

June 13, 1955

Internal Memorandum

Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City

The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City occupies about half of a twenty-story building which was put up in 1920 under the urging of Joe Zack Miller, the bank's President and also its Chairman, who is still remembered as one of the most picturesque figures in the System. He must have been a man of enormous will-power. He was small with a pugnacious expression and rather like a fighting bantam cock. Twenty stories must have seemed incredibly high for a bank in Kansas City in the 1920's, but that is what Mr. Miller wanted, and characteristically, that is what he got.

I was greeted by the president's secretary, Mrs. Fencil, and by Mr. Leedy himself, a soft-spoken, cautious man with a lawyer's training and the reputation of being very kind. He turned me over immediately to Mrs. Clara Lott, who had been with the bank since 1937 and was supposed to know everything. She has for some time exercised the functions of the secretary's office but without the title. She is slow-spoken, cautious, rather southern, a white-haired woman full of false starts which probably stem from her fear that she will say something injudicious to a stranger. By coincidence, Mr. Delos Johns, president of the St. Louis Bank who had been in the Kansas City Bank before he went to St. Louis, was in the office for a day or so. I indicated that I was not getting information as rapidly as I might like, and he said with a smile, "Clara knows everything, but it isn't always easy to get it out of her." She had given him the same difficulty when she served as his secretary while he was in Kansas City.

We went immediately to work on the missing biographies which always constitute a large sector of needed information in these bank visits. Mrs. Lott got me what information she could, but as usual I left quite a bundle of cards with her to be filled out later. She was much more willing to do it than was Mr. Lysen in Minneapolis but told me she did not think she could get them back quickly.

Mr. Henry Koppang

Mr. Koppang came from Helena, Montana (please check). He was a bank examiner

for many years and finally settled down as a vice president in Kansas City. My conversation with him on Monday afternoon was the first opportunity I had had to ask about the characteristics of the district.

Mr. Koppang was fluent and informed but did not pretend to have the figures at the end of his tongue which were the province of Mr. Clarence Tow, who is head of research. He said that agriculture and livestock had built the economy of Kansas City and continue to build it. Industry has come in since the war. The town ranks second only to Detroit in automobile assembly. The General Electric has an airplane parts plant there, and Ford Motor Company has an assembly plant. Farm machinery is made in quantity. There is some textile and women's wear.

The Kansas City airport is a transport center, and the town is now spending \$28,000,000 on another field further south (it is the only city I have yet found where the airfield was only a mile from the center of town). The town is a great railroad center and always has been. There are twelve trunk lines which enter the city and occupy the central depression about which the town's hill line circles. Milling and meat packing are important businesses. Kansas City is the largest "stocker" of cattle, that is, a way point for cattle which come in from the ranges and go to Iowa or Missouri to be fed and prepared for the market. The town is a center for corn and wheat storage.

In recent years oil, which has been found in Texas and Oklahoma, was discovered in Kansas, Colorado and Wyoming which lengthened the scope of possible business for the city. The district includes New Mexico and Colorado, and therefore uranium, for Grand Junction, Colorado is now called "The Uranium Capital of the World." Mr. Koppang admitted, however, that this was a slightly exaggerated idea and that the uranium discoveries around Colorado were more in terms of future than of present.

He also spoke of the Air Academy at Colorado Springs and the resort money which comes into Colorado and is an important item in the Denver branch of the Kansas City Bank.

Mr. Koppang spoke of Albuquerque and Denver as having spectacular growth in these years, the first because of the government atomic work now going on at Sandia and Los Alamos, the second because of industry and the general increase in tourist trade. He also said that Kansas City is still growing at a considerable rate and also Wichita on account of plane manufacturing there.

Mr. Koppang confirmed my impression that although Kansas City is technically in Missouri (there is also a Kansas City, Kansas on the opposite side of a street called State Line), the town really looks west. The Federal Reserve district as laid out includes a narrow western stretch of Missouri, all of Kansas, part of Nebraska, Colorado, part of New Mexico, part of Oklahoma, and Wyoming. There are three branches, one in Denver, one in Omaha, and one in Oklahoma City. From a geographic point of view, this is the second largest district local authorities claimed.

Mr. Koppang would undoubtedly be very useful if one were questioning him about examinations all over the country, but this would take a longer preparation than it seemed wise to try to do at this instant. He is alert and intelligent and knows much more than he says.

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