Boyd and City Marshal Muckelroy—gun in hand—were on a dead run from the courthouse to the bank when Jim Bennett sighted them and started firing.

Shooting from the hip, the bandit put the officer out of the fight with a 40-82 bullet in the groin. As Muckelroy dropped, Boyd, who was unarmed, retreated to the cover of the courthouse, where he watched the battle.

"I wasn't three feet from Mat when he was hit," the dairyman went on, "It could just as well have been me.

"Mat was saved from serious injury by two silver dollars in his pants' pocket. The coins split the bullet, half bored through his clothes, the other half put a deep crease in his thigh. That Bennett was a dead shot with his Winchester special. The gun is still here. They have it at the bank."

### Two Notches in Rifle

Powerful, short-barreled, of the early saddle holster type, Jim Bennett's Winchester special may be seen today in the vault of the First National bank here. An 1888 model, the rifle shows two distinct notches on the underside of its stock.

"It's still a mighty good rifle," C. A. Loftis, president of the First National bank, told a reporter. "I use it for a deer gun.

"One of the most interesting things about it is that its sight is of bone. The story—and I don't doubt the truth of it—is that the piece of bone is from a human skull; from the head of one of Bennett's victims."

If Jim Bennett just hadn't met a straight-shooting, fearless hardware merchant (who still refuses to let his name be published) with a Colt .45 he could have two more notches

in his gun's stock. George Buckingham and Charles Learned both died as the result of Bennett's deadly fire on that May afternoon, Buckingham instantly, and Learned a month later.

In a raid on a Coffeyville, Kansas, bank, Emmett, Grattan and (the appropriately named) Rob Dalton met their doom some two years before the last of the four brothers led his band into Longview.

Weeks before the robbery the audacious Dalton sent a note warning officials that he planned to rob the bank. It was never taken seriously.

The bank in 1894 was located across Fredonia street and four doors further west along Tyler street from where it is now. The four outlaws, Bill Dalton, Jim Bennett, and Bill and Jim Nite—also known as Bill and Jim Jones—left their horses in the narrow street—now known as Bank avenue—in the rear of the bank.

### Handed Banker Note

Jim Bennett look up his station to guard the horses and act as look-out. The three others, with Winchesters concealed under long, black slickers thrown carelessly over their shoulders, went around to the front of the building. Bill Nite stayed in the street in front of the bank to guard any unexpected attack.

It was 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The Texas and Pacific's daily passenger train was due at the depot a half block south; District Judge Gordon Russell was holding court in the old courthouse a block north from the bank. The streets were practically deserted, all idlers being either at the depot or in the courtroom.

Bill Dalton and Jim Nite entered the bank. The president, Joseph Clemmons, the cashier, Tom Clemmons, and a relative of the two, Josh Cooke, were present.

The feared Oklahoma gang leader walked casually up to the bank window and handed President Clemmons a folded note, scribbled in pencil, which read:

Home, May 23, 1893  
 Cashier, First National Bank,  
 Longview.  
 This will introduce to you Charles Speckelmeyer who wants some money and is going to have it.  
 B. and F.

(The note was erroneously dated by a year and the name, Charles Speckelmeyer, was a common alias of Dalton's, according to Henry C. Fuller, Nacogdoches, an authority on southwestern bandit lore. The B. and F. supposedly



Bill Dalton (above), was last to die of the four brother-desperadoes who led a bandit gang into Longview, Texas, on May 23, 1894, looted the First National bank, and escaped with \$2,500. The gang left behind one dead Longview citizen, one mortally wounded, one crippled for life, one shot in the groin and one dead member of their own party. Loot taken from the Longview bank led to Dalton's death, near Ardmore, Okla., two months later.

stood for Brown and Flewellyn, owners of a nearby saw mill where the four bandits had worked for a few days while planning the robbery).

As the president of the bank read the note, a taut stillness settled over the banking room. No one moved. Not one of the five men said a word. Then Tom Clemmons, realizing that something was amiss, walked out from behind his cage. The two bandits showed their Winchesters. Joseph Clemmons was covered and Dalton began scooping up all the cash and currency in sight. Tom Clemmons and Josh Cooke stood with hands high.

### Reaches for Rifle

Then a man named Bartholomew walked in through the front door. No one seemed to know why Bill Nite let him enter unless it was that Bartholomew was alone and unarmed. As the man, a Longview merchant, came into the room Jim Nite raised his rifle.

"Don't kill anyone," Tom Clemmons cried, and reached for Nite's Winchester.

The banker grabbed the gun near the hammer, as Nite tried to shoot him down. When the bandit pulled the trigger, the hammer of the rifle struck the meaty party of Clemmons' hand between the thumb and the forefinger. The rifle didn't fire.

In the excitement, Josh Cooke escaped unnoticed through a side door to an adjoining building and yelled an alarm.

One of the first men to hear was George Buckingham, a bartender who grabbed a six-shooter and dashed for the rear of the bank. Jim Bennett stopped him with a bullet in the face before the bartender could tell whether the bandit was friend or foe. That was the opening shot of a gun-fight that, after 45 years, is still a subject of much conversation in these parts.

As the bartender dropped, Bennett, hat pulled low over his eyes, Winchester at his hip, crouching low, made his way to Buckingham's side

and stood ready to pump more lead into the prostrate body.

A woman screamed "Don't, don't shoot him again. You've already killed him!"

Bennett didn't molest the woman but turned his attention to locating the man who was crying. "The bank's being robbed."

### Armed Citizenry Appears

In those days a fire alarm was given by the firing of a rifle, and most citizens who heard that first shot thought a fire had broken out.

Armed men began to appear as the cries of Josh Cooke were taken up. The prolonged firing made those at the courthouse first think that mad-dogs were being killed, a common practice at that time.

Because the firing came from the rear the three bandits in front were not seen as they left the bank with their loot and dodged between buildings, working their way to Bennett's aid.

Dalton and the two Nite boys still hadn't joined Bennett when he mortally wounded Charles Learned and crippled Walter McQueen for life with his uncanny aim.

Then the 31-year-old hardware merchant (still the one who refuses to reveal his identity) stuck his shirt in action. Colt .45 through an open window of a near-by brick building. He leveled down on Bennett just as the desperado turned to drop City Marshal Muckelroy, running from the courthouse. The man with the .45 wouldn't shoot until Bennett turned again to face him.

The bandit saw that menacing Colt as he turned and both of the men fired at about the same time. The slug from the Colt found Bennett's heart; the bandit's 40-82 bullet buried itself in the brick wall rather than from the hardware merchant's head.

Dalton and his two henchmen ducked out from between buildings as Bennett's Winchester slipped from his fingers. One of the Nites cried

**Volunteer Army Battles Crime, Guides Convicts**  
 Problems Include Finding a Job, Conquering Black Sheep Stigma, Overcoming Police Distrust

quarrels before the man is released.

Sometimes a mother will have nothing to do with her erring boy. Sometimes a prisoner and his wife must be brought together again. In one case, the father was the problem.

The boy hated his father. He started stealing cars because each crime put his father on the spot. The

**'T. B. MUST GO' MADE SLOGAN OF THE PINES**

'Early Diagnosis' Cam...

# Longview Bank Recalled

W. H. MABRY, ADJUTANT GENERAL

HENRY DREAN, CLERK

W. H. OWEN, S. M.



## Adjutant-General's Office,

STATE OF TEXAS

Austin, Dec. 6, 1897

CAPT. R. B. LEVY,  
Longview Rifles.

Sir,

The Sheriff of Gregg County is apprehensive of an attempt at rescue of J. C. Nite, the bank robber, during the present term of Court, and has asked that your company be ordered to guard the jail.

It is not likely that the friends of Nite, will attempt to carry out such a scheme, if it is known that the jail and Court, are well guarded by both the civil officers and the military, and the public sentiment of the community is aroused, and ready to suppress any such movement.

I suggested to Sheriff Howard, to call on you for a detachment of 500 men for guard duty, every 24 hours. This detachment, if commanded by a commissioned, or non-commissioned officer of your own rank (and no others should be detailed,) will be authorized to defend the jail or Court, until re-inforcements from the whole company can reach the spot, if any emergency should arise requiring the full company.

You will notify each member of the Longview Rifles, to be prepared and ready for duty at a moment's notice, and make such arrangements by signals or calls, that every man will know what is required of him.

Respectfully

*W. H. Mabry*  
Adjt.-Genl.

