

History of St Louis city and County , From the Earliest Periods...

181. "At a meeting of the directors and stockholders of the 'Missouri Paper Manufacturing Company,' held at their office, No. 46 Chestnut Street, St. Louis, Tuesday, Oct. 30, 1860, the organization of the company, under the laws of the State of Missouri, was completed, and the following-named gentlemen confirmed as directors of the company for the first year from the 7th of July last, and the persons named in connection with the same elected officers for the same term.

"Directors, as named in the license from the State, **R. H. Hubbell**, E. Stafford, Bernard Poepping, George Spear, V. B. S. Reber; President, Hon. Bernard Poepping; Vice-President, Thomas H. Paschall, Esq.; Secretary, Edward Stafford, Esq." — *Missouri Republican*, Nov. 2, 1860

236. No event in the criminal annals of St. Louis ever created such an intense feeling in the community as the Montesquieu murder, or City Hotel tragedy, as it was popularly called. On the morning of Sunday, **Oct. 28, 1849**, two young French noblemen, Gonsalve and Raymond de Montesquieu, arrived in St. Louis and stopped at Barnum's City Hotel. They had come to this country the preceding June for recreation and pleasure, and had traveled leisurely westward, Chicago having been the last stopping-place. Gonsalve was about twenty-eight years old, and his brother was two years his junior. Both were liberally supplied with money. Among their effects were capacious wardrobes, a number of guns, and an extensive hunting equipment. They were assigned a room situated on a hall leading from a back piazza. Directly opposite, but in a room opening directly on the piazza, Albert Jones, H. M. Henderson, and **Capt. Win. Hubbell** slept, and in another room, the window of which overlooked the piazza, were T. Kirby Barnum, nephew of the proprietor of the hotel, and Mr. Macomber, the steward.

Between eleven and twelve o'clock on the night of Monday, October 29th, while young Barnum and Macomber were preparing for bed, they were startled by a tapping on the windowpane, and the curtains being drawn aside they saw the two young Frenchmen on the piazza, one of them armed with a gun. Simultaneously with the discovery one of the Frenchmen fired, the contents mortally wounding Barnum and giving Macomber a flesh-wound on the wrist.

Aroused by the report of the gun, Jones, Henderson, and **Hubbell** opened the door of their room, and were immediately fired upon, Jones being instantly killed, and the others slightly wounded. The brothers returned to their room after the shooting, and were subsequently arrested there.

The homicide was at first regarded as a mystery, as the Montesquieus were perfectly sober, and had had no intercourse or communication whatever with the five men who were shot. At the time of their arrest the younger brother stated that Gonsalve had recently displayed symptoms of insanity, and the latter, exculpating his brother from all blame, said he was controlled by an irresistible inclination to kill two men; that he started out to do so, and that his brother merely followed to prevent a tragedy, but it was consummated before he (Raymond) could interfere.

After the tragedy public indignation ran so high that the jail was surrounded, and efforts were made to obtain possession of the Montesquieu brothers, but these were foiled by the jailer and sheriff, who, between seven and eight o'clock on the evening of the day succeeding the homicide, and while the crowd were assembling around the jail walls, deeming it unsafe to keep the prisoners longer in jail, quietly took them from their cells, conveyed them over the back wall, through the churchyard to Fifth Street, where cabs were in waiting, and conveyed them to Jefferson Barracks. On the way to the barracks the elder of the two seemed perfectly composed, and when they reached the gate took advantage of the sheriff's absence from the cab, sprang from his seat, and made a slight effort to

escape. The younger appeared very much frightened, and used every precaution while being conducted from the jail to avoid recognition. Between one and two o'clock A. M. on the Friday following they were returned to the jail.

At the time of their arrest the statements of the Montesquieus as to their birth and social position in France were received with incredulity, it being generally believed that they were desperadoes, but a few weeks later their claims were substantiated, as the following extract from the *Missouri Republican* will show:

"The deplorable and almost incomprehensible event which produced so much sensation in the public mind a few weeks ago, and so much grief in several families, seems to have excited equal sensation and grief in France. The last steamer brings out from Mr. Rives, our minister at Paris, a letter of his own to Senator Benton, with many letters and official documents to himself and others to Senator Benton, Senator Cass, and the Hon. Mr. Winthrop, on the subject of this most melancholy occurrence. The letters make known the fact that the father of these young gentlemen (the late Count Montesquieu) labored under insanity, and destroyed his own life two years ago, and that their elder brother is now insane in Paris, and hence raise the irresistible inference that inherited insanity must have broken out in the two brothers at St. Louis. All the letters speak of them in the same terms as being remarkable for the amiability of their characters and their 'mild and inoffensive manners;' that they came to the United States for information and recreation, and especially to see the Western country, and with ample means and credit. They descend from a family in France not only of great historic fame, but distinguished for private virtues.

"The celebrated Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, author of the 'Maxims,' is their grandfather on the mother's side; the present Duke de la Rochefoucauld writes in their behalf as nephews; the Gen. Oudinot, Duke of Reggio, and Gen. Arrigri, Duke of Padua, also in their behalf as relations. The Count Montesquieu himself belonged to the distinguished family of that name. Many Americans in Paris, among them Mr. William H. Aspinwall, of New York, also writes, and with all the deep feeling which the view of the agonized condition of the unhappy mother and relations so naturally inspires. These letters and official attestations have all been forwarded to St. Louis, to have their effect in explaining a transaction which seemed to be incomprehensible."

In the latter part of December, 1849, Lewis Borg, vice-consul of France at the port of New York, and Justin Paillaire, of Paris, arrived at St. Louis, M. Borg being commissioned to investigate the Montesquieu tragedy, and his companion being an intimate friend of the young men involved in the melancholy affair. The effect of the letters from abroad and the visit of Messrs. Borg and Paillaire was to change public sentiment in regard to the guilt and character of the accused, and it was not strange that in each of two trials the juries failed to agree upon a verdict. In the first trial the jury stood seven for acquitting and five for convicting Gonsalve, and eight for acquitting and four for convicting Raymond. In the case of Gonsalve the jury divided upon his insanity, and in the case of Raymond they divided upon the dying declaration of Barnum and Macomber's testimony as given before the coroner and recorder. Barnum and Macomber identified Raymond as the person who fired into their room, but the fact that at the time of the shooting Barnum and Macomber were in a lighted room, the defendants in the dark upon the piazza, and the alarm of the persons in the room when they saw a man approach the window with a gun in his hand, their hasty observation and precipitate retreat, the similarity in the appearance of the two brothers, the excitement of Barnum and Macomber at the time of recognition on the night of the occurrence, the fact that both were identified at different periods on that night as the "man" who shot, that but one gun, double-barreled, was discharged, and if both shot they would necessarily have had to use the same piece, that at the time of the arrest Raymond denied he had shot, and stated that his brother did it, that Gonsalve admitted he killed both men, and exonerated his brother, were all considered by the jury, and caused the division upon the conviction of Raymond. This first trial occupied four weeks, and was concluded April 20, 1850. On the next trial, which took place two weeks later, the jury, after being out forty hours, also disagreed, the vote being nine for conviction and three for acquittal in the cases of both

of the brothers.

A few weeks after the second trial the Governor pardoned Gonsalve on the ground of his insanity at the time of committing the murder, and shortly thereafter he pardoned the younger brother on the ground of "a general belief that he did not participate in the homicide whereof he stands indicted, and that a further prosecution of these indictments will not accomplish any of the objects of public justice, but will result only in renewed trouble and increased expense to the State." The brothers Montesquieu sailed for France from New York immediately after being set free. Gonsalve afterwards died a raving maniac