



the **Prairie Tales** podcast

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SOURCE ARTICLES

1873-16 – Blood & Roses

DESCRIPTION OF NEWTON

“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.” *The Newton Kansan, Newton, Kansas. Thursday, April 17, 1873.*

NEWTON - L.A. Bigger and Lute Perry of Hutchinson, awaited railroad connections here last Friday, and tells us of their hopes and prospects in getting the railroad division, and which prospects have grown considerably less in the past week – The Newton Kansan. It is astonishing what a jealous disposition our sister town has towards Hutchinson. We are satisfied with the future prospects of Hutchinson, and know that she is fast becoming the city of the Arkansas Valley. So why fret and stew like Newton? Our “prospects” for the division are flattering, and still grow better the good work goes on. Alas, poor Newton, you have buried too many of your noble citizens with their boots on to ever recover! *The Hutchinson News, Hutchinson, Kansas. April 10, 1873. Page 3.*

NEWTON - Two years ago to-day – April 17, 1871 – the first stick of lumber was unloaded upon the town site of Newton, by S.J. Bentley. *The Newton Kansan, Newton, Kansas. Thursday, April 17, 1873. Page 3.*

NEWTON - The sale of the Hyde Park property last week furnished a splendid opportunity for the truly virtuous to visit that place upon which they have so often gazed but would not venture near. The property was sold quite cheap, and 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. *The Newton Kansan, Newton, Kansas. Thursday, May 29, 1873. Page 3.*

JIM SHAY

FEBRUARY 16, 1873 - CASE # 1873-HM01

NEWTON – Assassinated. On Sunday night the notorious Jim Shay of Newton was killed. Some unknown man put three bullet holes through him while he was drunk on the streets. Shay had long kept a dance house at Newton and did not meet his doom sooner than he deserved. *The Hutchinson News, Hutchinson, Kansas. Thursday, February 20, 1873. Page 3.*

NEWTON -Sunday night, James Shay, proprietor of a dance house at Newton, received five shots from an unknown party. He died. *The Junction City Weekly Union, Junction City, Kansas. Saturday, February 22, 1873. Page 2.*

NEWTON - James Shay, keeper of a dance house at Newton, was shot at that place last Sunday evening. He was killed on a street corner, and was fired at five times, all of the shots taking effect, killing him instantly. It is not known who committed the deed. Shay was a resident of Abilene in the days of the Texas cattle trade. *The Kansas Chief, Troy, Kansas. Thursday, February 27, 1873. Page 2.*

NEWTON – Jimmy Shea, of Newton, was shot dead last Sunday evening as he stepped out of a restaurant door in that town, with a can of oysters in his hand. The shooting party is yet unknown. *The Leavenworth Daily Times, Leavenworth, Kansas. Friday, February 21, 1873. Page 4.*

ABRAHAM SHUSTER

MAY 29, 1873 - CASE # 1873-HM02

Owning a livery stable in Harvey County was apparently a dangerous occupation, at least in 1873. The A. Shuster livery stable and feed store was located on the north side of 6th Street, while his farm was located 6 miles further west of Newton.

Hired by a group of men to transport them on a hunting expedition in the west, “A. Shuster and others became encompassed by Indians 15 miles southwest of Medicine Lodge, and are lucky to get away alive, after being prisoners one day.” This event took place in February of 1873. We know that this was a profitable venture, as it was reported that “A. Shuster has about six hundred buffalo hides and two tons of dried meat almost ready for shipment east.”

One would expect this to be the new normal for news in Newton from this point forward, as Newton was applauding its civil reforms. According to the Kansan at this time, “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.” Peace and tranquility

had not yet overtaken Newton, however. That same week, on May 28, 1873, a young man named George Cannon was walking to his home and while on the east side of Newton's Sand Creek "a man with a gun in hand suddenly stopped him." Then, apparently realizing that George was not the man he was after, the gunman turned away into the grass and disappeared. George Cannon recognized and identified him as O.J. Flick, who was immediately arrested. Mr. Flick had served as an occasional duty officer in town, and had already sued several people for non-payment of mortgages.

It was then on the following night, May 29, "Considerable excitement was occasioned in town by the hasty arrival of a boy in the employ of A. Shuster, reporting that while at work a short time before upon his farm some six miles west of town, a man formerly in his (Shuster's) employ had quietly and deliberately come up, and after first shooting Mr. Shuster in several places, pounded his head into a jelly with the butt of the gun. Of course the news went like wild fire that Shuster had been shot. Several persons and officers on horseback and armed to the teeth immediately started in pursuit to bring the murderer to justice; followed by a couple of medical gentlemen with rags, saws, whiskies, and pill boxes, and they did not slacken their pace until they had reached the mentioned spot." The newspaper account continues, "Arriving upon the ground and finding all well and that simply a little altercation of no serious character had taken place, between even different parties, imagine their mortification as they coolly returned to town to have a laugh over the joke." The newspaper article told only part of the story, even though it was published a week after the event. Several days previous to the story's publication, on Saturday May 31, A. Shuster filed a criminal complaint with Sheriff C.A. Tracy, charging that one Henry Knife hired another man, Lewis Clark, to kill A. Shuster, and Lewis Clark both shot at and did shoot Mr. Shuster. The conclusion of the court matter is not known, but Mr. Shuster did live and apparently the matter was not quite the "joke" that it was reported to be. Only 2 months later, Mrs. A. (Ellen) Shuster received a telegram stating that her brother, Lewis Klingensmith, "...alias L.J. Wallace, Gingham Davis, Lewis Judson, and A.J. Clarke..." was shot and killed in Dallas Texas, on Saturday, July 12. His body was returned to Newton and is buried in Greenwood Cemetery. Mr. A. Shuster lived in Newton and ran the livery stable until his death on September 7, 1890. His wife and children continued the operation until 3 years later, when on August 8, 1893, fire swept through several businesses including the livery stable and the Shuster home. Mrs. Shuster then was forced to sue the insurance company, which had refused to pay on the policy.

