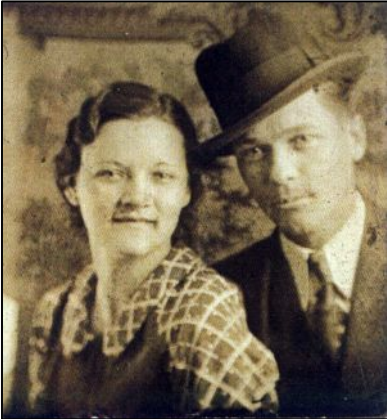


MORRIS CHARLES MEDLEY
b. 25 May 1910, Putnam Co., TN
d. 10 July 1940, TN
md Vera M. Swallow
s/o Ernest "Earnest" Medley &
Micheal "Telia" Anderson



Articles taken from the newspaper about the murder of Morris C. Medley: Pictured left: Morris Medley and his wife Vera Swallow.

Putnam County Herald, Cookeville, Tennessee,
Thursday, July 4, 1940.

**BAXTER CAFÉ OPERATOR SERIOUSLY
WOUNDED IN WILSON COUNTY SATURDAY**

Morris Medley, 30, Baxter café operator, was critically wounded in the abdomen as the result of a shooting at Newsome Service Station on the Murfreesboro Pike, about three miles from Lebanon at 6:30 o'clock Saturday night. Scant hope is held for his recovery.

Charged with the shooting is Constable Gordon Newsome, 45, Newsome was arrested and lodged in the Wilson County Jail by Sheriff P. T. Burnett on a charge of assault with a pistol with attempt to commit murder.

Sheriff Burnett said the shooting occurred just after he had arrested Newsome on a charge of drunkenness. "As I started to take Newsome away he reached into his shirt and pulled out a .38 caliber pistol, placed it against Medley's abdomen and fired." The pistol slug, the Sheriff said, ripped through the victim's intestines and emerged through his hip.

Burnett said the argument between Medley and Newsome started over the exchange of dollar bills, one of the large old issues for the newer currency. "Because he was drunk," Sheriff Burnett said, "Newsome thought Medley had taken two one dollar bills from him for one."

Burnett recalled that Newsome had shot Ernest Holbert through the hand about a month ago.

Medley is at the McFarland Hospital in Lebanon.

Putnam County Herald, Cookeville, Tennessee,
Thursday, July 18, 1940 – Front Page & page 8.

**MORRIS MEDLEY DIES OF PISTOL WOUNDS
RECEIVED IN ARGUMENT OVER \$1.00**

Funeral services for Morris Medley 30, Baxter café operator, who died at a Lebanon hospital Wednesday of last week as a result of pistol wounds received in Wilson County June 29 were held at the Methodist Church at Baxter Thursday, the Rev. J. H. Stephens and the Rev. John B. Barbee officiating. Burial was in the Smellage Cemetery.

Mr. Medley was shot by Gordon Newsom on a charge of drunken stable, according to Sheriff P.T. Burnett, who witnessed the crime. Sheriff Burnett, who said he had gone to a filling station to arrest Newsom on a charge of drunkenness, declared that when he started to take Newsom away, Newsom suddenly snatched a pistol from its hiding place under his shirt and shot Medley. Burnett said that Newsom and Medley had argued over a dollar.

Newsom was released at a preliminary hearing under \$5,000 bond on an attack charge, but a warrant was sworn to last week by Medley's wife, Mrs. Vera Medley, charging Newsom with first degree murder.

Preliminary hearing on the charges will be held before Magistrate John Rushing at Lebanon Saturday. Newsom was released on \$25,000 bond pending preliminary trial.

Besides his wife, Mrs. Vera Swallows Medley, other survivors include a small daughter, Billie Carol Medley; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Medley of Baxter; two sister, Misses Ruth and Louise Medley of Baxter, and two brothers, Arnold Medley of Madison and Lamar Medley of Baxter.

Wilson Court Opens Monday – Two Murder Cases, One Bribery Charge On Heavy Docket

LEBANON, Tennessee, December 14 – (Special) – Facing a crowded docket headed by two murder cases, a conspiracy and bribery case, the December session of criminal court will meet in Lebanon at the Wilson County Courthouse, Monday morning at 9:30 o'clock with Judge John A. Mitchell of Cookeville on the bench.

The twice postponed case of Gordon Newsom, Lebanon real estate dealer, charged with the murder of Morris Medley of Baxter, has been set for Tuesday, according to Turner Evans, circuit court clerk. The Newsom jury will be selected from a special panel of 150 veniremen.

