



**FRANKLIN COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
OTTAWA, KANSAS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 14, 2016

Notorious Kansas bank heists topic at 79th Annual Historical Society Meeting

Ottawa, Kansas—Notorious Kansas Bank heists and the gunslingers and gangsters who committed them will be the focus of author Rob Beemer's keynote presentation during the 79th Annual Meeting of the Members of the Franklin County Historical Society on Sunday, January 31, 2 p.m. at Neosho County Community College in Ottawa, Kansas.

During the first half of the 20th Century, bank robbers were often better equipped to rob banks than the banks were equipped to defend themselves. Carrying top-of-the-line weapons and explosives and driving fast getaway cars, bank robbers—from legends like Bonnie and Clyde, Henry Starr, and Elmer McCurdy to men and women who were never identified—inspired more than four thousand vigilantes to patrol the Sunflower State during the 1920s and 1930s to combat the criminal menace. No town was too big or too small for its banks to be hit, and some of those robberies were close to home—including Ottawa's First National Bank, which was robbed by the notorious Fleagle Gang on November 2, 1923. During that heist, the Fleagle Gang absconded with more than \$150,000 in bonds and cash.

Notorious Kansas Bank Heists author Rod Beemer is an independent writer, researcher, and speaker who has authored and co-authored numerous books and magazine articles. He's a member of the Kansas State Historical Society, West Texas Historical Association, Smoky Hill Trail Association, Westerners International, Fort Larned Old Guard, and Custer Battlefield Historical Museum and Association. Beemer lives in Minneapolis, Kansas, with his wife of 47 years.

The January 31 program will begin at 2 p.m. with a short review of the exhibits, events, and activities of 2015 and a preview of 2016, followed by Rod Beemer's presentation on notorious Kansas bank heists. Books will be available for sale and signing afterward. Refreshments will be served. This free event is open to the public and will be held at Neosho County Community College's Ottawa Campus, 900 East Logan Street, Ottawa, Kansas. In the event of inclement weather, the program will be rescheduled for Sunday, February 7, at 2 p.m. at NCCC. For more information, contact Deborah Barker at (785) 242-1232 or barkerd@olddepotmuseum.org.

Founded in 1937, the Franklin County Historical Society strives to preserve, present, and promote the history of Franklin County, Kansas. For more information, visit www.olddepotmuseum.org.

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