The above letter from the adjutant-general of the State of Texas to Capt. Levy of the Longview Rifles orders an eight-man guard for Jim Nite, member of the Dalton gang that held up the Longview bank, who was awaiting trial in the Longview jail three years after the hold-up. Nite, whose trial was moved to Tyler, Texas, eventually escaped from jail, but was recaptured, tried and sentenced to 20 years. The adjutant-general disagreed with Longviewites over spelling of the bandit's name. The Capt. Levy to whom the letter is addressed is the same Levy who finished a term as associate justice of the court of civil appeals at Texarkana in 1935.

ton's hideout, near Ardmore, where, some say, he was killed while resisting arrest—and others say he was suffering from a paralytic stroke, and put in a wagon, shot full of holes and reported as killed while resisting arrest.

However it was, the loot from the Longview robbery led to his death—and two of the four bandits had been accounted for.

The same Frank Fischer who had fished in Merrill's lake with "Speckelmeyer" went from Longview to Ardmore to identify Dalton as one of the bank robbers. Fischer identified the dead man as "Speckelmeyer" by his boots, the desperado's features being too contorted in death to be recognizable.

Fischer remembered that the man he had met on the shore of Merrill's lake had had an unusually high instep, had split his boots just above the instep and sewed in extra pieces of leather. The outlaw had died with those same boots on.

The Nite brothers led peace officers a much merrier chase and it wasn't until 1897 that they were caught stealing horses along the Guadalupe river in southwest Texas. Bill Nite was killed in the clash with irate ranch owners, but Jim Nite was captured and returned to Longview for trial.

As he languished in jail awaiting trial, Sheriff Hughes of Gregg county received word that desperado friends of the bank robber would attempt to free him.

### Fourth Finally Slain

Sheriff Hughes informed Adjutant-General W. H. Mabry in Austin of the rumors of an attempted jail break and Mabry wrote Capt. R. B. Levy of the Longview rifles to detail eight men to guard Nite 24 hours a day until he was brought to trial. Capt. Levy was the same Levy who in 1935, ended a term as associate justice of the court of civil appeals at Texarkana.

Jim Nite's case was moved to Tyler, Texas, on a change of venue and there he did break jail. He was recaptured in Nacogdoches, while working in a nearby saw mill, put in the penitentiary for safe keeping until he could be tried. Eventually he was sentenced to 20 years, served eight, became a model prisoner, and was pardoned by Gov. Colquitt in 1907. Several years later he met death in a gun fight in Tulsa, Okla. All four, then, had died the same kind of violent deaths they had desit out so casually.

Mounted on a placard in the present First National bank here are pictures, faded with the years, of the dead Jim Bennett hanging in the street; of Bill Dalton when he lived and after death; the original proclamation signed by Gov. Hogg offering \$200 reward apiece for the three bandits who escaped from Longview, and the original note that "Speckelmeyer" handed to Clemmons. Included in the display are several letters from United States marshals and Texas sheriffs relative to the prolonged hunt for the two Nite brothers.

There are many eye-witnesses to that memorable gunfight still living in Gregg county and many more can relate the story from what their fathers and grandfathers told them. All the stories are substantially the same.

Perhaps the man who asked that his name be withheld was remembering an anonymous note he received from Vincennes, Ind., years after he killed Jim Bennett. It read: "Some day I'll meet you and give you all my six-shooter's got!"

"They've got Bennett, we'd better get."

They got. Mounting their horses, cowboy fashion, they headed out of town toward Red River. Citizens fired ineffectively at them as they galloped off.

### Still Fears Publicity

Because of what he feared would make for unwanted notoriety the now 76-year-old former hardware merchant, whose single action .45 Colt dropped the robber-killer, asked that his name be withheld, although it is common knowledge among old-timers in Gregg and adjoining counties.

"I could have gotten Bill Dalton and one of the Nite boys from my place in the window," the plucky ex-hardware merchant, whose killing of Bennett routed the robbers, told a reporter. "But they had their backs

turned . . . and I wouldn't shoot even a murdering bank robber in the back."

As the bandits passed John McClain's house, McClain shot a bandit's hat off. A mile or two further the robbers forced a horseman to give them his hat and pitched him a silver dollar in payment.

Outraged citizens placed a rope around the dead Bennett's neck and dragged him through the dusty streets to the depot, where they hung him to the cross arm of a telegraph pole to stay until their anger cooled. Later that same day he was cut down and given a Christian burial.

Investigations in the days that followed showed that the two Nite boys and Jim Bennett had been in the vicinity of Longview for several weeks prior to May 23. They had worked a while at Brown and Mc-

Ellyn's saw mill, camped in the Sabine river bottoms and spent a few days fishing at Merrill's lake.

Frank Fischer, a native of Gregg county, had fished with them several times and had been introduced to "Charles Speckelmeyer" after he came to join the three.

### Caught by Bank Notes

Included in the loot made off with by Dalton and the two Nites were several sheets of \$20 Federal Reserve notes that were to have been signed by President Clemmons. Unsigned when the bandits took them, the notes were easily spotted when two women and a man gave two of them in payment for supplies at a grocery store in Ardmore, Okla., in July of the same year.

The two women and the man unwittingly led peace officers to Dal-

**BOY TO STAY IN JAIL UNTIL JURORS MEET**

Murder Charge Unbailable in Mississippi; Mrs.

**Everybody's Funny Now, So the Comedians Mourn**

Joe E. Brown, Eddie Cantor, Joe Penner, the Marxes Find the Going Difficult, Material Hard to Get

Hollywood, April 22 (AP) The

**DAIRY SHOW IS PLANNED FOR CAMDEN**

Event Will Be Held In

18" x 28" Official Texas Historical Marker  
Gregg County

1665

DALTON GANG'S LAST RAID\*

A BLOODY DAY (MAY 23, 1894) IN  
EARLY LONGVIEW. BILL DALTON, LEADER  
OF ARMED GANG PRESENTED A NOTE  
FOR MONEY AT FIRST NATIONAL  
BANK. A GUNFIGHT ERUPTED WHEN  
SHERIFF JACK HOWARD, CITY MARSHAL  
MAT MUCKLEROY AND CITIZENS  
RESISTED. THREE LOCAL MEN—J.W.  
MCQUEEN, GEO. BUCKINGHAM, CHARLES  
LEARN—AND ONE OUTLAW DIED OF  
GUNSHOT WOUNDS. BANK PRESIDENT  
J.R. CLEMMONS AND CASHIER TOM  
CLEMMONS WERE HELD AS HOSTAGES  
FOR A SHORT TIME AS OUTLAWS  
MADE GETAWAY INTO OKLAHOMA.  
FORGED \$20 BANK NOTES LED TO  
CAPTURE OF SURVIVORS.\*\*

FILE COPY DO NOT REMOVE

(1967)\*\*\*

- \* 3/4" lettering
- \*\* 1/2" lettering
- \*\*\* 1/4" lettering

RECEIVED  
READY FOR

NOV 27 1967

SOUTHWELL ORDER  
TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

APPROVED  
T.L.  
11-27-67

DALTON GANG'S LAST RAID  
by Amelia Belding

One half block West at the early location of the First National Bank of Longview the Dalton Boys staged their last raid.

The First National Bank, an outgrowth of the F. J. Harrison, Private Bank (first in Longview) and its successor, A.E.

Clemons & Sons, Private Bank, received its charter No. 4077 July 18, 1889. First stockholders included T. M. Campbell, later <sup>(1907-1911)</sup> Governor of Texas. First president, J. R. Clemmons.

During Mr. Clemmon's presidency the colorful raid was executed; he, with brother Tom were taken as hostages for hours.

Bill Dalton, head of gang, presented the following note to bank: "Home, May 23d., 1894, Cashier, First National Bank, Longview. This will introduce to you Charles Specklemeyer who wants some money and is going to have it. B. & F."

\$2,100.00 taken; "1,700.00 later recovered. Gang member Bennett, alias Wallae, shot and killed; others escaped to Okla Territory, later apprehended by tracing unsigned (which they forged) paper (money) from raid.

Strong resistance of Sheriff Jack Howard, Marshall Matt Muckleroy help of who and deputies plus local residents/put up terrific gun-fight; Daltons never staged another raid.

The Dalton Gang was made up of:

Bill Dalton; A man known as Wallace but real name Jim Bennett; two men called Jones but real names Bill Nite and Jim Nite.

Local casualties of raid:

Mr. Buckingham, killed; J.W. McQueen, shot, died later; Chas. Learn, shot, died few days later; City Marshall, Matt Muckleroy, shot, not seriously, dollar in purse split bullet, saving his life.

