

Lewisville Gridsters, Retired Farmer Stop Bank Bandit's End Run

BY JOHN WAGNER,
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LEWISVILLE, Denton Co., Texas, Sept 30.—A retired farmer and the Lewisville high school football team combined here Monday afternoon to capture a bank robber.

Within a few hours after a slightly built, 23-year-old man in a light-colored hat walked into the Lewisville State Bank and said, "Boys, I mean business," County Attorney Baldrige had obtained a signed statement from a Dallas resident.

Baldrige said charges would be filed Tuesday against the holdup man, whose statement said he committed the robbery to pay off his debts.

South Denton County party line wires were humming Monday night with this story.

Assistant Cashier B. N. Savage said it was about 4:45 p.m. when the robber walked in through a rear door, flourished his pistol, and twice repeated his "I mean business" line.

Begin to Step Around.

"We began to step around then," said Savage, who was ordered into the vault along with A. Hayes, President G. C. Hedrick and Bookkeeper B. L. Dunagan Jr.

The robber then recalled Hayes to ask him how to close a side door which opened out to Highway 77. When Hayes re-entered the vault he slammed the vault door and called Miss Willie Sparks, the town telephone operator. Miss Sparks sounded the fire siren, called the city hall, and the county sheriff at Denton.

The robber, who had brought his own paper sack, scooped up \$1,046 and fled out a back door.

At a cotton gin at the rear of the bank, he ordered E. G. McCombs, who runs the gin, to start a small pick-up truck nearby.

When McCombs could not start the truck the robber shouted to gin manager W. W. Sherill, who happened to be using the phone,

"Stop that telephone talking and get out here."

Sherill just looked him in the eye and didn't budge. The robber began running across the field near the football stands as a woman screamed, "There goes the man who robbed the bank!"

Coach J. K. DeLay's maroon and white gridsters abandoned their kicking and passing practice and took out after the suspect, who dropped his gun and money bags as he cleared a fence.

Meantime, B. H. (Bob) Hilliard had deserted his favorite resting spot, in front of Whattley's General Store, borrowed a double-barreled shotgun from a man he thought was being too cautious and caught a ride on the highway to head off the pedestrian robber's southbound flight.

Paced by their fleet end, Eugene Mathews, the football players were in full cry through a field behind the robber, when Hilliard, famous in these parts for his fishing exploits, stepped out of his car.

"When he saw me hit the ground with that gun he started begging for himself. He said he didn't want to hurt anybody," Hilliard related.

Coach DeLay called his men back to practice for Friday's joust. "We've had a little excitement, now let's get to work," he told them.

Monday evening the bankers counted up the money and it was all there.

At Denton, County Attorney Baldrige's wife called him to supper before charge papers were completed.

"The justice of the peace was out of his office anyhow," Baldrige said.

Baldrige said the bandit admitted he planned the robbery Friday in order to pay off his debt. His billfold showed evidence about twenty-five creditors including a bank at Gainesville, several Dallas finance companies and several individuals.

Baldrige said the robber claimed he bought his pistol for \$18 from a Dallas pawnshop Monday morning and had planned to catch a ride after the robbery to make his escape. No accomplice has been found.