



the **Prairie Tales** podcast

[www.PrairieTales.US](http://www.PrairieTales.US)

Compiled by Darren McMannis

## THE GOOD, THE BAD, & THE UGLY

### *THE LIFE OF DAVID RASURE*

Episode Number: 1873-18

#### KNOWLEDGE PACKET

Date: Summer/Fall 1874

This episode summarizes the key events and characteristics of David Rasure's life, drawing from the provided sources. His narrative is marked by military service, law enforcement roles, personal turmoil, and a penchant for violence and controversy.

#### I. Early Life and Civil War Experience

- **Confederate POW (1862):** Ten years prior to moving to Newton (circa 1862), David Rasure was captured by Union Forces in St. Louis, Missouri, and imprisoned in Gratiot Prison as a Confederate Prisoner of War. Notably, he was imprisoned "along with his mother, for passing counterfeit currency." This early brush with the law suggests a contentious past before his move to Kansas.
- **Union Enlistment and Rank:** Despite his imprisonment as a Confederate, Rasure later "enlisted in the 2nd Indiana Light Artillery with the Union, later transferring to the 2nd Missouri Artillery, and gained the rank of Corporal." This indicates a complex and perhaps opportunistic shift in allegiance during the war.

#### II. Law Enforcement Career in Newton, Kansas (1872-1873)

Upon his arrival in Newton in 1872, Rasure quickly established himself in the community and within law enforcement.

- **Railroad Night Policeman (November 1872):** "The railroad company have engaged the services of David Razier as night policeman and he has been sworn in as such by the city council." His duty was to "protect their interests in that locality during these hours, which is also the interest of the travelling public and our citizens." This appointment was

highlighted as a "particular selection" by Mr. Bancroft, suggesting a level of trust placed in him.

- **City Marshal (May 1873):** Rasure swiftly ascended to the position of City Marshal, as reported: "David Rasure has been appointed city marshal."
- **U.S. Deputy Marshal (June 1873):** His career continued to advance rapidly with his appointment as a "U.S. Deputy Marshal for Kansas," with his operations "confined particularly to Harvey county."

### III. The St. Joseph Shooting Incident and Marital Strife (March 1878)

A significant turning point in Rasure's life was the shooting incident in St. Joseph, Missouri, stemming from his wife's affair with B.C. Arnold.

- **Discovery of Affair:** Rasure, who had been mining at Shot Creek, learned that his wife and B.C. Arnold were together. He tracked them to the Bacon House in St. Joseph, where they had registered as "B.C. Arnold and wife, Newton, Ks."
- **The Confrontation and Shooting:** Rasure entered the room occupied by his wife and Arnold. According to Rasure's statement, Arnold initially grabbed a small revolver, which Rasure disarmed him of. However, Arnold then "took a large navy revolver from the same drawer, and just as Mr. Rasure stepped to the door of the room, he (Mr. Arnold) fired at him with the navy revolver, the ball striking him about three inches below the collar-bone, lodging just under the skin on the breast bone; Mr. Arnold shot twice in quick succession." Rasure then "drew a small revolver from his pocket and returned," firing three or four shots. Arnold fled, with Rasure in pursuit, but Rasure was "so badly wounded that he gave up the chase."
- **Rasure's Injuries:** Rasure was "badly wounded in the arm and shoulder," and his condition was described as "very severe," with the possibility that "the arm will have to be amputated." His case was viewed as "quite critical."
- **Mrs. Rasure's Statement:** Mrs. Rasure provided a compelling account, stating that she had been subjected to "rough" treatment and "threats" from Arnold. She claimed, "He beat her, kicked her down and choked her. The marks are on her face and neck yet." She also stated she came with Arnold "as his wife because I feared him," and that Arnold "made me agree not to write any letters nor receive any only through him." She also reveals Arnold's attempts to coerce her into selling her property to him or C.S. Bowman.
- **Reputation of Principals:** Both David Rasure and B.C. Arnold were described as "well known" and "leading citizens" or "solid men of the town" in Newton, having held positions of honor and trust. However, a Kansas City source states that David Rasure "does not bear a first-class reputation," noting his mother's proprietorship of the "Through Ticket saloon" and Rasure's own "house of odorous repute called the Globe House," where he "married one of the women."
- **Divorce:** Rasure and his wife were "divorced immediately after this incident."

