



## THE PRAIRIE TALES PODCAST

### TRAIL GUIDE

**Episode 1871-01**  
May 15, 2025

**Kansas' First Road Rage Incident (John Wesley Hardin)**

*Sponsored by Bud & Steve Auto Service, Newton, Kansas*

This episode chronicles some incidents involving the notorious gunfighter **John Wesley Hardin** and another swift gunman, **Juan Bideo**, both on the Kansas prairie during the early 1870s. Hardin instigated a deadly "road rage" confrontation on the Chisholm Trail that resulted in several deaths. A couple of weeks later, John Hardin pursued and killed Juan Bideo, who had earlier murdered Hardin's friend near Abilene. We briefly recount Hardin's interactions with Marshal **Wild Bill Hickok** in Abilene, highlighting Hardin's impulsive nature when he killed a man for snoring.

**Episode 1871-02**  
May 15, 2025

**How To Build A Cowtown**

*Sponsored by the Harvey County Museum & Archives, Newton, Kansas*

Newton, Kansas was a rapidly growing settlement driven by the arrival of the AT&SF Railroad and its role in the cattle trade. Initially characterized by its abundance of saloons and a rough-and-tumble atmosphere, the town quickly attracted a diverse population of residents and transient cowboys. The accounts highlight instances of violence, such as the **Snyder / Welch** shootout leading to the first burial in the area that would become Boot Hill.

**Episode 1871-03**

May 15, 2025

**Boot Hill Cemetery***Sponsored by Dr. William Beck at Axtell Eye Center, Newton, Kansas*

Kansas communities such as Newton, Sheridan, Hays City, and Dodge City each had cemeteries violently inaugurated as “**Boot Hill**.” Boot Hill was repeatedly described as a burial ground for individuals who died violently, often by shooting, thus "dying with their boots on." Several articles detail the relocation of bodies from the original Newton Boot Hill and later discussions about the leveling or development of the land. The Hays City account provides a particularly poignant description of the lives and deaths of those buried there, including the tragic story of a child killed by a stray bullet. The texts collectively paint a picture of these early western cemeteries as final resting places for those who met untimely ends during the wild and lawless period, highlighting their eventual loss of recognition as landmarks due to development.

**Episode 1871-04**

May 22, 2025

**A Right Lively Place***Sponsored by Harvey County NOW Newspaper*

These glimpses into Newton, Kansas, in the summer of 1871, focus on its rapid development as a railroad terminus and cattle town. They highlight the prevalence of violence, including a shooting at a saloon and a deadly wagon accident, and document the boisterous behavior of cowboys, particularly the infamous **John Wesley Hardin** and his group as they are passing through again. We also describe the arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad, the opening of another house of prostitution, and the notable individual **Jack Johnston**, who became City Marshal despite a fatal incident. Overall, they paint a picture of a wild and quickly growing frontier town.

**Episode 1871-05**

May 22, 2025

**End Of The Track***Sponsored by Ward Chiropractic, Halstead & Hutchinson, Kansas*

We get further glimpses into life in Kansas highlighting the tumultuous nature of burgeoning cattle towns like Park City and Newton. They describe incidents of violence and lawlessness, from a fatal confrontation over trespassing cattle to the unruly atmosphere fostered by cowboys, gamblers, and dance halls in Newton. We touch upon the challenges of establishing new transportation routes and the unique, sometimes dangerous, characters drawn to these frontier settlements, including an account of a man nearly serving on a coroner's jury before even finding a hotel and a freight agent seeking refuge from gunfire among gunpowder kegs.