DIED IN HOSPITAL

Newsom is alleged to have shot Medley on the night of June 29 after an altercation at Holt's service station, two miles south of Lebanon on the Murfreesboro Pike. Medley died of the wound at a Lebanon hospital July 10. A warrant charging first degree murder was sworn out on the same date by Mrs. Vera Medley, widow of the slain man. The case is being prosecuted by Ernest Medley, a brother of Medley, and the State of Tennessee.

Wilson Murder Trial Opens On Tuesday

LEBANON, Tennessee, December 16 – (Special) – The twice postponed case of Gordon Newsom, Lebanon real estate dealer, charged with the murder of Morris Medley of Baxter, has been set for Tuesday, the second day of the December session of the Wilson County Criminal Court, which convened here this morning.

One hundred and fifty special veniremen have been summoned from which the trial jury is to be chosen. Two regular trial juries and the Grand Jury was being selected this morning.

Second in general interest in the crowded docket is the trial of Halbert Rose, licensed bondsman, on Atty.-Gen. Baxter Key's indictment charging Rose with conspiracy to bribe officers of the law.

Defense attorneys for Newsom have made no indication of their plea. Newsom is represented by Gen. Walter S. Faulkner, City Judge W.D. Baird, and Willard Hagen, Representative-elect from Wilson County. Attorneys for the prosecution will be General Key, Asst. Atty.- Gen. Allison Humphreys, Scott Camp, and Beverly Medley, cousin of the slain man.

Newsom is charged with fatally shooting Medley on June 29 at the Holt Service Station, two miles from Lebanon on the Murfreesboro Pike. Medley died of gun wounds on July 10.

Among the witnesses subpoenaed are, Joe Sanford, highway patrolman, former Sheriff P.T. Burnett, Ernest Medley, Jack Dale, Pennock Maxwell, Vera Medley, Howard Gunter, Roy Holt, Dr. Sam McFarland, Mrs. Sam Hearn, Alvin Allison, J.L.Lannom and Mary Kate Mitchell.

Chain Pinball Operator Tells Of Slaying

LEBANON, Tennessee, December 18 – (Special) – The trial of Gordon Newsom, Lebanon real estate dealer charged with the fatal shooting of Morris Medley of Putnam County last June 29, moved swiftly Wednesday today as Jack B. Dale, 38, chain pinball machine operator, was cross-examined.

Pennock Maxwell, 38, told of a visit by Medley, Jack Dale and himself to Lebanon to repair juke boxes and pinball machines. He stated they stopped at two filling stations near Lebanon in an effort to buy whisky and finally secured a pint from a Negro. At the filling station of Roy Holt, two miles from Lebanon on the Murfreesboro Pike he first saw Newsom.

His testimony indicated that Dale knew Newsom but Medley did not. After the men had talked for sometime Medley displayed a gold certificate and Newsom attempted to buy the \$20 certificate. Medley refused to sell it but offered to exchange an old style \$1 bill for the smaller, new bill.

The exchange was made- but a bill was dropped by Dale and an unidentified bystander told Newsom the man had "beat him out of a dollar."

An argument ensued, during which Sheriff Perry Burnett and Highway Patrolman Joe Sanford drove up. Burnett ordered Sanford to arrest both Dale and Newsom. Newsom,

who was a constable, pulled a gun from beneath his shirt and shot Medley, the witness said, declaring with an oath, "I am the law too."

Newsom Said Sober When Medley Slain

LEBANON, Tennessee, December 19 – (Special) – Defense counsel for Gordon Newsom, charged with the murder of Morris Medley, this morning continued to introduce witnesses in support of Newsom's testimony Wednesday that he had not been drinking when Medley was shot on the night of last June 29.

Bob Gann, former Lebanon Chief of Police, testified that Newsom did not appear intoxicated when he talked with him at the local jail and that he was wearing a coat. Newsom had testified that the gun that killed Medley was discharged accidentally as he pulled it from a coat pocket to surrender to Former Sheriff Perry Burnett. Burnett, Joe Sanford and two other state witnesses had testified that Newsom carried the gun underneath his shirt.

Seldon Hackney said that he had a business deal with Newsom about 4 o'clock and he was not drinking at that time. J.H. Tucker and Walter Lannom, who saw him later in the afternoon at Holt's Station, also testified that Newsom did not appear to be drinking. J. D. Manning gave similar testimony.

Wilson Rutledge, local taxi driver, was introduced by the defense to prove that Jack Dale, a former state witness, had been drinking.

