



the **Prairie Tales** podcast

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SOURCE ARTICLES

1872-12– SHOTGUN VIOLENCE IN BLEEDING KANSAS

WARD & KEENER

JANUARY 17, 1872 - CASE # 1872-HM01

The Southwestern Stage Company began running four-horse stage coaches every day to the city of Sedgwick in January of 1872. It was later that same month, however, when the stage brought in trouble of its own, and then delivered the news across the country that a shooting affray had occurred in the little town. The following newspaper articles uniquely expressing the tragedy appeared in Cleveland, New York, and Boston:

SEDGWICK - Shot Gun Justice. Near Newton, Kansas on Tuesday last, Mr. Ward took his shot gun and went to interview Mr. Taylor. He found him at Mr. Merrill's saloon and fired at him. He killed Mr. Merrill by mistake, and Mr. Taylor killed him. So that the man who should have been killed is the only survivor. *The Cleveland Leader, Cleveland, Ohio. Thursday, February 8, 1872.*

NEW YORK - Kansas Is Still Bloody. Kansas is still bloody. A stage driver shot at one Taylor, but killed one Merrill; when one Taylor killed the stage driver. *Pomeroy's Democrat, New York, New York. Sunday, February 4, 1872. Page 4.*

NEW YORK - Murder In Bleeding Kansas. A Stage Man Shoots the Wrong Man and is Shot by the Right Man - An altercation occurred last Wednesday night at a stage station nine miles from Newton, Kansas, between an employee of the Southwestern Stage Company and a man named Taylor, which was amicably arranged, but subsequently the stage man fired at Taylor, but hit and killed a man named Merrill, a friend of Taylor, whereupon Taylor shot and killed the stage man. *The Herald, New York, New York. January 29, 1872. Page 10.*

BOSTON - A Shooting Affray. At a stage station near Newton, Kansas, Wednesday, a stage driver shot at a man named Taylor, but hit and killed a Mr. Merrill, when Mr. Taylor responded by

killing the stage driver. *The Boston Post, Boston, Massachusetts. Tuesday, January 30, 1872. Page 3.*

SEDGWICK CITY - Double Murder Near Newton. On Wednesday evening last, at a stage station nine miles south of Newton, Ks., an employee of the Southwestern Stage Company and a man named Taylor were drunk, and had an altercation in a saloon. After some time the matters in dispute were apparently adjusted and both parties took a drink as an evidence of their mutual good understanding. The man Taylor and his friend Merrill went outside, where quite a crowd was gathered.

Soon the employe went out of the saloon and began to fire promiscuously among the crowd, one of the balls taking effect in Merrill's lungs, from which he died in a few minutes. It appeared that Taylor was the one whom the employe intended to shoot, and Merrill had no connection whatever with the previous altercation.

The employe, after killing Merrill, ran to the hotel, followed by the crowd. When the employe saw the crowd before the door, he rushed by them, and with a horrible oath yelled out, "Where is Taylor?" He continued running until he reached the spot where Merrill lay dead, and again asked for Taylor, whereupon Taylor, who had remained with Merrill, drew his revolver and "brained" his pursuer, from which he fell and died instantly. Taylor was arrested, but will probably be released soon. *The Topeka Commonwealth, Topeka, Kansas. Saturday, January 27, 1872. Page 3.*

SEDGWICK CITY - A Kansas Tragedy. About five o'clock, on Thursday evening, a row occurred in a Saloon at Sedgwick, Kan., between two men named Taylor and Keener, who have been stopping about that town for a few weeks. The parties were separated and left the house. A short time afterwards, Taylor and a friend, named Merrell, crossed the street and was entering a store. Just at the time, Keener happened to pass by. Taylor seeing him, took a few steps in that direction, and attempted to shoot Keener, but the pistol did not fire.

Keener caught him and both fell to the ground, and in a few minutes Keener arose with the revolver. Taylor and Merrell started for the store door. Just as they were entering Keener shot at Taylor, and killed Merrell, the ball having passed through the breast. Merrell took a few steps in the store, remarking that he was shot in the heart.

Keener went to the hotel where he was boarding and worked. During this time the officers were making preparations to arrest him, but before they could proceed to the hotel Keener came out and went to the store in which Taylor and Merrell ran, and asked for Taylor, but before he could see him two men caught him and took the revolver away; and while they were yet holding him, Taylor, who had been standing in another part of the store, came up behind them and shot Keener in the head, killing him instantly.

Taylor was immediately arrested and will be dealt with according to law. The citizens are horror-stricken over the matter, as this is the first thing that has ever occurred to mar the peace and quietness of the place. *The Daily Missouri Democrat, St. Louis, Missouri. Monday, January 29, 1872. Page 3.*

A.M. Merrill was born February 30, 1849 and is buried in the Pleasant View Cemetery of Castalia, Iowa. He was 22 years old when he died. Keener's burial location has not yet been located.