**Episode 1871-06**

May 29, 2025

**When Ballots & Bullets Fly***Sponsored by Smith Home Improvements, Burrton, Kansas*

We explore the violent early history of Newton, Kansas, specifically detailing two fatal incidents in August 1871. The first involves the death of a young man named **J.H. Lee**, whose shooting in a dance hall is variously described as accidental or a result of the unchecked behavior of Texans. The second series of accounts concerns the death of **Bill Bailey**, a Texan and temporary policeman known for his aggression, who was killed in a drunken fight, with some sources noting the community's lack of desire to see his killer, **William McCluskie**, apprehended. Finally, one excerpt paints a picture of the town's wild nature, emphasizing the complete absence of religious institutions and services and the prevalence of gambling and violence, highlighting the desperate need for moral influence in the burgeoning settlement.

**Episode 1871-07**

May 29, 2025

**Massacre In A Cowntown***Sponsored by Smith Home Improvements, Burrton, Kansas*

We are eyewitness to the dramatic events that occurred in Newton, Kansas, during August of 1871. There were two primary incidents: the killing of **Bill Bailey** by **Mike McCluskie** following a dispute on election day, and the subsequent "Newton Massacre" a week later, where Texan drovers seeking revenge for Bailey's death clashed with McCluskie and resulted in numerous fatalities and injuries in a local dance hall. We also discuss the aftermath of the violence, including efforts to establish a town government, the difficulty in apprehending suspects, and the need for order and religious influence in the community.

**Episode 1871-08**

June 5, 2025

**Trail To The Deepest Pit Of Hell***Sponsored by Enduring Love Memorials, Newton, Kansas*

The area around Newton in the 1870's was a frontier town grappling with lawlessness and a less-than-savory reputation. Reports detail instances of swift justice, such as the hanging of a horse thief. The town was characterized by rampant gambling and prostitution, highlighted by a detailed account of the infamous "Gold Rooms" and the tragic suicide of **Annie Glinn**, a young woman involved in the sex trade.

**Episode 1871-09**

June 5, 2025

**Tales Of A Frontier Town***Sponsored by Norm's Coffee Bar, Newton, Kansas*

We remain in Newton, Kansas, in late 1871. The town is still struggling with lawlessness and danger, including attempted arson, a counterfeiting

incident, and multiple reports of violence and shootings. Despite these challenges, there were periods of calm and hints of future prosperity, particularly as railroad construction began to bring new activity and hope for a more established and moral community.

#### **Episode 1871-10**

June 12, 2025

#### **No End Of Tears**

*Sponsored by Dr. Troy Holdeman at Axtell Clinic, Newton, Kansas*

Newton continued to be plagued by sadness and violence during September of 1871. Several reports focus on the shooting of **Bill Dow** by **Lottie Foster**, stemming from a prior physical altercation. A suicide attempt was made by a German woman using chloroform, and then two women attempted suicide by poison after becoming intoxicated. Finally, multiple articles describe the death of City Marshal **Carlos King**, who was shot in a dance house while attempting to disarm a Texan.

#### **Episode 1871-11**

June 12, 2025

#### **Shadows In The Dark**

*Sponsored by Sheriff Chad Gay & the Harvey County Sheriff's Office*

We detail the brutality of public executions illustrating the harsh realities of the era. Multiple accounts specifically address Newton's notorious reputation for violence and vice, highlighting its struggles with lawlessness, drunkenness, and crime. However, there seemed to be a gradual improvement in Newton's moral climate and a migration of its "hard cases" to other areas. Overall, we get a glimpse into the challenges and evolving nature of a developing Kansas town on the edge of the frontier.

#### **Episode 1872-12**

June 19, 2025

#### **Shot Gun Violence in Bleeding Kansas**

*Sponsored by Cy's Hoof and Horn Restaurant, Sedgwick, Kansas*

Multiple violent incidents occurred in and around Newton, Kansas, during early 1872. The first account details a fatal shooting involving a stagecoach employee, a man named **Taylor**, and an unintended victim named **Merrill** – "A stage man shoots the wrong man and is shot by the right man" wrote one newspaper. Another incident describes an altercation between **Joseph Grisel** and **Fred Minke** resulting in Grisel being shot with buckshot. A third case involves an accidental shooting where **Mrs. Lebigre** was injured while examining a revolver she wanted for protection.