The Wednesday testimony and that today centered around the conflict in statements between former Sheriff Burnett that Newsom fired before he grappled with him and Newsom's statement that the gun was discharged as he attempted to surrender it to the Sheriff.

Mac and Harry Morse, brothers, were introduced by the State to support Newsom's contention that he was legally armed on the night of the shooting. The two young men had lost a wallet and when attempting to pay for gasoline and finding themselves without money Newsom told them that he did not want anything like that to happen around that station and then he would try to locate the lost pocketbook in the capacity of an officer.

J.T. Young and his Negro servant, Rufus Goodner, were then introduced as eye witnesses for the defense. Young, prominent Wilson County stockman, said that he had driven out to the Newsom home to collect a bill for barley he had sold Newsom and that on seeing Mrs. Newsom he pulled abruptly off the highway and inquired for her husband. She told him she would go down to the station and get Newsom. At this juncture he heard the explosion of a gun and turned his head to see Newsom and Burnett wrestling, finally Burnett rising and breaking open the gun to unload the weapon. He also stated that Burnett kicked Newsom in the face on rising.

Rufus Goodner substantiated Young's story but General Humphreys, on cross-examination, made capital of the fact that Goodner said that Sheriff Burnett broke open

the gun – when in fact the gun, a .38 caliber Smith and Wesson Special, has a throw-out cylinder. Goodner also testified that Joe Sanford, previously identified as an officer assisting Burnett in the struggle, was crouching behind gasoline pumps several feet removed from the scene of the struggle.

Gordon Newsom, first defense witness stayed on the witness stand for two hours and twenty minutes under a stiff cross-examination as the battle for his freedom continued at the Wednesday afternoon session following the State's rest after four fact witnesses had been introduced.



PRINCIPALS IN LEBANON MURDER TRIAL – Staff Photos by Harold Twitty – Trial of Gordon Newsom, Lebanon stock trader, real estate man, and constable on a charge of first degree murder in connection with the fatal shooting of Morris Medley, 30, of Baxter, last June, is expected to reach the jury Friday. The defense opened its case Wednesday morning. Principal figures in the trial, being held in Wilson County Courthouse before Trial Judge John A. Mitchell, are shown in the above pictures (left to right): Mrs. Vera Medley, widow of the slain man; Miss Ruth Medley, sister of the victim; Ernest Medley, father of the slain man; District Atty.-Gen. Baxter Key, representing the State in the prosecution; Attorney Beverly Medley, Cookeville, assisting the State in the prosecution; the .38 caliber Smith and Wesson Special revolver with which Newsom is charged to have shot Medley; Defense Attorney W.D. Baird, the defendant, Newsom; and Defense Attorney Williard Hagan. Asst. Dist. Atty.-Gen. Allison Humphreys, and Defense Attorney Walter S. Faulkner were not present when the pictures were made.

Murder Trial Nearing Jury In Wilson

LEBANON, Tennessee, December 20 - (Special) – The trial of Gordon Newsom for the murder of Morris Medley was expected to reach the jury this afternoon.

The four-day-old trial entered its final stages when the argument of counsel began at 1 o'clock this afternoon.

Rebuttal testimony by the State closed at 11:30 o'clock this morning with former Sheriff Perry Burnett continuing his steadfast claim that Newsom shot Medley before they grappled for Newsom's gun.

Dudley Martin was introduced in an effort to refute the statement of Howard Gunter who yesterday testified that the gun was discharged after the struggle began.

Martin quoted Gunter as stating on the night of the accident that former Sheriff Burnett grappled with Newsom after the shot. Ernest Medley, father of the slain man, was reintroduced to identify the pocketbook and a \$20 gold certificate as property of his son.

The State has insisted that the original argument between Newsom and Medley was over the gold certificate while Newsom has stated that it was over an old-issue dollar bill.

Defense attorneys for Newsom introduced an array of thirty-nine character witnesses this morning to establish the creditability of Newsom and J.T. Young, key co-operation witness to Newsom's theory that the shooting of Morris Medley was accidental.

The continued introduction of defense witnesses as to fact Thursday afternoon was designed to strengthen the defense theory that Newsom's gun was accidentally discharged in a struggle with former Sheriff Burnett after he had started to surrender the gun.

Newsom's general reputation was assailed by state counsel in cross-examination of character witnesses. Each was questioned as to the fact that it was a part of Newsom's general reputation that he had assaulted a man and shot him through the hand in a dice game, that he could not get insurance on his real property because of his former losses by fire, and that on one occasion he had discharged a pistol at his home on East Main Street in Lebanon, almost hitting Mrs. W.B. Sellars.