#### IV. Later Life and Continuing Troubles

Rasure's life continued to be marked by conflict and a transient lifestyle.

- **Remarriage:** After the divorce, he "married Jennie Halliburton, his wife until they died."
- **Wellington Altercation (September 1884):** Rasure was involved in another violent incident in Wellington, Kansas, where he and William Sherrill were "severely cut" during an argument over a watermelon. Rasure "became angry and struck Sherrill," who then retaliated with a "grass knife," inflicting a "dangerous wound, the point of the knife penetrating the cavity." Frank Rasure, David's brother, intervened, also cutting Sherrill.
- **Business Ventures:** By 1890, Rasure had moved on from hotel ownership (the "old Howard House" in Newton) and was "in the drug business at Garden City, Kansas, and Guthrie, Oklahoma."
- **Guthrie Killing (December 1892):** In Guthrie, Oklahoma, Rasure, then a Street Commissioner, was involved in a fatal confrontation with Policeman Frank Rinehart. "It is stated that Rasure was drunk this afternoon and was placed under arrest by Rinehart. By the intercession of friends he was turned loose; whereupon he went home, got a gun, and searched out Rinehart," opening fire on him. Rinehart returned fire, "hitting Rasure in the abdomen, and inflicting probably, a fatal wound."

#### V. Death and Legacy

- **Death (March 1900):** David Rasure died at his home in Guthrie, Oklahoma, on March 26, 1900, at the age of 59. His death was attributed to "pneumonia fever" and "heart trouble," which appeared a week prior.
- **Community Standing (at death):** Despite his tumultuous life, at the time of his death, he was described as "an early day settler of this city [Guthrie] and served on the police force. He was also street commissioner for two years." He was also considered "one of the most respected and well known men living here." This suggests a degree of rehabilitation or acceptance in his later years in Guthrie.

## Thought-Starters

### Who was David Rasure, and what was his early life like?

David Rasure was a prominent figure who held various public safety roles, including railroad night policeman, City Marshal of Newton, Kansas, and U.S. Deputy Marshal for Kansas, particularly in Harvey County. His early life was marked by an unusual incident during the Civil War where he and his mother were imprisoned in Gratiot Prison as Confederate Prisoners of War for passing counterfeit currency. Despite this, he later enlisted in the Union Army, serving in the 2nd Indiana Light Artillery and then the 2nd Missouri Artillery, rising to the rank of Corporal.

### **What was the shooting incident involving David Rasure and B.C. Arnold about?**

The shooting incident in St. Joseph, Missouri, on March 6, 1878, stemmed from a domestic dispute. David Rasure's wife had left him to be with B.C. Arnold. Rasure tracked them to the Bacon House, where Arnold shot him twice (in the arm and shoulder/collarbone area) after Rasure confronted them. Rasure returned fire, and Arnold sustained a minor flesh wound, saved by his pocketbook. The altercation was over Rasure's wife's infidelity and Arnold's alleged coercion and abuse of her.

### **What was Mrs. Rasure's statement regarding her relationship with B.C. Arnold and the events leading to the shooting?**

Mrs. Rasure stated that she and David had been happily married until about a year before the shooting, when suspicions arose about her relationship with Arnold. After her husband left for Shot Creek to mine, Arnold and an attorney, C.S. Bowman, allegedly coerced her. She claimed Arnold "used her roughly in threats," "beat her, kicked her down and choked her," leaving visible marks. She said Arnold pushed her to sell her Newton property, first to Bowman, then to himself, using threats. She only went to Kansas City and then St. Joseph with Arnold because she "was afraid of him" and felt pressured to marry him after a divorce. She believed Arnold would "rather see [her] dead than go back to [her] husband."