Please Refer to  
State Merit Committee

References:

When the Daltons Rode      by Emmett Dalton  
The Dalton Brothers      by An Eye Witness  
Beyond the Law      by Emmett Dalton

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Original gang consisted of Bill Powers, Bob Dalton,  
Grat Dalton, Dick Broadwell, killed, Coffeyville, Kansas  
Oct. 5, 1892, Emmett Dalton wounded at same time, jailed.

Senior Daltons had 7 sons, 5 daughters.

THE BANKS OF LONGVIEW  
1872 - June 30, 1956

First Bank in Longview

F. J. HARRISON & CO., Private Bank

Longview was established and named in 1870. The town and streets were mapped by the Southern Pacific Railroad (re-named Texas & Pacific). Building sites were given for a Courthouse and four churches. The railroad had its terminal on the block between Center and High Streets, and the turntable was located where the Kelly Plow Company warehouse now stands.

Longview was incorporated June 24, 1871, under the mayor form of government and MOSE KAUFMAN was the first mayor.

F. J. Harrison and his two sons-in-law, A. W. Morrison and J. C. Turner, followed the railroad to Longview from Marshall, and in 1872, organized a much needed bank. Tom McCall and Joe Clemmons were employed as assistant cashier and bookkeeper. J. C. Turner kept some of the records, but soon opened a grocery store on the corner of E. Tyler and N. Fredonia.

The bank was located at 213 E. Tyler, immediately east of the Turner Grocery. These buildings were made of rock from the quarry on the hill.

F. J. Harrison was a charter member of the First Baptist Church, and a Baptist preacher and teacher in a Louisiana College.

A few years later the rock buildings burned and the bank bought a lot and built a small two story building at 211 N. Fredonia, where McCarley's Jewelry store is now located. They sold to T. M. Campbell and moved back to a building on Tyler Street later.

J. C. Turner built a two story brick building on the corner.

Mr. Morrison liked spots and speculation to the neglect and injury of the bank. In about 11 years (1883), Mr. Harrison closed the bank.

A large depositor, thinking the bank had made an assignment, retained a young lawyer named Tom Campbell (later Governor of Texas 1907-1911), to recover his deposit. Fortunately, Mr. Harrison could and did protect all customers and no depositors lost any money.

Joe Clemmons' banking experience was helpful to him in his future career. When the Harrison bank closed, he consulted with his father and brother Tom about organizing another bank. RESULT:

A. E. CLEMMONS & SONS

Private Bank

This Clemmons bank, organized early in 1884, purchased some of the equipment used in the Harrison Bank. The location of this bank was 106 E. Tyler, about 100 ft. from Center Street.

Joe Clemmons acted as President. Tom Clemmons as Cashier and they employed two young men to keep books and assist them.

Dr. A. E. Clemmons was the first pastor of the First Baptist church (1874-1881) and in 1884 was a member of the Board of Trustees. He lived in both Longview and Marshall. He had some capital of his own and some of his friends joined him in securing sufficient funds for the banks operation.

The Clemmons Bank was well managed and met with success from the beginning and grew with the town. They made application for a National Charter which was issued July 18, 1889 - #4077

and named:



THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK  
of Longview  
Capital paid in \$50,000.00  
July 18, 1889

1665

The bank bought from A. E. Clemmons for \$3,000.00, a location diagonally across the street at 129 E. Tyler where Mangles is now located. As soon as this building was secured, workmen proceeded to install the necessary equipment. The brick and cement used for building the bank vault was hauled to the building by a young and useful citizen named Claude Lacy.

The bank moved into this building about October 1, 1889.

The original Longview stockholders were: J. W. Bateman, W. R. Bass, J. W. Yates, John R. Hoxie, J. R. Clemmons, T. E. Clemmons, A. E. Clemmons, T. M. Campbell, Percy D. Harrison and Brown & Flewellen. Some stock was sold to out-of-town citizens for business connections.

The first Officers of the new National Bank were: J. R. Clemmons, President; J. W. Yates, Vice-President; T. E. Clemmons, Cashier and W. K. Eskman, Bookkeeper.

In 1895, J. R. Clemmons resigned as President because of ill health and J. W. Yates was elected President of the First National Bank. He had been Vice-President since 1889. He served until 1907 when he, with his wife, went to Mineral Wells for his health, where he died May 24, 1907.

Gov. T. M. Campbell then nominated R. M. Kelly as President. He had been associated with the bank since 1896 and a director since 1900. Kelly accepted on a temporary basis and served until 1908 when upon the urgent request of Mr. Kelly, Leroy Trice returned to Longview and was elected President of the bank, also Vice-President of Kelly Plow Co.

While serving as President of the First National Bank, Trice organized the People's State Bank. The two banks occupied the same building until the banking officials informed them that this could not be done. The First National Bank then moved to the building next door, an archway was cut in the rear of the two buildings and both banks used the same vault. The People's State Bank operated only about 6 years when it closed.

In 1910, Trice resigned as President to retire to his ranch in South Texas, and T. C. Morgan, who had been with the bank since 1895 as assistant cashier, was elected President. Dr. V. R. Hurst was Vice-President.

January 13, 1910, the First National Bank bought from J. C. Turner for \$25,000.00, the lot and two story brick building where the Citizen's National Bank was in business at 202 E. Tyler. The building was moved by a contracting firm from St. Louis, to the adjoining lot east and facing Tyler Street. The First National Bank then erected a new 5 story brick and stone building on the corner lot, which they moved into in 1912.

In 1918, fire broke out on the 5th floor which was occupied by the Elk's Lodge. This floor was completely destroyed and the 4th floor where Dr. J. W. Falvey's office was located was badly damaged. This floor was repaired and the 5th floor was never rebuilt.

Morgan served the bank until 1919 when he resigned and Charles W. Foster was elected President.

The Commercial National Bank of Shreveport bought a large block of stock of the First National. In 1926, Foster resigned and The Commercial National Bank suggested the name of Smith Price, who was President of a bank in Logansport, Louisiana. He was elected and served until 1930. When the Commercial National Bank needed his services to save a bank in Mansfield, Louisiana in which the stockholders were interested.

In 1932, when oil came to Gregg County, Price returned to Longview and was elected Chairman of the Board of the Rembert National Bank.

R. M. Kelly was informed that C. A. Loftis, Vice-President of a Gainsville, Texas bank, might be available for the First National. Mr. Loftis was invited to come to Longview and after some discussion and negotiations, he accepted the position as President of the First National Bank on September 20, 1930. John McDavid became Vice-President on February 1, 1929. Soon after Loftis took the position, oil was discovered and the bank grew rapidly, increasing its capital and surplus a few times from earnings.

After considerable discussion, the Board of Directors decided to erect a modern 10 story bank building. The architects submitted drawings for the new building and after several changes, the plan was adopted.

Before proceeding with the new building, it was necessary to secure convenient quarters for the bank and the two story building owned by the bank at 205 E. Tyler was removed and temporary quarters provided for the bank.

In December, 1954, work on the 10 story building was started under the general supervision of President C. A. Loftis. On May 18, 1956, R. M. Kelly, Chairman of the Board, cut the ribbon at the front door, officially opening the new bank building. The Directors of the bank at this time were: Leo Butter, H. L. Foster, David C. Hull, Dr. V. R. Hurst, R. M. Kelly, C. A. Loftis, John W. McDavid, G. C. Murphy, O. L. Norton, J. C. Wilkinson, and L. T. Ziegler.

As stated at the beginning, the First National Bank started with \$50,000.00 paid in capital and surplus. To this was added \$40,000.00 in cash and the balance of the present capital and surplus from earnings.

1665

Sunday, March 5, 1989

# Bill Dalton shot straight in bank note



**KENT  
BIFFLE'S  
TEXANA**

**LONGVIEW** — One day in early 1894, a prominent citizen of Longview was jolted when he opened an envelope in the day's mail. A scrawled note fell out:

"We take this method of informing you that on or about the 23d day of May, A.D. 1894, we will rob the First National Bank of Longview. So take notice accordingly and withdraw your deposit as this is a straight tip. For further information see Charles Specklemeyer or the undersigned.

"Yours for business,  
"B. & F."

When the note was shown to bank officials, they judged it a hoax.

But the tip was straight. Charles Specklemeyer was headed for Longview.

Bill Dalton had authored the note. ("B. & F." — Bill & Friends?)

Dalton was a 29-year-old bandit whose outlaw brothers' gang had been shot to pieces on Oct. 5, 1892, while robbing two banks in Coffeyville, Kan.

In that gunbattle, three citizens and four bandits were killed. Brothers Bob and Grat Dalton died. Emmett Dalton was dangerously wounded.