Roy Holt, proprietor of the filling station at which Medley was killed is ill, but his deposition, read to the jury, stated that he did not see the actual shooting. He stated that Newsom had not been drinking but that Jack Dale (a state witness with whom Newsom had an argument prior to the shooting) had been drinking.

Claud Rucker, woolen mill employee, denied on cross-examination that he had reluctantly told Assistant, Atty.-Gen. Allison Humphreys that Newsom's gun was fired before Burnett grappled with Newsom. He had sworn that the gun was fired during the scuffle.

Three women witnesses, Ruth Anderson, Mrs. Roy Holt, and Mrs. Mary Kate Mitchell, testified that Newsom was not drinking. Mrs. Mitchell, waitress in the Holt Restaurant, was the only one of the three who witnessed the shooting. She stated her attention was attracted by the gun explosion and on looking through a window she saw Newsom and Burnett struggling.

Other fact witnesses who testified Newsom was not drinking included C.B. Holt, Howard Gunter, and Alvin Allison. Deputy Sheriff C.E. Long, who arrested Jack Dale, stated that he had been drinking on the night of the shooting. Lloyd Anderson and J.L. Lannom, who claimed to have witnessed the actual shooting, substantiated Newsom's claim that the shot was fired after the struggle began.

Among the character witnesses introduced by Newsom's counsel were Albert Oliver, Sam J. Hathcock, Deputy Sheriff Ewing Atkinson, Sheriff H.M. Taylor, O.B. Cleveland, Homer Hancock, Richard M. Hawkins, Albert Neal, Miss Annie Lou McDaniel, Deputy Sherriff Clarence Hankins, Squire W.H. Conatser, and Chief of Police M.M. Prowell.

On cross-examination, Prowell said he investigated the alleged assault by Newsom with a gun on an unnamed person in a dice game and found "there wasn't anything to it."

Cross-examination made it increasingly evident that the State in the argument will attempt to show that Newsom, granting that he was legally armed as a peace officer on the night of the shooting, had no reason to surrender his gun to Burnett. The argument will perhaps indicate further that the defense's introductions of exhibits showing that Newsom was attempting to collect a bad check did not authorize him to carry a gun.

Wilson Jury Undecided in Murder Case

LEBANON, Tennessee, December 21 – (Special) – The jury in the trial of George N. Newsom, Lebanon real estate dealer and constable, on trial in Wilson County Circuit

Court for the pistol slaying of Morris Medley of Baxter, reported twice today that it had been unable to reach a verdict.

One juror identified by Willard Hagan of the defense counsel as B.W. Hudson, spoke out and said "and I don't think it will." Judge John Mitchell disregarded Hudson's remark and sent the jury back for further deliberation.

Judge Mitchell, after the charge to a jury in which he stated the defense theory of accident and the state theory of willful murder while in a drunken condition, gave the jury the case at 6 o'clock Friday night.

Jury Dismissed in Newsom Case

Mistrial Results in Hearing On Pistol Slaying Of Morris Medley

LEBANON, Tennessee, December 21 – (Spl) – The jury in the trial of George N. Newsom, for the pistol slaying of Morris Medley, was dismissed at 5:30 o'clock this afternoon when it reported it was unable to agree.

The jury had considered the evidence since early Friday afternoon and three times reported that it was unable to reach a decision.

Judge John Mitchell ordered the jurymen dismissed when it reported no agreement for the fourth time.

Mistrial Ordered In Murder Case

LEBANON, Tennessee, December 23 – (Special)

Judge John Mitchell dismissed the twelve men composing the trial jury of Gordon Newsom Saturday night at 6 o'clock after the men had pondered Newsom's guilt or innocence in the shooting of Morris Medley for an even twenty-four hours. They had been unable to reach a verdict. A mistrial automatically followed and the case was reset for hearing at the April term of court.

Judge William D. Baird of the defense counsel stated Saturday night, "I understand the jury stood seven to five for conviction of an involuntary manslaughter charge, none recommending more than a year and a day in the penitentiary for our client." Gen. W. S. Faulkner, who with Willard Hagen composed the counsel employed by Newsom, stated "my information is that the jury stood seven to five for conviction, but those wishing conviction were holding out only for an assault verdict."

Judge Baird added that he had been told that at one time the jury had stood ten to two for a not guilty verdict.