### **What was the immediate aftermath of the shooting for David Rasure and B.C. Arnold?**

David Rasure was severely wounded, with doctors indicating his arm might need amputation. His condition was considered critical, leading to B.C. Arnold's bond being increased from \$500 to \$1,000. Arnold was captured by police after a brief chase and taken to the Marshal's office. He refused to make a statement initially. Both Rasure and Arnold were prominent citizens, with Rasure known as a hotel owner and public official, and Arnold as a successful businessman and former county commissioner.

### **How did the Kansas City Times article portray David Rasure's character and past?**

The Kansas City Times article, published shortly after the shooting, presented a less favorable view of David Rasure's character. It mentioned that he was the son of Mrs. Julia Sweet, proprietress of a house on Main Street and Commercial Alley, and formerly the "Through Ticket saloon."

It also stated that Rasure himself "started a house of odorous repute called the Globe House, and married one of the women" who worked there. The article concluded that while Rasure was "well known here," he did "not bear a first-class reputation." This contrasts with the Newton Kansan's portrayal of him as a "leading citizen" and "substantial man."

### What happened to David Rasure's marriage after the St. Joseph shooting?

Immediately following the shooting incident in St. Joseph, David Rasure and his wife were divorced. He later married Jennie Halliburton, and they remained together until their deaths.

### Did David Rasure have other notable incidents or careers after the St. Joseph shooting?

Yes, David Rasure's life continued to be eventful. In 1884, he was involved in another altercation in Wellington, Kansas, where he was severely cut in the side with a grass knife by William Sherrill, after a dispute over a watermelon. His brother, Frank Rasure, intervened, also cutting Sherrill. Later in his life, he transitioned into business, owning the old Howard House in Newton, and subsequently entering the drug business in Garden City, Kansas, and Guthrie, Oklahoma.

### How did David Rasure die?

David Rasure died in Guthrie, Oklahoma, on March 26, 1900, at the age of 59. Although he had been shot in the abdomen on December 24, 1892, by Policeman Frank Rinehart after Rasure, allegedly drunk, sought out Rinehart for an earlier arrest, his death six weeks later was attributed to pneumonia fever with complications of heart trouble. At the time of his death, he was described as an early settler of Guthrie, having served on the police force and as street commissioner, and was considered "one of the most respected and well known men living here."

## Study Guide:

### I. Early Life and Civil War Period

- **Family Background:** Identify key family members mentioned and their connections.
- **Civil War Experience:** Detail his capture, imprisonment, and later military service.
- **Controversy:** What was the reason for his imprisonment during the Civil War?

### II. Life in Newton, Kansas (1872-1878)

- **Arrival and Early Reputation:** When did he arrive in Newton and what was his initial reputation?
- **Occupations and Public Service:** List the various positions he held in Newton.
- **Marital Status:** Who was his wife during this period?
- **Business Ventures:** What business was he associated with in Newton?

### III. The St. Joseph Shooting Incident (March 1878)

- **Key Individuals:** Identify all main participants in the incident (Rasure, his wife, Arnold, police, witnesses).
- **Pre-Incident Events:** What led Rasure to travel to St. Joseph? What was his wife's account of events leading up to her departure with Arnold?
- **The Confrontation:** Describe the sequence of events during the shooting, from Rasure's entry into the room to the end of the chase.
- **Injuries:** Detail the injuries sustained by Rasure and Arnold.
- **Legal Aftermath:** What happened to Arnold immediately after the incident?
- **Reputations:** How were Rasure, his wife, and Arnold perceived by their communities, according to the sources?
- **Family Connections (Kansas City):** What new information about Rasure's family and past reputation emerges from the Kansas City Times article?