**Episode 1872-13**

June 19, 2025

**Rowdy Joe & The Plug Hat Guest**

*Sponsored by Citizen's State Bank, Moundridge, Kansas*

Highlighting the rough and lawless nature of the frontier town as the railroad arrived, this episode also touches upon efforts to establish order. Notably, the reports detail the killing of **A.M. Sweet** by "**Rowdy Joe**," the death of "**Cherokee Dan**" **Hicks** at the hands of saloon keeper **Harry Lovett**, and the shooting of an unnamed man who stepped off the train for a minute – killed for simply wearing a plug hat in a cowboy town.

**Episode 1872-14**

June 26, 2025

**Badge of Dishonor (Billy Brooks)**

*Sponsored by Garden Community Church, Hesston, Kansas*

We focus on the turbulent life and repeated shootings of City Marshal **Billy Brooks**, detailing his injuries from attempts to enforce peace and then later reports of his involvement in several killings. Other accounts describe individual violent incidents, including the killing of a dance-house proprietor, a tie contractor, and two men at Hays City. However, one article also notes a significant shift in Newton by June 1872, highlighting the establishment and flourishing of a Sunday school as evidence of a move towards morality and order.

**Episode 1872-15**

June 26, 2025

**Contempt of Court – A Horrible Affray**

*Sponsored by Garden Community Church, Hesston, Kansas*

Violent incidents continued to characterize Newton, Kansas in 1872. One account describes **James Brewer** shooting **Benjamin Ferguson** during an altercation over a plow, resulting in Brewer's conviction for attempted manslaughter and subsequent pardon. Another series of reports recounts the fatal shooting of **George Halliday** by **M.J. Fitzpatrick** in a saloon, followed immediately by City Marshal **Jack Johnson** killing Fitzpatrick. These events led to citizens forming a safety committee and driving perceived "bad characters" out of town. A later article offers a "moral" attributing the violence to frequenting saloons and dance houses and suggests that law-abiding citizens are safe if they avoid such places, while another piece highlights frontier justice regarding an organ-grinder.

**Episode 1873-16**

July 3, 2025

**Blood and Roses**

*Sponsored by LuAnn McMannis in honor of Elisabeth Smith's Birthday*

Despite attempts at reform and civic pride, several instances of violence in Newton rattle the town, including the assassination of a dance hall proprietor and a reported attack on a livery stable owner. Competitive tensions with the neighboring town of Hutchinson are also evident, with

local newspapers engaging in a war of words over the prospects of securing railroad infrastructure. The personal accounts, like the tragic domestic dispute involving the **Santoff** family, underscore the challenges and hardships faced by residents during this transitional period in Kansas prairie history.

**Episode 1874-17**  
July 3, 2025

**In The Line Of Fire**

*Sponsored by The Rural Messenger, Haven, Kansas*

The culmination of a long-standing feud between relatives in Halstead, Kansas resulted in a fatal shooting, while another homesteader was ambushed and wounded during a theft on his farm. We hear of the murder of a young cattle dealer for his money, a suicide or accidental shooting mystery, and a non-fatal shooting affray between brothers. Together, these sources offer glimpses into instances of conflict and violence in these Kansas communities in the 1870's.

**Episode 1878-18**  
July 10, 2025

**Streetwise – The Life of David Rasure**

*Sponsored by the Harvey County Genealogical Society*

This episode recounts the turbulent life of **David Rasure**, beginning with his imprisonment during the Civil War for counterfeiting, followed by his service in the Union Army. Upon arriving in Newton, Kansas, he quickly rose to prominence, serving as night policeman, city marshal, and U.S. Deputy Marshal. A significant event detailed is a shooting incident in St. Joseph, Missouri, stemming from his wife's affair with **B.C. Arnold**, leaving Rasure severely wounded. The text also describes a later stabbing incident in Wellington, Kansas, and concludes with Rasure's death in Guthrie, Oklahoma, after being shot by a policeman.

