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BLOOD & ROSES

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These historical excerpts offer a glimpse into the evolving and sometimes violent nature of Newton, Kansas, in the 1870s. Early newspaper accounts highlight Newton's rapid transformation from a rough town to a more reformed one, alongside its rivalry with Hutchinson. The sources also document specific instances of crime and violence, including the assassinations of Jim Shay and Abraham Shuster, and the fatal shooting of Peter Dunningham in another town. Domestic disputes are revealed through the case of Caroline Santoff and her troubled marriages. Collectively, these snippets from local newspapers and court records paint a picture of a developing frontier community grappling with progress, conflict, and personal tragedies.

Main Themes:

1. Newton's Self-Proclaimed Reform and Inter-Town Rivalry:

Rapid Transformation: Newton actively sought to shed its "bad" reputation and highlight its progress. As early as April 1873, The Newton Kansan declared, "We venture that no town in the State has during the same length of time undergone the change it has; been as bad and yet now as reformed; suffered the same amount of abuse and yet made as rapid progress in growth as Newton has to-day." This sentiment is underscored by the observation that on April 17, 1873, it had been exactly two years since the first lumber was unloaded on the town site, marking its rapid establishment.

Civic Improvements and Order: By May 1873, Newton boasted of its efforts to establish law and order: "Newton has four licensed saloons paying a license of \$300 a year each, all under bonds that they will not sell liquor to a minor, or to any person intoxicated or in the habit of getting intoxicated. It also has a marshal who will see that it is one of the most orderly towns in the State." The sale of the Hyde Park property, formerly a "den of brothels," was presented as further evidence of this reform, with the Kansan noting, "nothing but a piece of hardware is left

to mark the spot where one year ago was a den of brothels. Let persons who tell of Newton's early days make a note of this."

Rivalry with Hutchinson: Despite Newton's self-improvement narrative, its neighbor Hutchinson viewed its claims with skepticism and considerable jealousy. The Hutchinson News (April 10, 1873) sarcastically noted, "It is astonishing what a jealous disposition our sister town has towards Hutchinson... Alas, poor Newton, you have buried too many of your noble citizens with their boots on to ever recover!" This highlights a regional competition for prestige and resources, specifically regarding railroad division prospects.

2. Persistent Violence and Lawlessness:

Jim Shay's Assassination (February 1873): Despite the claims of reform, the early months of 1873 were marked by significant violence. Jim Shay, proprietor of a dance house, was assassinated on February 16, 1873. Accounts vary on the number of shots (three to five) and his immediate location (drunk on the streets, stepping out of a restaurant with oysters), but all agree on his instant death and the unknown perpetrator. The Hutchinson News bluntly stated, "Shay had long kept a dance house at Newton and did not meet his doom sooner than he deserved," reflecting a dismissive attitude towards violence against figures associated with the "old" Newton.

Abraham Shuster's Attack (May 1873): The incident involving livery stable owner Abraham Shuster on May 29, 1873, illustrates the continued threat of violence, even as Newton claimed to be more orderly. Initial newspaper reports (from The Newton Kansan) downplayed a serious assault as a mere "little altercation of no serious character," leading to "a laugh over the joke." However, the reality was far more grave: Shuster had been shot "in several places" and had his "head pounded...into a jelly with the butt of the gun" by a former employee, Lewis Clark, who was allegedly hired by Henry Knife. This incident reveals a disconnect between official reports and the dangerous reality on the ground, and highlights the ongoing legal complexities of the time. Shuster survived, but the attempted murder was far from a joke.

O.J. Flick Incident (May 1873): Even "occasional duty officers" like O.J. Flick contributed to the climate of fear. In the same week as the Shuster incident, Flick, after suing several people for non-payment of mortgages, was identified by George Cannon as a gunman who accosted him, suggesting underlying tensions and potential misuse of authority.

Violence Beyond Newton's Borders: The dangers extended beyond Newton's town limits. Shuster himself had a prior perilous encounter in February 1873, when on a hunting expedition, he and others were "encompassed by Indians 15 miles southwest of Medicine Lodge, and are lucky to get away alive, after being prisoners one day." Furthermore, the death of Peter Dunningham in Great Bend (July 1873), described as a "buffalo hunter from near Halstead, Harvey county," by the city marshal in a "justifiable homicide," underscores the violent realities of other frontier towns and the harsh law enforcement of the era.