The Daltons were from Missouri. Bill had led a reputable life in California until the Coffeyville slaughter. He hurried to Emmett's bedside.

## Fightin' mad

Bill O'Neal, author of the *Encyclopedia of Western Gunfighters*, published by the OU Press, told me what came next:

"Bill resentfully criticized the people of Coffeyville, claiming they had looted and abused his fallen brothers. Bitterly he contemplated that three of his brothers had died violently (Frank Dalton, a deputy U.S. marshal, had been killed in 1887 by whiskey runners) and Emmett now faced prison for life.

"Bill Dalton felt compelled to strike back at society. When outlaw Bill Doolin offered him a chance, Dalton took up a criminal's life.

"Doolin, a key member of the Dalton gang, had escaped the Coffeyville massacre only because his horse had gone lame on the road into town.

"Subsequently Doolin formed a band of robbers known to the press as the 'Oklahombres.' Dalton became his second in command, in company with Bitter Creek Newcomb, Red Buck George Weightman, Little Bill Raidler, Tulsa Jack Blake, Dynamite Dick (Dan Clifton), Arkansas Tom Jones (Roy Daugherty), Little Dick West, Charley Pierce, Bob Grounds, Alf Sohn and Ol Yantis.

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## Breaking away

O'Neal, who teaches history at Panola College in Carthage, said, "On April 1, 1894, Dalton and Bitter Creek Newcomb entered a store in Sacred Heart, Oklahoma Territory. The owner, a former peace officer, recognized Dalton and went for a gun. Once again, Dalton shot his way to safety. But his survival instincts told him it was time to break away from the Oklahombres.

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Please see DALTON on Page 50A.

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"There isn't going to be any problem moving (the tree) and it surviving," said **Helen Arnold**, director of the state Board of Affairs.

"It's been there and died back and then come back again. These are very, very hardy trees."

Ms. Arnold also said a brass plaque noting the history of the tree also will be relocated near its new location.

The tree, a cutting brought to Oklahoma from the Holy Land, was planted by the Daughters of 1812 and the Oklahoma Memorial Society.

It might be considered blasphemy by some Texans, but it was an Oklahoma City firm that produced the new, 600-pound aluminum seal for Houston's City Hall.

**Jack Ramos**, vice president of ARK Ramos in the Sooner capital, said the 7-foot-diameter seal was completed and shipped to the Bayou City in late February.

"There's not a lot of foundries around that want to tackle something that size," Ramos said. "It's certainly not the norm for us."

Instead, he said, the foundry primarily generates such products as plaques for schools and public buildings.

In fact, Ramos' work can be found around the world, including in government structures in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Now that that the massive hand-sculpted Houston seal has been completed, Ramos said his company will be filling a more conventional order.

It will be casting bronze plaques for each of the competition sites for this summer's U.S. Olympic Festival in Oklahoma City.

*Arnold Hamilton is chief of The Dallas Morning News' Oklahoma Bureau.*

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"May 23d, 1894.  
 "This will introduce you to Chas. Specklemeyer, who wants some money and will have it.  
 "B. & F."



**Bill Dalton**

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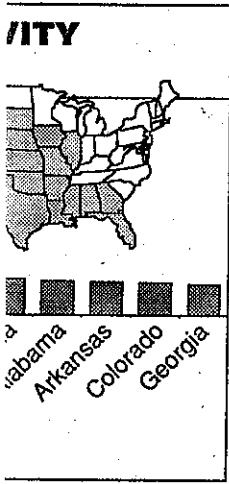
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"You'll get plenty of these if you follow too close.  
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# n of tornadoes



**ITY**

The Dallas Morning News

primarily to broad, ons that cover wide n entire state or re-

at the university's he Analysis and Pre-rms is successful, id, forecasters soon accurately predict — nd 12 hours in ad-severe thunderstorm given location at a d produce a specific and specific-sized

earchers will spend ears working to de-er model that would droegemeier said. Be-chnology would be st the formation of a

of the ultimate, re-ier said. "We don't why some storms do. beginning now to edicting individual

After research at OU suggested it might be possible to predict the formation and severity of individual thunderstorms, Droegemeier said OU applied for a National Science Foundation grant to operate one of 11 science and technology centers nationally.

The foundation announced in early December that Oklahoma's request had been approved, and it guaranteed nearly \$5 million in grants in the first five years of what may be an 11-year funding commitment.

OU officials said the support will be used for three new faculty positions — one each in meteorology, computer science and mathematics — as well as an endowed chair in meteorology and improvements to the university's geoscience computer system.

Droegemeier said the sophisticated new forecasting system, if successful, could help in agricultural and ground-water management, improve airline safety and give residents more time to prepare property and seek shelter.

"If we could predict thunderstorms nine to 12 hours in advance, the benefits would be even far beyond what we could imagine now," he said.

Meanwhile, in Oxford, Miss., a University of Mississippi physics professor said he and other researchers are testing an in-home tornado warning device similar to the popular residential smoke detector.

Henry Bass said the detector would be mounted inside a home and connected by wire to a microphone hanging under the southwest eave.

Most tornadoes move from south-

Please see **RESEARCHERS** on Page 51A.

Witnesses bolted. Merchant John Welborne and Josh Cooke, a bank employee, rushed into the street, yelling: "They're robbing the bank."

Longview showed fight.

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"Wallace was filled with battle lust," O'Neal said. "He began to roar out war whoops, blasting any man he saw."

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Dalton ducked back into the house, grabbed a revolver and clambered out a back window. As he sprinted for a ravine, Deputy U.S. Marshal Loss Hart shouted for him to halt. Dalton pointed his six-gun at Hart. But Hart fired first. The bullet tore through Dalton's chest, and he dropped, dying.

William Marion Dalton's death not only brought down the curtain on the last of the outlaw Dalton brothers, but presaged the violent eradication of the Nite brothers, Bill Doolin, and most of his Oklahombres.

A happy exception was Emmett Dalton, who recovered from his Coffeyville wounds in a Kansas prison. He was pardoned from his life sentence in 1907 and wed the sweetheart of his youth. He moved to Los Angeles, where he became a building contractor. Ultimately, he wrote movies and acted in bit parts. In LA, at 66, he died in 1937 with his boots off.

Bill Dalton's embalmed corpse was displayed in Ardmore for five days. Hundreds of people, many of them from Longview, traveled to Ardmore to look at the dead outlaw. He had given Longview a day to remember.

Scores of shots were fired on May 23, 1894. Four victims were wounded, seven if you count the slight injuries at the saloon and Tom Clemmons' hammered hand. Two courageous citizens, George Buckingham and Charles Learn, died from gunshots. Bandit Jim Wallace was killed.

And Charles Specklemeyer was out of business.

## Bill Dalton shot straight in bank note



**KENT BIFFLE'S TEXANA**

**LONGVIEW** — One day in early 1894, a prominent citizen of Longview was jolted when he opened an envelope in the day's mail. A scrawled note fell out.

"We take this method of informing you that on or about the 23d day of May, A.D. 1894, we will rob the First National Bank of Longview. So take notice accordingly and withdraw your deposit as this is a straight tip. For further information see Charles Specklemeyer or the undersigned.

"Yours for business,  
"B. & F."

When the note was shown to bank officials, they judged it a hoax.

But the tip was straight. Charles Specklemeyer was headed for Longview.

Bill Dalton had authored the note. ("B. & F." — Bill & Friends?)

Dalton was a 29-year-old bandit whose outlaw brothers' gang had been shot to pieces on Oct. 5, 1892, while robbing two banks in Coffeyville, Kan.

In that gunbattle, three citizens and four bandits were killed. Brothers Bob and Grat Dalton died. Emmett Dalton was dangerously wounded.

The Daltons were from Missouri. Bill had led a reputable life in California until the Coffeyville slaughter. He hurried to Emmett's bedside.

### Fightin' mad

Bill O'Neal, author of the *Encyclopedia of Western Gunfighters*, published by the OU Press, told me what came next:

"Bill resentfully criticized the people of Coffeyville, claiming they had looted and abused his fallen brothers. Bitterly he contemplated that three of his brothers had died violently (Frank Dalton, a deputy U.S. marshal, had been killed in 1887 by whis-

key runners) and Emmett now faced prison for life.

"Bill Dalton felt compelled to strike back at society. When outlaw Bill Doolin offered him a chance, Dalton took up a criminal's life.

"Doolin, a key member of the Dalton gang, had escaped the Coffeyville massacre only because his horse had gone lame on the road into town.

