

Kearney Hub

Jealous Husband Kills Wife & Wounds her Lover

Shooting happened March 28, 1888, trial in late August

Husband, Albert Murrish, married when he was 22

Wife, Clara

Daughter, Pearl, who was born in Sept. 1878

Came from Wisconsin about 1879

lived on farm in Divide Township Buffalo County,

6 miles east and a little north of Kearney

Lived in a three room frame house – two bedrooms and kitchen/living area room.

Albert hired G. W. Patterson to help with the farm work, he was gone frequently “insuring”
G W had worked there 3-4 weeks before Christmas, left, came back and had now been there 6-7 weeks.

Mar. 24, 1888 – Albert purchases a .38 revolver in Kearney

Husband, described as insanely jealous, suspected wife and hired man of having affair.

Albert arranged for G. W. to take Clara to Kearney.

Gave him an errand; she to shop.

Said he would be gone two days on insurance business

Went to his brother’s farm a couple miles away.

Brother brought him back

sneaked back to house, hid in attic, made a small opening in floor to spy

Pearl (9) spent afternoon with neighbor, Tool.

G. W. & Clara went to Kearney. Picked Pearl up on their way back from town

House was locked when they returned. Key in a jar by the door

Two men were at Tool’s waiting to see Albert so they went with G. W. & Clara and spent the
Night. Left about 9-10 the next morning.

G W testified that he worked around the place that morning, came in the house for dinner at noon
Murrish came out of one bedroom, shot him in the thigh. He dived behind the stove.

Albert went after him. G W crawled around the other side and partly under, had his head
under the stove. Clara was pleading with Albert not to shoot. He shot and her voice
stopped. Albert fired at G W’s back, did not hit him, fired again but the gun did not go
off. G W testified that “I was never out nights any where with Mr. and Mrs. Murrish but
she would come to my room and get in bed with me. She did that quite frequently during
the last three weeks preceding the shooting”

Albert testified that he had lived 9 years in Buffalo County in Divide Precinct. When he left the
house he said he was going to the Island a couple of days and he drove 1 ½ east before
going to his brother, John’s place. His brother tried to talk him out of his plan but
couldn’t so John took Albert home and locked the door after Albert went in. He said he
made two holes in the ceiling. He said he was in the attic nearly 2 days, with no food,
watching through a crack “and saw them in the act.” About 5 p.m. his wife and G W had

returned. Two men came and spent the night. They left about 10 the next day. About 11 Clara sent Pearl over to Tool's. G. W. came in and read some poetry. Then they ate dinner. Then they embraced and kissed and G W said "We better have our fun before Albert gets home." That's when Albert came out of the attic and shot them. He said he planned to kill himself but did not have the courage so he came to the sheriff.

Friends for the defense testified that Albert was of unsound mind. His doctor said he had treated Albert for unsound mind.

The New Era Standard, when reporting the shooting in April 5, said –

"The [Kearney Enterprise?] this morning very correctly said that if a man may shoot down his wife, for infidelity, that a wife has the same right to shoot down her husband for the same reason. If this theory of justice were followed out, the coffin trade would be lively in Kearney."

Albert was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to four years hard labor in the Lincoln penitentiary.

He was released for good behavior after 3 years.

When the newspaper reported his release, it said he would return to Kearney to live after visiting his parents in Wisconsin.

Did not stay in Kearney

Married Mary Osborne in 1894

Son, Archibald E, was born in Oct. 1894

Daughter, Sarah E, was born in Feb. 1899

Two other children, probably born in between, died

By 1900 they were living in Lincoln where Albert was an insurance agent. Also living with them were Albert's daughter, Pearl Johnson, now 21, divorced, and Mary's mother, Mary Osborne

By 1910 they were in Hastings, NE

Albert J., now 51, was still an insurance agent. He and Mary, called May in this census, had been married 17 yrs.

May (Mary), now 42 said she had given birth to 5 children and 4 were living. Those four children and her mother, now 70, were living with them but Pearl was not.

The children were a son, Archie, 15, and three daughters, Cerice, 11, Carrie, 8, and Marjorie, 6.

In 1920 Census Albert and Mary (now called Marie) still lived in Hastings, NE where Albert was selling fire insurance. Archibald was gone but the three girls were still living at home, as was Mary's mother. Mary Osbourn had come from England in 1858

In 1930 Albert and Mary, now 71 & 61, were still living in Hastings, NE. Only their youngest daughter, Marjorie, now 26, was still at home. Mary's mother had apparently died some time in

that decade of the 20's. Their son, Archibald had also died. His wife, Martha, and her two children, Esther, 6, and Archie, 2 7/12 were now living with Albert and Clara.

Sources: Archives file containing Kearney New Era newspaper
Census records 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930