Harry Lovett's Shooting (November 1873): Harry Lovett, an "early citizen of Newton," was shot in Dodge City in November 1873. While he survived, this instance further demonstrates the pervasive violence across the Kansas frontier that could impact Newton's residents.

3. Domestic Strife and Its Tragic Consequences:

Caroline and August Santoff (December 1873 - December 1874): The case of Caroline and August Santoff offers a poignant look into the severe domestic issues prevalent in the era. On December 8, 1873, Caroline swore an affidavit against August for repeated "assaulted, beat, and mistreated" behavior, escalating to threats of "great bodily harm" and death. Less than a year later, on December 14, 1874, August Santoff committed suicide by shooting himself, attributed by The Newton Kansan to his "unwell" state, "domestic relations not having been of the most pleasant kind," and "a sufficient quantity of liquor." This highlights the lack of protective measures for victims of domestic violence and the tragic outcomes.

Caroline Santoff's Continued Struggles (1877-1879): Caroline's misfortune continued after marrying Fred (Fritz) Minke, a man described as having a "similar temper" to her deceased husband. In August 1877, Minke was involved in an altercation where he "drew a jack knife and inflicted two slight cuts" on Caroline's brother, Michael Timm. Although Minke was later found "not guilty," the court costs were charged to the victim's brother, leading to a "Sheriff's sales of Fred & Caroline's property." Minke's subsequent death in Las Vegas, New Mexico in 1879, further illustrates the turbulent and often transient nature of life for many in this period.

4. Economic Pursuits and Hazards:

Livery Stables and Frontier Commerce: Abraham Shuster's livery stable and his buffalo hunting venture demonstrate common economic activities of the time. The reported "six hundred buffalo hides and two tons of dried meat almost ready for shipment east" illustrate the profitability and scale of such enterprises, while the attack on Shuster highlights the dangers inherent in these ventures.

Railroad and Labor: August Santoff's occupation as a "railroad section hand" points to the importance of the burgeoning railroad industry as a source of employment in towns like Newton.

Conclusion:

Newton, Kansas, in the mid-to-late 1870s, was a town in a dynamic state of flux. While actively promoting its transformation from a violent frontier outpost to a reformed and orderly community, the pervasive individual and domestic violence, combined with the inherent dangers of the Western landscape and the competitive spirit of neighboring towns, reveal a complex reality. The narratives of Jim Shay, Abraham Shuster, Peter Dunningham, and Caroline Santoff collectively paint a picture of a society grappling with the challenges of establishing law, order, and social stability in a rapidly developing and often brutal environment. The disparity between public pronouncements of reform and the grim realities of daily life underscores the turbulent nature of this period in Western expansion.

Moral: *"Do not envy the violent, or choose any of their ways" (Proverbs 3:31).*

Thought-Starters

How did Newton, Kansas, change in its early years, and what factors contributed to this transformation?

Newton, Kansas, underwent a significant transformation in its early years, specifically between 1871 and 1873. Initially, it was described as having been "bad" and suffering "abuse." However, by April 1873, it was lauded for its rapid progress and reformation. This change was partly driven by the town's growth, evidenced by the unloading of the first stick of lumber on the town site in April 1871. The "Hyde Park" area, once a "den of brothels," was sold in May 1873, with only "a piece of hardware" remaining, symbolizing the town's efforts to shed its notorious past. Furthermore, by May 1873, Newton had implemented civil reforms, boasting four licensed saloons with strict regulations and a marshal ensuring it was "one of the most orderly towns in the State."

What was the reputation of Newton, Kansas, in the early 1870s, particularly in comparison to neighboring towns like Hutchinson?