**Episode 1878-19**  
July 10, 2025

**A Serious Affray**

*Sponsored by Skeeter's Towing, Newton, Kansas*

We review the case of **Benjamin Ball**, who died from injuries sustained in a stabbing by **J. C. Wilson** at a livery stable in Newton, Kansas, following a dispute over corn. After escaping from jail, Wilson was later recaptured. A different individual named **William Gazolo** was later noted for his prior imprisonment in Newton for shooting a **woman** who helped him steal horses. A third narrative describes the arrest and sentencing of **Claud Wilson** for attempting to stab the **city marshal** after Claud drove over a child while drunk at the circus. Together, these pieces offer a glimpse into criminal activity and justice in Kansas during the late 1870s.

**Episode 1882-20**  
July 17, 2025

**Deliver Us From Evil – The Tennessee Taylor Brothers**  
*Sponsored by d’Veers Venue Center, Elbing, Kansas*

This episode chronicles the criminal acts of the Taylor brothers in Tennessee during the early 1880s, focusing on the murder of **Captain James Fletcher** by **John Taylor**. The most prominent event is the rescue of John Taylor from **Sheriff Cate** and **Deputy Conway** by his brothers, **Bob and Andy Taylor**, resulting in the officers' deaths. We then follow the subsequent pursuit and fates of the brothers, including Bob's death while resisting arrest and John's reported death from illness, before detailing Andy Taylor's capture in Newton, Kansas, and his extradition, trial, and eventual execution. The articles also highlight the extensive manhunt and the large rewards offered for their apprehension, as well as the logistical challenges of bringing Andy Taylor back for trial and the significant public and media attention surrounding the events.

**Episode 1878-21**  
July 17, 2025

**Keeping The Home Fires Burning**  
*Sponsored by Miller Insurance Agency, Newton, Kansas*

It wasn't just the men who faced danger on the Prairie. These historical news excerpts document multiple instances of individuals, primarily women and children, suffering severe or fatal burns across Kansas and neighboring States in the latter half of the 1800's. The accidents frequently occurred within or near the home, often while cooking, attending to fires, or handling lamps or hot objects. Several reports highlight the speed with which clothing ignited, leading to horrific injuries before the flames could be extinguished. The accounts collectively paint a somber picture of the dangers of fire in this era, where even common household tasks posed significant risks.

**Episode 1883-22**  
July 24, 2025

**Why Was Nellie Naughty?**  
*Sponsored by Halstead Historical Society and Museum, Halstead, Kansas*

This episode documents the sensational 1883 murder trial of **Nellie C. Bailey** who came from Halstead, Kansas. The articles describe the mysterious death of **Clement Bothamley**, a wealthy Englishman, while traveling from Sedgwick City, Kansas through the Indian Territory with Bailey and others. We hear the detail of Bailey's arrest, her several marriages and romantic relationships, and conflicting accounts of the events leading to Bothamley's death, including the possibility of suicide. Following her acquittal, the texts reveal Bailey's subsequent legal troubles, her attempt to capitalize on her notoriety by writing a book about her life, and later scattered reports of her whereabouts.

**Episode 1884-23**

July 24, 2025

**Instant Horse Racing**

*Sponsored by Miller Insurance Agency, Newton, Kansas*

In this episode we report on several incidents involving runaway horses and related accidents that occurred between 1884 and 1886 in Newton and surrounding areas like Halstead and Hesston on the Kansas prairie. "To grandmother's house we go..." could be a dangerous adventure. Incidents include a man killed by a pitchfork after being thrown from a straw load by his team, another fatality from a fractured skull after a wagon accident, and a woman dying when run over by a wagon after her team bolted. Other accounts detail less severe incidents, such as a deaf man being struck by a wagon, a crippled farmer's narrow escape from a runaway, and minor breakages from a team startled by a train. These news items highlight the inherent dangers of horse-drawn transportation during this period and the potential for unpredictable events to cause significant harm.