PETER DUNNINGHAM

JULY 9, 1873 - CASE # 1873-HM03

The same week as Mrs. Shuster's brother was killed in Texas, it was reported in Harvey County that a Halstead resident, Peter Dunningham, had been shot and killed by the marshal in Great Bend, Kansas.

GREAT BEND - A man named Peter Demmingham, and said to be from the west side of Harvey county, was shot and killed at Great Bend last Wednesday night by the marshal of that place. *The Leavenworth Times, Leavenworth, Kansas. Wednesday, July 9, 1873. Page 4.*

GREAT BEND - Peter Dunningham, a buffalo hunter from near Halstead, Harvey county, was shot and killed by city marshal James Gainsford, last night about 11 o'clock. Dunningham had been fined for drunkenness during the afternoon of the same day, and after having paid his fine started for the south side of the Arkansas river with loud threats of vengeance against the citizens and officials. Instead of leaving town, Dunningham, with another companion halted near the railroad track and after dark commenced a raid upon the demi monde, who came up to the marshal for assistance.

City Marshal Gainsford promptly arrested Dunningham, who resisted and severely assaulted the marshal, and the result of the assaulted the marshal, and the result of the assault was the death of the assailant as above mentioned.

Justice Dodge, in the absence of the coroner, summoned a jury, who after a searching investigation assisted by county attorney Nimocks, rendered a verdict of justifiable homicide. This is the first affair of the kind that has occurred in our city, and while it is most sincerely regretted by all classes, yet the verdict of the jury which was composed of our most conservative citizens would indicate that our marshal done no more than his duty. *The Atchison Daily Champion, Atchison, Kansas. Thursday, July 10, 1873. Page 4.*

HARRY LOVETT

NOVEMBER 24, 1873 - CASE # 1873-HM04

DODGE CITY – Harry Lovett, one of the early citizens of Newton, was shot through the left breast at Dodge City, Monday night, and is not expected to live. *The News, Hutchinson, Kansas. Thursday, December 4, 1873. Page 1.*

NOTE: Harry Lovett survived, and later moved back to Newton, Kansas to pursue farming, eventually residing on Sixth Street.

CAROLINE SANTOFF

DECEMBER 8, 1873 - CASE # 1873-HM05

On December 8, 1873, Caroline Santoff of Newton was tending to her normal domestic duties in support of herself and her husband, August Santoff. What prompted that day's family dispute is not known, but Caroline was threatened too seriously this time. Late afternoon found her in the office of the Harvey County Sheriff, swearing out a complaint against Mr. Santoff. In her affidavit under oath, she stated that at on that day and at various other times, August Santoff "assaulted, beat, and mistreated" her while threatening to do her "great bodily harm." On this date this normal abuse was heightened to the point that Mr. Santoff now threatened to kill her, "and this affiant believes that unless the said August Santoff is restrained by lawful authority that he will do her great harm." *1873 Court Register transcribed by Darren McMannis. Register Book provided courtesy of the Harvey County Historical Museum.*

August Santoff had been born in Prussia in 1827 and Caroline born there in 1831. They had a daughter, Rosina, who has born in Prussia in 1856. The family lived in Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1870 but by 1873 they had moved to Newton. The next thing we know about the family appears 1 year later.

NEWTON - Last Monday afternoon (December 14, 1874), about two o'clock, a German named August Santoff, aged perhaps 45 years, shot and killed himself at his residence on Railroad street, not far from the roundhouse. He had been unwell for some time, and his domestic relations not having been of the most pleasant kind, intermingled with a sufficient quantity of liquor to furnish a variety in his feelings, is thought to have driven him to desperation. As his wife reports it (who was the only person present at the time) he went to a trunk and taking out a loaded revolver, placed the muzzle to his mouth, fired, killing himself almost instantly. The ball lodged in the upper and back part of the head. Santoff was a quiet and industrious man when in employ, and usually worked as a railroad section hand at and near this place. *The Newton Kansan, Newton, Kansas. Thursday, December 17, 1874. Page 3.*

Nearly a year later, Caroline Santoff was re-married to a man 10 years younger than she. However, Fred (Fritz) Minke was a man of similar temper as Mr. Santoff. In 1877.

NEWTON - Last Thursday night Fritz Minke and Michael Timm had an altercation. High words ensued, then blows. Minke during the melee drew a jack knife and inflicted two slight cuts on the person of Finn. They were both taken before Police Judge Reed next morning on a charge of disturbing the peace and fined respectively six and eight dollars. Minke was then arrested on a charge of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill and bound over to the district court in the sum of \$300. *The Harvey County News, Newton Kansas. Thursday, August 23, 1877. Page 3.*

NEWTON - Last Friday Fritz Minke was arrested and tried by the city for cutting his brother-in-law Michael Timm in the ribs and arm the night before, with a knife...." *The Newton Kansan, Newton Kansas. Thursday, August 23, 1877. Page 3.*

Minke was judged "not guilty" on September 19, 1877 and the complainant, Caroline's brother Michael Timm, was charged the \$54.65 court costs. A Sheriff's sales of Fred & Caroline's property in Newton ensued.

Then in 1879, it was reported, "Fritz Minke, a former resident of this city, is reported to have died recently at Las Vegas, New Mexico." *The Newton Kansan, Newton Kansas. Thursday, August 7, 1879. Page 3.*

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