"Subsequently Doolin formed a band of robbers known to the press as the 'Oklahombres.' Dalton became his second in command, in company with Bitter Creek Newcomb, Red Buck George Weightman, Little Bill Raidler, Tulsa Jack Blake, Dynamite Dick (Dan Clifton), Arkansas Tom Jones (Roy Daugherty), Little Dick West, Charley Pierce, Bob Grounds, Alf Sohn and Ol Yantis.

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### Breaking away

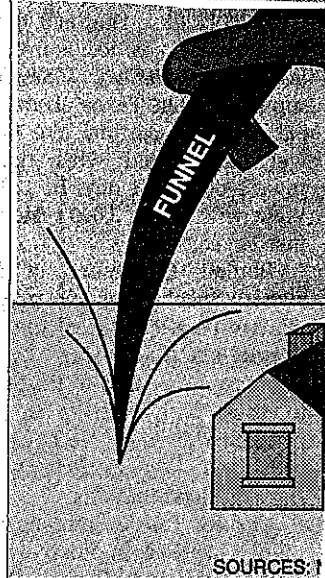
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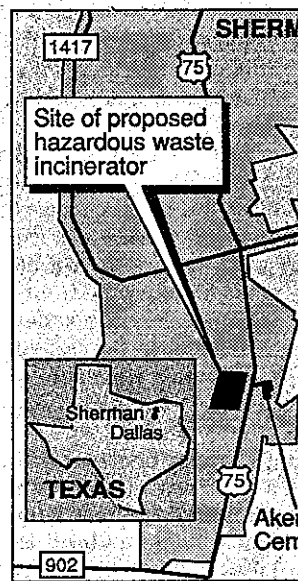
By David Hanners

Staff Writer of The Dallas Morning News

SHERMAN, Texas — M the future, and it is hot.

Very hot. Like 2,200 degrees-hot-as-Venus hot.

Temperatures that high arduous waste incinerators



The Dallas Mo

## INSIDE

### Sam Attlesley

Railroad Commissioner Kent Hance and George W. Bush, political rivals in the past,

Continued from Page 49A.

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Probable route of the special train carrying the posse in search of the Dalton Gang from Longview, Texas to Ardmore, Oklahoma.

Longview to Big Sandy	T & P
Big Sandy to Gilmer	S.L. & S.W. (Cotton Belt)
Gilmer to Sulfur Springs	M.K.T. (Katy)
Sulfur Springs to Sherman	Cotton Belt
Sherman to Whitesboro	T & P
Whitesboro to Gainesville	M.K.T.
Gainesville to Ardmore	G.C. & S.F.

From: Rand-McNally Atlas - Railroad Map of Texas, 1900.

Charlotte Allgood Black, January 5, 1993.



## Bride's East Texas bank-robbing beau

Jenny Renfro had been on Cloud Nine when she married George Bennett just before Christmas 1893.

But now her new husband was gone, and 18-year-old Jenny didn't have a clue where he'd gone or when -- or even if -- he'd come back to their East Texas home.

J.C. "George" Bennett was a stockbroker and part-time horse trader who had arrived in Longview from parts unknown in the summer of 1893.

Jenny took a liking to George right off. Following a whirlwind romance they married on Dec. 23, 1893, and settled into their small ranch house north of town.

Not everybody was happy about the marriage, though. Jenny's father had his doubts about Mr. Bennett, noting that his new son-in-law's body was "full of scars" from what appeared to be old bullet wounds.

Bennett also seemed to be a little too handy with a six-gun, too, sometimes putting on shooting exhibitions for local residents. And then there were the rough-looking characters Bennett would meet at the ranch house from time to time.

Then one day in early February 1894, Bennett saddled a horse and told Jenny he was going to meet some cattlemen who were camped nearby.

That was the last time Jenny Renfro would see her newlywed husband -- at least, the final time she'd see him alive.

For you see, it turned out that her husband wasn't George Bennett after all. That was only an alias. His real name was Jim Wallace. He wasn't a stockbroker or horse trader, either. His true profession was robbing banks.

And on May 23, 1894, Bennett/Wallace returned to Longview to do just that. He was accompanied by Bill Dalton -- the brother of the famous outlaw Dalton brothers -- and a couple of brothers named Jim and Asa Nite.

### A date with death

Their destination was the First National Bank in downtown Longview. Dalton and one of the Nites walked through the front door of the bank and handed a holdup note to the teller while Wallace and the other Nite went around back to the alley that today is called Bank Street.

Somebody yelled "bank robbers! bank robbers!" and Wallace, armed with two double-action revolvers and wearing a cartridge belt, started firing at anything that moved.

A saloonkeeper, George Buckingham, ran into the alley to see what the commotion was about -- and Wallace shot him dead. Wallace then turned his guns on millhand Charles Learned and killed him, too.

By this time citizens were scrambling for guns in downtown stores and beginning to return the outlaws' fire (In all, more than 200 shots were fired during the battle, which saw the wounding of three other Longviewites, including City Marshal Matt Muckleroy).

As the other outlaws made their escape on horseback, attorney Claude Lacy and Deputy City Marshal Will Stevens fired bullets into Wallace almost simultaneously. The outlaw let out a loud gasp and fell dead in the dirt.

Jenny Renfro wouldn't learn until several hours later -- after angry residents had dragged Wallace's body down to the train depot and hanged it from a telegraph pole -- that the dead bandit was her long lost husband.

When George Buckingham and Charles Learned were buried, stores closed and there were long processions for the funerals.

When Jim Wallace, alias George Bennett, was buried on May 25, 1894, in the Greenwood Cemetery potter's field, there was only one mourner present.

Van Craddock is heard 6:50 a.m. weekdays on KFRO (1370 AM and 95.3 FM) and 12:20 and 5:30 p.m. weekdays on 95.3 FM.



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## Van Craddock's EAST TEXAS

# Early ETex bank robber Was bandit of some note

He might not be as famous as, say, Jesse James or Billy the Kid. But when it came to passing along holdup notes, nobody could touch outlaw Bill Dalton. In fact, Bill Dalton likely is the only bandit in history to write a letter warning he intended to rob a bank. It happened in Longview in May of 1894.

Dalton and three badguy buddies were camped on the bank of the Sabine River plotting the robbery of Longview's First National Bank. In a moment of inspiration, Dalton penned an anonymous letter to a friend in Longview. "We take this method of informing you that on or about the 24th day of May, A.D. 1894, we will rob the First National Bank of Longview. So take notice accordingly and withdraw your deposit. This is a straight tip. (Signed) B and F."

Unfortunately, the friend decided the note was a practical joke and didn't think any more about it. But sure enough, on May 23, the Dalton Gang proceeded to make good on its threat. Bill Dalton entered the bank and, naturally, handed the teller a letter.

"This will introduce to you Charles Specklemeyer who wants some money and is going to have it," the second note said. Dalton pulled off the robbery, but only after a bloody gunfight that left three people dead (including one outlaw) and several townsfolk wounded.

The three surviving robbers galloped north out of town with about \$2,000 in bank notes and coin. Sheriff Jack Howard quickly organized a posse and took after the gang.

## Posse was shell shocked

According to local legend, several miles out of town the bandits came across a man walking along the road. They stopped their horses just long enough for Dalton to write yet another note, which he handed to the man along with two rifle shells. Dalton instructed the fellow to give the note to the posse that would be coming by.

Sure enough, the posse appeared a half hour or so later, and the man dutifully handed Sheriff Howard the shells and the note, which read, "You'll get plenty of these if you follow too close."

After that, the posse didn't seem particularly interested in getting too close to the bandits, who already had shown they were handy with firearms.

Although the outlaws were apparently headed toward Oklahoma's Indian Territory, East Texas bank officials were more than a little nervous after the daring Longview robbery.

A Longview man, Bob Chaney, happened to be in Marshall a couple of days after the holdup. He needed to deposit some documents in a bank there but didn't know any of the local bank officials. So he hunted up a Marshall friend to go along to the bank with him. "I'm not going into a bank and stick a lot of paper at the cashier," Chaney told a newspaper reporter. "He might shoot me and read the paper afterwards."

Wild stories began circulating throughout East Texas. One paper reported that "It has been ascertained from a reliable source that Bill Dalton was seen to pass through Mineola coming east with two other men. He was recognized by a cattleman who knows his personality."

The report was wrong, of course. By that time, Dalton was hiding out in an isolated Oklahoma farmhouse. However, only two weeks after the East Texas robbery, Dalton was shot to death by lawmen near Ardmore.

Bill Dalton had written his last note.

Van Craddock's "Craddock at Large" is heard 6:50 a.m. weekdays on KFRO (95.3 FM, 1370 AM) and at 12:20 and 5:30 p.m. on 95.3 FM.