In the early 1870s, Newton's reputation was mixed. While the *Newton Kansan* highlighted its remarkable progress and reform, the *Hutchinson News* presented a more critical and competitive view. Hutchinson saw Newton as having a "jealous disposition" and believed that Newton had "buried too many of [its] noble citizens with their boots on to ever recover!" This suggests that Newton had a rough and possibly violent past, with instances of lawlessness and sudden deaths. Hutchinson, in contrast, aimed to portray itself as the burgeoning "city of the Arkansas Valley," emphasizing its own "flattering" prospects for railroad division while subtly denigrating Newton's history and future.

What details are known about the assassination of Jim Shay in Newton?

Jim Shay, the proprietor of a dance house in Newton, was assassinated on Sunday, February 16, 1873. He was killed by an unknown assailant who shot him multiple times (reports vary from three to five shots) while he was drunk on the streets or as he stepped out of a restaurant. Different newspaper accounts state he was either on a street corner or leaving a restaurant with a can of oysters. The act was described as instant, with all shots taking effect. Shay was also noted as a former resident of Abilene during the Texas cattle trade days, implying a connection to a rougher, frontier lifestyle. His death was largely presented as deserved by at least one source, reflecting a moralistic view of his occupation.

What was the nature of Abraham Shuster's businesses and experiences in Newton in 1873?

Abraham Shuster owned a livery stable and feed store on 6th Street in Newton, and also had a farm six miles west of town. His businesses included profitable ventures like buffalo hunting expeditions; in February 1873, he acquired "about six hundred buffalo hides and two tons of dried meat." However, his life in Newton was fraught with danger. In February 1873, he and others were captured by Native Americans while on a hunting trip but managed to escape.

Later, in May 1873, Shuster was the target of an attempted murder. While initial newspaper reports downplayed the incident as a "joke" and a "little altercation," it was revealed that he was shot multiple times and had his head "pounded... into a jelly" by a former employee, Henry Knife, who allegedly hired Lewis Clark to carry out the attack. Despite the severity, Shuster survived and continued to operate his livery stable until his death in 1890.

Describe the domestic abuse experienced by Caroline Santoff and its tragic outcome.

Caroline Santoff experienced a severe pattern of domestic abuse from her husband, August Santoff, after their move to Newton by 1873. On December 8, 1873, she filed a complaint with the Harvey County Sheriff, testifying under oath that August had "assaulted, beat, and mistreated" her on multiple occasions, and on that particular day, had threatened to kill her. She genuinely feared for her life. A year later, on December 14, 1874, August Santoff committed suicide by shooting himself in the head. The *Newton Kansan* attributed his act to his ill health, "domestic relations not having been of the most pleasant kind," and alcohol consumption. This tragic event highlights the dire circumstances faced by victims of domestic violence in the era.

What happened to Caroline Santoff after her first husband's death?

After August Santoff's suicide, Caroline Santoff remarried about a year later to Fred (Fritz) Minke, who was ten years her junior. However, her second marriage also proved to be troubled by violence. In August 1877, Minke was involved in an altercation with Caroline's brother, Michael Timm, during which Minke drew a knife and inflicted two cuts on Timm. Minke was initially fined for disturbing the peace and then arrested for assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill, though he was later found "not guilty." This incident led to a Sheriff's sale of Fred and Caroline's property in Newton. Fritz Minke was later reported to have died in Las Vegas, New Mexico, in 1879, suggesting that Caroline endured a period of hardship and instability with both of her husbands.

What were some of the other notable violent incidents that occurred in or involved residents of Newton in 1873?

Beyond the cases of Jim Shay and Abraham Shuster, 1873 saw other significant violent incidents affecting Newton residents. In February, Abraham Shuster himself was held captive by Native Americans during a hunting expedition. In May, a man named O.J. Flick, a former occasional duty officer, was arrested in Newton after attempting to confront someone with a gun, mistakenly identifying George Cannon as his target. In July, Peter Dunningham, a "buffalo hunter from near Halstead, Harvey county," was shot and killed by a city marshal in Great Bend after resisting arrest and assaulting the officer. Although Dunningham was from near Halstead, the event was reported in Harvey County. Later in the year, in November, Harry Lovett, an early citizen of Newton, was shot in Dodge City, though he miraculously survived and later returned to Newton. These events underscore the prevalence of violence in the region during this frontier period.

