

# History of DENISON STATE BANK

Denison State Bank was incorporated on Feb. 18, 1901. Joseph S. Lanning was the first president. The bank opened with \$7,000 in capital stock and \$37,000 in total assets.

The bank started in Denison in a new stone building on the west side of Central Avenue. In 1925, the bank moved into a larger, more modern building across the street to the east, and the bank stayed there until relocating to Holton in 1939.

Lanning was succeeded as president by C.P. Humphrey in 1907.

In 1909, David Coleman and his son, Walter A. Coleman, purchased bank stock. David Coleman's father, George Coleman, many years before the bank was incorporated, was the early banker in the Denison community and loaned money to the early settlers in the area. He would bring money in his saddlebags to be deposited in the bank.

On July 4, 1910, robbers blew the vault with dynamite and got away with just over \$4,000 during a daring midnight robbery. Many townspeople thought the explosion was routine fireworks, but they soon realized the bank safe had been blown. Shortly, Jackson County deputies were on the hunt with the bloodhounds. The robbers didn't leave with as much money as they had hoped, as the explosion incinerated much of the paper money in the vault. The bandits were never apprehended.

The bank moved into a new building across the street in Denison in 1925.

David Coleman was elected president in 1930 and served until 1936. Otis Humphrey was elected president in 1936 and resigned in 1938. He was succeeded by Walter A. Coleman.

David A. Coleman, son of Walter and Edith I. Coleman, worked in the bank as a student and in 1938 was elected cashier, the same year Edith became the first woman officer of the bank.

## ***"This is a hold-up"***

The bank was robbed again on Jan. 17, 1938. Two men entered the bank and told W.A.

Coleman "This is a hold-up." He didn't hear them the first time, and when they told him again he put both arms up. This made them mad because they thought someone outside the bank would see him. One bandit covered a customer, Bill Blumberg, while the other dashed around back of the counter and hit Coleman on the back of his head, hard enough to knock him to the floor. This bandit then forced David A. Coleman to put all the money in a pillow slip they had with them.

After they seized all the cash at the counter, about \$800, they pulled the vault door open and ordered Coleman to open the money chests. Coleman said he could not comply because the vault was set on a timer. While they stood there, the time lock was released on one chest, so Coleman opened the chest containing \$1,200 and some registered bonds. After locking Walter, David and Bill in the vault, they dashed to the car and fled.

The pair were eventually convicted of another crime and served time in prison. When that term was served, David was summoned for a hearing on their outstanding warrant. David chose to let them go.

The bank enjoyed a steady growth in its hometown, but the board believed that it could serve its customers better and have a greater share in the growth of Jackson County by moving to Holton. Denison merchants did not share this, and there was a petition to have them remain, but Coleman applied for and received permission to move the bank to Holton with the corporate name to remain "The Denison State Bank."

## ***The Move to Holton***

The bank moved to Holton the first day of the year 1939 to the old State Bank of Holton building (now Kellerman's Insurance and Real Estate) on the southeast corner of the square of Holton.

In 1944 the bank bought the north half of the Holton Building and Loan building on the west side of the square.

Following the death of Walter Coleman in 1948, Edith I. Coleman was elected president.

In 1952 the bank bought the building to its south where the Gas Service Company had been. This had previously been occupied by the Holton Building and Loan so their two

vault doors were utilized, one in the basement, and the other in bookkeeping.

In 1953, the bank had a major remodeling and expansion project.

Edith Coleman served as president until 1964, when her son, David A. Coleman, was elected president.

### ***Conveniences Added in '60s***

In 1967, the bank felt the need of a drive-up window for customers in a hurry, and banking laws said they had to be attached to the bank building. Remodeling required buying the Bender Hardware and F.B. Wright buildings to the north, tearing them down, and making a lane to two new drive-up windows -- one in bookkeeping and the other back by the alley. The first night-deposit box was also installed. An open house was held August 1967 for the beautiful new bank, but some town's people resented the bank for "breaking the Square."

In 1972, Jim Birkbeck joined the bank as an officer and director.

Remodeling took over again in 1976 to fill up the open space created in the square. By this time banking laws had relaxed, and drive-ups could be detached from the main bank. A detached facility was built on Wisconsin Street behind the bank. Five offices were added and a spacious lobby too. The open house was held in conjunction with the bank's 75th anniversary in February 1976.

In 1977, Jim Birkbeck was elected bank president and assumed majority ownership of the bank.

### ***Branching and Buying More Banks***

A 1,500 square-foot branch bank was built along Hwy. 214 in Hoyt in 1988. The facility first began as a part-time drive-up and lobby, but today it is a full-service branch and has enjoyed increased customer volumes since then.

In 1990, a drive-up facility was built along Highway 75 in Holton, and has extra office space available to tenants. That branch expanded into a full-service branch in 2000.

In 1994, the main bank received a major facelift on the outside, making the exterior compliment the town's new Heritage Walk.

In 2000, the main bank underwent expansion work and remodeling, including the addition of a new administrative wing and installation of new carpeting, paint, wallpaper and lobby features. The same year, the bank contracted with a new data services/fintech provider, welcoming in many new services including digital banking.

In 2003, the bank acquired the branch bank of INTRUST in Holton (\$9 million in assets) and merged its operations into the bank.

In 2003, Denison Bancshares Inc. acquired Countryside Bank in Meriden and its branch in Topeka (\$32 million in assets). That institution was operated as Countryside Bank until May 14, 2004, when it officially merged with Denison State Bank.

In 2004, Dean Tuley was named president of Denison State Bank, and Jim Birkbeck was named CEO and Chairman of the Board.

In 2007, the bank built a new drive-up at Fifth and Wisconsin in Holton.

In 2012, the main bank in Holton underwent extensive remodeling and expansion to a bank-owned building to the north.

In 2013, Mike Day was named bank president.

In 2020, upon the death of Jim Birkbeck, his daughter Paula (Birkbeck) Taylor was named Chairwoman of the Board of Directors and CEO, with Day continuing as bank president.

Today, Denison State Bank remains headquartered in Holton and operates full-service branches in Holton, Hoyt, Meriden and Topeka. It is now in the Top 40 banks in Kansas in asset size. The bank employs approximately 75 officers and staff (full and part-time), is governed by a 6-member board of directors, and is owned by Denison Bancshares Inc.