#### IV. Life After the St. Joseph Incident (Post-1878)

- **Divorce and Remarriage:** What was the immediate consequence for his marriage, and who did he marry next?
- **Later Conflicts/Incidents:** Describe the altercation in Wellington.
- **Occupations and Locations:** Track his geographical movements and changes in profession (e.g., mining, drug business, public service).
- **Guthrie, Oklahoma:** What positions did he hold in Guthrie? Describe the events leading to his fatal shooting.
- **Death:** When and how did David Rasure die? What was his reputation at the time of his death?

#### V. Themes and Patterns

- **Contradictory Information:** Note any instances where different sources provide conflicting details or portrayals of Rasure.
- **Character Assessment:** How does Rasure's character evolve or is depicted differently across the various incidents and time periods?
- **Role of Law Enforcement:** How is law enforcement portrayed in the events involving Rasure?

## Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. Prior to his move to Newton, what significant event occurred in David Rasure's life during the Civil War?

2. Upon his arrival in Newton in 1872, what were David Rasure's initial roles or occupations?
3. Describe the circumstances under which David Rasure and B.C. Arnold came to be in St. Joseph at the same time.
4. According to Mrs. Rasure's statement, what were B.C. Arnold's motives or actions regarding her property in Newton?
5. What injuries did David Rasure sustain during the shooting in St. Joseph, and what was his condition afterward?
6. How did the Kansas City Times article's portrayal of David Rasure's past differ from his initial reputation in Newton?
7. What happened to David Rasure's first marriage immediately following the St. Joseph shooting incident?
8. Describe the circumstances of the altercation David Rasure was involved in in Wellington, Kansas.
9. What public office did David Rasure hold in Guthrie, Oklahoma, leading up to his final fatal confrontation?
10. How did David Rasure ultimately die in Guthrie, Oklahoma?

## **Quiz Answer Key**

1. During the Civil War, David Rasure was captured by Union Forces in St. Louis, Missouri, and imprisoned in Gratiot Prison as a Confederate POW along with his mother for passing counterfeit currency. He later enlisted with the Union.
2. Upon arriving in Newton in 1872, David Rasure was first engaged by the railroad company as a night policeman. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed City Marshal and then U.S. Deputy Marshal for Harvey County.
3. Rasure traveled to St. Joseph after learning that his wife had left Newton with B.C. Arnold and registered with him as "B Cole and Mrs. Cole" at the Leland Hotel in Kansas City before moving on to St. Joseph and the Bacon House.
4. Mrs. Rasure stated that B.C. Arnold used threats and physical abuse to try and induce her to sell her property in Newton, first to C.S. Bowman, and then to Arnold himself, promising to get her the money in St. Joseph.
5. David Rasure was badly wounded in the arm and shoulder, and also received a gunshot wound to his breast, with the ball lodging just under the skin. His condition was considered critical, and there was a possibility his arm might require amputation.
6. The Kansas City Times article revealed that David Rasure was the son of a proprietress of a saloon and had himself started a "house of odorous repute" called the Globe House,

marrying one of the women there, indicating he did not bear a first-class reputation in Kansas City.

7. Immediately following the St. Joseph shooting incident, David Rasure and his wife were divorced. He later remarried Jennie Halliburton, who remained his wife until their deaths.
8. In Wellington, Rasure became angry over a joke about a watermelon and struck William Sherrill. Sherrill retaliated by striking Rasure with a grass knife, inflicting a dangerous wound to his side that penetrated the cavity.
9. Leading up to his final fatal confrontation in Guthrie, David Rasure held the position of Street Commissioner. He had also previously served on the police force in the city.
10. David Rasure died in Guthrie, Oklahoma, on December 24, 1892, after being shot in the abdomen by Policeman Frank Rinehart. This occurred after Rasure, who had been arrested earlier for being drunk and then released, returned with a gun to search for Rinehart.