How did the local authorities and legal system respond to the violent incidents in Newton and surrounding areas during this period?

The response of local authorities and the legal system varied across the reported incidents. In the case of Jim Shay's assassination, the perpetrator remained unknown, indicating a challenge in enforcing justice for such crimes. For Abraham Shuster's attempted murder, while the newspaper initially downplayed it, a criminal complaint was filed with the Sheriff, leading to an investigation into Henry Knife and Lewis Clark, although the ultimate court outcome is not specified. In the shooting of Peter Dunningham in Great Bend, a jury, in the absence of a coroner, quickly ruled it a "justifiable homicide," suggesting a swift and decisive, albeit potentially controversial, legal conclusion. In the domestic abuse case involving Caroline Santoff, a complaint was filed with the Sheriff, highlighting the legal avenues available for victims, even if the eventual outcome for August Santoff was suicide rather than legal prosecution. Later, when Caroline's second husband, Fritz Minke, was accused of assault, he was tried and found "not guilty," leading to the victim (Caroline's brother) being charged with court costs, indicating a sometimes complex or perhaps even unfair application of justice.

Study Guide:

Quiz

1. According to *The Newton Kansan* on April 17, 1873, what remarkable transformation had Newton undergone?
2. How did *The Hutchinson News* on April 10, 1873, characterize Newton's attitude towards Hutchinson's railroad prospects?
3. When was the first stick of lumber unloaded on the town site of Newton, and who was responsible?
4. What happened to the Hyde Park property in May 1873, and what did it signify about Newton's reforms?
5. What was Jim Shay's occupation, and what were the varying accounts of his death regarding the number of shots and the location?
6. Describe A. Shuster's dangerous encounter in February 1873 and what made it profitable for him.
7. How did *The Newton Kansan* (May 29, 1873) initially report the incident involving A. Shuster on his farm, and what was the reality according to later information?
8. What were the circumstances surrounding Peter Dunningham's death in Great Bend, and what was the official verdict?
9. What was the initial news regarding Harry Lovett in November 1873, and what was his later fate?
10. Describe the domestic issues of Caroline Santoff, including her complaint against August Santoff and the eventual fate of both August and her second husband, Fritz Minke.