N



## Van Craddock's EAST TEXAS

# Good deed turned fatal for brave bank cashier

Tom Clemmons hadn't planned on being a hero ... and he sure didn't want to be a victim.

But the young Longview banker turned out to be both, thanks to the Dalton Gang's bank robbery in May 1894.

Clemmons, 32, was working as a cashier in the First National Bank when a bearded stranger walked in and handed him a note that read: "This will introduce you to Chas. Specklemeyer who wants some money and is going to have it ..."

The note-writing bandit turned out to be Bill Dalton, at the time probably the most famous outlaw in America. Dalton and three pals had been casing out the Longview bank for weeks. The bank was ripe for the taking and on May 23, 1894, the bad guys made their move.

It should have been an easy job, except for the unexpected reaction of Tom Clemmons. Although Dalton had drawn his six-shooter and aimed it at the banker, Clemmons quickly slammed the bank vault shut with his foot and then lunged at the outlaw.

In the ensuing struggle, Dalton fired his pistol pointblank at Clemmons several times. But in grabbing Dalton's gun, Clemmons had placed his thumb between the hammer and the cylinder. Although his hand was torn and bloody from the hammer's blows, Clemmons' quick action had kept him alive.

An angry Dalton then dragged Tom Clemmons out into the alley behind the bank, threatening to kill him but then ordering him to mount a horse and ride out of town as a hostage. Clemmons thought otherwise, however, and took off running down the alley as Dalton emptied his weapon at him.

## A fatal mistake

Clemmons then dived into the first thing that offered safety: a large vat of lime that was being used at a construction site.

While a gunbattle raged for several minutes between the outlaws and the townspeople, Clemmons lay low in the vat, thanking his lucky stars he'd gotten away.

Because of Clemmons' actions, the outlaws got away with only a little more than \$2,000 in silver and bank notes. The young banker was considered a true hero by his friends and neighbors, who told him how lucky he had been.

The gun fight had resulted in three deaths that day: outlaw Jim Bennett (shot down in the bank alley) and Longview residents George Buckingham and Charles Learned. Several other locals had been severely wounded, including City Marshal Matt Muckleroy.

But sadly, while Tom Clemmons had escaped Bill Dalton's wrath, breathing all that lime into his system (he had swallowed some of the lime as well) while he lay in the vat would prove to be just as deadly as the outlaw's bullets.

Clemmons never again enjoyed good health after that fateful day. His condition continued to worsen and he finally died on Dec. 20, 1896, a little more than two-and-a-half years after the bank robbery.

Only 36 years old, Clemmons left behind a wife, Cora, and four sons, Theodore, Joseph, Thomas and Morris. The 1894 bank robbery had claimed yet another victim.

All of the businesses in Longview closed for the funeral and the mourners overflowed the First Baptist Church.

Shortly before he died, Clemmons told the minister who would perform his funeral that he had tried to live so that "my life would do good and not harm, build up mortality and the right and not tear down, and that whatever mistakes I have made were of the head and not of the heart."

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# Lecture series on Old West set at Historical Museum

By Martha Griffin  
Assistant Features Editor

Travel back to the Old West this month through a lecture series at the Gregg County Historical Museum.

Three free lectures by three authorities on Old West lawmen and outlaws will be held Thursday and May 12 and 19 as part of the museum's Dalton Days celebrations. The lectures begin at 7 p.m. in the Museum Education Center, 218 N. Fredonia St. in downtown Longview.

The lectures are free, but reservations are required.

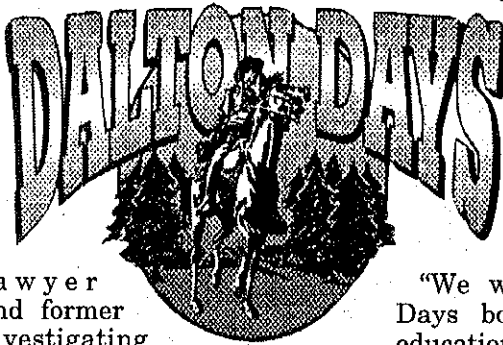
Speakers are Bill O'Neal, a history professor at Panola College in Carthage; Dr. Frank Prassel of the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville; and retired Lt. Col. Nancy B. Samuelson of Eastford, Conn., who is a descendant of the Daltons.

O'Neal will speak on "The Dalton Raid on Longview" for the first lecture on Thursday.

His great-grandfather was a Lampasas County cowboy in the 1870s, and his grandmother came to Texas with a wagon trail in 1881. He has written numerous magazine articles and 10 books, including "Encyclopedia of Western Gunfighters," "Arizona Ranger," "Henry Brown, Outlaw Marshal," "Cattlemen Versus Shepherders" and "Fighting Men of the Indian Wars," and is working on the book "Historic Ranches of the Old West."

Prassel will discuss "Outlaws of the Old West" on May 12.

He has been an adviser to CBS "60 Minutes," Time-Life Books and TBS "The Untold West." His books include "The Great American Outlaw." A



lawyer and former investigating officer with the Army, he created programs in criminal justice at San Antonio College, Stephen F. Austin State University and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and was a Fulbright professor of law to the Republic of China.

Samuelson will speak on "The Dalton Gang Story: Lawmen to Outlaws" on May 19.

Her research and writing projects have focused on Western history, genealogy and women in the military. Her interest in the Dalton Gang began when she started researching her own Dalton family line. She is the author of "The Dalton Gang Story: Lawmen to Outlaws" and has appeared on A&E's "The Real West."

"Our impressive speakers are generously donating their services to help us establish a high-quality lecture series as a part of future Dalton Days," said Ellie Caston, museum

director.

The lecture series kicks off the Dalton Days events to raise money for the historical museum as well as recognize the 100th anniversary of the Dalton Gang bank robbery.

"We want to make Dalton Days both entertaining and educational," Caston said.

"The lecture series will provide a broader background of information about the era as well as a more in-depth look at the bank robbery that occurred in Longview," she said.

The Dalton Gang robbed Longview's First National Bank on May 23, 1894. Three people were killed.

On May 21, the museum has planned two free reenactments of the robbery, Old West skits and the opening of a new permanent museum exhibit exploring the aftermath of the robbery and how it affected Longview and its residents.

The lecture series is sponsored by Longview Bank and Trust.

"We are very appreciative that Longview Bank and Trust is sponsoring the lecture series, so that we can offer it free to the public," Caston said.

To reserve a space, call the museum at 753-5840.

In the Name and by the Authority of the State of Texas:

THE GRAND JURORS, for the County of

*Meigs*

State aforesaid, duly organized as such at the

*Spring*

Term, A. D. 189

of the District Court for said County, upon their oaths in said Court present that

*Jim Nite*

on or about the

*23*

day of

*May*

A. D. one thousand eight

hundred and ninety

*four*

and anterior to the presentment of this Indictment, in the County of

*Meigs*

and State of Texas, did then and there unlawfully

*with his malice aforethought kill George Buckingham and Charlie Learned by then and there shooting them the said George Buckingham and Charlie Learned with a gun.*

*And the said Grand Jurors upon their oaths further find and present that Jim Nite on or about the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of May 1894 in the State and County aforesaid with his express malice aforethought did then and there kill George Buckingham and Charlie Learned by shooting them the said George Buckingham and Charlie Learned with a gun, the said murder being so committed by the said Jim Nite while he the said Jim Nite was engaged in the perpetration of the crime of robbery*

against the peace and dignity of the State.

*R. L. Brown*

Foreman of the Grand Jury.

No. 975

NAMES OF WITNESSES:

THE STATE OF TEXAS

vs.

Jim Nite

Joe Clemmons

Frank Fisher

Will Munden

Mrs. McCullough

D.D. Durham

John Watson

Will Stevens

Harrison Bland (Wood. Co.)

Patrick Ford (Upshur Co.)

J. Killingerworth

INDICTMENT.

OFFENSE:

Murder

Stuart Smith Attorney.

10th day of May 1897

J. W. Campbell Clerk,  
W. J. District Court of  
Harris County, Texas Deputy.

A TRUE BILL:

Foreman of Grand Jury.

Amount of Bail, - - - \$

State of Texas

vs

Jim Nite

In the District Court of Gregg County , Texas, December Term A.D. 1898.

Now comes the defendant Jim Nite , in the above styled cause and

says; Ist- That there exists in this County of Gregg, where the prosecution against him is commenced so great a prejudice against him that he can not obtain a fair and impartial trial.