## Essay Questions

1. Analyze the progression of David Rasure's public and professional life from his arrival in Newton in 1872 to his death in Guthrie in 1900. How did his roles and reputation change over time, and what factors might have contributed to these shifts?
2. The St. Joseph shooting incident is presented through multiple perspectives (David Rasure's, Mrs. Rasure's, and newspaper accounts). Compare and contrast these different narratives, highlighting any discrepancies or areas of agreement. What do these varying accounts reveal about the nature of truth and reporting in the period?
3. Discuss the role of reputation and community standing in David Rasure's life, using specific examples from the text. How did his past and present reputations in different cities (Newton, Kansas City, St. Joseph, Guthrie) impact the perception of events he was involved in?
4. Examine the personal relationships in David Rasure's life, particularly his first marriage and its dissolution. What does Mrs. Rasure's statement reveal about her agency, fear, and motivations in her relationship with B.C. Arnold, and how does this complicate the narrative of the shooting?
5. Identify and discuss the recurring patterns of conflict and violence in David Rasure's life. What do these incidents suggest about his personality, his environment, and the challenges of law enforcement and personal conduct in the late 19th century American West?



## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Bacon House:** A hotel in St. Joseph, Missouri, established in 1860, where the shooting incident between David Rasure and B.C. Arnold took place.
- **B.C. Arnold:** A harness maker well-known in St. Joseph and an early settler of Newton, who had an affair with David Rasure's first wife and was involved in the St. Joseph shooting. He was also a county commissioner in Newton.
- **City Marshal:** A municipal law enforcement officer, a position held by David Rasure in Newton.
- **Counterfeit Currency:** Fake money, for the passing of which David Rasure and his mother were imprisoned during the Civil War.
- **Depot:** A railroad station, specifically the area where David Rasure first served as a night policeman in Newton.
- **Gratiot Prison:** A Union prison in St. Louis, Missouri, where David Rasure was held as a Confederate Prisoner of War.
- **Guthrie, Oklahoma:** A city where David Rasure later lived, engaged in business, served as Street Commissioner, and was ultimately killed.
- **Harvey County:** A county in Kansas where David Rasure's operations were confined as a U.S. Deputy Marshal.
- **Jule Street:** A street in St. Joseph, Missouri, where the shooting incident at the Bacon House occurred.
- **Leland Hotel:** A hotel in Kansas City where B.C. Arnold and Mrs. Rasure registered as "B Cole and Mrs. Cole."
- **Newton, Kansas:** The town where David Rasure lived for several years, became a well-known citizen, and held various public and business roles. It was also the location of the Rasure House hotel.
- **Newton Kansan:** A local newspaper in Newton, Kansas, that reported on David Rasure's appointments and the St. Joseph shooting.
- **Pneumonia Fever:** The illness that David Rasure suffered from for six weeks before his death in Guthrie in 1900.
- **Promissory Notes:** Written promises to pay a specific sum of money, which B.C. Arnold tried to persuade Mrs. Rasure to accept as payment for her property.
- **Rasure House:** A hotel in Newton, Kansas, that David and his first wife were in charge of for several years.
- **Shot Creek, Kansas:** A location where David Rasure was extensively engaged in mining for some time.

- **St. Joseph, Missouri:** The city where the major shooting incident between David Rasure and B.C. Arnold occurred.
- **Street Commissioner:** A municipal official responsible for the maintenance of streets, a position held by David Rasure in Guthrie.
- **Summit View Cemetery:** The burial place of David Rasure in Guthrie, Oklahoma.
- **Through Ticket Saloon:** A business formerly owned by David Rasure's mother, Mrs. Julia Sweet, in Kansas City.
- **U.S. Deputy Marshal:** A federal law enforcement officer, a position held by David Rasure in Kansas, specifically Harvey County.
- **Union Forces:** The military forces of the United States during the Civil War, which captured and imprisoned David Rasure.
- **Wellington, Kansas:** A town where David Rasure was involved in an altercation and suffered a severe knife wound.

WWW. PRAIRIETALES .COM