Quiz Answer Key

1. *The Newton Kansan* on April 17, 1873, states that Newton had undergone a significant transformation, moving from a "bad" and "abused" state to being "reformed" and experiencing rapid growth. This suggests a period of improvement and progress for the town.
2. *The Hutchinson News* on April 10, 1873, characterized Newton as having a "jealous disposition" towards Hutchinson's railroad prospects. They suggested Newton was fretting and stewing, while Hutchinson was confident in its future as the "city of the Arkansas Valley."
3. The first stick of lumber was unloaded upon the town site of Newton two years prior to April 17, 1873, meaning on April 17, 1871. S.J. Bentley was responsible for this initial development.
4. The Hyde Park property, formerly a "den of brothels," was sold "quite cheap" in May 1873, with only a piece of hardware remaining to mark the spot. This event was presented as evidence of Newton's "truly virtuous" reforms and a departure from its earlier reputation.
5. Jim Shay was the proprietor of a dance house in Newton. Accounts of his death vary: *The Hutchinson News* states three bullet holes, *The Junction City Weekly Union* and *The Kansas Chief* state five shots, and *The Leavenworth Daily Times* mentions him stepping out of a restaurant with oysters.
6. In February 1873, A. Shuster and his group were "encompassed by Indians" 15 miles southwest of Medicine Lodge, becoming prisoners for a day but escaping alive. This venture was profitable as he secured "six hundred buffalo hides and two tons of dried meat."
7. *The Newton Kansan* initially reported the incident as a "joke" and a "little altercation of no serious character," implying no real harm to Shuster. However, A. Shuster later filed a criminal complaint stating he was shot by Lewis Clark, hired by Henry Knife, indicating it was a serious assault.
8. Peter Dunningham, a buffalo hunter from near Halstead, was shot and killed by City Marshal James Gainsford in Great Bend after resisting arrest for drunkenness and assaulting the marshal. A jury, in the absence of a coroner, rendered a verdict of "justifiable homicide."
9. Initial news in November 1873 reported Harry Lovett was shot through the left breast in Dodge City and "not expected to live." However, he survived and later returned to Newton, Kansas, to pursue farming, eventually residing on Sixth Street.
10. Caroline Santoff swore a complaint against her husband, August, for repeated assault, mistreatment, and threats of "great bodily harm," including death. August later died by suicide. Caroline remarried Fritz Minke, who also had a violent temper, evidenced by an altercation where he cut his brother-in-law, and he later died in New Mexico.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the conflicting portrayals of Newton, Kansas, in the spring of 1873 by *The Newton Kansan* and *The Hutchinson News*. What do these contrasting perspectives reveal about inter-town rivalries and the self-perception of a rapidly developing frontier town?
2. Discuss the significance of the "reforms" in Newton as described by *The Newton Kansan* in May 1873, particularly concerning the Hyde Park property and saloon regulations. To what extent do the contemporaneous events and later incidents described in the source material challenge or support the notion of Newton as an "orderly town"?
3. Compare and contrast the reporting of the Jim Shay assassination across the different Kansas newspapers. What inconsistencies exist, and what might these variations suggest about the reliability of news sources and the spread of information in the 1870s?
4. Examine the concept of "justice" in 1873 Newton and surrounding areas through the cases of Jim Shay, A. Shuster, and Peter Dunningham. How were these incidents investigated and resolved, and what do these outcomes suggest about law enforcement, community standards, and the frontier legal system?
5. Analyze the domestic life in Newton as exemplified by Caroline Santoff's experiences. What challenges did women face in seeking protection from domestic abuse, and how did societal norms and the legal system address such issues during this period?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Arkansas Valley (Ar-Kansas):** A geographical region in Kansas, through which the Arkansas River flows. Hutchinson is referred to as "the city of the Arkansas Valley" in the source.
- **Assassinated:** To murder (an important person) for political or religious reasons. In the context of Jim Shay, it refers to his deliberate killing.
- **Bonds (Saloons):** Financial guarantees required from saloon owners, ensuring they would comply with regulations, such as not selling liquor to minors or intoxicated persons.
- **Brothels:** Houses of prostitution. Hyde Park in Newton was described as a "den of brothels" before its sale and reformation.
- **Demi Monde:** A term referring to a class of women who were not respectable in society, often implying prostitutes or those associated with them. Peter Dunningham was said to be "raid[ing] upon the demi monde."
- **Division (Railroad):** Refers to a railroad division point, which would be a significant hub for railroad operations, maintenance, and employment. Hutchinson and Newton were competing for this.
- **Domestic Relations:** The state of affairs within a household, particularly between husband and wife. August Santoff's "domestic relations not having been of the most pleasant kind" refers to his troubled marriage.

- **Justifiable Homicide:** The killing of a person in circumstances that allow the act to be regarded as legally permissible, such as in self-defense or by a law enforcement officer in the line of duty. This was the verdict in the Peter Dunningham case.
- **Livery Stable:** A stable where horses and carriages are kept for hire, and where horses can be boarded and cared for. A. Shuster owned a livery stable and feed store.
- **Marshal:** A law enforcement officer, particularly in frontier towns, responsible for maintaining peace and order. City Marshal James Gainsford was involved in Peter Dunningham's death.
- **Mortification:** A feeling of shame, humiliation, or strong embarrassment. The officers and medical gentlemen felt "mortification" upon realizing the A. Shuster incident was a "joke."
- **Railroad Section Hand:** A laborer who works on maintaining and repairing railroad tracks. August Santoff was typically employed as a railroad section hand.
- **Roundhouse:** A circular or semicircular building for housing and repairing locomotives, often found near railroad yards. August Santoff resided on Railroad Street, "not far from the roundhouse."
- **Sand Creek:** A creek located on the east side of Newton, mentioned in relation to George Cannon's encounter with O.J. Flick.
- **Texas Cattle Trade:** The historical practice of driving cattle from Texas north to railheads in Kansas for shipment to markets. Jim Shay was noted as a resident of Abilene during this era.

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