**Episode 1886-24**

July 31, 2025

**Death By Sand Bag (Adam Kuntz)**

*Sponsored by Enduring Love Memorials, Newton, Kansas*

The life and mysterious death of **Adam Kuntz** in Newton, Kansas is reviewed in this episode. Details emerge regarding his divorce petition, an incident where he was found injured and robbed while intoxicated, and his subsequent death from complications stemming from the assault. Reports of the coroner's inquest reveal that while physicians concluded he died from a blood clot caused by a blow to the head, the jury could not determine the assailant. Information about Kuntz's background, family, and military service, along with coverage of his funeral in Fort Wayne, Indiana, are also provided.

**Episode 1883-25**

July 31, 2025

**The Heart of Night**

*Sponsored by Prairie Tales Media, North Newton, Kansas*

We look at several notable criminal incidents and legal proceedings on the central Kansas prairie. The articles describe a case of murder where the punishment is equated to minor theft, a tragic discovery of an abandoned infant in Burrton, Kansas, and a series of events involving a man named **J.M. Flowers** accused of forgery and later shooting a brakeman, resulting in his conviction and sentence.



**Episode 1886-26**  
August 7, 2025

### **Denham's Depravity**

*Sponsored by McMannis Duplication & Fulfillment, Canton, Kansas*

We recount the story of **Albert Denham**, who was convicted of the 1886 murder of **Phoebe Wilcox** in McPherson County. We detail the circumstances of the crime, where Denham shot into the Wilcox home, striking and killing Mrs. Wilcox. We also cover his multiple trials and convictions, the lack of a local jail necessitating his transfer to Newton, and his attempted suicide while incarcerated. Furthermore, we touch on Denham's background, the possible motives for the murder, his eventual sentence reduction and parole - and a subsequent incident where he was shot and again returned to prison.

**Episode 1887-27**  
August 7, 2025

### **Victims Of Circumstance**

*Sponsored by Bud & Steve Auto Service, Newton, Kansas*

These news excerpts from various Kansas newspapers in 1887 describe several distinct legal and criminal incidents. The first recounts the imprisonment of **Ralph M. Stewart** for a justifiable assault and the curious coincidence of his farmhand also being jailed. The second details the acquittal of **J.F. Ollinger** in a murder case related to a county seat dispute. The third piece reports on a stabbing between two bricklayers where the assailant fled. Finally, the sources present conflicting accounts regarding the death of **Joseph Hamilton**, initially ruled as due to exposure but later rumored to be murder, with subsequent reports refuting the murder theory after further examination of the body.

**Episode 1887-28**  
August 14, 2025

### **Crimes and Punishments**

*Sponsored by Halstead Historical Society & Museum, Halstead, Kansas*

We will detail the ongoing conflict between farmers **John Ralph** and **Henry/Fred Haber**, which began with a land dispute over a roadway and escalated to a shooting and subsequent lawsuits. Other reports cover incidents like an assault with a razor in Newton, the capture of an elderly man accused of incest, and the shooting of a city marshal during an arrest attempt, highlighting the range of criminal activity reported in the region. Finally, one case from Illinois involves a former Halstead, Kansas woman shooting **Mr. Fosdyck**, who she accused of seducing her daughter, demonstrating that one's Prairie neighbors kept in touch with your family long after you've moved on.

**Episode 1889-29**  
August 14, 2025

**Common Conflicts**

*Sponsored by the Sedgwick Historical Society, Sedgwick, Kansas*

Was the Prairie finally settled by 1890? Not really. This episode details a violent conflict between trainmen and tramps attempting to ride without fare, which escalated to gunfire and resulted in the arrest and eventual sentencing of one individual. Another report describes local excitement in Sedgwick City caused by the discovery of a dismembered leg. We then cover a case of assault with a deadly weapon in Sedgwick City where one man was arrested for threatening another, leading to a court appearance and fine.

