

Know When To Fold 'Em



From the Philadelphia Inquirer of March 9, 1836, reporting on the stabbing death of my first cousin (five times removed), Robert Allen Jr:

“We learn with much pain, that Robert Allen, esq., son of Col. Robert Allen, of Smith County, and formerly of this place, was stabbed by a blackleg, on the 29th January, on board the steam boat Selma, about twenty-five miles above Bayou Sarah, on the Mississippi river, of which wound he died in New Orleans.

The circumstances we understand to be these. At the dinner table, in conversation with other gentlemen, Mr. Allen expressed himself in strong terms of professional gamblers – remarking in substance that he considered them little better than horse thieves. After dinner, a man named Hamilton Taylor, formerly of East Tennessee, who was at the table when the remarks were made, called upon Allen to know if they were intended to allude to him. Allen replied that his observations were general – that he knew nothing of him [Taylor] or his profession; but that if he were a professional gambler he fell under the general remark.

After some warm words, Taylor struck Allen with his left hand and immediately thereafter with a large clasp knife stabbed him just below the right nipple through the lungs. Taylor was secured and will be tried at the May term of the Feliciana criminal court.

Mr. Allen was a young man of high promise – a member of the Bar – and was on his way to Alexandria in the state of

Louisiana where he intended to settle himself, with a view of attending to his profession.”

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