2nd.-- That there is a dangerous combination against him instigated by influential persons , by reason of which he cannot expect a fair trial.

3rd.-- Defendant says that he is informed that on the 23rd day of May 1894, the First National Bank of Longview was robbed by four men and that during said robbery a large number of shots were fired by both the bank robbers and the citizens of Longview . That the altercation between the bank robbers and citizens of Longview lasted about twenty minutes during which time continual shooting was going on the bank robbers using heavy needle winchester rifles of 38 & 44 caliber; and that during said altercation George Buckingham and Charlie Learned good citizens of Longview, Texas, were killed by the bank robbers, and that J. W. McQueen a citizen of Longview Texas was shot through the hip by one of the bank robbers and thereby rendered a helpless cripple for life and that \_\_\_\_\_ Summers , a farmer living near Longview was shot through the hand by one of the bank robbers , and that one of the bank robbers was killed by the citizens. That during the bank robbery a regular battle was entered into between the bank robbers on one side, and the citizens and officers of Longview and Gregg County on the other, with guns and pistols and the said battle was kept up

until the bank robbers made their retreat out of town .

That immediately after said bank robbers got out of town, numerous

possees of men were gotten together for the purpose of persuing said

~~bank robbers and for the purpose of cutting them off . That the~~

railway Companys having their roads running out of Longview

immediately extended free transportation and ran out extra trains

for the purpose of carrying the possees of men. That the number of

men sent out in possees amounted to more than one hundred. That from

the beginning of the bank robbery for one or two weeks nothing but the

wildest excitement prevailed all over Gregg and Harrison Counties.

The District Court of Gregg County was in session at the time of the

bank robbery and the Judge presiding over said Court was compelled to

adjourn Court for the week and publicly announced that on account of

the excitement Court would stand adjourned until the following Monday

morning , the bank robbery happening on Wednesday afternoon .

That on the opening of the Court on the day to which it was adjourned

nothing scarcely was done on account of the excitement and the Court

soon closed without doing much business. That all the business of the

town of Longview virtually ceased for about two weeks, and the

farmers of Gregg County pretty generally stopped their work on their

farms and come to Longview every day and there were crowds of people

in Longview every day for about two weeks engrossed in the wildest

excitement. That immediately after the surviving bank robbers left

Longview, on the day of the bank robbery, there were about three

thousand men women and children on the public square in Longview and

on the streets contiguous thereto in the wildest of excitement .

That some of the citizens of Longview and surrounding Country took

the body of the dead bank robber and placed a rope around his neck and dragged him through one of the main streets and through the public square a distance of about four hundred feet to a telegraph pole and drew him up a distance of about 25 feet and held him there suspended for about one hour during which time the wildest excitement prevailed and the crowd of people were yelling. That said persons dragging said lifeless body dragged it with a rope through the dirt, regardless of whether the bare face head or neck was grating against the earth. Defendant says that the bank robbery was committed in a daring manner, and in a manner most likely to stir up the highest character of feeling.

Defendant says he was arrested on the charge in this case on or about the 7th day of February 1897 and that ever since his arrest he has been commonly known as the 'bank robber' and his case in the District Court is not commonly known as 'Jim Nites' case but is commonly known all over Gregg County as 'The Bank Robbers' case. And that ever since his arrest different reports have been circulated about him to his detriment. That it has been recently reported that he was to be rescued from the officers of Gregg County, That the reason of said reports the Longview Rifles, the military Company of ~~the~~ Longview, have been stationed at the County Jail, where defendant is being confined for the past three weeks all ~~is~~ for the purpose of keeping your said defendant from escaping or being rescued. That your defendant has to-day been marched to the Court house in charge of said military Company and Capt. McDonald and two of his company of the Texas Rangers around with winchesters all of which is noticed by the public, and which has its effect to his detriment.



That the Court house is now packed to overflowing with excited people eagerly watching this case, and that the extra large crowd now ~~at said Court house came here because of the ascertaining this to be the day this defendant was to be tried.~~ Defendant says that he is informed that threats have been made that if a change of venue is granted in his case that he will be mobbed by the citizens before he can safely be carried out of Longview . He further says that for several weeks every stranger that has come to Longview or surrounding country has been closely watched to ascertain whether or not they were here to assist your defendant to escape or rescue him.

That in the last few days Capt. McDonald with some of his rangers have been sent here to watch the strangers and prevent any one from assisting your defendant to escape or from rescuing him. Defendant says that Gregg County is a small County, being only about 15 miles across east and west and about 22 miles North and South and that Longview is a place of about 4500 people situated about half way between the North and South and on the East side of said County, and is attainably situated from every point in said County. That Longview is the only town on any size in said County and about half the people of said County live in said Longview and the majority of the remainder live in the Country contiguous thereto. That all of the matters hereinbefore set out are known all over the County of Gregg and are considered by the people detrimentally to the defendant. Defendant says that the officers and stock holders of said First National Bank of Longview and all the killed and injured parties at said bank robbery have numerous friends and relatives in this County while your defendant has none, and your defendant is informed that

4

several witnesses who are residents of Gregg County will testify that they recognize him as one of the bank robbers, participating in the

bank robbery on May 23rd 1894, that your defendants defense is on

~~an affidavit, and that the witnesses he depends upon to prove his~~

whereabouts on that day are not residents of Gregg County, Texas, and are not known in said County and all of the State witnesses are well known in said Gregg County giving the State a decided advantage over him. Defendant says that by reason of the premises hereinbefore set out every qualified juror in Gregg County is more or less excited in regard to his cause and is prejudiced against him and biased in favor of the State, whereby he cannot get a fair and impartial trial. Defendant says that the citizens of Gregg County are so eager to have him tried here that he can not get any compurgators to sign an application for a change of venue with him, and he here now makes oath to the foregoing and asks this Court to change the venue of this case of its own motion.

Jim Nite Defendant.

Sworn to and subscribed before me on this 27th day of December 1897.

J. N. Campbell  
(L.S.) Clerk of the District Court of Gregg County, Texas.

UNIT STATES OF AMERICA

IN SENATE, JANUARY 10, 1901

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE

RELATIVE TO THE LANDS BELONGING TO THE UNITED STATES

IN THE STATE OF TEXAS

AND THE TERRITORIES OF ARIZONA, CALIFORNIA, COLORADO, ILLINOIS, INDIANA, IOWA, KANSAS, MISSOURI, NEBRASKA, NEVADA, NEW MEXICO, NORTH CAROLINA, NORTH DAKOTA, OHIO, OKLAHOMA, SOUTH CAROLINA, SOUTH DAKOTA, TENNESSEE, VIRGINIA, WEST VIRGINIA, WISCONSIN, AND WYOMING

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1900

PREPARED BY THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE

WASHINGTON: GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1901

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U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1901

## TAKE TWO

## Bank-robbing Bill remains a mystery

So, who was this desperado who pulled off East Texas' most dramatic bank robbery on May 23, 1894?

Bill Dalton was America's most feared outlaw when he relieved Longview's old First National Bank of a couple thousand dollars after a downtown shootout that saw two townspeople and one bandit die.

But 105 years after that deadly deed, plenty of questions remain about this infamous Dalton and his cohorts.

For starters, we aren't even sure what to call him. His name supposedly was William Marion Dalton, although there is evidence that at birth he actually was named Mason Frakes Dalton.

And there's the question of Dalton's age. Most historians figure he was 29 when shot down in Oklahoma only two weeks after the Longview bank robbery. However, some think he was born in 1860, which would make him 34 at his demise. Other birth dates given include 1863 and 1866. Pick one.

Some accounts note that Bill

Dalton once served in the California State Assembly. He didn't. A letter to the California State Archives several years ago confirmed that while a Dalton did serve in the Golden State's Legislature in the 1880s, it wasn't our outlaw. (I'm tempted to suggest that Bill would have fit right in amongst politician types, but I won't.)

Shoot, we aren't even sure of the names of Dalton's bank-robbing friends. One was Jim Wallace (also called George Bennett). Then there were the Nite brothers, Jim and Bill. Or was it spelled Knight? Or possibly Night? Some historians maintain their last name was Jones, White or Littleton and that their first names were Asa and Jourd. Confused? Well, so am I.



Van Craddock

Another question: What did "B & F" mean? When Dalton robbed First National, he handed the bank president a holdup note that read, "This will introduce to you Chas. Speckelmeyer who wants some money and is going to have it. (Signed) B & F."

It has been suggested that the letters stand for "Bill & Friends," but we really don't know.