The jury made its first report at 9 o'clock Saturday morning. Still unable to agree after lunch the jury was again retired by Judge Mitchell for further deliberations.

Reporting continued disagreement at 4 o'clock the jurymen went into final session but failed to break the deadlock.

Medley, Baxter restaurant proprietor, was slain at the Roy Holt filling station two miles from Lebanon on the Murfreesboro Pike last June 29. The defense contended that Newsom, a constable, was in the act of surrendering his gun to former Sheriff Perry Burnett when it was discharged. The state theory insisted Newsom shot Medley while in a drunken condition after an argument over a \$1 bill.

Newsom Trial Jury Is Dismissed After Failure to Agree

Lebanon Democrat Newspaper, Lebanon, Tennessee – 26 December 1940, Front Page.
Mitchell Orders Jury Home After Fourth Failure To Arrive At Verdict.

The special jury which heard the evidence in the murder case of Gordon Newsom, charged with the pistol shooting of Morris Medley, was dismissed Saturday afternoon at six o'clock by Judge John A. Mitchell when it reported that it was not able to agree on a verdict. The jury had considered the evidence since five o'clock Friday afternoon, and had three times reported that it was unable to reach a decision.

Judge Mitchell ordered the jury dismissed when it was unable to agree for the fourth time.

State and defense attorneys had argued the case between one and five o'clock Friday afternoon.

After the testimony of rebuttal witnesses had been concluded at noon Friday, argument on the case began at one o'clock.

Defense attorneys Walter S. Faulkner, William D. Baird and Willard Hagan insisted that the shooting was entirely accidental and that the fatal shot was the result of a struggle between Newsom and ex-sheriff P.T. Burnett.

State's attorneys Baxter Key and Allison Humphreys, assisted by Beverly Medley, charged that Newsom was drunk at the time of the shooting, and that he deliberately shot Medley in a drunken rage.

A parade of character witnesses took the stand Thursday afternoon for the defense. On cross examination state's attorneys attempted to show that Newsom had twice before been engaged in shooting scrapes, and had suffered such high losses by fires that he could not get insurance on his property.

Roy Holt, owner of the service station where the shooting occurred, swore that Newsom was not drunk at the time. Ruth Anderson and Mrs. Roy Holt supported this testimony, stating that as far as they could tell Newsom was not drunk. Alvin Allison, Howard Gunter and C.B. Holt made similar statements.

The defense produced two witnesses, Loyd Anderson and J.L. Lannom, both of whom said they saw the shooting. Both swore that the shot which caused Medley's death was not fired until after Newsom began struggling with Sheriff Burnett. It was evident that the defense was trying to show that the shot was accidentally fired during the struggle.

M.M. Prowell, Lebanon chief of police, testified as a character witness for Newsom. He said that he investigated the case where Newsom was supposed to have shot and slightly wounded another man during a dice game and said there was "nothing to it."

Other character witnesses introduced by the defense were Homer Hancock, Richard M. Hawkins, Albert Neal, Miss Annie Lou McDaniel, Deputy Sheriffs Ewing Atkinson and C.E. Hankins, Squire W.H. Conatser, Albert Oliver, S.J. Hathcock, H. M. Taylor and O. B. Cleveland.

To be continued.....

Certificate of Death: #17763: State of Tennessee, Div. of Vital Statistics
Full Name: Morris Charles Medley
Place of Death: Wilson, Dist. 10: Lebanon, Tennessee – McFarland Hospital
Married: White Male: 30 years 1 month 15 days old
Date of Birth: 25 May 1910, Putnam Co., TN
Wife: Vera Medley: 26 years old
Legal Residence: Baxter, Putnam Co., Tennessee
Usual Occupation: Waiter: Café operator
Father: Ernest Medley: Born: Putnam Co., TN
Mother: Telie Anderson: Born: Putnam Co., TN
Informant: Mrs. Morris Medley of Baxter, Tennessee
Burial: 12 July 1940, Putnam Co., TN
Undertaker: Whitson Funeral Home, Cookeville, Tennessee
Medial Certification: I hereby certify that I attended the deceased from June 29 1940 to July 10, 1940 and that death occurred on the date stated at 8:30 p.m.
Immediate cause of death: Gunshot wound of abdomen producing 4 large punctures of small intestine and complete division in another segment – laceration of mesentery
Autopsy: No
Accident, Suicide or Homicide: checked
Where did injury occur: Lebanon, Wilson Co., Tennessee, public place.
Signature: Sam B. McFarland, M.D.
Date signed: 11 July 1940

<http://www.ajlambert.com>