JOSEPH GRISEL

JANUARY 22, 1872 - CASE # 1872-HM02

NEWTON - Another Shooting Affray. On Monday evening last, another shooting affray occurred in Newton. It appears that Joseph Grisel, a carpenter, owed a German named Fred Minke a bill. Fred went to Grisel's house and demanded the payment thereof, and Grisel refused to pay and ordered Fred to leave his house, which he promptly obeyed.

Fred, upon getting away from the house some twenty or thirty yards, turned and fired two shots at Grisel from a double barreled shot gun. Forty-two shots took effect in Grisel's left shoulder. He was taken into the house and Drs. Boyd and Truesdale were called, who pronounced him in a very critical condition, with little hope of recovery. Fred was promptly arrested and placed in jail. Some excitement was created by the affair, but all is now quiet. *The Atchison Daily Patriot, Atchison, Kansas. Thursday January 25, 1872.*

NEWTON – Mr. Joseph Grissel, of Newton, got jealous of Mr. Joseph Minkey, and being a man of muscle as well as gristle, he got out his little gun and ensconced about forty buckshot in Mr. Minkey's frame. Mr. Grissel is now observing the terms of a \$1,000 bond. *The Lawrence Daily Journal, Lawrence, Kansas. Thursday, January 25, 1872. Page 3.*

NEWTON - Jealousy The Cause. Newton was enlivened last Monday night by Joseph Grisel, who shot Joseph Minkey with a shotgun, with about forty buck shot. Cause, jealousy. Preliminary examination was held, and Grisel was bound over in the sum of one thousand dollars. *Emporia Weekly News, Emporia, Kansas. Friday, February 2, 1872. Page 2.*

NEWTON - Newton is reported dull, only one man having been shot in two weeks. *The Florence Pioneer, Florence, Kansas. Reprinted by the Emporia Weekly News, Emporia, Kansas. Friday, February 2, 1872. Page 2.*

MRS. LEBIGRE

FEBRUARY 6, 1872 - CASE # 1872-HM03

NEWTON - Mrs. Lebigre, of Newton, is in explaining to Mrs. Hoffman the mechanism of a revolver, accidentally shot the latter, the ball passing into her breast, striking a rib and glancing off. She will recover. *The Lawrence Daily Journal*, Lawrence, Kansas. Wednesday, February 14, 1872. Note that Mrs. Lebigre was actually the victim, not the shooter, as evidenced by the following articles.

NEWTON - Mrs. Hoffman, while carelessly examining a revolver in her husband's establishment, at Newton, Kansas, accidentally shot Mrs. Libigre. *The Neosho Valley Register*, Neosho, Kansas. Saturday, February 10, 1872. Page 2.

NEWTON - "We learned of the accidental shooting at Newton of a person who tarried in Salina in former times. Many persons will recollect a Mr. Lebigre, a Frenchman, who kept a barber shop in Salina two or three years ago. His wife was accidentally shot last Thursday at Newton under these circumstances: Her husband, to comply with governmental provisions, went out a couple of miles to sleep on his claim, and she, having an amount of money about her and thinking to protect herself, stepped into a gun shop to get a revolver. A Mrs. Hoffman, who handed her the revolver, was exhibiting to her the art of firing it, when the revolver, loaded but unknown to her, was discharged, the ball taking effect in the region of Mrs. L.'s heart. The wound was a critical one, but under good treatment she is reported to be in a fair way of recovery" *The Salina Journal*, Salina, Kansas. February 15, 1872. Page 2.

ABOUT ALLEGRO (E.J. HARRINGTON)

FEBRUARY 10, 1872 - CASE # 1872-HM04

NEWTON – One E.J. Harrington, a newspaper correspondent, writing over the nom de plume of "Allegro," "Adelade," and some others to us unknown, has been circulating in this vicinity for some six months past, and has been corresponding with the Topeka Commonwealth, the Journal of Commerce of Kansas City, the Republican Journal and Democratic Standard of Lawrence, Kansas. He has been operating in the blackmail line to a considerable extent, and, as he has threatened to write articles derogatory to the character and business qualifications of some of our best business men unless they accede to his demands, we desire to place the public on their guard and warn them to receive his statements with a great deal of allowance. We know this Harrington to be a low, miserable, drunken loafer, who has spent much of his time since his arrival in Newton in lying around houses of ill fame where his principal occupation has been that of furnishing violin music for dances of the inmates, and in drinking whisky. He has no

character to lose, for his reputation is so low as to be beneath contempt, and but that those who do not know him might give some credence to his statements, this card would go unpublished. His statements are entirely unreliable, as he can be bought for a very small price to “write up” the lowest, or “write down” the best. – George Halliday, E. Smith, Johnson Barker, S.J. Bentley, Daniel Ainsworth, A.F. Horner, D. Hamill, H.C. Schly, Fred P. Lord. *The Kansas State Record, Topeka, Kansas. Wednesday, June 5, 1872. Page 3.*