**Episode 1889-30**  
August 21, 2025

**All In A Day's Disruption...**

*Sponsored by The Harvey County Genealogical Society*

Today our reports focus on the case of **Anna/Kittie McIntire**, detailing her altercation and shooting at **J. J. Johnson** at a residence near Sedgwick City, the subsequent court appearances, her bond being posted, and ultimately her conviction. Another set of articles recounts an incident at a Church festival in Newton, where **Charles Royston** carried a piece of concrete into the Sanctuary and then assaulted **William Coleman** for wanting to throw it out. Royston then pulled a pistol from the pulpit, flourishing it about, which resulting in a fine for Royston. Finally, there was the report of a Halloween shooting in Newton where the details and individuals involved remained hidden behind masks.

**Episode 1889-31**  
August 21, 2025

**Innocence Lost (Jennie Schrock)**

*Sponsored by Hendrickson Chiropractic, Newton, Kansas*

We first look at 13-year-old **Jennie Schrock**, formerly from Newton, Kansas, and the tragic details of her murder by her older lover in Denver, Colorado, followed by his suicide. The second set of articles focuses on a shooting in Walton, Kansas, between **Thomas McElroy** and **J.W. Bowman** over a debt, highlighting the conflicting narratives, the initial difficulty in obtaining a warrant for McElroy, and the eventual trial and acquittal of Bowman for assault with a deadly weapon. Together, these texts offer glimpses into violent occurrences of the era, as reported by local newspapers.

**Episode 1890-32**  
August 28, 2025

**Barber Pole & School Bells**

*Sponsored by the Harvey County Historical Museum & Archives*

Our first case details a physical altercation between barber shop co-owners **M. C. Cayton** and **John Staub**, resulting in Staub drawing a

revolver. The second case recounts a serious stabbing incident involving **John Godfrey** and **Orvison “Red” Woodfall**, where Godfrey was severely injured and Woodfall, after a period on the run, was ultimately sentenced for assault with intent to kill. Our third case describes an assault against school teacher **John T. Sutton** by **William Hickerson**, who threatened Sutton with a knife at a schoolhouse and convicted of simple assault.

**Episode 1890-33**  
August 28, 2025

**Where Dreams Go To Die**  
*Sponsored by The Rural Messenger, Haven, Kansas*

We explore the mystery surrounding **Isaac van Brunt**, an orphan train rider who settled in Harvey County, Kansas. He was accused and convicted of the murder of **George Broer** in 1890, who was a farmer in the process of selling his farm to return to his wife in Germany. After serving nearly eight years in prison, Isaac was pardoned and eventually ended up in Leavenworth, where he died under strange circumstances in 1915 after an apparent case of ptomaine poisoning. The texts provide details of his life, the murder investigation, his trial, imprisonment, pardon, and final days.

**Episode 1890-34**  
Mystery Date

**Both Cowards Are Well Known (Jack Reynolds & Pony Spencer)**  
*Sponsored by Faith & Life Bookstore, Newton, Kansas*

“As the westward construction train stopped at Ellinwood, **Conductor Jansen** discovered two men in a box car, and entering, civilly demanded fare. For reply one man presented a cocked navy revolver at his head, while the other gave his lantern a violent kick extinguishing it. Although unarmed, Mr. Jansen grappled with his murderous assailant and shouted loudly for help. His engineer and fireman promptly responded and the kicker made the best use of his heels. Meantime, after a brief but fierce struggle Mr. Jansen succeeded in gaining possession of the revolver from the would-be assassin, and with praiseworthy forbearance let him off with a few solid cracks over the head with the butt of the pistol. The foiled villain pled piteously for his life, and finding that safe, slunk away in the darkness whining for his revolver. Both cowards are well known; **Pony Spencer** and **Jack Reynolds**, old rangers recently graduated from Newton.” *The Hutchinson News, Hutchinson Kansas. Thursday, August 1, 1872. Page 3.*

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