And explain, please, why the note is dated "May 23, 1893" when the robbery occurred in 1894? Dalton was killed June 8, 1894, at a cabin in the Arbuckle Mountains northwest of Ardmore, Okla. Who killed him? Some believe it was U.S. Deputy Marshal Selden T. Lindsey. Most credit Deputy Marshall Lawson "Loss" Hart.

#### Posse was indicted

One final mystery: In his autobiography, Emmett Dalton (a famous bandit in his own right) insisted that brother Bill had been playing with his crippled daughter, Gracie, on the front porch of the Oklahoma hideaway when posse members shot Bill in the back in a most cowardly manner.

Posse members disagreed, insisting instead that Dalton had bolted out a back window and, pistol drawn, was escaping toward some nearby woods when shot down.

Fact is, though, Emmett might have been pretty close to the truth. In 1896, nine of the posse members were arrested and charged with murder in the shooting of Dalton. A trial was to be held in Paris, Lamar County, in June of that year. But a funny thing happened.

The Paris courthouse burned, and so did all the official records. If a trial were ever held, we have no record of it.

Just one more mystery that surrounds Bill Dalton.

But it's no mystery that folks throughout the Southwest breathed a collective sigh of relief when they got the news that Bill Dalton would rob no more banks.

Reported one Texas newspaper back in 1894: "With Bill Dalton out of the way, Oklahoma and Indian Territory are fully qualified for admission as a state."

Van Craddock's e-mail address is no mystery. It's craddock04@aol.com.

# The bank robbery

By BOB BOWMAN

Lately I've begun to wonder if our Chambers of Commerce in East Texas haven't exhausted the availability of suitable tourist attractions. They've started promoting outlaws.

Somehow, over the years, we've softened our attitudes about some of our worst outlaws and elevated them to almost mythical roles. Historical markers tell us of their exploits; their raids and robberies are chronicled in history books; and we've even made movies about them.

I have to admit that we've had our share of important outlaws in East Texas.

One of the most famous outlaw crimes was in 1894 when the famous Dalton gang, headed by young Bill Dalton, robbed the First National Bank of Longview. It ended in a bloody gunfight that resulted in the ultimate capture of the outlaw band.

After gunfights and prison ended the careers of his famous brothers — Bob, Frank, Gratton and Emmett — Bill Dalton became obsessed with the idea of making his own name more prominent than that of his brothers.

Bill soon joined Bill Doolin, a former member of his brothers' gang, and together they formed a new gang of motley group of misfits, including Jim Wallace, a cowboy with the habit of deserting his women; Jim Nite, a loafer from Oklahoma; and Bill Nite, Jim's young brother. Together, they vowed to take East Texas by storm.

Jim Wallace had been married at one time to the daughter of a Longview farmer and told Dalton about the prosperous First National Bank. Choosing the bank for their first job turned out to be a mistake. It was not only their first job, but the last of the Dalton family.

A few days later, the Longview bank received a scrawled note in the mail:

"We take this method of informing you that on or about the 23rd day of May, A.D., 1894, we will rob the First National Bank of Longview. So take notice accordingly and withdraw your deposit as this is a straight tip. For further information, see Charles Specklemeyer or the undersigned. Yours for business, B&F."

It later turned out Bill Dalton had written the note. The B&F apparently stood for "Bill and friends." The bank official who received the note showed it to his superiors, but they judged it to be a hoax.

But just as planned, the Dalton gang rode into Longview on May 23, 1894. Holding two bank officials and a customer at gunpoint, they made their withdrawal — taking coins, bills and \$20 bank notes — but bank president T.E. Clemmons grabbed Dalton's drawn pistol. The pistol fired, but the hammer came down on Clemmons' hand. Jim Nite kept his gun leveled at Clemmons' brother, J.R., the other bank officer.

While the struggle continued, witnesses in the bank bolted and ran out the back door, jumped a high fence to avoid Wallace, and alerted Longview residents.

Realizing their only chance for escape lay in using Clemmons brothers as hostages, they turned the bankers into human shields, forcing them out the back door and onto waiting horses.

But lawmen arrived and gunshots ran up and down the alley. Seven people were wounded and two Longview residents and Wallace died from gunshot.

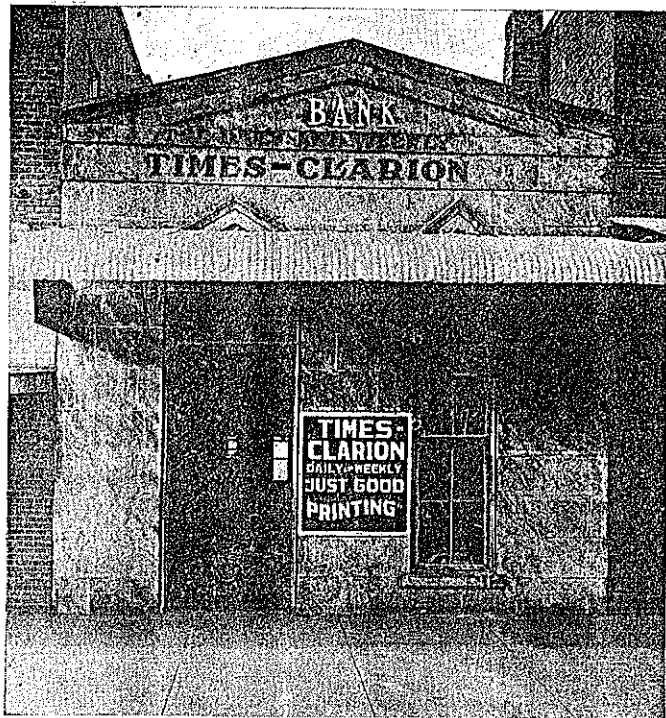
As angry townspeople hung Wallace's body from a telegraph pole, a posse was quickly organized and rode after the remaining gang members, traveling as far north as Ardmore, Oklahoma. Conceding they were out of their element, the posse returned to Longview in a few days.

But Bill Dalton's own mistakes eventually cost him his freedom. A few months later, he used several of the bank notes taken in the Longview raid to buy a wagon and supplies near Ardmore. Authorities traced the money to Dalton, rode out to his home to make the arrest, and killed him when he tried to flee.

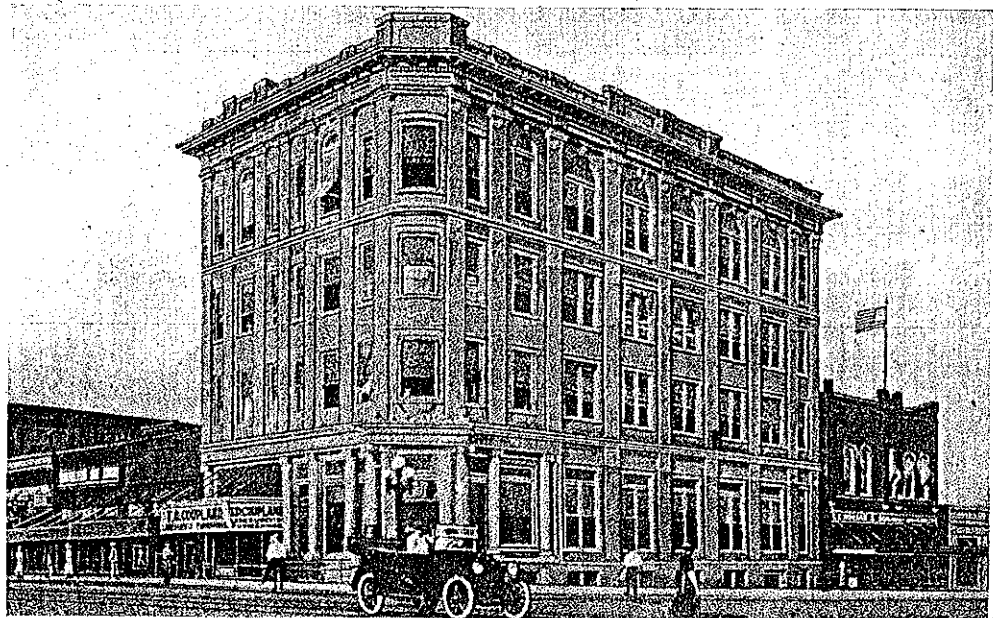
The two Nite brothers were found by lawmen in Guadalupe County, Texas, where they were shot. Bill died instantly and Jim was seriously wounded. In 1897, Jim was returned to East Texas to stand trial for the bank robbery and was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Texas Gov. Oscar B. Colquitt granted Nite a pardon, but he was later killed in a Tulsa saloon fight.

Wallace's body is buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Longview.





FIRST NATIONAL BANK 20 YEARS AGO



First National Bank Today